

Through the Old Testament – Book by Book

1st Lesson: Introduction

Beginning an exciting trip through God's Word This study gives the purpose of these studies through the bible and the method that will be used as a guide, laying down a "bird's eye view," giving the student a general outline of the Bible.

2nd Lesson: Genesis

Genesis reveals creation, the fall of man, and redemption of the human race through Jesus Christ. Around this centers all divine revelation. Genesis is the seed-plot of the whole Bible, essential to a correct understanding of every God's Word. This book is the foundation on which all divine revelation rests. Not only that, but it enters into, and forms a very integral part of God's revelation. Every great doctrine of Scripture finds its roots in Genesis in germ, type, or simple revelation.

3rd Lesson Exodus

The name "Exodus" signifies a departure, referring to Israel going out of Egypt. It is a continuation of Genesis, introducing another great epoch in the history of Israel. What Genesis sets forth in prophecy, Exodus records in history, recording the wonderful prophetic increase of Israel during the 145 years between Joseph and the Exodus – the persecution and oppression of Israel in Egypt – their deliverance by the power of God – the exodus from Egypt – the giving of the Law – the building of the Tabernacle – and the beginning of the Aaronic priesthood. It sketches the early life of Moses and his call to led Israel out of Egypt – tells of the plagues which made Pharaoh willing to permit Israel to leave – and records the history of the political and religious organization of Israel as a people of God and a mighty nation.

4th Lesson: Leviticus

This book is one of the detailed walk, worship, and service of the redeemed people of God. In Leviticus we have the giving of the laws concerning sacrifices and offerings, the consecration of the priesthood, the full establishment of the Tabernacle worship, the relationship of Israel to Jehovah, the feasts of Jehovah, the record of God dwelling in the Tabernacle in the midst of His people, and the proper means of approach and fellowship with God.

5th Lesson: Numbers

Numbers records the two great numberings and orders of the children of Israel, the first in the 2nd year after the exodus and the other at the end of wilderness wanderings just before entering into Canaan. This book takes up the story of between the two numberings (about 38 years) – Israel's exodus from Egypt to Canaan where the book of Exodus left it.

6th Lesson: Deuteronomy

"Deuteronomy" means "2nd Law," because it records the repetition of the 10 commandments and also contains the parting counsels of Moses to Israel in view of their entrance into Canaan – a summary of the wilderness wanderings – many view laws that needed to be added to those given some 40 years before – many warnings in view of the possibility of sin – prophecies concerning the future of Israel – and

the Palestinian covenant.

7th Lesson: **Joshua**

This book deals with the consummation of the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, showing that redemption has two parts – **out** and **into**. It records the fulfillment of the prophecies of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses regarding the land of promise being given to Israel; and the conquest and division of this land. The first 12 chapters give the conquest; chapters 13 through 24 giving the division of the land

8th Lesson: **Judges**

Judges is a record of Israel's failure during the rule of the judges, recording the apostasies, servitudes, the various judges and their exploits. This book covers about 440 years of the judges rule in Israel.

9th Lesson: **Ruth**

Ruth is a simple historical record of life in Israel, during the judges, illustrating the law of kinsman redemption, recording the story of a Gentile woman in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, and bringing the genealogy of David up to day – from Pharez to David.

10th Lesson: **1 Samuel**

1st Samuel presents the life history of Samuel, the last of the days of the judges, the moral failure of the priesthood under Eli, the moral failure of the judges under Samuel, the beginning and failure of the monarchy under Saul, the anointing and trying experiences of David, and the end of Saul.

11th Lesson: **2 Samuel**

2nd Samuel records the restoration of order in Israel through David, the choice of God as ruler of his people, the full establishment of the kingdom of Israel with Jerusalem as the political and religious center, the making of the Davidic covenant as the basis of all earthly kingdom truth, the full conquest of the enemies of Israel, David's sin and repentance, family troubles of David, rebellion of Absalom, and the last days of David.

12th Lesson: **1 Kings**

Presents the history of the kings of Israel and Judah from the time of Solomon to the captivity by Babylon, showing the reason for the Davidic kingdom not being perpetually continued and to reveal why God sent Israel into captivity

13th Lesson: **2 Kings**

Repeating the history of the kings of Israel and Judah from the time of Solomon to the captivity to Babylon, giving additional particulars, showing the reason why God sent Israel into captivity.

14th Lesson: **1 Chronicles**

Giving genealogical background of Israelite leaders and of the coming messiah, and a history of the kingdom of Judah and of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, according to the flesh.

15th Lesson: **2 Chronicles**

Giving additional genealogical background of Israelite leaders of the coming messiah, and a history of the kingdom of Judah and of the ancestors of Jesus Christ, according to His earthly humanity.

16th Lesson: **Ezra**

Tells of the return of the Jews from all the 13 tribes of Israel, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the difficulties that faced the nation in respect to separation from the heathen world living around Palestine.

17th Lesson: **Nehemiah**

Contains the history of Nehemiah in Babylon and his a record of his events during his 12 years of governorship in Judea; events in the charge of Ezra; lists of Jewish exiles who came back to Jerusalem; a record of the dedication of the walls and certain reforms made by Nehemiah in his 2nd governorship of Judea.

18th Lesson: **Esther**

Gives the great deliverance of the Jews from extermination during the time of the Babylonian captivity – recording the beautiful story of Esther and the institution of the feast of Purim.

19th Lesson: **Job**

Gives a treatise on human sufferings and the effects upon the sufferer and his friends, and reasoning about why these things happen even to the godly of the earth, showing the part Satan and God have to do with human suffering.

20th lesson: **Psalms**

Presenting Christ; God; the Word of God; creations; sufferings and redemption of God's people

21st Lesson: **Proverbs**

Presenting practical moral and spiritual truth in proverbial form – showing the way to knowledge and wisdom.

22nd Lesson: **Ecclesiastes**

Presents a record of Solomon's reasoning "*under the sun*" while he in a backslidden condition.

23rd Lesson: **Song of Solomon**

Presents a literal story of the song concerning Solomon while he was visiting in the northern part of his kingdom. At Shunem he found a shepherdess wit whose beauty and charm he was so captivated that he took her to Jerusalem, hoping to win her for his queen of queens. Having already been promised to a shepherd of her own community, she proved herself faithful to his love; she was finally married to him with the sanction of the king and her own family.

24th Lesson: **Isaiah**

Isaiah is a miniature of the Bible, - 66 books; the first 39 chapters dealing with Law and judgment corresponding with the message of the 39 books of the Old

Testament, (revealing the coming judgment upon Israel and captivity because of sin and apostasy, and doming judgment on many Gentile nations); then 27 chapters, corresponding with the 27 books of the New Testament both in number and message of mercy, comfort, and eternal restoration under the coming Messiah.

25th lesson: **Jeremiah**

Jeremiah writes of the dangers of backsliding. His theme is one of judgment without mercy for those who become apostates and defy God. He repeatedly refers to the Babylonian captivity, the return of Israel after 70 years, another world-wide dispersion, a final regathering of Israel at the end of this age, and the reign of Messiah over Israel forever.

26th Lesson: **Lamentations**

Presenting 5 poems of lamentation expressing the deep suffering of Jeremiah because Israel and Jerusalem were destroyed.

27th Lesson: **Ezekiel**

Ezekiel, commissioned of God, rebukes Israel for her many sins, for her constant and ever deepening hardness against Him. The Holy Spirit inspires Ezekiel to give various pantomimes of Scripture. His prophecies are of 4 general kinds: **(1)** the immediate captivity of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem; **(2)** judgments on other nations for their part in the sins and rebellions of Israel; **(3)** prophecies concerning Israel in the last days just before and up to the coming of the Messiah and Armageddon; **(4)** exclusively of the millennial Temple and the eternal reign of the Messiah over Israel

28th Lesson: **Daniel**

Daniel gives prophecies of the Gentile world kingdoms from his day to the future Millennium and eternal kingdom of God He also records the history of Babylon and Medo-Persia. The backbone of Bible Prophecy can be found in this great book.

29th Lesson: **Hosea**

Here is a book on repentance, the backslider being invited to return to God or suffer the consequences. God speaks to Israel through the domestic troubles of this prophet who was commanded to take a wife of whoredom – to picture the condition of Israel when God called and married her Hosea’s experience was used to teach Israel that she must now return to God, after forsaking His covenant and going after other gods; and He would marry her again and enter into an eternal covenant relationship with her

30th Lesson: **Joel**

The book of Joel gives the immediate and latter-day destruction of Israel by Babylon, and the future Antichrist; the battle of Armageddon; and the restoration of Israel in the day of the Lord – speaking of the future outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh.

31st Lesson: **Amos**

God’s messages of judgment upon various nations, Gentiles and Jews, because of their sins and rebellion against Him; the controversy between God and Israel; how

Israel could avert judgment; and the final restoration of the nation under their Messiah.

32nd Lesson: **Obadiah**

Obadiah has a vision of Edom being punished, immediately and also in the future day of the Lord, for her sin of mistreating Israel. Edom had ever been bitter against God's people, so it is her destruction is predicted in this prophecy, as well as Israel's eternal possession of the land God promised her.

33rd Lesson: **Jonah**

This book presents a story of a bigoted Jew who, after being chastened of the Lord for disobedience, preached to and converted the whole city of Nineveh.

34th Lesson: **Micah**

Micah, though a prophet in Judah, also deals with Samaria and Gentile nations, reproving all for their sins, and warning of impending judgment and captivity of Israel. He also sees their future restoration in the kingdom of the Messiah and great events of the latter days.

35th Lesson: **Nahum**

Nahum deals with the destruction of Nineveh about 100 years after Jonah. The prophecy is a complement and counterpart of the book of Jonah; the city was literally destroyed as predicted by both prophets – by Medes and Babylonians under Nebopalassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar.

36th Lesson: **Habakkuk**

Habakkuk alone, of all the prophets, seemed more concerned about the character of God being vindicate than about Israel escaping punishment and writes of the vindication of the holiness and justice of God.

37th Lesson: **Zephaniah**

The book shows the judgment of God upon both Jews and Gentiles for their many sins; and His goodness to the godly of both classes.

38th Lesson: **Haggai**

Haggai encourages the exiles returning from Babylonian captivity – that they would take fresh hope and rebuild the unfinished Temple and restore worship of God at Jerusalem.

39th Lesson: **Zechariah**

The book deals with the immediate and future restoration of Israel as a nation again in Palestine, particularly their eternal restoration under the Messiah. It is primarily Messianic in message and concerning this the prophet's vision and clearness of thought are almost without parallel.

40th Lesson: **Malachi**

Malachi presents accusations from God and denials from Israel that He is rightfully accusing them of evil. He pronounces the moral judgment of God upon the exiles returning from Babylon. Contains prophecies of the 1st and 2nd advent.

41st **Between the Old and New Testaments**

This study reveals what took place in the 400 years between the writing of the Old and New Testaments. Is the Apocrypha reliable? What does history reveal concerning this period of time? What part did the political background play?

Through the Old Testament – Book by Book

We are about to begin an exciting trip through the Bible. And, without doubt, you will find this journey to be one of the most thrilling experiences of your Christian life. You will learn the major themes of all the books of the Bible, the key verses, the central messages and what God is saying through each book of the Bible. You will also learn how each book is organized, how it came into being, its role in the Bible story.

You will also learn the how to analyze all 66 books of the Bible, which are the most significant chapters of each book, where to find the central purpose, and the main verses of each book of the Bible to copy and remember.

In this journey through the Bible, you will receive greater insight into the Scriptures and more knowledge of God's Word than you ever thought possible.

We plan to travel book by book through God's Word, enabling us to see the progressive step-by-step revelation of God's will as perhaps we have never seen before. We will see God's Word evolve from the Pentateuch to the Revelation - 66 books written by 40 authors, covering approximately 1600 years.

Studying God's Word from beginning to end is basic to knowing it well, yet most literature about the Bible skips from place to place often resulting in confusion and misunderstanding. One never reads a story this way and the Bible is a narrative telling God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ from Genesis through Revelation.

So, we are about to see the Bible unfold as a beautiful, divinely inspired thru story, with a beginning, a middle and an end yet to come.

To receive maximum knowledge and inspiration you should:

1. Attend each class session.
2. Read the entire book of the Bible we are studying.
(If that is impossible, at lease read the key chapters)
3. Take and review your notes
4. Mark your Bible with key references of various Scriptures.
5. Search the Scripture and mark references.
6. Promise the Lord at least two hours a week for reading.

The time has come for Christians who mean business for the Lord to devote themselves to the study of His Word and to learning the basic principles that we all should know. Promise yourself and promise God you will live up to these "*musts*."

No man's education is complete if he does not know the Bible.

No believer can live the full and effective life without a grasp of the Bible.

PURPOSE:

Our purpose in this study is to give a grounding in the Scriptures. One should not just study these outlines of the various books of the Bible and notes - instead of studying the Bible, itself. The Bible itself should be read and searched and researched as we proceed through these studies.

These studies will build a skeleton - that is, the bone structure, and, then, it is up to you to add the circulatory system and some muscle to that skeleton, by your own study of God's Word.

METHOD:

We will seek to give the outstanding meaning and message of each book of the Bible and strive to see it in relation to the whole of God's Word.

We must not become so engrossed and fascinated with a subject that we lose sight of the object, but, rather, we must let the big broad meanings of God's wonderful Old Book to get hold of us.

It is important that we realize that the Bible is inbreathed by the Holy Spirit and that He, the Holy Spirit, must be our Teacher: John 14:26.

THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE:

1. The Bible is God's written revelation of His will to man
2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21
2. The central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 3:16
3. The Bible contains 66 Books, written by 40 authors,
covering approximately 1,600 years
4. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew
(a few short passages in Aramaic)
The New Testament was written in Greek.
Our Bible is a translation from these languages.
5. The word "*Testament*" means "*Covenant*" or agreement. The Old Testament is the Covenant God made with man about his relationship before Christ came. The New Testament is the agreement God made with man about his relationship with the Father after Christ came.

In the Old Testament we have the Covenant of the Law. In the New Testament we have the Covenant of God's Grace through Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:19-25 and Galatians 3:13-14
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The first 17 Books of the Old Testament are divided into two sections: The first five books of the Bible are called the **Pentateuch**: (Pentateuch means "Five.")

Genesis - Exodus - Leviticus - Numbers - Deuteronomy

They are all from the pen of Moses and are called "*The Law*," however, they are redemptive and historical in nature.

God's Word is a progressive revelation and one cannot learn it from reading verses or passages at random. It is a step-by-step revelation of one story, one mind (God), the Creator of all things, and the story is His great purpose moving through the ages and that story was and is to redeem mankind through Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior of all who will believe. John 3:16.

Following the **Pentateuch**, there is a second group of Books in the Old Testament, and they are historical in nature:

***Joshua - Judges - Ruth - 1 Samuel - 2 Samuel
1 Kings - 2 Kings - 1 Chronicles - 2 Chronicles
Ezra - Nehemiah - Esther***

After this, we have what is referred to as "*The Middle Five Books*" of the Old Testament:

Job - Psalms - Proverbs - Ecclesiastes - Song of Solomon

These five books are individual and experiential. While the former 17 Books of the Old Testament are national. These are personal, dealing with human problems of the heart. All of the first 17 are *prose*, while these five Books are *poetry*.

The last 17 Books of the Old Testament are ***Prophetical Books***:

***Isaiah - Jeremiah - Lamentations - Ezekiel - Daniel - Hosea
Joel - Amos - Obadiah - Jonah - Micah - Nahum
Habakkuk - Zephaniah - Haggai - Zechariah - Malachi***

These 17 Books of the Old Testament are also divided into two groups as the first 17 were:

The first 5 - are the "*Major Prophets*"
The last 12 - are the "*Minor Prophets*"

So we see that the 39 Books of the Old Testament fall into this orderly group

**SEVENTEEN - subdivided into 5 and 12
FIVE
SEVENTEEN - subdivided into 5 and 12
The New Testament**

The First Five Books: *Matthew - Mark - Luke - John - Acts*

These are the foundational Books to all that has preceded and all that follows.

The Next Twenty-one - "The Epistles"

The First Fourteen Epistles are referred to as the "*Pauline Epistles*" and are divided as follows:

***Romans - 1 Corinthians - 2 Corinthians - Galatians
Ephesians - Philippians - Colossians
1 Thessalonians - 2 Thessalonians***

The Next Five Books of the New Testament are referred to as "*Pastoral*" or Personal, they are:

1 Timothy - 2 Timothy - Titus - Philemon - Hebrews

While the authorship of Hebrews is debated, however, it would seem from the style of the book and from Hebrews 13:23, that it was written by Paul.

Then we have Seven Books are the "*General Epistles*" each names after its author:

James - 1 Peter - 2 Peter - 1 John - 2 John - 3 John - Jude

The last Book of the New Testament is a Book of Prophecy - "*The Apocalypse*" - The Revelation of Jesus Christ penned by John.

The New Testament consists of 5 foundational Books - firm on which to build the 21 Epistles of instruction ending in the "*glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*" in the Revelation.

OLD TESTAMENT - 39 BOOKS

17 HISTORICAL		5 PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL	17 PROPHETICAL
5 Law Moses	12 Historical	Poetry	5 Major 12 Minor

NEW TESTAMENT - 27 BOOKS

5 FOUNDATIONAL	21 EPISTLES		1 PROPHECY
Gospels: Matthew - Mark - Luke - John - Acts of the Holy Spirit	14 by Paul; _____ 9 to the Church, 5 to Pastors	7 are General instructions	The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Bible is divine. The thought and revelation is divine however, the expression of the communication is human. It is the **Word of God!** (2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Peter 1:24-25).

GENESIS

This first Book of the Bible is well described by its title, for the name, "*Genesis*" means "*beginning*," and this Book is a history of the beginning of all things. This Book has been called, "*the seed plot of the Bible*" from the fact that the germs of all the great doctrines concerning God, man, sin and salvation are found there.

The very first verse suggests the purpose of the Book, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" The Israelites, to whom the message of the book was first addressed, would learn that the God of Palestine was also the God of all lands, and the God of one nation (Israel) was also the God of all nations. Since God was the God and Creator of all the earth, He must ultimately become the Redeemer of all the earth. Genesis describes how redemption became necessary because man had sinned and fallen into darkness: and how God prepared to choose one nation to take the light of Divine truth to the other nations.

Genesis enters the very structure of the New Testament, in which it is quoted about sixty times in seventeen Books of the New Testament. Its divine revelation and the fact that Moses is the author is authenticated by the Testimony of Jesus, himself.

Genesis tells us of the beginning of everything *except* God:

The beginning of the Created Word - 1:1-25
 The beginning of Man and Woman - 1:26 and chapter 2
 The beginning of Sin - 3:1-7
 The beginning of the Promise of Redemption - 3:8-24
 The beginning of Family Life - 4:1-15
 The beginning of Civilization - 4:16 through 9:29
 The beginning of Nations - Chapters 10 and 11
 The beginning of a Chosen People - Chapters 12 through 50
 (and other beginnings, i.e. Judgment, Altars, Death, etc.)

THE CONTENTS OF GENESIS CENTER AROUND NINE OUTSTANDING SUBJECTS:

1. Creation (Chapters 1 and 2)
2. The Fall of man (Chapter 3)
3. The First Civilization (Chapter 4)
4. The Flood (Chapters 5-9)
5. The Dispersion of Nations (Chapters 10-11)
6. Abraham (Chapters 12-25)
7. Isaac (Chapter 17-35)
8. Jacob (Chapters 25-35)
9. Joseph (Chapters 27-50)

Let's take a brief look at each of these subjects:

1. **CREATION** - (Chapter 1 and 2)
 - (A) Verse 1. There is no definition of God, no description of creation, no declaration of date. ***It is a declaration of divine truth!*** Accept the first sentence of Scripture and there will be little difficulty in accepting all of God's Word.
 - (B) The time space between Verse 1 and Verse 1 is unknown and leaves room for all the geologic eras. Verse 2 should read "*the earth became without form and void.*" The same word used here is also used in Genesis 2:7 - "*Man because a living soul.*"
 - (C) The six days in Chapter 1 do not record the original creation for that happened in Verse 1. The six days give an account of a *new* beginning or a *re-creation*. During the first

four days no creative act is recorded. Only when we come to animals in Verse 21 and man in Verse 27 is the Hebrew word for "create" used.

- (D) Man is the crown of God's creation. Notice Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7. Man was created in the image (*representation* or *resemblance*) and likeness (*character* or *model*) of God. No words can adequately express this but the fact that God breathed into man "*the breath of life and man became a living soul*" is the best expression to be found. Man is then body, soul and spirit.

2. THE FALL OF MAN

- (A) **THE TEMPTING** - (3:1-6) (Note Satan casting doubt on God's Word in Verse 1, the first lie in Verse 4, the appeal to pride in Verse 5) Satan captured the ear, eye, inward desire. (See 1 John 2:16) We see here the "*natural*" man.
- (B) **THE YIELDING** - (Verse 6) - Look up Romans 5:12!
- (C) **THE RESULTS** - (Verses 7-25) Notice, now there is self conscience - Verse 7; shame and fear - Verse 10; sorrow - Verse 17; cursed - Verse 17; thorns - Verse 18; and sweat - Verse 19.
- (D) **THE GRACE OF GOD** - (3:9 and 15) God sought out Adam - Verse 9. The Promise of a Redeemer - Verse 15 This verse may be translated into layman's terms as follows:

"And there will be intense hatred between Satan and Christ. Eventually Christ will crush the head of Satan and Satan will only bruise the heel of Christ."

THIS IS THE FIRST DIRECT PROPHECY OF JESUS CHRIST

- (E) **THE FRUIT OF SIN** - (Chapter 4) The Cain line or "*the sons of man*" - the first murder, and the birth of Seth, a spiritual seed. Note Verses 3-5 and Verse 8 and Verse 25

3. THE FLOOD - Chapters 5 through 9

- (A) The Book of the generations of Adam through Seth - (4:25-5:3)
- (B) Chapter 6 - the mixing of demons and the human race. (See Jude 1 and 2 Peter 2:4-5)
- (C) Judgment falls in Chapter 7 as a result of Chapter 6:5-7
One man found grace in the eyes of the Lord - Noah
(Read Genesis 6:8 with Matthew 24:37-39)
- (D) God's Covenant with Noah - 9:8-17
Note: Seven times God uses the word "*Covenant*" in this passage.

4. THE DISPERSION OF NATIONS - Chapters 10 and 11

- (A) The generations of the sons of Noah - Chapter 10
- (B) The confusion at Babel - Chapter 11
The reason for the action of God was because of the people refused to obey God in spreading abroad to replenish the earth.
Note: "*Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered*" (Verse 4)
Note, also, Verses 7-8. God did this so they would scatter abroad.
"*Babel*" means confusion. It was the **capital** in Nimrod's kingdom - (10:9-10)

5. ABRAHAM - Genesis 12 through 23

- (A) Abraham's call - 12:1 with Acts 7:2

(B) The Abraham Covenant - 12:2-3 with Acts 7:3

Note the seven promises of God:

1. *I will make thee a great nation*
2. *I will bless thee*
3. *I will make thy name great*
4. *Thou shalt be a blessing*
5. *I will bless them that bless thee*
6. *I will curse them that curse thee*
7. *In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*

(C) This Covenant was confirmed again and again in:

13:14-18; 15:1-21; 17:6-8; 22:15-18; 26:1-5; and 28:13-15.

(D) Abraham was a man of faith - Read Hebrews 11:8-19**6. ISAAC - Genesis chapters 24 through 26 - (Read Chapter 17:15-19, also)****(A) The beloved and obedient son - 22:1-8****(B) A bride for Isaac, Rebekah - Chapter 24****(C) Father of Esau and Jacob - "*two nations in womb*" - 25:23-26 (Also Hebrews 11:17-20)****(D) The Abrahamic Covenant confirmed to Isaac - Chapter 26****7. JACOB - Chapters 27 - 36 (became "*Israel*")****(A) The stolen blessing of his father, Isaac - Chapter 27****(B) Abrahamic Covenant confirmed to Jacob - 28:13-15****(C) The twelve sons of Jacob:**

Reuben - 29:32	Judah - 29:35	Gad - 30:13	Zebulun - 30:20
Simeon - 29:33	Dan - 30:6	Asher - 30:13	Joseph - 30:24
Levi - 29:34	Naphtali - 30:8	Issachar - 30:18	Benjamin - 35:18

These are the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel - 49:28

(D) Jacob's name changed to Israel - 32:28 - *Thus we have Israel and the 12 tribes***8. JOSEPH - Chapter 37 - 50****(A) There is no word or reproof against Joseph.****(B) He was the favored son - 37:3**

- Sold for 20 pieces of silver and taken to Egypt (37:20-36)

(C) Humiliation and exaltation in Egypt - Chapter 39 through 48**(D) Jacob (Israel) enters Egypt with his entire household (46:27) which numbers 70. Acts 7:14 refers to 75, but it also states, "*and all his kindred,*" a probable reference to the five surviving wives of Jacob's sons. In Genesis 46:26 the number is 66, but it states, "*which come out of his loins.*" In Verse 27 the number is 70 from "*the house of Jacob*" including the 66, Joseph and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh and Jacob himself.****(E) Joseph is the most complete picture (type) or shadow of Christ in the Bible.**

Here are just a few illustrations:

1. Both are beloved by their fathers - Genesis 37:3 & Matthew 3:17
2. Both were shepherds - Genesis 37:2 & John 10:11-14
3. Both were taken to Egypt - Genesis 37:26 & Matthew 2:14-15
4. Both were sold for the price of a slave - Genesis 37:28 & Matthew 26:15
5. Both were highly exalted after suffering - Genesis 41:41 & Philippians 2:9-10

(F) The prophecy and blessing of the tribes of Israel - Chapter 49 (See Hebrews 11:22)

We see how the Book of Genesis the supreme object of God in providing for us a family

through which the promised Redeemer was to come. (Galatians 3:14).

EXODUS

The name "*Exodus*" comes from Greek words meaning "*going out*," and this second Book Of the Bible was so named because it recorded the departure of Israel from Egypt. It was written (as was Genesis) by Moses and this was confirmed by Christ in Luke 24:44.

THE THEME OF EXODUS

In the Book of Genesis we read about the *beginnings* of redemption. In the Book of Exodus we read about the *progress* of redemption. In Genesis this redemption is being worked out through **individuals**; in Exodus, it is worked out through an entire nation - **Israel**. The central thought of the Book of Exodus is redemption by blood. Around this thought gathers the story of a people saved by Blood, sheltered by Blood and having access unto God by Blood. This redemption is shown to meet every need of the nation.

The Israelites had been under the bondage of Egypt's ruler, Pharaoh (a ruler in Egypt). Exodus describes how God delivered them from bondage. In Genesis we saw the ruin of man through the sin (fall) of man. In Exodus we see the redemption by blood and power of God. Oppressed by the Egyptians, Israel needs deliverance. God supplies this deliverance. Having been saved ; the nation needs a revelation from God to guide them in conduct and worship in their new life. **God gives them the Law**. Convicted of sin by the holiness of the law, the Israelites find their need of cleansing. God provides sacrifices! Having a revelation of God, the people feel their need of worship. God gives them the Tabernacle and appoints a priesthood.

Exodus continues what was begun in Genesis. Genesis 46:27 tells the number of the family of Jacob (7) and approximately 400 years later a vast multitude, 600,000 men, *plus women and children* (Exodus 12:47) came out of Egypt.

The events recorded in Exodus cover a period of 216 years, from about 1706 B.C. to 1490 B.C. It begins with an enslaved people dwelling in the presence of Egyptian idolatry, and ends with a redeemed people dwelling in the presence of God.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF EXODUS

1. Israel in Bondage - (Chapters 1 & 2)
2. Israel Redeemed - (Chapters 3 to 15:22)
3. Israel Journeying to Sinai - (Chapters 15:23 to 19)
4. Israel Given the Law - (Chapters 20-23)
5. Israel in Worship (Chapters 24-40)

Let's analyze each point of the above outline:

1. ISRAEL IN BONDAGE - (Chapters 1 &2)

- (A) The oppression of Israel - (Chapter 1)
- (B) The birth of Moses - (2:1-4)
- (C) The adoption of Moses - (2:5-10)

- (D) The ill-advised zeal of Moses - (2:11-14)
- (E) The flight of Moses - (2:15)
- (F) The marriage of Moses - (2:16-22)

Was Israel's bondage prophesied? - (Genesis 15:7-16)
What did this bondage do for Israel? - (Exodus 2:23)
What would this result in? - (Romans 10:13)
Did Moses ever forget his people and his God while being
educated in Egypt? - (Hebrews 11:24-26)
Why not? - (Exodus 2:7-9)
What did he suppose when he killed the Egyptian? (Acts 7:25)
Was it God's time?
What did Moses' 40 years' sojourn in the wilderness teach him
(Compare Acts 7:25 with Exodus 3:11)

2. ISRAEL REDEEMED - (Chapters 3 to 15)

- (A) The call and commission of Moses (Chapters 3 to 4:28)
- (B) Moses' departure to Egypt (4:24-31)
- (C) Moses' conflict with Pharaoh (Chapters 5 & 6)
- (D) The plagues (Chapters 7 to 11)
- (E) The Passover (Chapter 12)
- (F) The departure from Egypt (Chapter 13)
- (G) The crossing of the Red Sea (Chapters 14 to 15:26)

Notice the greatness and the supernatural character of Israel's deliverance. God's purpose was to have a people whose testimony to the world would be "*Saved by the power of God.*" God wanted so to impress this event of Israel's deliverance from Egypt upon the mind of Israel that in the days to come, when the oppression and trial should come, they could always look and remember that "*salvation is of the Lord.*" In the Old Testament, God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt is the measure of His power. - [What is the measure of His power in the New Testament? - Ephesians 1:19-20 and Philippians 3:10].

An explanation of a difficulty is in order here. Many have stumbled at the fact that God "*hardened Pharaoh's heart*" and then punished him. Let it be noted that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15 and 32). God hardened Pharaoh's heart in the same sense that the Gospel hardens men's heart when they reject it. To some, the Gospel brings salvation, to others death (2 Corinthians 2:15-16). In Acts 19:9 we read that "*some were hardened*" after Paul had preached. Could Paul be blamed for the hardness of their hearts? No, the blame rests with those who rejected the message. So it was in the case of Pharaoh. God's message was simply the **occasion** of the hardening of his heart; his own refusal to obey the message was the **cause**.

The Passover contains some wonderful types of our redemption:

- What does Egypt typify? (Galatians 1:4 and Romans 6:18)
- What does the slain lamb typify? (John 1:29)
- The blood sprinkled on the door posts? (Romans 3:25 and 1 Peter 1:18-20)
- What does the unleavened bread typify? (1 Corinthians 5:8)
- What did the eating of the lamb typify? (1 Corinthians 11:24)

What did the crossing of the Red Sea typify? (1 Corinthians 10:1-2)

3. ISRAEL JOURNEYING TO SINAI - (Chapters 15 through 19)

[It might be well to consult a map of Israel's journey at this point]

A Summary of Chapters 15 to 19

- (A) Marah - Bitter Waters - (Chapter 15)
- (B) Elim - Wells and trees - (Chapter 15)
- (C) Wilderness of Sin - Manna - (Chapter 16)
- (D) Rephidim - Rock smitten; battle with Amalek - (Chapter 17)
- (E) Sinai - Visit of Jethro - (Chapter 18)

4. ISRAEL GIVEN THE LAW - (Chapters 19 through 23)

Summary of chapters 19-23

- (A) Moses ascent to Sinai - (Chapter 19)
- (B) The Ten Commandments - (Chapter 20)
- (C) The civil law (Chapters 21 to 23)

Note the following:

ISRAEL'S ELECTION (Exodus 19:5).

By a solemn covenant Israel was appointed the priest-nation - separated **from** all nations, in order to be trained in Divine truth and ultimately bring light **to** all nations.

ISRAEL'S LEGISLATION (Chapters 20 through 23)

Just as the United States of America is a republic governed on the basis of its Constitution, so Israel was a theocracy (a state governed by God) having as the basis of its government the Ten Commandments, which we may regard as the Constitution of the United Tribes of Israel. The commandments represent the tenfold expression of God's will, and the standard by which He rules His subjects. In order to apply these principles to the everyday life of the people, the civil law was added, which prescribed penalties and gave directions for enforcement.

What did the Israelites undertake to do? - (Exodus 19:8)
 Could they do this? - (Acts 13:39 and Galatians 2:16)
 Why not? - (Romans 7:14 and 8:3)
 If they could not keep the law, why was it given?
 - (Romans 3:19-20; 5:20 and Galatians 3:24)
 What two principal lessons was the law intended to teach?
 - (Matthew 22:37-39)

How do Christians fulfill the law? - Romans 13:8-10
 How may we possess the love that fulfills the law?
 - (Romans 5:5 and Galatians 5:18)
 Under what law is the Christian? - (Galatians 6:2; John 15:12)

5. ISRAEL IN WORSHIP - (Chapters 24 through 40)

- (A) Moses receives pattern for the Tabernacle - (Chapters 24 through 40)

- (B) The law broken - (Chapters 32 through 34)
- (C) The Tabernacle under construction - (Chapters 35 through 39)
- (D) The Tabernacle erected - Chapter 40)

At Mount Sinai God and His people entered into a special relationship. Through the mediatorship of Moses, a redeemed people and their God were united in holy bonds of covenant relationship. Jehovah became the God of Israel, and Israel became the people of Jehovah. In order that fellowship might be continued, Jehovah commanded the erection of the Tabernacle. "*And let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*" Exodus 25:8. The design of the Tabernacle will be more clearly understood as we consider the titles applied to it:

1. **The Tabernacle** (In Hebrew this means "*dwelling*")

Though God dwells everywhere, He appointed a place where His people could always find Him "*at home.*"

2. **The Tent of the Congregation** or "*The Tent of Meeting*"

It was the point of contact and the channel of meeting between Heaven and earth. (Exodus 29:42-43)

3. **The Tabernacle of Testimony** of "*The Tent of Witness.*"

It was so called from the presence of the two tables of the law which were placed in the ark. These tables were called the "*testimony.*" (Exodus 31:18 and 34:29). These tables of the Law witnessed to God's holiness and man's sinfulness.

4. **The Sanctuary**

Literally, "*holy place,*" or a building set apart for the Divine indwelling.

LEVITICUS

The Book of Leviticus gets its name from the Levites and is so called because it is a record laws pertaining to the Levites and their service. The Book of Leviticus is God's plan for the detailed *walk, worship and service* of the people. In Exodus God spoke out of the Mount where the people were not allowed. In Leviticus He speaks out of the Tabernacle in which He dwells in the midst of His people.

The Theme of Leviticus

In Genesis we saw the ruin of man - through the fall. In Exodus we saw the redemption and deliverance by blood and the power of God. In Exodus we saw Israel redeemed; redemption of an enslaved people. Leviticus tells us how a redeemed people can approach God in worship and how the fellowship thus established can be maintained. In this Book we see worship and communion on the ground of atonement. Leviticus is called the Book of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:30-34)

The message of Leviticus is: Access to God [*living in fellowship with God*] is only through blood, and access thus obtained calls for holiness on the part of the worshiper. Most of the types in the Book relate to the atoning work of Christ, and are set forth in the various offerings there described. Exodus gives us the account of the One offering that redeemed Israel once for all. Leviticus gives us many pictures of that one offering in its relationship to the different aspects of redemption.

The practical purpose of the Book is that it contains a divinely appointed code of laws designed to make Israel different from other nations, spiritually, morally, mentally and physically. Israel was to become a holy nation - a nation separated from the ways and customs of the nations surrounding them and consecrated to the service of the one true God.

The Book of Leviticus embraces the period of less than a year of Israel's time at Sinai. It is a Book of laws, so we may classify its contents with that thought in mind.

1. Laws concerning Offering - (Chapters 1-7)
2. Laws concerning Priesthood (Chapters 8-10)
3. Laws concerning Purification - (Chapters 11-22)
4. Laws concerning Feasts - (chapters 23-24)
5. Laws concerning the Land (Chapters 25-27)

1. LAWS CONCERNING THE OFFERINGS

Sacrifices were instituted as means whereby the people could express their worship of God:

The first three Offerings were Sweet Savor - and Voluntary

- (A) The **Burnt Offering** signified entire consecration to Jehovah - (Chapter 1)
- (B) The **Peace Offering**, part of which was eaten by the priest and part by the offering, pictured fellowship with his God - (Chapter 2)
- (C) The **Meat Offering**, or food offering, consisted of flour, cakes or grain, represented the offering of a gift to the Lord of all in acknowledgement of His goodness - (Chapter 3)

The last two Offerings were Non-sweet Savor and Compulsory

- (D) By means of the **Sin Offering** the Israelite expressed sorrow for sin and the desire for pardon and cleansing - (Chapter 4)
- (E) The **Trespass Offering** was brought in the case of offenses that called for restitution - (Chapter 5)

2. LAWS CONCERNING THE PRIESTHOOD - (Chapters 8-10)

These chapters record the consecration of Aaron and his sons and their inauguration into the priestly office. The following are the main topics of this section:

- (A) Consecration - (Chapter 8)
The consecration ceremonies included washing with water, clothing with priestly garments, anointing with oil, the offering of sacrifices, and the sprinkling of blood.
- (B) The Service (Chapter 9)
- (C) The Failure - (Chapter 10)
Nadab and Ahihu, Aaron's sons, instead of using fire taken from the altar, used ordinary fire for the burning of the incense. In order to impress the nation with the

sacredness and responsibility of the priesthood, God made an example of these men by destroying them with fire.

What probably led to their sin? - (See verses 8-11)
Does 1 Corinthians 11:20-32 suggest some parallels?

3. LAWS CONCERNING PURITY - (Chapters 11-22)

Let us sum up this section as follows. Israel as a holy nation have:

- (A) Holy food - (Chapter 11)
- (B) Holy bodies - (Chapters 12 to 14:32)
- (C) Holy homes - (Chapter 14:33-57)
- (D) Holy habits (Chapter 15)
- (E) Holiness annually renewed - (Chapter 16)
- (F) Holy worship - (Chapter 17)
- (G) Holy morals - (Chapter 18)
- (H) Holy customs and costumes (Chapters 19 and 20)

What does chapter 18 teach concerning the character of the nations surrounding Israel (See verses 24 and 28)

There are those who would take exception to the contents of these chapters, characterizing them as "*improper*," however, let it be noted that the Bible, in describing moral diseases, does not resort of prudery or mock-modesty any more than does a medical text-book in dealing with physical diseases.

4. LAWS CONCERNING FEASTS - (Chapters 23-24)

- (A) The Sabbath - (Chapter 23:1-3)

This was a weekly feast of the Israelites, on which they rested from all work, and on which they gathered for worship.

- (B) The Passover, the feast of unleavened bread - (Chapter 23:6-8)

Notice that there were two feasts in one - the Passover (celebrating the passing of the death-angel over the houses of the Israelites), which lasted one day; and the feast of unleavened bread (commemorating the departure from Egypt), which lasted seven days.

- (C) The Feast of First Fruits - (Chapter 23:9-14)

Following close after the Feast of Passover came the Feast of First Fruits, when a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest was waved before the Lord. This was a type of the resurrection of Christ according to 1 Corinthians 15:20.

- (D) The Feast of Pentecost - (Chapter 23:15-22)

Fifty days after the Feast of First-Fruits came the Feast of Pentecost (meaning "fifty"). On the fiftieth day, two wave loaves, with leaven (23:17) were offered before the Lord.

(E) The Feast of Trumpets - (Chapter 23:23-25)

"New Year's Day" for the children of Israel. What is the typical signification of this feast: (I Corinthians 15:52; Matthew 24:31 and Revelation 11:15).

(F) The Day of Atonement - (Chapter 23:27-32)

Read Leviticus 16 with Hebrews 9:6-12. This was a fast, rather than a feast. On that day the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, with blood, to make do penance for the sins of the people. This was done but once a year, and it typified Christ's entering heaven itself with His own blood to make eternal atonement for our sins. Besides the other sacrifices of that day, there were two goats. One of these was killed; upon the other, Aaron laid his hands, confessing over it the sins of the nation, and then sent it into the wilderness. These two goats represented two aspects of the atonement. The first typified Christ as paying the penalty for our sins - death; the second, as putting away our sins, never to remember them again.

(G) The Feast of Tabernacles - Chapter 23:33-44)

This feast commemorated the time when the Israelites lived in tents, after their departure from Egypt. This feast followed closely harvest time (23:39), and typifies the rejoicing of the saints in the presence of the Lord, after the great gathering - the rapture. (Compare the references to palms in verse 40 with Revelation 7:9)

Note the typical sequence of the Feasts - how they give the history of redemption.

[We will omit the Day of Atonement, because it was not a feast, but a fast]

Passover - The crucifixion

First-fruits - The resurrection of Christ

Pentecost - The Outpouring of the Holy spirit

Trumpets - The rapture of the living, and resurrection of the dead, saints

Tabernacle - Our dwelling in the presence of the Lord after the great gathering

5. LAWS CONCERNING THE LAND - (Chapter 25-27)

(A) The year of the Jubilee - (Chapter 25)

The year of Jubilee was a sabbatical year held every fifty years and beginning on the Day of Atonement. At that time, the land was given rest from cultivation, all debts were canceled, all Hebrew slaves were released, all estates reverted to their original owners. Houses in walled towns were an exception; they did not revert (25:30). The purpose of the Jubilee was to prevent the perpetual enslavement of the poor, and the accumulation of wealth by the rich; and likewise to preserve the distinction of the tribes and their tribal possession. It was that year which Christ proclaimed as "*the acceptable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4:19) and by Peter as "*the times of the restitution of all things*" (Acts 3:21). As a type, the Jubilee finds its partial fulfillment in this Gospel dispensation, and its complete fulfillment during the Millennium,.

(B) Reward and punishment - (Chapter 26)

On what is Israel's blessing conditioned - (verse 3)

When will verses 29-30 fully be fulfilled? - (Luke 21:20-24)

When will Jehovah turn to Israel again? - (verse 40)

When will that take place? - (Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7)

Even though scattered and under punishment, is Israel forsaken of Jehovah?
- (verses 44-45)

What will God remember? - (verse 42)

(C) Vows - (Chapter 27)**NUMBERS**

The Book of Numbers gets its name from the fact that it contains the record of the two numberings of Israel before entering Canaan.

In Exodus we saw redeemed; in Leviticus, Israel worshipping, and now in Numbers we see Israel serving. Numbers takes up where Exodus left off. Just one month between the two Books with Levitical instructions coming in between.

The service of the Lord was not to be done in any haphazard manner, so this Book of Numbers gives us a spectacle of a camp where everything is done according to the first law of Heaven - *order!* The people are numbered according to tribes and families, every tribe is assigned its position in camp, the marching and encampment of the people are regulated with military precision; and in the transporting of the Tabernacle, every Levite had his appointed task.

The Nature of the Book of Numbers - The census is taken - the people organized - the march begun to Canaan - God leads - Canaan is in sight - Israel disbelieves and rebels - judgment falls - 40 years wandering set in - old generation dies off - new generations is numbered - to go into the land of Canaan.

Besides being a Book of service and order, Numbers is a Book recording Israel's failure to believe God's promises and enter Canaan, and of their wandering in the wilderness for 40 years . . . (From about 1491 to 1451 B.C.) . . . as a punishment. But it is a failure that does not thwart God's plans, for the end of the Book leaves us at the borders of the Promised Land, where the new generation of Israelites awaits to enter. Thus four words - **SERVICE - ORDER - FAILURE - WANDERING** - will sum up the message of the Book of Numbers.

The *Old Hebrew* name of this Book was "*In the Wilderness*" for it is indeed a Book of Movement by the people of Israel in the wilderness. It deals with two different *generations*.

The Old Generation - (Chapters 1 through 14)

The Wandering Transition Era - (Chapter 15 through 20)

The New Generation - (Chapters 21 through 36)

Two Generations - (Chapters 1-14 & 21-36)
 Two Numberings - (Chapters 1-4 & 26-27)
 Two Journeyings - (Chapters 10-14 & 21-27)
 Two Instructions - (Chapters 5-9 & 28-36)

1. THE OLD GENERATION - (Chapters 1-14) - Sinai to Kadesh

- (A) The Numbering - (Chapters 1-4)
 Chapter 1 - Numbering of adults males
 Chapter 2 - Distribution of the tribes
 Chapter 3 - Numbering of Levite males (priests)
 Chapter 4 - Distribution of Levite duties

The numbering (*Taking a census*) was for military purpose. Each of the twelve tribes were numbered and assigned a position around the Tabernacle.

Chapter 3 gives the census of the tribe of Levi - *exempt from the general census*. They were priests, set apart to serve God and care for the Tabernacle. Chapter 3:38 tells the position of Moses, Aaron and his sons.

2. THE INSTRUCTING - (Chapter 5 to 10:10)

The first four chapters deals with the outward formation of the camp. These five chapters deal with the inward condition of the camp:

- (A) Chapter 5 deals with purity, honesty and truth (Note verse 3)
 (B) Chapter 6 gives the vows of the Nazarites: (Totally separated unto the Lord)
 (C) Chapter 7 is the free-will offering of leaders of each tribe.
 The Lord recorded the offering. See Mark 12:41-44
 (D) Chapter 8 describes the consecration of Levites
 (E) Chapter 9 shows the people keeping the Passover and tells us of *the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night*. This indicated the guidance of the Lord. Don't forget the Passover was a memorial of past deliverance. The Lord's Supper is a memorial for us of deliverance from sin through Christ. See 1 Corinthians 11:26
 (F) Chapter 10:1-10 - The Lord commands Moses to make two trumpets for calling the assembly. The pillar of cloud gave guidance for the eye while the trumpets gave guidance for the ear - See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

3. THE JOURNEYING - (Chapter 10:11 through Chapter 14)

In Chapters 10-11 Israel has at Sinai getting ready for the march to Canaan. Now the pillar of cloud lifts, the trumpets sound and the whole camp moves.

Chapters 11 through 14 finds the people moving toward the Promised Land - and after three days they begin to murmur and complain. Even Aaron and Miriam become jealous of their brother, Moses. At Kadesh-barnea they displayed their sinfulness of unbelief, instead of entering in and possessing the Promised Land, they send twelve spies to search out the land and ten come back with a negative report. Only *two*, Joshua and Caleb, said, "*Let us go up and possess the land.*" The crowd would not believe them. Judgment falls in the form of 40 years wandering. See 14:29-33.

4. THE WILDERNESS WANDERING - (Chapters 15 through 20)

In these chapters we have the transition from the Old to the new generation with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. *The Lord told the people they would die* (14:29) and that their children would go into the land.

For forty years the children of Israel wandered and finally came to the same spot where they had been - *Kedesh-barnea*.

God continued to communicate with them through Moses during this time (15:1, 17, 35). He provided them with food and water, clothes and shoes (Deuteronomy 8:2-6).

In Chapters 16-18 comes an attack on the Aaronic priesthood and over 15,000 die in earthquake, fire, and plague. Then God causes the rod of Aaron to blossom - showing His approval of the office. The budding of the rod speaks of Christ, our High Priest, and of His resurrection. (See Hebrews 4:14 and 5:4-10).

In Chapter 20 we see the death of Miriam and the sin of Moses when he smote the rock *twice* when God had told him just to speak to it. Because Moses had disobeyed the and, in doing so, had spoiled the type, he would not go into the land (Verse 12)

Aaron dies (Verse 24)

5. THE NEW GENERATION - (Chapters 21 through 36) - From Kadesh-barnea to Moab

The delay is over. The old generation is gone and a new generation has arisen.

(A) The New Journeying - (Chapters 21-25)

The journey was made longer because Edom refused to let them go through their land (See 20:14-22 and 21:4)

Again, Israel is in despair and murmuring and God sends the serpents, however, God provides a way to be saved in 21:8-9.

Chapters 22 to 25 - The Confrontation with Balaam

(B) The New Numbering - (Chapters 26-27)

At the beginning of the 40 years there were about 6000,000 men and at the end of the 40 years there were about 600,000. Notice 26:64. In Chapter 27:12-14 Moses is told of his impending death and then, Joshua is appointed in his place.

(C) The New Instructing - (Chapters 28-36)

Chapters 28-29 - Offerings to be given to the Lord

Chapter 30 - The vows of men and women

Chapter 31 - "*Avenge the children of Israel*" against the Midianites.

Not one Hebrew life was lost - Verse 49

Chapters 32-36 - Request of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh to settle on the east of the Jordan. Their place was inside Canaan, not just outside. The result are found in 1 Chronicles 5:18-26.

They chose from what they could *see* (32:1) instead of accepting the instructions of the Lord.

The Cities of Refuse - Chapter 35

Their number - Verses 6-8

Their purpose - Verses 9-12

Their distribution - Verses 13-14

Their regulations - Verse 15-35

A good way to familiarize yourself with the Book of Numbers is to use a map in locating the different places mentioned in the course of reading through this Book.

1. At Sinai (Chapters 1-9) This is where:

The numbering of the people to place (Chapters 1-2)

The numbering of the priests and Levites (Chapters 3-4)

The Laws are given (Chapter 5-6)

The Free-will Offering of the princes (Chapter 7)

The Consecration of the Levites (Chapter 8)

The Passover and the Guiding cloud (Chapter 9)

2. Sinai to Kadesh (Chapters 10-19) - Here we see the . . .

Beginning of the March (Chapter 10)

Murmuring and lusting (Chapter 11)

The seventy elders chosen (Chapter 11)

Aaron's and Miriam's rebellion (Chapter 12)

The spies' report and Israel's unbelief (Chapters 13-14)

Korah's rebellion (Chapters 16-17)

Ceremonial laws given (Chapters 18-19)

3. Kadesh to Moab - (Chapters 20-36) - Where the following took place:

Moses' sin (Chapter 20)

Death of Miriam and Aaron (Chapter 20)

The brazen serpent (Chapter 21)

Balaam's error and doctrine (Chapters 22-25)

The numbering of the new generation (Chapter 26)

Preparations to enter the land of Promise (Chapters 27-36)

DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is the last Book of the Pentateuch . . . [the five Books of Moses].

In Genesis we have the "*beginnings*" - the *ruin* of man, the fall.

In Exodus the law and a way out - *redemption* by blood and the power of God.

In Leviticus the worship of the people - *communion* on the ground of the atonement.

In Numbers the wanderings - *direction* by the will of God.

In Deuteronomy, final preparation to go into Canaan
- *destination* through the faithfulness of God

Deuteronomy gets its name from two Greek words meaning "*second law*," because it records the repetition of the laws given at Sinai. Better still, Deuteronomy is a new expounding of the law to the new generation of Israel who had grown up in the wilderness. It is not the giving of a *new* law, but an explication, a giving in detail, that which was already given.

The Setting of the Giving of the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses has fulfilled his mission. He has led Israel from Egypt to the borders of the Promised Land. Now that the time of his departure is at hand, he *reviews* before the new generation, in a series of discourses, Israel's past history and upon this review he bases the warnings and exhortations that make Deuteronomy one great exhortatory sermon to Israel. He exhorts during the wilderness wanderings, in order that they may rest assured of His continued care of them when they enter Canaan. He admonishes them to observe the Law in order that they might prosper. He reminds them of their past backslidings and rebellions, and warns them of the consequences of future disobedience. The message of Deuteronomy may be summed up in three exhortations: **Remember! Obey! Take heed!**

Moses and the new generation of Israel are on the plains of Moab, about to enter into the Promised Land, Canaan, and for two months, in about 1451 B.C., Moses prepares them for the transition.

FIRST, a transition to a new generation.
SECOND, a transition to a new possession
THIRD, a transition to a new experience
FOURTH, a transition to a new revelation of God - the revelation of *His love*.

From Genesis to Numbers the love of God is never spoken of; but here in Deuteronomy we have the wonderful words of His love:

See Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:7-8; 10:15 and 23:5

The first section of the Book of Deuteronomy is: **Remember** - (Chapter 1 through 4)
First, Deuteronomy looks backward and reviews their wanderings in the wilderness. This section can be divided into two parts:

1. Moses reviews Israel's wanderings - (Chapters 1 through 3)
2. Moses makes that review a basis for a warning - (Chapter 4)

Where do we find Israel at the beginning of this book? - 1:5
--

What prophecy had been partially fulfilled in Israel?
 - 1:10 with Genesis 15:5
 In what one instance was Moses' prayer refused? - 3:25-28
 What was to be Israel's attitude toward the Word of God? - 4:2
 What was the Law to Israel? - 4:6
 Concerning what days does Moses prophesy in 4:25-30?
 To what book written by himself does Moses indirectly refer?
 - 4:32

The Second of the Book of Deuteronomy is: **Obey** - (Chapter 5 through 27)

1. The Ten Commandments - (Chapters 5 and 6)
2. Warnings and exhortations - (Chapters 7 through 12)
3. False prophets - (Chapter 13)
4. Ceremonial laws - Chapters 14 through 16)
5. A future king and a future Prophet - (Chapters 17 and 18)
6. Civil laws - (Chapters 19 through 26)
7. Blessings and cursings of the Law (Chapter 27)

- What was God's earnest desire for His people? - 5:29
- What is the one great commandment of the Law? - 6:4-5
- Was Israel chose because of their greatness or righteousness? - 7:7 and 9:4
- For what two reasons was Israel chosen? - 7:7
- What was one of the purposes of God's leading Israel through the wilderness? - 8: 2-5, 16
- What was all that God required of Israel? - 10:12
- What was to be the difference between Israel's conduct in the wilderness
 and that in the Land of Promise? - 12:8
- Where were sacrifices only to be offered? - 12:13-14
- Do miracles necessarily prove the genuineness of a prophet? - 13:1-2 & 2 Thess. 2:9
- What is the test of a genuine prophet? - 13:2 and Matthew 7:15-23
- What did Moses foresee? - 17:14-16; compare 1 Samuel 8:5, 10-18
- What great prophecy did Moses utter? - 18:15-19
- Who was to enforce the law of retribution, judges or ordinary individuals? - 19:21
- With what does the review of the Law end? - 25:26
- What is our relation to the Law? - Galatians 3:13

The third section of the Book of Deuteronomy is: **Take Heed!** - (Chapters 28-34)

1. Blessings and Cursings - (Chapter 28)
2. The Palestinian covenant - (Chapter 29 and 30)
3. Moses' last counsels to the priests, Levites and Joshua - (Chapter 31)
4. The song of Moses - (Chapter 32)
5. The blessings of the tribes - (Chapter 33)
6. The death of Moses - (Chapter 34)

Deuteronomy 28, along with Leviticus 26, should be remembered as the two great prophetic chapters in the Pentateuch. Verses 1-14 **would have been fulfilled IF** Israel had been obedient, however, the promises of these verses will find their ultimate fulfillment during the Millennium.

Verses 14 through 26 *were* fulfilled in Israel's Babylonian captivity [See 2 Chronicles 36:15-20].

Verses 37-68 were fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the period following [See Luke 21:20-21].

Josephus, a Jewish general and historian, who lived during those days of A.D. 70, gives vivid accounts of the terrible sufferings of the Jews at that time, which shows how literally the verses were fulfilled. He records women who literally, "*ate their own infants*" (28:53).

Chapter 29 and 30 record what is know as "*The Palestinian Covenant.*" that is, an agreement of their possessing Palestine. It should be carefully noted that there are two covenants which relate to Israel's possession of the land.

The first is "*The Abrahamic Covenant*" (Genesis 17:7-8). His covenant was **unconditional**; that is, Israel's conduct would not effect its fulfillment. (See Jeremiah 31:35-37 and Romans 11:26-29

God, however, knew that Israel would sin, so He, therefore, put them under another covenant - "*The Palestinian Covenant.*" This covenant is **conditional** upon Israel's obedience, and enables the Lord to punish them with **temporary** banishment from the land without casting them off **forever**.

"The Abrahamic Covenant was the inheritance laid up for an obedient Israel; The Palestinian Covenant was the whip to bring Israel to that place of obedience."

The Palestinian Covenant:

1. Israel's dispersion for disobedience (30:1)
2. Future repentance of Israel (30:2)
3. The return of the Lord (30:3)
4. Restoration of Palestine (30:4)
5. National conversion (30:5)
6. Judgment of Israel's oppressors (30:7)
7. National prosperity (30:9)

The song of Moses, contained in chapter 32, may be considered as a summary of the whole book of Deuteronomy. It may be summed up in the three words of our theme

Remember! - Obey! - Heed!

This 32nd chapter was written in the form of a song so as to be more easily remembered by the people.

What is said concerning God's character? - Verse 4

What is said concerning Israel's character? - Verses 5-6

What country did the Lord make the center of all nations? - Verse 8

What is said concerning Jehovah's care of Israel - Verses 10-14

Was Israel grateful? - Verses 15-18

Who was to provoke Israel to jealousy? - Verse 21 (See, also, Romans 11:11)
 How would Jehovah punish them? - Verses 22-26
 What would prevent Jehovah from making a full end of them? - Verse 27
 What was His desire for them? - Verse 29
 When will He return to them? - Verse 36
 Who will finally rejoice with Israel? - Verse 43

Moses' blessing of the tribes can be compared with that of Jacob found in Genesis 49. It is most likely that Joshua wrote the account of Moses' death found in chapter 34. What is a probably reason why the location of Moses' tomb was never revealed? (Read Numbers 21:8 with 2 Kings 18:4, as well as, Jude 1:9.)

What was Moses' physical condition at death?
 What did Israel do at Moses' death
 - that they ought to have done during his lifetime? (34:8)
 Did ever a prophet arise in Israel like Moses (34:10 and 18:15).

I close this study with Moses' words, evidently prophesying of Jesus Christ's coming, in Deuteronomy 18:15, "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him . . . The Lord said to me, What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers: I will put My words in His mouth, and He will tell them everything I command Him.*"

JOSHUA

The five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) lead the children of Israel *up to* Canaan, now, the Book of Joshua leads them *into* Canaan. the remainder of the "*Historical Books*" (Joshua through Esther covers Israel's history *inside* the Land of Canaan.

Beginning with the Book of Joshua, Israel is now ready to take possession of Canaan, and fulfill their God-given commission to be a witness to the nations of His unity, and a guardian of His Word and Law. In the "*Historical Books*," beginning with Joshua, we shall see whether or not Israel fulfilled their commission. Joshua is the book of victory and possession. It gives us the spectacle of the once rebellious Israel transformed into a disciplined army of warriors, subduing nations, their superiors in numbers and power. The secret of their success is not hard to find "*The Lord fought for them.*" God's faithfulness is the central thought of the Book of Joshua and could be summed up in the words of Joshua in chapter 21:45, "*Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.*"

There is a remarkable parallel between the Book of Joshua and the New Testament Book of Ephesians. In Joshua we see Israel entering and possessing the earthly inheritance given to Abraham. In Ephesians we see the church entering and possessing the heavenly inheritance given to us in Christ.

Author

The Talmud says that Joshua wrote all of the book except the last five verses.. It is certain that Joshua is the author of the Book that bears his name and, if he did not pen it by his own hand, he gave the words and substance to a scribe who wrote it.

Scope

The Book of Joshua covers the period from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua, covering a period of 24 years, from 1451 to 1427 B.C.

The Book of Joshua can be divided into four, easy to remember, sections:

1. Entering the Land - (Chapters 1 through 5)
2. Overcoming the Land - (Chapters 6 through 12)
3. Occupying the Land - (Chapters 13 through 22)
4. Joshua's Farewell - (Chapters 23 through 24)

1. ENTERING THE LAND - (Chapters 1 through 5)

(A) Joshua Commissioned for Leadership - (Chapter 1)

Joshua's authority was based on the Word of God. Read verses 5-9. Notice what real "*success*" is in Verse 8 and name the steps to success in Verse 8.

(B) Rahab and the Spies - (Chapter 2)

Joshua sends two spies to Jericho because it was a key city. This did not degrade nor do away with Joshua's faith. True faith does not despise the use of means because there is a wide difference between believing and presuming.

Notice the acts and rewards of Rahab - Verses 11, 12 and 18.

(C) The Jordan River Crossed - (Chapter 3)

This was a critical moment for Israel. They were at the same place as their parents - **40 years earlier!** Now they were to move - led by the priests and Levites. God would work miracles *if* they would follow. Note Verse 3, 5, 13 and 17. These Verses teach us that it is one thing to be brought out of the "*Egypt*" of sin but another thing to trust and obey the total Word of God.

(D) Two Memorials Raised - (Chapter 4)

The children of Israel must not forget what had done. There was to be a *memorial* **in** the river Jordan - Verse 9. And a memorial at Gilgal - Verses 3 and 19. Each memorial was made up of twelve stones. These memorials reminded them of the power of God in holding back the waters and the faithfulness of God in bringing them into the land. Can you name a memorial which we observe speaking of our salvation?

(E) The Seal of the Covenant and The First Passover in Canaan - (Chapter 5)

Circumcision was the seal of the covenant between God and Israel. The children born during the forty years of wandering had to hear the mark of Israel - which spoke of moral and spiritual separateness. (Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6 and Colossians 2:11-13).

How much land were the Israelites to possess? - 1:3
 What spiritual truth does this illustrate? - Matthew 9:29
 What was to be Joshua's guide now? - 1:8
 Note that up to this time the Lord made known His
 will through visions, dreams and angelic appearances,
 but now it was to be through the written Word.
 What are the two and a half tribes reminded of? - 1:13-15 What
 kind of woman was Rahab? - 2:1
 What saved her? - Hebrews 11:31
 Did she do anything difficult to obtain salvation? - 2:21
 What did Joshua command as a memorial
 of the crossing of the Jordan? - 4:3 and 9
 What was the effect of the report of Israel's
 coming upon the Canaanites ? - 5:1
 What did it fulfill? - Deuteronomy 2:25
 What did it fulfill? - Deuteronomy 2:25
 What change did the Israelites undergo at this time? - 5:11-12
 Who was the real leader of Israel's hosts? - 5:13-14
 Who was this? - Revelation 19:11-16

2. OVERCOMING THE LAND

(A) The Fall of Jericho - (Chapter 6)

The would do the conquering if Israel would do *exactly* what God commanded. They did and God did! (Rahab was saved - Verses 13 and 17).

(B) The Sin of Achan - (Chapter 7)

One sin affected the whole camp - Verses 11 and 20-21

(B) Conquest of the Land - (Chapters 8 through 12)

1. Conquest of Ai - chapter 8
2. Dealing with the Gibeonites - Chapters 9-10
3. Final conquest of the Land - Chapters 11-12

After sin had been confessed and dealt with, God gave Joshua and Israel victories, at Ai - through the central, southern and northern campaigns. Chapter 12 gives a summary of all the kings and cities that fell at the hands of Israel.

What does the taking of Jericho teach concerning
 God's ways of working? - 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
 What warning was given Israel? - 6:18
 What curse was pronounced at that time? - 6:26
 Upon whom did it fall? - 1 Kings 16:34
 To what New Testament characters may we compare Achan?
 - Acts 5

Who were punished for the sin of one man? - 7:1
Is it sometimes out of order to pray? - 7:10 and Exodus 14:15
What was at the bottom of Achan's sin? - 1 Timothy 6:1-10
What was the symbol of Moses' power? - Exodus 10:13
Of Joshua's power? - 8:18 and 26
What command of Moses did Joshua fulfill at this time?
- 8:30-35 and Deuteronomy 27
What mistake did Joshua make in his dealings with Gibeon?
- 9:14
Why were the Gibeonites spared? - 9:19
How were they punished? - 9:23-27
How many kings did Joshua conquer? - 12:24
What was the secret of his success? - 10:42

3. OCCUPYING THE LAND - (Chapters 13 through 24)

- (A) The Division of the land among the tribes and Levities was no simple task.
God went into detail - Chapter 13
- (B) The Dividing of the land was by "*casting lots before the Lord*" - 18:6-7.
The Lord was to settle the tribes where He wanted them. Note, also, 14:2. Notice that Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh settled on the *east* of Jordan (Genesis 48:19-22 - the other nine and one-half on the *west* side.
- (C) Mark well the *principle* which governed Israel's occupation of the land. Note Chapter 11:23 and compare that with Chapter 13:1. There is no contradiction here but they complement each other. The decisive blow had been struck and it only remained that they should go on through to the last detail. The same is true in our lives - the blow against Satan has been struck in the acceptance of Christ. All that He has is ours if we will possess all "*blessings in Christ*" but we must go on and possess them ourselves.

The key passage in this section is Chapter 21:43-45.

What note what the Lord gave them:

1. The Lord gave to Israel *all the land*.
2. The Lord gave them *rest*
3. The Lord gave all *enemies* into their hand

(D) The Cities of Refuge - Chapter 20

Here we have the six Cities of Refuge - three on the west of the Jordan and three on the east. They were a merciful provision to protect those who had committed "*sins of ignorance,*" mistakes and unintentional wrongs. Christ, Himself, is our "*City of Refuge.*"

4. JOSHUA'S FAREWELL - (Chapters 23-24)

Read especially - 23:14 and 24:14-16

At 110 years of age Joshua died - 24:29

What did Joshua enjoin upon the elders of Israel? - 23:6
 What did Joshua foresee? - 23:13-14
 What choice does he put before the people? - 24:15
 What obligation do the people take upon themselves
 - 24:16-18
 From what you know of Israel's history,
 did they keep their promise?
 What did Joshua make with the people? - 24:25

JUDGES

The Book of Judges is so named because of its contents: Those whom God raised up as judges to deliver Israel in a time of declension and disunion after the death of Joshua.

The Book of Judges portrays a series of relapses into idolatry on the part of God's people, Israel, followed by invasions of the Promised Land and oppressions by their enemies.

The narrative centers around the personalities of the heroic judges who were raised up to become deliverers of Israel, whenever they sincerely repented of their sins. The dark side of the picture is especially emphasized in the record found in the Book of Judges.

A study of the dates that this Book of Judges covers . . . [about 440 years] . . . would seem to show that the people maintained an outward loyalty to Jehovah's a larger part of the time than the casual reading of the Book would indicate.

Written around 1126 B.C, the Book of Judges records Israel's failure during the rule of the judges. It records 9 apostasies, 7 servitudes, 14 judges and their exploits (not including those of Eli and Samuel, the 15th and 16th judges, however, they are given in the Book of 1 Samuel.

These judges are:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>1. Othniel</i> | <i>4. Deborah</i> | <i>7. Abimelech</i> | <i>10. Jephtha</i> | <i>13. Abdon</i> |
| <i>2. Ehud</i> | <i>5. Barak</i> | <i>8. Tola</i> | <i>11. Ibsan</i> | <i>14. Sampson</i> |
| <i>3. Shamgar</i> | <i>6. Gideon</i> | <i>9. Jair</i> | <i>12. Elon</i> | |

Joshua was a Book of victory! Judges is a Book of Failure. Judges 2:7-19 sum up the story of the Book. After Joshua's death, the new generation of Israelites made alliance with those nations that the old generation had left in the land, and the result was a lapse into idolatry and immorality. This brought on them the judgment of God - they became servants to the very nations which they should have subdued. Upon their crying unto God, a deliverer . . . (a judge) . . . was sent unto them, and during the lifetime of each judge, Israel remained faithful to God, however, after the death of each judge, it seemed that they again relapsed into their old sins. In the last few chapters of the Book of Judges, the writer gives us a close-up view of those times of apostasy and anarchy, and explains it all by the fact that "*In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*"

The nature of the Book of Judges places emphasis on the spiritual significance of events recorded, rather, than on chronological continuity.

The author of the Book of Judges is not named, though Jewish tradition attributes it to Samuel. The main thing for us is - it is part of the canon of Scripture and is given "*by the inspiration of God.*"

Failure Through Compromise

The body of the Book of Judges (Chapters 3 through 16) speaks of *fourteen* judges. Of these, *six* stand out pre-eminently - because the entire story is based upon six successive apostasies and servitudes, (or punishments), of Israel and the six judges or deliverers. All six servitudes, or punishments, are said to have been brought about by Jehovah Himself, that is "*The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and He wold them into the hands of the King of Mesopotamia*" - (3:8).

Why this tragic landslide? The verse that rings out loud and clear is Judges 7:6. (Read 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.) In answering the question, "*Why the decline?*" - we will form a guide for our study

FAILURE THROUGH COMPROMISE		
Prologue - Chapter 1 and 2		
MAIN NARRATIVE - CHAPTERS 3 through !6		
	<i>Servitude</i>	<i>Deliverer</i>
Judges 3:5-9	To the King of Mesopotamia - 8 years	Othniel - 3:9-11
Judges 3:12-31	To the King of Moab - 18 years	Ehud - 3:15-30 Shamgar - vs.31
Judges 4:1-23	To the King of Canaan - 20 years	Deborah & Barak - 4:4 to 5:31
Judges 6:1-10	To Midianites - 7 years	Gideon - 6:11 to 8:35
8:33 to 10:5	Civil War	Abimelech - Tola - Jair
Judges 10:6-18	To Philistines - 18 years	Jephthah - Ibson, Elon - Abdon - 11:1 to 12:7
Judges 31:1	To Philistines - 40 years	Samson - 13:2 to 16:31
Illustrative Epilogue - Chapters 17 through 21		

Eli and Samuel were, also, judges, however their record is not given in this Book because their chronological order came later than the period which Judges covers.

The "*Prologue*" (Chapters 1-2) is explanation of how the period came about. The "*Epilogue*" (Chapters 17-21) is illustration of the conditions themselves.

The Book of Judges covers the period between the death of Joshua and the Judgeship of Samuel

The story of the Book of Judges may be summed up in four words:

SIN, SERVITUDE, SORROW, SALVATION

A good manner to remember the contents of the Book of Judges is to keep the following outline in mind:

1. THE PERIOD AFTER JOSHUA - (Chapters 1 through 3:4)

- (A) The incomplete victory of the tribes - Chapter 1
- (B) Visit of the angel - Chapter 2:1-5
- (C) Review of events leading up to Israel's apostasy - Chapters 2:6 through 3:4

Chapter 1 records that which was the beginning of Israel's fall - their failure to conquer the Canaanites and their subsequent alliance with them (2:12). Though contrary to His will that the Canaanites dwell in the same land with Israel, what use does the Lord make of them? -2:21-23. What else did He use for the same purpose? - Deuteronomy 8:2-16.

2. ISRAEL'S APOSTASIES, CAPTIVITIES, AND DELIVERANCES

The major section of the Book of Judges - (Chapter 3:5 through 16)

Three important facts concerning the judges should be noted: they were called of God, endowed with special power, and most of them belonged to that class described by

Paul as "*the weak things of the world...the base things of the world*" (1 Corinthians 1:27-28).

Jael's action in killing Sisera, and Deborah's praise of the same, has called forth criticism from some quarters. The things should be taken into consideration here. First, that although Deborah and Barak glorify the act, the Bible does not endorse or commend it; it simply records the fact. On the other hand, we must take into account the fact that the age in which Jael lived differed from ours in regard to customs and standards.

One commentator states: "*Jael by her righteous and courageous act saved her life, defended the honor of her absent husband, her own honor, and that of many hundreds of her sex (5:30). By going into the woman's tent, Sisera was guilty of a most cruel action and it was a very base return for the hospitality and kindness shown to him. He well knew that the Desert Law condemned to death a woman into whose part of the tent a man entered. She could only save herself by, if possible, putting him to death. Such was the Law of the Desert; and Jael was a daughter of the Desert, and not of Israel.*"

How did the angel of the Lord address Gideon? - 6:12
 Was that Gideon's estimate of himself? - 6:15
 Was Gideon conscious of unbelief in asking for a sign? - 6:39
 Why did God want to deliver Israel with only a few men?
 - 7:2
 What law does 7:3 refer to? - Deuteronomy 20:8
 What can be said concerning the weapons of Gideon's band?

- 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 and Zechariah 4:6

Did Jephthah really sacrifice his daughter? - Remember that "human sacrifices were forbidden by the Law (Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5), therefore, the offering of Jephthah's daughter must have taken the form of a dedication of the girl to perpetual virginity, which 11:36-40 seems to indicate.

Who was it that Samson's parents saw? - 13:17-18,22
 also Genesis 32:29-30

What was Samson from his birth? - 13:4-5
 Whom did he resemble in this respect? - Luke 1:13-15
 Was he to be separated unto the Lord? - 13:5
 Did he always remain separated? - 14:1-3
 What was the secret of his strength? - 13:25
 Did he always walk according to the Spirit? - 16:1-24
 How strong was he? - 14:5-7
 How weak was he? - 16:1-17
 What cause his fall? - 16:19 and 13:5

3. ISRAEL'S ANARCHY - (Chapters 17-21)

- (A) Anarchy in religious life - Chapters 17-18
- (B) Anarchy in moral life - Chapter 19
- (C) Anarchy in national life - Chapters 20-21

The Book of Judges is, perhaps more easily seen if we diagram the six episodes in parallel columns, in order, under a quadruple emphasis which is seen throughout.

	1st 3:7-11	2nd 3:12-20	3rd 4:1-5:31	4th 6:1-8:35	5th 10:6-12:7	6th 13:1-16:31
APOSTASY	<i>"Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord..."</i>	3:12	4:1	6:1	10:6	13:1
SUFFERING	<i>Vs.8 "The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel..."</i>	3:12-14	4:2	6:1	10:7	13:1
SUPPLICATION	<i>Vs.9 "The children of Israel cried to the Lord"</i>	3:15	4:3	6:6-7	10:10 and 15	No supplicationn recorded [10:15]
SALVATION	<i>Vs.9 "God raised up a deliverer"</i>	3:15	4:4-6	6:12-14	11:29 and 33	13:3 and 5 15:20

OTHNIEL	EHUD	DEBORAH & BARAK	GIDEON	JEPHTHAH	SAMSON
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The Epilogue of the Book of Judges - (Chapters 17 through 21)

This section illustrates the confusion and the depths to which Israel had sunk. Judges 17:6 gives the reason for it all.

First you will see confusion in the religious life of the nation - Judges - 17-18

Second, confusion in the moral life of the nation - Judges 19

Third, confusion in the political life - Judges 20-21

The first half of the Book of Judges gives us a short sketch of some of Israel's apostasies during the 450 years the judges ruled. Chapter 17 through 21 give us a close-up view of one of those periods. The last verse of the book offers an explanation for the terrible conditions that prevailed during that time.

Throughout the whole Book of Judges we see:

1. The sinfulness of man
2. The constant failure of man . . . however . . . we also see
3. the constant mercy of God

We also see God's delight in using the *weak things*:

Gideon's 300 men, against overwhelming odds (7:2-7)
the jawbone used by Samson (15:15)

Look up 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

RUTH

The Book of Ruth speaks for itself, therefore, it is not necessary to deliberate too long in this study of "*Through the Bible, Book by Book*," but, only to point out a few of the Truths found in this Book, that one should remember and apply.

Judges was a very dark picture of Israel as seen from the national viewpoint, however, we find that the Book of Ruth gives a bright picture of that same period as seen in the faithfulness and in the beauty of character of certain individuals. The story is one of the most beautiful in the entire Bible, and is doubly interesting from the fact that its heroine is a Gentile.

The very last word in the Book - "*David*" - will reveal its chief value. The purpose of this Book of Ruth is to trace the descent of David, the progenitor of the Messiah. The whole Book has its climax in the genealogy found in the last chapter.

The very first verse shows that Ruth belongs to the period covered by the Book of Judges and is named for its heroine, *Ruth*. The Book covers a period of ten years and was probably a record during the time of Gideon.



It is one of only two Books in Scripture which bear the names of women - Ruth and Esther. The Book of Ruth is a love story. It is unique in the fact that Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, placing her in the line of Christ. Ruth is one of the **four** women named in the Mesdianic line. The other three - *Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba* recall to our mind unworthy conduct; but Ruth is virtuous.

Jewish tradition assigns the authorship to Samuel.

NOTE THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

1. Ruth Deciding - Love's Choice - Chapter 1

Why was there a famine in the land? - Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

2. Ruth Serving - Love's Response - Chapter 2

Interestingly, Verse 3, states, "*that Ruth happened to light on a field belonging to Boaz,*" however, we know from subsequent events, that this "*happening*" was divinely ordained. (Notice Boaz' prophetic blessing of Ruth - 2:12)

3. Ruth Resting - Love's Security - Chapter 3

This chapter calls for an explanation of some Jewish laws and customs. Elimelech, through poverty, had lost his property. According to Jewish law, the property could be redeemed by a kinsman of the former owner (Leviticus 25:25). Boaz, as a kinsman of Elimelech had this right. Another law required that if a man died childless, his brother should marry the widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). It seems, however, that custom had decided, in the course of time, that in the absence of a brother-in-law, Naomi, since she was the widow of Elimelech, and since she had no children, had a claim on Boaz. This claim she gave over to Ruth. Ruth is sent to Boaz, and by the symbolic act of lying at his feet reminded him of the duty owed to his deceased kinsman (3:7-9). Boaz though willing to marry Ruth, reminded that there was a nearer relative than he, who would have first claim.

Another custom, which seems strange to our western mind, was Ruth "*uncovered his . . . [that is, Boaz'] . . . feet and laid down*" (3:4). A prominent part of the marriage ceremony among the Orientals was for the Bridegroom to throw the skirt of his robe over the bride, constituting a "*proposal*." Scripture tells us that Boaz was "*a man that feared God*" and that Ruth was a very modest woman. Here, in the first of chapter 3, Naomi designed what was honest and honorable for her daughter-in-law. It was an appeal to Boaz to assume his obligation under law. This was a marriage proposal and all that Boaz held sacred. [*Interestingly, in the East, servants were accustomed to sleeping at the feet of their master.*] There is nothing "*sexual*" about it.

4. Ruth Rewarded - Love's Reward - Chapter 4

The next morning, Boaz takes witnesses and offers the right of the redemption of Naomi's property to his kinsman, at the same time, reminding him that if he bought the property, he would have to marry Ruth. This he refuses to do leaving Boaz free to marry Ruth.

Chapter 4:18-22 though seemingly an uninteresting list of names, is the climax to

which the book leads, for it reveals the purpose of its writing - to show the descent of David, the progenitor of the Messiah. (See Matthew 1:3-6)

1 SAMUEL

The Book of First Samuel is the beginning of "*three double*" Books of the Old Testament - 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles. These three double Books form the record of the rise and fall of the Israelite monarchy.

This Book of First Samuel is a transition Book, marking off a definite period - from the birth of Samuel, *the last of the Judges*, to the death of Saul, *the first of the Kings* and covers a period of about 115 years, from about 1171 to 1056 B.C.

This Book is the record of the passing of the government of Israel by **judges** to the government by **kings**, and of the passing from the **rule of God**, the invisible king - which made them unlike other nations - the rule of a visible king - which made them like other nations. The Book of Samuel is a history with the personal attraction of biography added.

Samuel is general supposed to have written the book as far as chapter 24, and from the fact that the prophets Nathan and Gad are mentioned conjointly with Samuel (1 Chronicles 29:29) as writers of the events of David's life, it is considered that they were the authors of the remaining chapters.

The contents may be grouped around three persons:

SAMUEL, the last of the Judges - (Chapter 1-7) a patriot and judge with a lowly consecrated heart, obediently serving God;

SAUL, the first of the Kings, - (Chapters 8-15) a selfish, wayward, jealous king, faulty and unfaithful in allegiance to his God;

DAVID, the anointed Successor - (Chapter 16-31) a man after God's own heart, the sweet singer of Israel, a man of prayer and praise, tested, disciplined, persecuted, and finally crowned monarch of all Israel.

The children of Israel demanded a king, choosing less than God's best (Chapter 8).

1. SAMUEL

- (A) The birth of Samuel (Chapters 1 to 2:12)
- (B) The call of Samuel (Chapters 2:12 to Chapter 3)
- (C) The taking of the Ark (Chapter 4 and 5)
- (D) The return of the Ark (Chapters 6 and 7)

The ministry of Samuel marks the beginning of the prophetic office. There were those before on whom the mantle of prophecy had fallen, i.e. Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18) However, Scripture indicates that the prophetic order was founded by Samuel.

The silent years of Samuel - (4:1 to 7:2). In these three chapters Samuel is not

mentioned, It was a period of about 20 years (7:2). The Art of the Lord is feature here!

Samuel is the Judge (7:3, 15 and 8:22). He continued to serve after Chapter 8:22, however, then the head of the nation is a king, beginning at Chapter 9.

The people demanded a king from Samuel (8:5) "*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*" 8:7.

<p>Where was the place of worship at this time of Israel's history? - 1:3 When did Jerusalem become a place of worship? - 2 Samuel 5:6-9 What place did Hannah hold in her husband's heart? 1:8 What did it mean in those days for a Jewish woman to be without children? - Genesis 30:23; Luke 1:25 What kind of child did Hannah request from the Lord? - 1:11 What did she promise he should be? - 1:11 with Numbers, chapter 6 Whom does she resemble in this respect? - Luke 1:13-15 Why was Samuel so called? - 1:20 Did Hannah fulfill her vow? - 1:24-28 What did Jehovah's kindness to her inspire? - 2:1-10 What Isarelitish woman uttered similar words under like circumstances - Luke 1:46-55</p>
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Is it possible for a person to be in the ministry and yet be sinful? - 2:12

What is said concerning Eli's sons? - 2:12

How did these young men injure the Lord's cause? - 2:17

Was Hannah well repaid for her sacrifice? - 2:21

What warning was given Eli? - 2:27-36

What was the condition of revelation in those days? - 3:1

What must have been the condition of the people in consequence
- Proverbs 29:18; Psalm 74:9; Amos 8:11

What shows that God can reveal His will to a little child?

How did the Lord confirm Samuel's call? - 3:19-20

Samuel was the first of the line of writing prophets - Acts 3:24; 13:20 and 1 Samuel 3:20. After the priest hood had failed Samuel became a spiritual leader of the people and the mediator between them and God.

Taking of the Ark - Chapters 4 and 5

The Ark was a symbol of the presence of the glory of the Lord (Numbers 14:43; Joshua 3:6; 1 Samuel 14:18-19; Psalm 132:8) It went before the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings and sometimes before the army in time of war (Joshua 3:6). It was before the Ark that the leaders sought the will of the Lord - Exodus 25:22; Joshua 7:6-9; Judges 20:27. Israel, in their backslidden condition, made a superstitious use of this piece of sacred furniture, thinking that the mere formal use of it would bring victory. They trusted in "*it*" instead of the Lord's power of which it was a symbol (4:3). Their great shout in the camp was the result of mere "*natural enthusiasm*."

While the Ark brought blessing to God's people, what did it bring to God's enemies? Chap. 5
What light did the wise men of the Philistines have on divine healing? - 6:3-6

With what history were they acquainted? - 6:6
What was the effect on the Israelites of seeing the Ark returning? - 6:13
Of what act of blasphemy were the people guilty? - 6:19 compare with Numbers 4:5, 15
Where was the Ark taken and over what did the Israelites lament? - 7:2
What did Samuel tell them to do? - 7:3
Of what is the act of the Israelites mentioned? - 7:6 What is it typical of? - Psalm 62:8
What prominence is given to prayer in this chapter? - 7:5 and 8-9
Notice that Samuel takes upon himself the office of priest by sacrificing - 7:9
Though only the priests were allowed to sacrifice, the Lord made special dispensation
in Samuel's favor, because of the failure of the priesthood.
What followed Israel's repentance? - 7:10-14

2. SAUL - The first of the kings - Chapter 8 through 15

- (A) Israel demands a king - Chapter 8
- (B) Saul chosen and anointed - Chapters 9-10
- (C) Saul's first victory - Chapter 11
- (D) Samuel's proclamation of the kingdom - Chapter 12
- (E) Saul rejection - Chapters 13-15

Israel wanted a king - like the other nations and God granted their request (8:19-22). Here is a great lesson for us - *we can have God's best or His second best* - His direct will or His permissive will.

Saul was chosen to be king (9:2) and was anointed by Samuel (10:1).

Saul's decline is in Chapters 13 through 26. -

- 13:12-13 shows his act of impatience • 15:19-23, His act of rebellion
- 16:14, "*The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.*"
 - 18:7-11 Saul tried to kill David because of jealousy
 - 26:21 - Saul said, "*I played the fool.*"
- 28:7-20 Saul's final downward plunge is "*witchcraft*" and Chapter 31 *suicide!*

What was the reason Israel desired a king? - 8:5

What was God's plan for the nation? - Deuteronomy 14:2 and Numbers 23:9

What gave the people an excuse for demanding a king? - 8:3-5

How closely is God identified with His servants? - 8:7

Did God let the people have their own way? 8:6-9

What kind of king did the Lord say they would have? - 8:11-17

Who had foreseen that Israel would desire a king? - Deuteronomy 17:14-20

Did the Lord's description of their future king discourage the people? - 8:19-20

What did the Lord then do? - Psalm 106:15

The personalities overlap, with Samuel the prominent character in the first 8 chapters. In the next seven chapters the focus is on Saul

What was Samuel's reputation among the people? - 9:6

What was a prophet originally called? - 9:9

How close to God did Samuel live? - 9:15

What signs were given to confirm Saul's faith? - 10:1-8

Notice the existence of a school of the prophets
of which Saul was probably the head - 9:10

Where all the people in favor of Saul? - 10:27

How did he show his wisdom? - 10:27

What established Saul's popularity? - 11:11-13

Though Israel had rejected Jehovah, did He utterly forsake them? - 12:14, 22

What did Samuel consider neglect of intercessory prayer? - 12:23

The Record of Saul's sin

Saul intrudes into the priest's office - Chapter 13

= This was a flagrant violation of Numbers 3:10, 38

What excuse did Saul offer? - 13:12

What did he lose through his disobedience? - 13:13

What was made known to Saul? - 13:14

What act of disobedience sealed Saul's fate? - 15:1-9

What excuse did Saul offer this time? - 13:18

What principle did Samuel lay down in 15:22?

What was Saul's repentance really sincere? (Compare 13:25 and 13:30)

What were Samuel's feelings on Saul's rejection? - 15:35

What were the Lord's feelings?

3. DAVID - the Anointed Successor - Chapters 16-31

(A) David anointed king - Chapter 16

David was chosen by the Lord, through Samuel, to be the successor to Saul

- 16:1-11

David is anointed to be king - 16:12-13

(B) David's victory over Goliath - Chapter 17

David meets Goliath - 17:31-54 - (Look at Ephesians 6:13-17)

(C) David's persecutions and wanderings - Chapters 18-30

Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David, but David is hated by Saul.

(Read David's word in Psalm 59, especially verses 1 and 16)

This was a time of testing and preparation for David. He has been threatened
by Saul and found refuge among the Philistines. (Read Psalm 56)

(D) The death of Saul - Chapter 31

By what was Samuel judging the fitness of a person to become king? - 16:6

How does the Lord judge? - 16:7

What happened after David's anointing? - 16:13

Of what event was this typical? - Matthew 3:16-17

1 Samuel 16:14 presents a difficulty. It states, "*The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and that an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.*" The question is, "*Does God send evil spirits to men?*"

In the expression of the Hebrew language, if anything could have been prevented, it states

that the one who allowed the action which took place, responsible for it. We have laws similar to that in our American judicial system, that is, "*If you could have prevented a crime, yet you did nothing about it, you are partially responsible for that crime.*"

This "*evil spirit*" came from God, only in the sense of God permitted it to trouble Saul, who had backslidden and persisted in his sin and rebellion (1 Samuel 16:14; 1 Kings 22:21-24 and 2 Chronicles 18:20-23). The idea is that God does not protect Saul from the evil spirit as He would have, if Saul had yielded to Him and obeyed Him. God gave Saul over to an evil spirit as consequence of his sins and self-will. Naturally, when the Holy Spirit left him, he was open to an evil spirit of torment from Satan.

The context here clearly shows that this "*evil spirit*" was a spirit of discontent, unrest and depression. Remember the circumstances, Saul had proved untrue to God. He had deliberately disobeyed God, and consequently God had withdrawn His Spirit from him, and a spirit of worry and discontent came upon him.

This was not an unkind act on God's part, in fact, due to God's laws of dealing with mankind, there just was nothing that God could have done. In fact, it is one of the most merciful provisions of our heavenly Father that when we disobey Him and wander from Him He makes us unhappy and discontented in our sin. If God should allow us to continue to be happy in our sin, it would be one of the most uncaring things He could do, however, God, in His great mercy, will do everything possible to win every one who strays from Him, back to Himself. We can know for sure that, if we sin, God, for our highest good, will allow unrest and deep depression to come upon us. We can, however, make use of this spirit of depression that God sends [*allows*] to come upon us, to bring us back to God and to the joy of the Holy Spirit.

Saul made the wrong use of this spirit of depression and, instead of allowing the unrest of his heart to bring him to repentance, he allowed it to embitter his soul against the one whom God had favored. The sending [*allowing*] of this evil spirit was an act of mercy on God's part. The misuse of this act of mercy resulted in Saul's undoing.

Another passage that has puzzled students of 1 Samuel is in 17:55-59, when Saul seems not to have recognize David after his victory over Goliath. After all, wasn't it Saul that sent him forth? Why, then, didn't he know who he was?

Missionaries from the East describe a custom from that part of the world that, indeed, does sound strange to our Western mind. It seems that a man who has performed some exploit, the cry is not, "*Who is he?*" rather, it is, "*Whose son is he?*" the glory passing to the one who fathered him. It also is not unusual to feign ignorance of the parentage in order to express greater surprise.

Why befriended David at this time? - 18:1

What cause Saul's jealousy? - 18:6-7

Why did Saul fear David? - 18:16

How did Saul attempt to take David's life? - 18:20-30 and 19:1-17

How did the Lord protect David? - 19:18-24

Where did David flee? - 19:18

What was at the root of Saul's enmity toward David? - 20:31

A good way to study this section of 1 Samuel, is to make a list of the places where David went during his wanderings, noting what occurred at each place. To follow David's wanderings on a map helps to set this section of God's Word in your mind.

What were David's feelings during the time of his wanderings and persecutions? What were his religious experiences?

The reading of the following psalms, referring to this period of time in David's life, will answer these questions.

Compare 1 Samuel 19:11 with Psalm 59
Compare 1 Samuel 21:10-11 with Psalm 56
Compare 1 Samuel 21:13 with Psalm 34
Compare 1 Samuel 22:1 with Psalm 57
Compare 1 Samuel 22:9 with Psalm 52
Compare 1 Samuel 23:19 with Psalm 54

2 SAMUEL

The whole Book of Second Samuel centers around the figure of David; there is no one other than he of sufficient importance to draw the attention. This Book is considered the "**Book of David's Reign.**" It opens with David reigning in Judah immediately after Saul's death. The Book closes just before David's death when he "*old and stricken in years*" (1 Kings 1:1 and 2:10-11).

2 Samuel is God's portrait of His anointed to which our eyes are directed. It is the picture of the man after God's own heart that we are called upon to study. And we begin our study with the question, "*What is there about David to merit so honorable a title?*"

David is not pointed out to us from a distance that we may gaze at the king set upon lofty eminence, surrounded by all the insignia of royalty, but, rather, we are invited to a close acquaintance with the man.

In Second Samuel, we see David, not only upon the throne, but in the home. We watch him in his deepest sorrows, as well as in the hour of his greatest triumphs; we hear his prayers and his praises, his righteous indignation, his words of kindness, tenderness and generosity. We are witnesses of his sin and his repentance, of his moments of impatience, of his kingly dignity, and the whole picture, in spite of its occasional dark shadows, shows us a man in whose life God really was first, and to whom above all else, God was a glorious reality - a man who was deeply conscious of his own weakness, failure and sin, but who knew God and trust Him with his whole heart.

In the original Hebrew canon and early editions of the Hebrew text, both 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel were both just one Book. The division came with the Septuagint translators about 289 to 284 B.C. and this has been followed in all editions since. The events recorded in the Book of 2 Samuel were probably added to Samuel's Book (1 Chronicles 29:29) by Nathan or Gad.

The Book of 2 Samuel covers a period of time from the death of Saul to the purchase of

the temple site, about 40 years, giving the period of David's reign.

1. DAVID'S RISE - (Chapters 1-10)

- (A) The death of Saul - Chapter 1
- (B) David becomes king over all Israel - Chapters 2 through 5
- (C) The ark brought to Jerusalem - Chapter 6
- (D) The Davidic covenant - Chapter 7
- (E) David's conquests - Chapters 8 through 10

The story of the Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1:4-10 has given some students concern. Notice that David asked the Amalekite who he was and how the battle was coming (verse 4). The young man reported that Israel has lost the battle and that many Israelites had been killed - and that Saul and Jonathan were both dead.

He assumed that this would be welcomed news to David, however, he couldn't have been more wrong. To most men in David's place, hearing that the only one between him and his being promoted to kingship, this might have been good news, but not too a very rare breed of men, like David.

It is very difficult for selfish and carnal men to understand the true feelings of David and his acts on this occasion.

The Amalekite continues his story and it cost him his life. He was so anxious to be honored by the new king, David, that he told a wrong story. He attempted to make himself out to be a hero in the eyes of his superiors. The discrepancy of his story is plain as seen from 1 Samuel 31:3-5 and 1 Chronicles 10:3-5.

This Amalekite, evidently, thought he would be rewarded for doing away with David's enemy, Saul. He attributed what Saul said to his armor bearer, as though Saul had said these things to *him*. Saul fell upon his own sword, this stranger did not "*slay him*."

Under these circumstances 2 Samuel 1:14-16 seems understandable.

Notice Chapters 1 through 4 is a Civil War Period, David is at Hebron 7 years and 6 months. He reigns over Judah only, because the other tribes would not accept him as Saul's successor. Israel (all the tribes other than Judah) has decided to have their own king (Chapter 2:8-11, also, note, 3:1).

Beginning with Chapter 5, and running through Chapter 10, we have "*The Conquest Period*." David is declared to be king of all Israel and he transfers the seat of government to Jerusalem. Note the acknowledgement of all the tribes of David's right to be king - 5:1-5.

[Jerusalem at that time was called Jebus
- 1 Chronicles 11:4 after the Jebusites - 2 Samuel 5:6-10]

The *Davidic Covenant* in Chapter 7:8-16 is one of the supremely great passages of the Bible. That the Messiah should be from David's line was affirmed later by the prophets in such passages as: Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5 and Ezekiel 37:25. In accord with these prophecies the

angel Gabriel announced to Mary concerning Jesus (Luke 1:23-33).

There are several significant things we should remember about the Davidic Covenant:

1. 2 Samuel 7:13 gives the Divine Confirmation of the throne in Israel.
2. 2 Samuel 7:11-16 give the perpetuation of the Davidic rule.
3. The Davidic Covenant was unconditional because it shall be fulfilled in the Messiah - Acts 2:29-31 and Acts 15:14-17
4. The Davidic Covenant is a sure prophecy of Christ
 - (A) The first such prophecy was made to Adam - Genesis 3:15
 - (B) The second was made to Abraham in Genesis 22:18
 - (C) The third to Jacob in Genesis 49:10
 - (D) The fourth is made to David here in this Chapter

NOTICE THE DEVELOPMENT TO THESE WORDS OF PROPHECY

- (a) 1st to Adam, the promise is to a *race* in general
- (b) 2nd to Abraham, to a *nation* in the race - Israel
- (c) 3rd to Jacob, to one *tribe* in that nation - Judah
- (d) 4th to David, to one *family* in that tribe - that of David!

2 Samuel 7:8-16 records God making a covenant with David, whereby His promises to him, and his descendants, the throne and kingdom forever. This covenant, upon which the glorious kingdom of Christ "*of the seed of David according to the flesh*" is to be founded secures:

1. A Davidic "*house*" - that is, posterity, family - 7:11-13
2. A "*throne*" - that is, royal authority - 7:13
3. A kingdom - that is, a sphere of rule - 7:13
4. In perpetuity - "*forever*" - 7:16
5. And this fourfold covenant has but one condition: *disobedience in the Davidic family is to be visited with chastisement but **not** to the taking away of the covenant.* - 2 Samuel 7:15; Psalm 89:20-37 and Isaiah 55:3.

Chastisement fell: First, in the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam, and finally in the captivities (2 Kings 25:1-7).

Since that time but one king of the Davidic family has been crowned
- and He was crowned with thorns

The Davidic covenant confirmed to David by the oath of Jehovah and renewed to Mary by the angel Gabriel is immutable (Psalm 89:30-37), and the Lord God will yet give to that thorn-crowned One "*the throne of His father David*" (Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:29-32).

Which was the first tribe to recognize David as king? - 2:1-4

How did David again show his kindness to Saul? - 2:5-7

Who instigated war between Judah and the eleven tribes? - 2:8-11

What was the outcome of the war? - 3:1

Who made a league with David at this time? - 3:12-26

What is revealed concerning Joab's character in chapter 3 ?

What was David's attitude toward Joab's murder of Abner?

Notice David's continued faithfulness to Saul and his house - Chapter 4
Where and when was David appointed king over all Israel? - Chapter 5
What city became the capital of the kingdom at this time? - 5:6-9
Who built David a home at this time? - 5:11
What Psalm did David compose on that occasion? - Psalm 30

The bringing up of the Ark was a commendable act of David's part, but the manner of carrying it was in violation of the law of God. The Ark, instead of being carried on a cart should have been borne by the priests (Numbers 4:14-15; 7:9).

Where was the Ark taken after this? - 6:10-11
What did its presence bring up that family? - 6:11
Was David's conduct before the Ark very dignified? - 6:16
Who took exception to it? - 6:16
With what words did David justify his conduct? - 6:21
What was the result of Michal's criticism of David? - 6:23
What did David purpose to do? - 7:1-3
Who encouraged him in this? - 7:5-7
Was it however, God's will that David should build the Temple? - 1 Chronicles 22:8
Notice David's beautiful prayer of thanksgiving after the making of this covenant
- 7:18-29.

How did David fully establish his kingdom - Chapter 8
Make a list of the nations he subdued.
How does David again show his kindness to Saul's family? - Chapter 9

2. DAVID'S FALL

- (A) David's great sin - Chapters 11 through 12
- (B) Absalom's rebellion - Chapters 13 through 20
[Read Psalm 51 together with this passage]

Beginning with Chapter 13, the rest of 2 Samuel is no longer a Book of triumph, but, rather, it is one of troubles. The last recorded victory is the end of Chapter 12 when David conquers the royal city of Ammon. All of the Chapters after Chapter 12 records all of David's troubles in his family and as a nation.

Nathan's saying that as a result of David's sin he had given occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme . . . [*"give reason for the enemies of the Lord to ridicule"*] . . . (12:14), has found fulfillment in the sneers of infidels who scoff at the fact of David's being called, "*a man after God's own heart.*" However, the truth is that David being a man after God's own heart does not mean that he was faultless, but, rather, it does mean that he was a man in whose heart there was an earnest desire to do God's will and seek His righteousness, in contrast to Saul, who was always seeking his own way.

David committed a terrible sin, yet, with a true sense of Jehovah's righteousness and a sense of his own guilt, he repented in sackcloth and ashes. There are many important lessons we may learn from David's sin:

1. No matter how strong and spiritual a man may be,
if he gets his eyes off God, he is liable to fall.

2. The recording in plain terms of the sin of Israel's greatest hero without any attempt to whitewash it, is a strong proof of the divine origin of the Bible. The natural thing to have done would be to draw a veil over this unpleasant event - (12:12)
3. God's grace can pardon the worst of sins if there is true repentance - (12:13)
4. Whatever a man sows that will he reap. The child of David's sinful union died. His two sons followed him in adultery and one committed murder.
5. God will not for a moment condone sin even on the part of His best beloved children.

Chapters 15 through 18 are concerning Absalom, the son of David, and his rebellion. This is part of the bitter fruit of David's sin according to 12:11-12. The only way Absalom could secure the throne was by defeating his father in battle. He tried but Joab, David's captain, showed no mercy and killed Absalom (18:14) When David heard it he cried the familiar words found in the last part of 18:33.

One cannot help but notice that, after this incident of David's sin, he began to reap what he had sown. His son, Amnon, committed an act of immorality which led to his murder by David's other son, Absalom (Chapter 13) David love his son, Absalom, however, a dread of public opinion had made him hesitate to recall him from the banishment to which he had been sentenced. Joab, knowing the struggle that was taking place in the king's heart, between affection and duty, resorted to a stratagem described in Chapter 14. The woman Joab employed, in a skillful speech . . . [similar enough to David's experience to awaken in him a desire to save her son] . . . obtained a pledge from the king that her son, who had supposedly slain his brother would be pardoned. She then insinuated that in pardoning Absalom, he would be doing no more than he had done for her, and there could be no charge of partiality against him. The scheme was successful. However, subsequent events prove that David had acted unwisely in pardoning Absalom because, in due time, his son rebelled against him.

David's prompt decision to leave Jerusalem and place the Jordan between him and the rebels was the action of a skillful soldier. In connection with David's flight, read Psalm 3.

Notice David's patience and humility in the face of Shimei's insult. He sees the hand of God in everything - 16:5-12.

Ahithophel counsels Absalom to commit an act which would cut off all hope of reconciliation with his father, and which would compel every one in Israel to show his colors. (16:21-23). this act was a fulfillment of 2 Samuel 12:12. Ahithophel then advises Absalom to take a small force and capture his father before he could gather a large army. Hushai defeated this counsel by suggesting that Absalom make a general mobilization of his whole army. This gave David time to pass over the Jordan and gather a large army. Ahithophel, foreseeing David's victory, and his own disgrace, committed suicide.

Joab's insolent reproof of David shows that he had no love for him (19:1-7). At heart he was a rebel. His having murdered Absalom had turned David completely against him (Compare

2 Samuel 19:13 with 1 Kings 2:5).

David is restored to the throne in Jerusalem followed by more experiences of retribution from the hand of God. Chapter 19, like a mirror, exhibits some sad facts. David seems to have forgotten the use and meaning of prayer. With all the incessant movement which takes place in Chapter 19, it is not once mentioned that "*David enquired of the Lord*," though it is much a part of his earlier life. The result was that he allowed selfish and excessive affection for his rebellious son to smother the affection which he should have shown for his brave and faithful soldiers; he pardons Shimei, swearing to him by Jehovah (an oath which he should not have taken - 1 Kings 2:8-9) when he ought to have judged him; he condemned Mephibosheth when he should have done him justice; and he hastened to Jerusalem without giving time for the chiefs and soldiers of the Northern tribes to assist in the restoration, thus occasioning the bloodshed and misery that takes place in Chapter 20.

What tribe should have been the first to welcome David back? - 19:11

Why should they have welcomed David back? - 19:12

Will the time ever come when Israel and Judah will welcome David's Son?
- Zechariah 12:10 and Matthew 23:39

Who conducted David back to the city? - 19:40

What did David's preferment of the tribe of Judah cause? - 19:41 to 20:2

Of what was this division between Juda and Israel the beginning?
- 1 Kings 12:16-24

What crime did Joab add to his record at this time? - Chapter 20

3. DAVID'S LATER YEARS

(A) The three years of famine - Chapter 21

(B) David's song - Chapter 22

(C) David's last words - Chapter 23

(D) David's sin in numbering the people - Chapter 24

What was the cause of the famine mentioned in Chapter 21? (Compare Joshua 9)

What penalty did Saul's family pay for the violation of this oath?

Chapter 22 is "*The Grateful Retrospect*." Toward the close of his life, David looks back on the alternating successes and failures of the past and gratefully acknowledges Jehovah's grace and faithfulness.

The first seven verses of chapter 23 record the last words of David. In this connection, Psalm 72 should be read, the last verse of which seems to indicate that it was David's last prayer.

What three things are said concerning David in 2 Samuel 23:1?

What did David claim in verse 2?

Who bore witness to this? - Matthew 22:43

What did David say was God's ideal of a ruler? - 23:3-4

Did David feel that he and his house had lived up to this standard? - 23:5

Though David had experienced many troubles and failures, what fact comforted him? - 23:5

What does he say concerning his enemies? - 23:6-7

The remainder of Chapter 23 gives a list of David's mighty men and their exploits. Verses 16-17 give a glimpse of the devotion of these men toward David and his appreciation of their valor.

Chapter 24 records David's sin in numbering the people. A comparison with 1 Chronicles 21:1-6 shows that it was Satan who instigated this. "*God cannot tempt man,*" (James 1:13). However, remember that God is often described in Scripture as doing what He merely "*permits to be done.*" In this case, He *permitted* Satan to tempt David. Satan was the active mover, while God only withdrew His supporting grace, and the great tempter prevailed against the king.

The fact of numbering the people was not in itself sinful. Moses did it by the express authority of God. However, David acted not only independently of such order or sanction, but from motives unworthy of the delegated king of Israel, it was from pride and vainglory, from self-confidence and a lack of trust in God. Above all, David "*numbered the people*" from an ambitious design for conquest. His purpose was that he was determined to force the people into military service and this act of numbering the people was to ascertain whether he could muster an army sufficient for conquest of his own design.

The Book closes with David's purchase of the threshing floor on Mt. Moriah (24:24-25) which became the site of the Temple. It was here, hundreds of years earlier, where Abraham offered Isaac.

1 KINGS

In 1 and 2 Samuel we read how the Jewish nation demanded a king in order that they might be like the other nations. Though contrary to His perfect will, God granted their request. In this Book of 1 Kings, we learn how Israel fared under the kings. Though many righteous kings ruled, the history of most of them is one of misrule and iniquity. In accordance with His promise in 1 Samuel 12:18-24, the Lord did not fail to bless His people as long as they sought Him, but, on the other hand He never failed to punish them when they departed from Him.

It is not certain who the human author was. It is believed that Jeremiah compiled the records made by Nathan and Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29). And several verse in 2 Chronicles seem to indicate the same thing, that is, 9:29; 12:15; 20:34; 26:22; 32:22.

1 Kings covers the period of Jewish history from the death of David, with the crowning of Solomon, to the reign of Jehoram over Israel - a period of 118 years from 1015 to 897 B.C.

1. The Establishment of Solomon's Kingdom

- (A) Adonijah's plot - 1:1-38
- (B) Solomon appointed by David - 1:39-53
- (C) The death of David - 2:1-11
- (D) Solomon's accession - 2:12-46

What was David's physical condition at this time? - 1:1

- Who attempted to seize the kingdom? - 1:5, 9
- What should have been a warning to him? - 2 Samuel 15:1-6
- Who were his accomplices? - 1:7
- How was the plot foiled? - 1:10-40
- Why could not Adonijah become king? - 1 Chronicles 22:9-10

Concerning David's charge to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1-9, the directions, which David communicates, referring to individual persons, David gives, not as a private man, but as king of Israel. Joab's double murder had gone unpunished. At the time he committed it, David was not in a situation to be able to punish him; but David felt the full weight of Joab's deed and, in horror of it, uttered a judgment against him (2 Samuel 3:29). In the eyes of the people, the non-punishment was regarded as an insult against God's law, and the responsibility of punishing Joab fell to David. It was a strain upon his reign, that had not yet been blotted out. Now, on his deathbed, he could think only of his duty, as that of a supreme judge, to deliver to his successor definite direction concerning this punishment of Joab. It lay upon his conscience, and he desired that the stain be removed. Joab's participation in Adonijah's revolt appeared dangerous for the coming reign of Solomon. The punishment of Joab was to David a matter of conscience, so also was Barzillai's compensation. What Barzillai had done, he had done for him as king, as the anointed of Jehovah. Such devotion to the king, ought to be publicly rewarded, and recognized in honorable remembrance after the death of the king. In direct contrast to the action of Barzillai was that of Shimei. He did not curse David as a private person, he cursed him with the heaviest curse as the *anointed of Jehovah*, and therein Jehovah Himself indirectly. For blasphemy against the king was on the same level as blasphemy against God. (1 Kings 21:10) Both punishable by death (Leviticus 24:14; Exodus 22:28), hence Abishai thought that Shimei should be put to death (2 Samuel 19:21). But David wished on the day when God had showed him such great mercy, to show mercy himself and, as a result, saved Shimei's life. It was no small matter to allow this criminal to spend his life near him, to permit him to spend his days quietly under the following reign was mercy that David showed unto Shimei. As for the rest, David left Solomon to choose the manner and time of his punishment only he was not to go unpunished.

2. Solomon's Reign

- (A) Solomon's wisdom - Chapter 3 and 4
- (B) The building of the Temple - Chapters 5-7
- (C) The dedication of the Temple - Chapter 8
- (D) Solomon's glory and fame - Chapters 9-10
- (E) Solomon's fall - Chapter 11

- Whom did Solomon marry? - 3:1
- Where did Solomon and the people sacrifice for want of a sanctuary - 3:2-4
- What request did Solomon make at this time? - 3:9
- What else did the Lord give besides that for which he asked? - 3:13
- What Scripture does that illustrate? - Ephesians 3:20
- What incident illustrating Solomon's wisdom is given? - 3:16-27
- What was the condition of Israel and Judah during Solomon's reign? - 4:20, 24-25
- What were the boundaries of Solomon's dominions? - 4:21, 24
- Who supplied Solomon with materials to build the Temple? - 5:1-12
- In what year after Israel's departure from Egypt
was the building of the temple begun? - 6:1

- What message came to Solomon at this time? - 6:11-13
- How long did it take to build the Temple? - 6:38
- How long did it take Solomon to build his own house? -7:1
- What was done after the Temple was completed? - 8:1-19
- What did the Ark of the Covenant contain? -8:9
- How did God manifest His presence at this time? - 8:10-11
- Notice carefully Solomon's sermon - 8:12-21
- Read Solomon's prayer of dedication - 8:22-53
- What was Solomon's blessing of the people - 8:54-61
- How was the dedication celebrated? - 8:62-66
- What was Solomon's prayer answered? - 9:1-9
- What choice did the Lord lay before Solomon and his people? - 9:4-9
- What did Israel ultimately choose? -9:9
- Describe Solomon's activities - 9:10-28
- Describe Solomon's wealth - 10:1-29
- Who caused Solomon's downfall? - 11:1-2
- What did they lead him into? - 11:5-8
- How did God say He would punish him? - 11:11
- When would that take place? - 11:12
- What prophet is introduced here? - 11:29
- What opportunity was presented Jeroboam? - 11:28

3. The Disruption and Decline of the Kingdom

To fully understand the Old Testament, a brief review of the Jewish people would be helpful at this point in our study. The Jewish nation started with God calling Abram (later to be named "*Abraham*") out of Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan (Genes 11:31). Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, had Isaac, then came Jacob. Jacob had twelve son, which each became the beginning of the twelve tribes of Israel.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Asher | 5. Gad | 9. Naphtali |
| 2. Benjamin | 6. Issachar | 10. Reuben |
| 3. Dan | 7. Judah | 11 Simeon |
| 4. Ephraim | 8. Manasseh | 12. Zebuliu |

Before the days of the kings over Israel, there were Judges, or Rulers:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Othniel - Judges 3:9 | 6. Abimelech - Judges 9:1 | 11. Elon - Judges 12:11 |
| 2. Ehud - Judges 3:15 | 7. Tola - Judges 10:1 | 12. Abdon - Judges 12:13 |
| 3. Shamgar - Judges 3:31 | 8. Jair - Judges 10:3 | 13. Samson - Judges 16:30 |
| 4. Deborah - Judges 4:5 | 9. Jephthah - Judges 11:11 | 14. Eli - 1 Samuel 4:18 |
| 5. Gideon - Judges 6:36 | 10. Ibzan - Judges 12:8 | 15. Samuel - 1 Samuel 7:15 |

1 Kings records the *division* of the united kingdom of Israel which Saul, David and Solomon had reigned over into *two kingdom* - known henceforth as *Israel* and *Judah*.

The name "*Israel*," comprising ten of the tribes, becomes the "*northern kingdom* with Samaria as capital. The kingdom of "*Judah*," comprising two tribes, Juda and Benjamin, becomes the "*southern kingdom* with Jerusalem as the capital. Now, fix this in your mind because it is necessary if you are to understand the remainder of the Old Testament.

NORTHERN KINGDOM - Israel - 10 tribes - Samaria
SOUTHERN KINGDOM - Judah - 2 tribes - Jerusalem

A profitable way to study this section of 1 Kings list certain of the kings of Judah and Israel, briefly noting:

- (1) the character of the king;
- (2) the length of his reign;
- (3) the names of the prophets mentioned in connection with his reign;
- and (4) the principle events of his reign.

After Samuel, the people demanded that a king be over them and so Saul was anointed as Israel's first king.

1. Saul 2. David 3. Solomon

After Solomon's death, his two son, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, each usurping their influence, split the nation of Israel into two kingdoms, known as the "*Northern Tribes*" and "*Southern Tribes*." This division continued for 260 years, until the captivity of the 10 tribes in Assyria (2 Kings, Chapter 17).

Kings of Judah [Northern Kingdom]	Kings of Israel [Southern Kingdom]
Rehoboam - 1 Kings 11:43	Jeroboam - 1 Kings 11:28
Abijam - (or Abijah) 1 Kings.14:31	Nadab - 1 Kings 14:20
Asa - - 1 Kings 15:8	Baasha - 1 Kings 15:16
Jehoshaphat - 1 Kings 15:24	Elah - 1 Kings 16:8
Jehoram - 2 Chronicles 21:1	Zimri - 1 Kings 16:15
Ahaziah - 2 Kings 8:25	Omri - 1 Kings 16:16
Joash (or Jehoash) - 2 Kings 11:2	Ahab - 1 Kings 16:29
Amaziah - 2 Kings 14:1	Ahaziah - 1 Kings 22:40
Uzziah (or Azariah) - 2 Kings 14:21	Jehoram (or Joram) - 2 Kings 1:17
Jotham - 2 Kings 15:5	Jehu - 1 Kings 19:16
Ahaz - 2 Kings 15:58	Jehoahaz - 2 Kings 10:35
Hezekiah - 2 Kings 16:20	Jehoash - 2 Kings 13:10
Manasseh - 2 Kings 21:1	Kerpbpa, - 2 Kings 14:23
Amon - 2 Kings 21:19	Zachariah - 2 Kings 14:29
Josiah - 1 Kings 13:2	Shallum - 2 Kings 15:10
Jehozhaz (or Shellum) - 2 Kings 23:30	Menahem - 2 Kings 15:14
Jehoiakim - 2 Kings 23:34	Pekahiah - 2 Kings 15:23
Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah)- 2 Kings 24:6	Pekah - 2 Kings 15:25
Zedekiah (or Mattaniah) - 2 Kings 24:17	Hoshea - 2 Kings 15:30

What petition did the elders of the people bring to Rehoboam? - 12:7; 2 Chronicles 10:1-5
 In spite of the outward prosperity of Solomon's reign,

what was the condition of the people? - 12:4

What showed Rehoboam's foolishness? - 12:8

What did he lose by it? 12:15-16

Had there already been the beginning of a breach between Judah and Israel?

- 2 Samuel 2:8-11; 19:41 to 20:2.

What did Rehoboam attempt to do to prevent the secession of the other tribes? - 12:21

What restrained him? - 12:22-24

What did **Jeroboam** fear? - 12:26

What did he do to prevent this? - 12:27-28

Did he at first wish to entirely destroy the worship of Jehovah,

or did he wish to conduct it in another way? - 12:28-29

What suggested his setting up the golden calves? - Exodus 32:1-4

What did he set these? - 12:29-30

What commandment did he break concerning the priesthood? - 12:28-31

What commandment did he break concerning the *feast*? - 12:32-33

Who denounced his sin? - 13:1-2

Whose birth, 350 years before, did this prophet prophesy of? - 13:2; 2 Kings 23:15

What Scripture does he disobedience of the man of God illustrate?

(Compare 13:18 with Galatians 1:8-9)

What judgment was pronounced upon Jeroboam? - 14:7-13

What prophecy concerning Israel was uttered? - 14:15-16

Enter - the Prophet Elijah

Beginning in Chapter 17, the work of God's prophet, Elijah, is emphasized. He appears suddenly as a crisis-prophet and disappears as suddenly in a chariot of fire in 2 Kings 2:11. Between Elijah's appearance and his translation into heaven, a succession of miracles takes place. The main events in Elijah's ministry will help us to grasp this portion of Scripture. [In order to give a complete account of Elijah's life, we will draw from 2 Kings.]

1. Elijah's message to Ahab - a three years of drought - 17:1
2. Elijah's flight to the brook Cherith - 17:2-7
3. Fed by the widow of Zarephath and raises her son from the dead - 17:8-24
4. Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal on Mt Carmel - Chapter 18
5. Elijah's flight to Mt. Sinai before Jezebel - 19:1-18
6. The call of Elisha
7. Elijah's denunciation of Ahab for the murder of Naboth - 21:17-29
8. Elijah's message to Ahaziah - 2 Kings 1:3-16
9. Elijah's translation - 2 Kings 2:1-11

Elijah and John the Baptist are mentioned together in the New Testament, the latter as fulfilling the ministry of the former in relation to Messiah's first advent (Luke 1:17 and Matthew 17:10-13). Elijah is the John the Baptist of the Old Testament, and John the Baptist is the Elijah of the New Testament.

Their ministries yield an interesting comparison:

1. Both ministered in times when Israel had departed from
the true spiritual worship of God
2. They resembled each other in appearance - 2 Kings 1:8 & Matthew 3:4

3. Both preached national repentance - 1 Kings 18:21 & Matthew 3:2
4. Both rebuked wicked kings - 1 Kings 18:18 & Matthew 14:3-4
5. Both were persecuted by wicked queens - 1 Kings 19:1 & Matthew 14:8
6. Elijah's sacrifice on Mt. Carmel, and John's baptism marked
a time of national repentance.
7. Elisha, Elijah's successor, received his power from service at the Jordan;
Jesus, John's successor, received the anointing of the spirit in the same river.
8. Both, towards the close of their ministry, yielded to discouragement
- 1 Kings 19:4 & Matthew 11:2-6

Elijah teaches us that ***God always has a man to match the hour!*** After fleeing from a threat of his life (19:2) he is told to go back and find and anoint two kings and find Elisha and begin training him to succeed him (19:15-16). Elijah pronounced doom on King Ahab (21:19) and it came to pass - 22:38).

Elijah, though just a human (James 5:17), proves what God can do through a man when the truth of God is being hurt by a person or a nation. We, like Elijah, should be separated servants of the Lord - 2 Timothy 2:19.

Originally, First and Second Kings was one Book and, therefore, should be studied as such because they tell a continuing story. 1 Kings records the ***division*** of the united kingdoms into ***two kingdoms***, known thereafter as the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

The main message of 1 Kings is "***Division Because of Disobedience***. This is clearly seen in 1 Kings 11:11 that marks the tragic turning point and becomes the key to the whole story of 1 Kings.

2 KINGS

The second Book of Kings is a continuation of the story of the downfall of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, culminating in the captivity of both. This is the continuing story of the same story found in 1 Kings, a story of failure on the part of kings and people, a story of backsliding and idolatry. Though 2 Kings is a time of great prophetic period in Israel, the message of the prophets goes unheeded. The reformation that took place under such kings as Hezekiah and Josiah were superficial. The people soon returned to their sins and continued therein until "*there was no remedy*" (2 Chronicles 36:15-16).

2 Kings covers a period from the of Jehoram over Judah and Ahaziah over Israel, to the captivity, covering a duration of 308 years, from 896 to 588 B.C.

1. The Close of Elijah's Ministry (Chapters 1 to 2:13.

- (A) Elijah and Ahaziah - 1:1-18
- (B) Translation of Elijah - 2:1-13

Who fell sick at this time? - 1:2

What kind of man was he? - 1:3

What was his great sin - Exodus 20:3 and Deuteronomy 7:7

What judgment was pronounced upon him? - 1:4

How is Elijah described? - 1:8

The appearance of what seems to be extreme cruelty of the two captains and their men will be removed, when full consideration of the circumstances is given. (1:9-14) These men were haughty and insulting to a man of God. God being king of Israel, Ahaziah was bound to govern the kingdom according to divine law; to arrest the Lord's prophet because he simply stated what God had commanded him to, was, certainly, an act of an blasphemous and notorious rebel. The captains supported the king in his rebellion; and they exceeded their military duty by contemptuous insults. In using the term "*man of God*," it would seem they either spoke derisively, believing him to be no true prophet; or if they regarded him as a true prophet, the summons to him to surrender himself bound to the king was a still more flagrant insult, the language of the second captain being worse than that of the first. The punishment was inflicted, not to avenge a personal insult of Elijah, but an insult upon God in the person of His prophet; and the punishment was inflicted not by the prophet, but by the hand of God.

What had the Lord purposed? - 2:1

Who was acquainted with this fact? - 2:3

What miracle did Elijah perform at the Jordan? - 2:8

What request did Elisha make? - 2:9

On what condition was it granted? - 2:10

2. The Ministry of Elisha - Chapters 2:14 through 13:21

Note the chief events of Elisha's ministry:

(A) Elisha's first miracle - the parting of Jordan's waters - 2:14

(B) The healing of the bitter waters - 2:19-22

(C) The cursing of the irreverent young men - 2:23-25

(D) His rebuke of the alliance of Jehoshaphat - 3:10-27

(E) The increasing of the widow's oil - 4:1-7

(F) The raising of the Shunammite woman's son - 4:8-37

(G) The healing of the deadly pottage - 4:38-41

(H) The feeding of the 100 men - 4:42-44

(I) The healing of Naaman - 5:1-27

(J) The recovery of the lost axe - 6:1-7

(K) Elisha and the Syrian host - 6:8-23

(L) Elisha's promise of food - 7:1-20

(M) His prediction of seven years of famine - 8:1-2

(N) Elisha's visit to Ben-hadad - 8:7-15

(O) His sending of a prophet to anoint Jehu as king - 9:1-10

(P) Illness and death of Elisha - 13:14-21

Note reference to the "*sons of the Prophets*" (2:3). These were schools where the young Israelites were trained for the prophetic ministry (Compare 1 Samuel 10:5-11 with 2 Kings 6:1).

There have been those who have felt so sorry for "*those poor little children who were eaten up by bears.*" The story is given in 2 Kings 2:23 and, of course, it does not say that "*they were eaten,*" only that the bears "*tare them.*" However, there are some other facts which must be taken into account, if we are to understand what happened here:

1. The place where this incident took place was *Bethel*, the place where Jeroboam set up a golden calf as an idol. Because Elijah's revival had affected this place, which, according to 2 Kings 2:3, was where his "*school of the prophets*" was established, there was real tension between the demon Baal worshippers and Jehovah's prophets, namely, Elijah, and now Elisha.
2. This incident takes place *immediately* after Elijah's supernatural translation, where he was taken to heaven in "*a chariot and horses of fire*" 2 Kings 2:1. Elisha had just picked up Elijah's mantle as a sign of his having witnessed Elijah's ascension and the fact that he was the one appointed by God to succeed Elijah's ministry. It was under these circumstances that he approaches Bethel where there was such contention between demon activity and Jehovah, the great God of Israel.
3. The Hebrew word, which is here translated as "*children*," does not mean "*small teenagers*," but, rather, it refers to "*young men*." This same Hebrew word, used in 2 Chronicles 12:13 and 13:7, show that the one referred to is **41 years old!** These, mentioned in 2 Kings 2:23, were not harmless "*little children*," as we would think of children, but, rather, they were young stapling hoodlums who were being spurred by demonic Baal worshippers.
4. Scripture shows that there was a *large crowd* of delinquents that came out to menace Elisha. True, only 42 of them were "*mauled*" by the two bears, however, this would mean, if 42 of them were mangled as the two bears came out of the woods and began to attack this crowd of ruffians, there can be little doubt, that many of them, if not most, would have scattered, showing that, probably, there was a couple hundred, or more, of them.
5. When these hoodlums referred to Elisha as "*thou bald head*," they were not just *taunting* him, but, rather, they were calling him a priest of Baal, since *shaving of the head* was a pagan religious practice of the Baal priests and was strictly forbidden to the people of God (Deuteronomy 14:1). These hooligans, calling Elisha "*bald head*," was an intentional, blasphemous, insult directed toward a prophet of God and it was their way of telling Elisha to prove to them that he was a man of God. Their ridiculing and scoffing him was, essentially, saying to him, "*You claim Elijah went straight up into heaven, why don't you go too? Go up thou bald head [you prophet of Baal]*".

There can be little doubt that this mob intended to harm Elisha, maybe even kill him. However, even if Elisha had not been killed by the mob, his authority and position as God's prophet - Elijah's successor in Israel - would have been destroyed had God not acted decisively in this situation.

Reading Leviticus 26:21-22 might help us to understand

To keep a bird's eye view of 2 Kings, keep in mind that in Chapter 17 the ten tribes of the *northern kingdom*, known as "*Israel*" go into Assyrian captivity from which they have never return.

In Chapter 25 the *southern kingdom*, known as "*Judah*" go into Babylonian captivity (the Temple is destroyed) and only a remnant returned to Jerusalem.

As far as the history of "*Israel*" is concerned it is a dark picture of degenerate rulers and sinful people ending in slavery. The kingdom of "*Judah*" was also on the down grade, but judgment was not visited upon her so speedily because of the influence of a number of good kings who reigned during this period.

Chapters 11 through 17 alternates concerning events of both kingdoms. The Assyrian take Israel captive. Jonah, Amos, Hosea prophesies at this time to Israel, the Northern Kingdom.

Chapters 18 through 25 record events of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, and end with the captivity of Judah in Babylon by which time Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Jeremiah had prophesied in Judah.

Keep the names of these prophets in mind, because we will meet them again as we go through the Old Testament. The prophets of God *after* the captivity (post exile) were Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Hopefully, you will be able to place these prophets in your mind.

In all, there were 19 kings that reigned over Israel, the 10 tribes kingdom, and lasted about 250 years. Not one king of the Northern Kingdom was godly. Judah had 20 kings and lasted some 390 years. The 19 kings of Israel came from seven different families while the 20 kings of Judah were of *one family - David's*.

3. The Decline and Fall of Israel - Chapters 13:22 through 17:41

What nations were sent against Israel? - 13:22; 15:19-20

What were Jehovah's feelings toward Israel - 13:23; 14:26-27

Under whose reign did Israel's captivity take place - Chapter 17

How did he hasten Israel's judgment? - 17:4

Notice God's indictment of Israel in Chapter 17:7-23.

The Assyrian King brought *substituted* people into his land, forming the nucleus of the later "*Samaritans*," and subsequently intermixed with the Jews (who eventually returned from captivity – Nehemiah 13:3, 23-31). They are referred to as "*foreigners*" and "*strangers*" in Luke 17:18 and Ephesians 2:19. These people were forced to migrate (17:24) because it was believed that integration of the peoples of a conquered nation was necessary, in order, to make any revolt of the conquered nations impossible. Israel was not assigned to any single dwelling place, but rather to several different places, separating them from one another by great distances, so that, these ten tribes were widely scattered in this foreign nation, without any natural connection with each other.

It would be well, at this junction, to read the study on
the subject, "*Were the 10 Tribes of Israel lost?*"

To take the place of the Israelites, the king of Assyria sent colonists from his dominions. Their idolatry brought upon them the judgment of God in the form of the appearing of lions among them. The king of Assyria then sent an Israelitish priest to instruct the colonists in the religion of Jehovah. This religion they accepted but they still continued to worship idols. They

mingled with the remnant of the ten tribes left in the land and from this union sprang the Samaritans. The Samaritans later built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim and claimed that it was the true place of worship (John 4:20).

Who, in your opinion, was the best king of Israel? - The worst?

4. The Decline and Fall of Judah

The kingdom of Judah lasted about 150 years longer than that of Israel. Their history is much brighter than that of the latter. While Israel suffered many changes of dynasty, the kingly line of David was kept intact in Judah. While the history of Israel presents a succession of revolts and usurpations, the history of Judah is comparatively peaceful. The preservation of Judah may be explained from the fact that through them, the Messiah was to come.

Chapters 24 and 25 record Judah's captivity. There are three stages to it:

- (A) Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion - 24:1-2
- (B) The first deportation to Babylon - 24:11-16
- (C) The siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the final deportation - Chapter 25

Note that as in the case of the ten tribes, it was the rebellion of the king of Judah against the invading nation that was the cause of the final captivity (24:20). Read God's indictment of Judah (2 Chronicles 36:15, 17).

In reading the Book of Second Kings one sees the different stages of Kings and prophets . . . the *Divine* and the *human*

First, one sees the human failure as seen in kings and people.

Second, one sees the Divine, as seen in the prophets and their messages.

"Where there is no vision the people perish" - one sees the human, however, on the Divine side, one realizes that there is to be ultimate triumph when David's greater Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, sits on His throne and reigns over all.

1st and 2nd CHRONICLES

The Books of the Chronicles . . . 1st and 2nd Chronicles . . . embrace, for the most part, the same matters as that found in 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings, therefore, having gone through the Books of Samuel and Kings, it will not be necessary to give more than an overview of the two Books of Chronicles. They are a "*Chronicle*" [*an account of events arranged in order*] which takes us from Adam to Nehemiah, giving us the main genealogies of the nation Israel - and also the main events of the Davidic Kingdom to the time of the Babylonian captivity.

The Greek translators of the Bible referred to these Books as "*The Things Omitted*," because they supply much information that is not found in the books of the Kings.

Though the Books of "*Kings*" and "*Chronicles*" show great similarity in the matter of their contents, they are written from different viewpoints. The two Books of "*Kings*" were

written from the human point of view, while the two Books of "*Chronicles*" was written from the Divine point of view. For instance, 1 Kings 14:20, recording the death of Jeroboam, states that he "*slept with his fathers,*" giving the human viewpoint of the event, however, we have recorded in 2 Chronicles 13:20 the same event, but it states that, "*the Lord stuck him and he died,*" giving God's Divine point of view.

The follow sketch will give an idea of the difference between the two Books of "*Kings*" and the two Books of "*Chronicles*":

<i>The Two Books of Kings:</i>	<i>The Two Books of Chronicles:</i>
1. written shortly after the beginning of the captivity in Babylon	1. written shortly after the return from the captivity.
2. compiled by a prophet - Jeremiah	2. were compiled by a priest - Ezra
3. emphasizes the throne of earthly kings	3. emphasizes the earthly throne (the Temple) of the Heavenly King
4. deals with Judah and Israel	4. deals with Judah, Israel being mentioned but incidentally
5. is political and kingly	5. is ecclesiastical and priestly

While the author is not certain, probably the prevailing belief of the Jews as stated in the Talmud is correct. It states, "*Ezra is declared therein to be the editor of the records written and preserved by trustworthy men.*" these records written by such men as Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Iddo, etc. were inspired of God and Ezra was further inspired to select from them and bring them together his selection in one continuous narrative. There can be little doubt that the story in *Chronicles* was written by Ezra at the return of the Babylonian captivity in order to encourage the people to build the Temple.

1 and 2 *Chronicles* covers the period from the death of Saul to the decree of Cyrus, covering a time span of 520 years - from 1056 to 536 B.C.

The Message of Both *Chronicles*

The Books of First and Second *Chronicles* deal with matters of the Temple, not mentioned in Samuel or *Kings*. Beginning in 1 *Chronicles* 11, and running through the last Chapter of 1 *Chronicles*, it gives the reign of David and his preparation for the building of the Temple.

Second *Chronicles*, Chapters 2 through 9, gives the account of the reign of Solomon and he building of the Temple.

Both Books deal solely with Judah and Jerusalem (often called Zion, romans 11:26) because that is the Kingdom and the city where the Temple was built.

One will notice that:

- Samuel and *Kings* are biographical, *Chronicles* is statistical.
- Samuel and *Kings* are personal, *Chronicles* is official,
- Samuel and *Kings* gives the history of both Israel and Judah

after the division of the Kingdom, Chronicles gives only the history of Judah after the division

- Samuel and Kings emphasize the Throne,
Chronicles emphasizes the Temple.

Chronicles goes back and reviews a history of a people to apply a vital lesson for them and for us, namely, that a *nation's response to God is the decisive factor in its history!*

1. The People of the Lord - Chapters 1 through 9

While this portion of Scripture is a genealogy, it has more for us to see than just a family tree. Here is the lineage of a certain *people* - the people of Jehovah. The stock of Adam shoots out three great branches; the sons of Jepheth, Ham and Shem. In the great purpose of God the oldest is passed over and Shem, the youngest, is chosen - so is Abraham, the youngest son of Terah chosen; so is Isaac over Ishmael; so is Jacob over Esau. All this in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 the redemptive line goes through Jacob, to Jesse, to David. In Chapter 3 the Davidic line continues down to the last of Judah's kings. The writer then reviews the genealogy of the tribes of Israel and their allotments in Canaan - Chapters 4-8.

2. The Anointed of the Lord - Chapters 10 and 11

Here begins the reign of David, the *Anointed* of the Lord and how he made Jerusalem the capital when he was made King. He was the king of *Divine* choice whereas Saul the king of *human* choice. Read 10:14.

3. The Ark of the Lord - Chapters 13 through 16

The first outstanding recorded act of King David - the bringing of the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem. This Ark meant the presence of Jehovah. In Chapter 15 the Ark is brought to Jerusalem and God blesses David - Chapter 16:7-36 is a psalm of thanksgiving, he teaches the people the mercy of God in the sacred Ark of Jehovah.

4. The Covenant of the Lord - Chapters 17 through 21

It pleased God to choose out of the race one nation - **Israel** - then out of that nation one tribe - **Jacob** - then out of that tribe one family - **the house of David**, and make with him a wonderful Covenant - Chapter 17:7-15

Chapters 18-20 give the Divine implementation of that Covenant. When David later fell to the strategy of Satan (Chapter 21) God overruled and that led to the fixing of the spot where the future Temple was to stand. Chapter 21:28 with 2 Chronicles 3:1

5. The Temple of the Lord - Chapters 22-29

David was not allowed to build the Temple, but he amply prepared for it:

- Materials - Chapter 22
- Levites - Chapter 23
- Priests - Chapter 24
- Singers, porters, etc. - Chapters 25-27

Charge to Solomon and the nation - Chapters 28-29

Since the central message of both Books of Chronicles is "*the House of the Lord*" we can see the importance of that theme in 1 Chronicles 17:10, "*The Lord will build thee an house.*"

When we come to 2 Chronicles, it has a glorious opening and a terrible ending.

6. The forty-year Reign of Solomon - Chapters 1 through 9

In these chapters we see the national and moral significance of Solomon's reign. Solomon was promised "*wisdom, wealth, and power,*" and he received them. He was promised "*length of days*" if he would walk with God - 1 Kings 3:13-14. This he forfeited and died at 59 years. (See outline on 1 Kings 1 through 11) We have already covered the building of the Temple so we will not study that here. We should point out 2 Chronicles 7:14 as God's promise to Solomon (**and to us**)!

7. Judah's History to the Captivity - Chapters 10 through 36

In the preceding chapters of both Chronicles there has risen up a **THRONE** founded in a Divine Covenant - and a **TEMPLE** founded by Divine Guidance. The Throne and the Temple were to uphold and glorify each other - but a condition of great apostasy develops in which the Throne becomes the worst enemy of the Temple. One must go and it had to be the Throne. (There were twenty kings over Judah from Rehoboam to Zedekiah). Thus the captivity (exile) and the suspension of the throne of David. Then the Temple is allowed to be burned. 2 Chronicles 36:19 and 2 Kings 25:9. (Also read Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 25:9-12).

In the two Books of Chronicles we have the full historical view of the Davidic monarchy. In it we see *high calling, great blessing, ill doing, bad ending*. When a king and a people honored God there was peace, prosperity - whereas when they were unfaithful to God there was adversity. (Read Galatians 6:7 together with this truth)

It is a great exercise in the study of historic Scriptures to compare the two divisions of the Bible - Chronicles with Samuel and Kings - in their treatment of the same incidents.

EZRA

The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther are all closely connected and deal with the same period, therefore, I it would be wise to give the principal events covered by these three Books at this point of our study, so that you may see - at a glance - the history of the period following the captivity.

1. The exiles return under Zerubbabel - 536 B.C.
2. The rebuilding of the Temple - 535 B.C.
3. The ministry of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah - 529 B.C.
4. The dedication of the Temple - 515 B.C.
5. The events related in the book of Esther - 478 through 473 B.C.
6. Ezra visits Jerusalem - 458 B.C.
7. Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem as governor. He rebuilds the wall - 446 B.C.
8. Malachi prophesies

1. THE BOOKS

Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the return of the "*remnant*" of the Jews which returned to Jerusalem. The Book of Esther deals with those who stayed on in the land of their captivity. In conjunction with the study of these Books we should read the prophetic Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi for these were the three prophets whom God raised up among His people in the period after the captivity (post exile period).

2. THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

The primary message of this period can best be expressed in the words of Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:31-32, "*For men are not cast off by the Lord forever. Though He brings grief, He will show compassion, so great is His unfailing love.*" This period of time in which God deals with His people will show that God always judges when it is necessary, however, through it all, He is very gracious.

The keynote of Ezra is restoration. A comparison with Kings and Chronicles will bear this out:

Kings and **Chronicles** record Israel's *destruction* of the Temple, however, only **Chronicles** records the *rebuilding* of the Temple.

Kings give a dark picture of a nation corrupt with idolatry,
Chronicles shows us a nation completely cleansed from idol worship

Kings record the neglect of the law,
Chronicles records its restoration to its rightful place in the hearts of the people.

Kings records the mingling of Israel with the heathen,
Chronicles records the complete separation of Israel from heathen influence and custom.

Ezra conveys a wonderful lesson of God's faithfulness. True to His promise (Jeremiah 29:10-14), He lifts His hand to restore His people to their land, and in so doing, He uses heathen kings - Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes - as His instruments.

Author

The fact that the book is written in the first person by Ezra (Chapters 7 and 9) indicates that he was the author. Ezra was the first of that class known as the scribes, who were the official copyists and interpreters of the Scriptures. Ezra gave himself to the study of God's Word with a view to expounding it to the people (7:10). To him has been attributed the work of settling the canon of the Old Testament; that is, of gathering together into one Book those writings that were inspired.

Scope

The Book of Ezra covers a period from the return from Babylon to the establishment in Palestine, covering a period of 79 years from about 536 to 457 B.C.

The Structure of the Book of Ezra

1. The Return Under Zerubbabel - Chapters 1 through 6
2. The Return Under Ezra - Chapters 7 through 10

THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL Chapters 1 through 6

THE RETURN UNDER EZRA Chapters 7 through 10

• The decree to Cyrus - 1:1-4	• The decree of Artaxerxes - 7:1, 11-26
• The leaders Zerubbabel - 1:8; 2:2	• The leader Ezra - 7:1-10
• Names and number of the remnant - 2:3-65	• Names and number of the company - 8:1-20
• Sacred vessels and gifts - 1:6-11 & 2:68-70	• Sacred vessels and gifts - 7:15-22 & 8:24-35
• The coming to Jerusalem - 3:1	• The coming to Jerusalem - 8:32
• Prophet Ministry: Haggai & Zechariah - 5:1 to 6:14	• Intercessory Ministry of Ezra - 9:1-15
• Main outcome - Temple is rebuilt - 6:15-22	• Main outcome - separation of the people - 10:1-44

THE RETURN OF THE REMNANT

- (A) The return of the "*remnant*" of Jewish people is one of the most important subjects in Jewish history, namely, the return of the elect to their own land after the Babylonian captivity.

This was predicted by the prophet Isaiah 200 years before Cyrus was born. (Read Isaiah 44:28 through 45:1-4, and verse 13, also Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-11) Now notice the first three verses of the Book of Ezra.

- (B) The second Chapter of Ezra gives the size of the remnant. They are first broken down into groups: the people (2:1-35); the priests (2:36-39); the Levites (2:40-54) and, finally, "*others*" (2:55-63).

The total is given in verses 64-65. A round figure of about 50,000. Such a number out of the national total was small - thus "*a remnant*." Many of those who had grown up in Babylon did not want to leave the only life they had known. *This was under Zerubbabel - 536 B.C.*

- (C) A further return was *under the leadership of Ezra* about 80 years later in 456 B.C. The total in this expedition was about 2,000 (males only were numbered) including the Nethinims (8:20). (These "*Nethinims*" were the Temple servants who helped the priests and Levites in all their work.)

- (D) Between these two expeditions, the narrative of the Book of Esther took place.

Let's look closer at these two expeditions:

1. THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL

- (A) Cyrus' decree - Chapter 1
- (B) The returning remnant - Chapter 2
- (C) The foundation of the Temple laid and ancient worship restored - Chapter 3
- (D) The opposition of the Samaritans - Chapters 4 and 5
- (E) The dedication of the Temple - Chapter 6

Cyrus was the Persian king who overthrew the Babylonian empire, in fulfillment of divine prophecy (Isaiah 14:22; Jeremiah 27:7; Daniel 5:28). His decree permitting the Jews' return had been foretold by Isaiah, who called Cyrus by name 200 years before his birth, referring to him as the deliverer of God's people and the rebuilding of the Temple (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4). Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that Daniel showed Cyrus these prophecies and the monarch was so affected by them and so well disposed to the captive people that he issued a decree permitting them to return to their country.

2. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA

- (A) Ezra commission - Chapter 7
- (B) Ezra's companions in the return - Chapter 8
- (C) Sin confessed - Chapter 9
- (D) Sin forsaken - Chapter 10

THE TWO LEADERS

"*Zerubbabel*" means "*descended of Babylon*" which indicates that he was born in Babylonia. His going to Jerusalem was undoubtedly a **first** for him for there is nothing to suggest that he had ever seen the land of promise before. His full lineage is given in Matthew 1:12-17. Matthew carries the lineage on to Christ.

Ezra was a great figure in Jewish history. Jewish tradition (the Talmud) has made him one of the great leaders of his day. He is attributed to be the founder of the "**Great Synagogue**," a group of Jewish scholars who recognized the Canon of Scripture and settled it as the "*Word of God*." He was a descendant of Israel's high priest, Aaron, and this is in Chapter 7:1-5. He is also a Scribe (7:6) which means he was an expert instructor in Scripture.

Note that the action of the Jews in putting away their heathen wives and children was rather a stringent one, but it should be remembered that in the past, intermarriage with the heathen had led to sin and idolatry, and it was necessary that the tribe of Judah should remain pure for through them was to come the Messiah.

NEHEMIAH

The Book of Nehemiah centers around a person - *Nehemiah!* It is an autobiography of a man who sacrificed a life of ease and luxury in order to help his needy brethren in Jerusalem. He was a spiritual leader with keen conviction and complete dependence on God, certainly, a good example for all of us to study.

This Book of Nehemiah describes a man who combined spirituality and practicality - one who knew how both to pray and work. Absolutely fearless, he refused to compromise with enemies on the outside or with sin on the inside. After rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem and effecting many

sweeping reforms among the people, Nehemiah humbly gave God the glory for all that had been accomplished.

The Central Message

The main lesson taught by his life is that *prayer and perseverance will overcome all obstacles*. There is no opportunity without opposition. There is no "open door" before us without there being many "adversaries" to obstruct our entering. Reminds one of the words of Paul, the Apostle, in 1 Corinthians 16:9, "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there re many adversaries."

This Book of Nehemiah covers the period from Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem to the restoration of Temple worship, covering a period of about 12 years from 446 to 434 B.C.

1. The Building of the Wall of Jerusalem - Chapters 1 through 6

- (A) Nehemiah's prayer and commission - Chapters 1 and 2
- (B) The builders of the wall - Chapter 3
- (C) The opposition of the Samaritans - Chapter 4
- (D) The nobles rebuked for their oppression of the people - Chapter 5
- (E) The completion of the work of building - Chapter 6

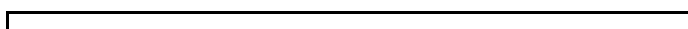
- What news did Nehemiah receive? - 1:2-3
- What effect did it have on him? - 1:4
- How often did he pray for Israel? - 1:6
- What position did Nehemiah hold? - 1:11

Nehemiah was apparently of the tribe of Judah (2:3) He was raised in exile and became prominent in the Persian Court. He was a royal cupbearer 1:11) a position of high honor and great influence. A *cup-bearer*, in ancient courts was always a person of rank and importance. From the confidential nature of his duties, and his frequent access to the royal presence, possessed a great influence. Greek historians have remarked on the polished and graceful manners in which the *cup-bearers* performed their duty of presenting the wine to their royal master. Having washed the cup in the king's presence, and poured into their left hand a little of the wine which they drank of in his presence, then they handed the cup to him, not grasped, but lightly held with the tips of their thumb and fingers.

Nehemiah's brother told him of the condition in Jerusalem and Judea. The walls were in ruin and gates were as they were left by the Babylonians 140 years earlier. Walls and gates were the only way to protect a city.

Nehemiah gave himself to fasting and prayer (1:4-11) and he was convicted to undertake the task. For four months (1:1 compare with 2:1) he knew this grief and burden and his appearance changed to the point that the king asked what was wrong (2:2) He responded (2:5) and the king granted the request and he is commissioned to do what God led him to undertake.

- What led indirectly to Nehemiah's being sent to Jerusalem? - 2:1-2



Nehemiah's fear is explained by the fact that it was considered highly unbecoming to appear in the presence of the king with any signs of sorrow or mourning.

- What did Nehemiah do before making his request to the king? - 2:4
- Who were grieved at his coming to Jerusalem? - 2:10 & 19
- What was the first attempt to discourage Nehemiah? - 4:1-3
- How did he treat this attempt? - 4:4-6
- What second attempt was made to discourage him? - 4:7-8
- To what did he then resort? - 4:9
- What other discouragement came at this time? - 4:10 and 16
- What precautions did Nehemiah take against a surprise attack? - 4:16-23
- What had the people been compelled to do on account of their poverty? - 5:1-3
- Who had been guilty of oppression? - 5:7
- What example had Nehemiah set before the nobles? - 5:14-19
- What other attempts were made to hinder Nehemiah's work? - Chapter 6
- What does 6:11 reveal concerning Nehemiah's character?
- What fact discouraged his enemies? - 6:16
- How long did it take to build the wall? - 6:15

2. REVIVAL OF RELIGION AND RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF WORSHIP - 7 to 13:3

- (A) Register of the people - Chapter 7
- (B) The reading of the Law - Chapter 8
- (C) The repentance and reconsecration of the people - Chapters 9 and 10
- (D) Resettlement at Jerusalem - Chapter 11
- (E) Dedication of the wall and restoration of Temple service - Chapter 12 to 13:3

This section, beginning with Chapter 7, deals with security and the population problem. Nehemiah was governor ("*Tirshatha*" in 7:65 means governor) and he appointed his brother and the ruler of the palace to have charge of all security.

There were too many people living outside the city so he took a census and by lot every 10th man moved into the city - Chapter 11.

- Whom did Nehemiah leave in charge of Jerusalem while he returned to the king of Persia? - 7:2
- What precautions were the people to take against surprise attacks? - 7:3

Nehemiah takes another register of the people based upon the one made by Ezra. This was for the purpose of distributing the land according to the ancestral abode of each family, and for ascertaining with accuracy to whom the duty legally belong of ministering before the altar and conducting the various services of the Temple. Chapter 7:73 tells the result of this registration; namely that all the families were in their own cities.

In Chapters 8 through 10, the people ask for the Scriptures to be expounded to them (8:1). Ezra explains afresh the law and the Feast of the Tabernacles is revived (a memorial of the redemption out of Israel). A day of humiliation is observed and confession is made of sin and

failure (Chapter 9) Then they enter into a self-imposed covenant according to the will of God in Scripture (Chapter 10).

- Who later joined Nehemiah? - 8:1
- For what purpose did these join him? - 8:1
- What was the command of Moses concerning the public reading of the law?
- Deuteronomy 31:9-13
- How many of the people gathered to listen to the reading of the Law? - 8:2
- Who explained its meaning? - 8:7-8
- What effect did it have on the people? - 8:9
- How many days did this reading continue? - 8:18
- What followed the reading of the Law? - 9:1-3
- What historical events were reviewed in the prayer of the Levites? - 9:36-37
- What was then done? - 9:38
- How many signed this covenant? - 10:1-26
- What did they covenant to do? - 10:28-39

Chapter 11 records the settlement of the people at Jerusalem. Since that city was the metropolis of the land, it was necessary that the seat of government and an adequate population should be there for its defense and for the custody of its buildings. Accordingly every tenth man of remnant of those who returned to Jerusalem was chosen by lot to become a permanent inhabitant of that city.

It makes me smile a bit as I visualize, in Chapter 13, how this man, in his unusual zeal for God, throws Tobiah's furniture out of doors (Vs. 8), or plucking off the hair of those who had married wives outside of Israel (Vs. 25), or "*chasing*" the young Jews who had become the son-in-law to Sanballat (v.28). He just kept on praying (vs. 24, 22, 29).

3. CORRECTION OF ABUSES - Chapter 13:4-31

- (A) Violation of Temple's sanctity - 13:4-9
- (B) Violation of Law concerning Levites - 13:10-14
- (C) Violation of the Sabbath rest - 13:15-22
- (D) The violation of the law of separation - 13:23-31

After his first reforms, Nehemiah returned to the court of the king of Persia (13:6). On his return, he found that the priesthood and people had lapsed into their old sins. The high priests was entertaining a heathen governor within the sacred precincts of the Temple; the support of the priesthood and had been neglected; the spirit of commercialism was threatening the sanctity of the Sabbath day; and many of the people had contracted unlawful unions with the heathen. With his characteristic zeal energy. Nehemiah quickly corrected their abuses.

ESTHER

We have studied the fact that Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the "*remnant*" which returned to Jerusalem and Judah. Now we see that the Book of Esther has to do with those who stayed in the land of captivity. The story takes place in Shushan the palace, (Esther 1:2 and Nehemiah 1:1)

which is Susa, the ancient capital of Persia. The number who stayed in the land was far greater than the number who returned to Jerusalem.

The Book of Esther teaches the *providence of God*. Providence means - *pro* - "before" - *video* - "I see." God saw beforehand what the people would do and even though they were out of the will of God by not going back to their homeland, they were not beyond His care. *Providence* then, is God providing, directing, leading people who sometimes do not want to be led.

The Book of Esther has a peculiarity that distinguishes it from any other book in the Bible; namely, the name of God is not once mentioned, neither are there any references to Jewish law or religion. But if God's name is not mentioned, there are abundant evidences of His working and of His care for His people. The book records God's deliverance of His people from a threatened destruction. As surely as God saved His people from Pharaoh's power, He delivered Israel from the hands of the wicked Haman. In the case of Pharaoh's power, the deliverance was effected by a manifestation of God's power and a revelation of Himself; however, in the case of God's people being delivered from wicked Haman, God remained unseen to His people and enemies, and by natural means. The very absence of the name of God is its chief beauty and should not be considered as a blot upon this Book. If the name of God is not found here, His finger is! This book has been called, "*The Romance of Providence*" and, by "*Providence*," we mean that in all the affairs and events of human life, individual and nation, God has a part and share. But that control is a secret and hidden one. Here, in this wonderful story, one sees the reality of Divine providence and, though, the name of God may not appear, it is only as the eye of faith sees the Divine factor in human history, and, to the attentive observer, all history is a Burning Bush aflame with the mysterious presence of God.

Jewish tradition gives Deuteronomy 31:18 as another reason why God's name is not mentioned. Because of their sin, God had hidden His face from Israel. Yet, though hiding His face He was not forgetful or unconcerned about His people, though He did it under a veil. The message of the book may be summed up in the following: The Reality of Divine Providence.

It is believed that Ezra wrote the Book of Esther, probably between the 6th and 7th Chapters of Ezra, before Ezra left for Jerusalem.

ESTHER, THE BOOK OF PROVIDENTIAL CARE

1. THE ANTI-SEMITIC CRISIS - Chapters 1 through 5

- (A) The wife, Vashti - Chapter 1
- (B) Esther becomes queen - Chapter 2
- (C) Haman contrives to keel the Jews - Chapter 3
- (D) "*For such a time as this*" - Chapter 4
- (E) The nobility of Esther - Chapter 5

2. PROVIDENCE OVERRULING OF THE CRISIS - Chapters 6 through 10

- (A) A Jew is exalted - Chapter 6
- (B) A woman gets her way - Chapter 7
- (C) The Jews are avenged - Chapter 8
- (D) The Feast of Purim is instituted - Chapter 9

(E) Mordecai becomes prime minister - Chapter 10

THE PERSONALITIES OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER

A good study of the Book of Esther is to look at the people in the story:

1. KING AHASUERUS

Ahasuerus was a real historical figure, known in secular history as Xerxes, which is the Greek form of his Persian name. He reigned over the Persian Empire from 485 to 465 B.C.

According to the first verse in Esther, he reigned over a province from India to Ethiopia with 127 provinces under his rule.

2. VASHTI

The name means "*beautiful woman*." In Chapter 1 she is queen. The king orders her to come and show her beauty to a host of drinking men. She refused (1:12) and in their drunken stupor the king and his "*leaders*" wrote a decree concerning women honoring their husbands. Vashti is set aside because of her courageous act.

The refusal of Vashti to obey an order that required her to make an indecent exposure of herself before a company of drunken revelers, was unbecoming with the modesty of her sex and her rank as queen because, according to Persian customs, the queen, (even more than the wives of other men), was excluded from the public gaze, and if the king's blood had not been heated with drink, or his reason overpowered by the force of offended pride, he would have realized that his own honor, as well as hers, would be dishonored by such conduct as was ordered for her. The so-called, "*wise men*," whom the king consulted with, were the "*magi*." Without their advice as to the proper time of doing a thing the Persian kings would never take a step. The persons named were the "*seven counselors*" who formed this function. The combined wisdom of all of them was enlisted to consult with the king what course should he take after so unsurpassed occurrence as Vashti's refusal to the royal summons. It is impossible for us to image the astonishment produced by such a refusal in a country where the will of the sovereign was absolute. The assembled men of high social position were petrified with horror at the daring offense. Alarm of the consequences that might ensue to each of them in his own household, seized on their minds, and the sounds of the drunken revelry were hushed and a deep, anxious, discussion as to what punishment could be inflicted on the unyielding queen.

The Persians had a degree in their laws that no one could ever amend or repeal, a law spoken by the king. This formed the ground of the saying, "*The laws of the Medes and Persians that change not*." Ahasuerus was, no doubt, sorry for his treatment of Vashti (2:1), however, according to the law which made the word of a Persian king irrevocable, she could not be exempt.

3. ESTHER

While Ruth was a Gentile girl who married a Jew - Esther was a Jewess who married a Gentile. Ruth became the ancestress of the Deliverer (Christ) and Esther saved the people of Israel so that the Deliverer might come as promised.

Esther, the cousin of Mordecai, was an orphan and was adopted by Mordecai (2:7). She was a

beautiful girl and was entered into the "*beauty contest*" in Shushan, the palace. She was made the queen (2:17), however, Mordecai instructed her not to tell that she was a Jew.

When the harsh custom of the East came from the royal court, for a girl to "*present herself*" before the king, no matter how unwilling the parents may have been, they dared not refuse. Thus, Esther was compelled to enter the court of Ahasuerus. It should be noted that, in the East, where polygamy prevailed, it was considered no disgrace for a girl to belong to the "*Harem*" of a ruler. Every one there was considered a wife of the king.

4. MORDECAI

Mordecai was in the royal service of the palace (2:5 and verses 19-21) He refused to bow before Haman. He was a Jew and he knew the law of God - Deuteronomy 5:7-10.

Because of this, Haman launched an anti-Semitic campaign to kill Jews. King Ahasuerus gave permission and sent a letter to all the provinces (3:13)

Mordecai sent for help from Esther. She was to plead with the king and she took a great risk. She had not been asked to his quarters for thirty days (4:11) Mordecai sent another message of great importance to Esther, (4:14) - "*who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such an hour as this.*" Esther responds that she would appeal to the king, saying, "*if I perish, I perish*" (4:16).

Because of Mordecai's cry for help, Esther gained freedom for the Jews from the king. Mordecai became premier, or prime minister and was exalted to the highest honor.

We learn from Mordecai the way God deals with nations and peoples to preserve His people. There is much typical meaning in the Book of Esther.

An interesting link in the chain of God's providence is found in Esther 2:21, where Mordecai protects the life of the king against plotters. This is recorded, because this incident played an important part in the deliverance of the Jews. Mordecai had a full assurance that God will deliver His people and that in God's providence, Esther had come to the throne for the purpose of delivering her people (4:14).

- Did natural circumstances seem to promise Esther a hearing from the king? - 4:11
- What did Esther expect? - 4:16
- How was God's influence manifested in her behalf? - 5:3
- Did she immediately plead for her people's deliverance? - 5:4-8
- What was to happen before she did this? - 6:1 and 10
- What Scripture does 7:10 illustrate? - Proverbs 26:27 with Psalm 9:15

5. HAMAN

Haman was an "*Agagite*," (pronounced A-gag-ite), which was from Amalek (1 Samuel 15:8). He was a "*big wheel*" under the king and a man of pride. He hated the Jews because Mordecai would not bow before him, so he appealed to the king to kill all of the Jews (3:8). Also see 3:10; 8:1; 9:10 and 9:24.

Haman required that all subordinate officers of the court should bow before him with their faces to the earth. To Mordecai this seemed to be an attitude of profound reverence which was due only to God. Haman, being an Amalekite, one of a doomed and accursed race, was doubtless another element in the refusal. Upon hearing that the offender was a Jew, and that his non-conformity was grounded on religious scruples, the magnitude of the humiliation appeared even greater, because it was believed that the example of Mordecai would be imitated by all his countrymen. Had the homage been a simple token of civil respect, Mordecai, no doubt, would not have refused it, however, Persian kings demanded a sort of adoration which even the Greeks reckoned as degradation for anyone to express, and, to Mordecai was, even, a violation of the second commandment of God's Law.

Haman became so incensed at Mordecai's refusal to worship him that he resolved to destroyed the whole Jewish race, and in order to appoint a day for the execution of his purpose, he cast lots.

In resorting to this method of ascertaining the most favorable day for putting his disgusting scheme into execution, Haman acted as the kings and nobles of Persia have always done, never engaging in any enterprise without consulting the astrologers and being satisfied as to the lucky hour. Vowing revenge, but scheming to lay hands on a single victim, he deliberately plotted to utterly destroying the whole Jewish race, and by artfully representing them as a people who were aliens in manners, customs and habits, and enemies to the rest of his subjects. He procured the king's sanction of the intended massacre. One motive used in urging his point was addressed to the king's love of money. Fearing lest his master would object that the extermination of a numerous body of his subjects would seriously hamper the public revenue, Haman promised to make up the loss (3:9).

THE FEAST OF PURIM

We have the "*Feast of Purim*" in Chapter 8. It resulted as a result of the king's new decree to allow the Jews to protect themselves. It was payback time for the Jews upon their enemies (9:1-19). The institution of the feast of Purim is found in 9:20-32. Mordecai's greatness is seen in 10:1-3.

Since the laws of the Medes and Persians were irrevocable (Esther 1:19 and Daniel 6:8), the king's command to destroy the Jews could not be reversed, however, in order to counteract this order, the king gave permission to the Jews to defend themselves. With the support of the king and government, and of a Jewish prime minister, victory was assured. But behind all these natural means, it was the unseen God who was protecting His own.

- What were the feelings of the Jews on hearing of the king's decree? - 8:16-17
- What effect did it produce on the heathen? - 8:17
- How many of their enemies did the Jews slay? - 9:16
- How did the Jews celebrate their victory? - 9:26-27

"*They called these days Purim after the name of Pur*" (9:26) "*Pur*," in the Persian language, signifies lot, and the feast of Purim, or lots has reference to the time having been pitched upon by Haman through the decision of the lot (3:7). In consequence of the signal national deliverance which divine providence gave them from the infamous machination of

Haman. Mordecai ordered the Jews to commemorate the event by an anniversary festival which was to last two days in accordance with the two days' war of defense they had to maintain. The 14th and 15th of the month of Adar became a season of sunny memories to the universal body of Jews, and by the letters of Mordecai, scattered through all part of the Persian empire, it was established as an annual feast, the celebration of which is still kept up today. On both days of the feast, the modern Jews read the Book of Esther in their synagogues. The copy must not be printed, but written on vellum in the form of a roll, and the names of the ten sons of Haman are written on it in a peculiar manner, being ranged, they say, like so many bodies on a gibbet - [the shape of a gallows with a projecting arm at the top suspending and displaying the bodies of criminals after hanging]. The reader must pronounce all the names *in one breath*. Whenever Haman's name is pronounced, they make a terrible noise in the synagogues. Some drum with their feet on the floor and the boys have mallets with which they knock and make a noise. They prepare themselves for their carnival by a previous fast, which should continue three days, in emulation of Esther's fast, however, they have mostly reduced it to one day now.

The whole meaning of the Book of Esther is found here. God's people were about to be destroyed but God used a person, Esther, at the right time (4:14).

The slaughter would have been similar to what Hitler did in the '40's.

Haman prepared a gallows for Mordecai (5:14). Mordecai had saved the king from harm and he king heard about it (6:1-2). He decides to honor Mordecai - thus the gallows for Mordecai became the death trap for Haman.

The entire story of the Book of Esther is one of God's providence in the preservation of His people. This Book closes with the establishment of the "***Feast of Purim*** and Mordecai becoming the one just under the king. The Feast celebrates the deliverance of the Jews. It was a Thanksgiving Day, for although they had forsaken God, God had spared them. The name "***Purim***" comes from Haman casting lots (*Pur*) against them. (9:24-26)

Lessons from the Book of Esther

1. Though sometimes the good may suffer and the evil prosper, God will eventually reverse the order. Haman, a cruel tyrant planned the destruction of Mordecai and his nation. In the end, Haman was degraded and Mordecai exalted.
2. God's care for His people may not always be an apparent fact, but nevertheless, it is being exercised. The name of God is not mentioned in this Book, but evidences of His care and protection abound. One writer illustrates this truth by the figure of a stage manager, who, though hidden behind the scenes, plays an important part in the staging of a play.
3. God foresees and provides for every emergency, with Him, nothing happens by chance. God foresaw from the beginning the intended destruction of His people, and He provided for that emergency. A poor Jewish girl becomes queen and is thus able to save her people. God foresees that Haman would attempt to destroy Mordecai, accordingly He so arranges events that a spell of sleeplessness on the part of the king leads to Mordecai's exaltation. God foresaw that since the decrees of the Medes and Persians were unchangeable, the Jews would have to fight for their lives, so He puts

fear upon the people and gives the Jews favor in the sight of the governors.

4. God's providence takes in details. The accident of the king's sleeplessness, his fancy to have the records read, the reader's stumbling accidentally on the account of Mordecai's act in saving the king's life, the king's happening to receive Esther when she came unbidden - all these seemingly accidental and insignificant events were used by God to deliver His people.

The Old Testament history *closes* after the account of Ezra, Nehemiah and the events of Esther. The rest of the Old Testament Canon of Scripture is in the main, *prophecy* concerning Israel before, during and after the captivity. All of the prophets shed light on God's message and His leading of His children, Israel. When one comprehends this fact, the Old Testament becomes easier to understand.

There is much type teaching that could be applied to our lessons, however, time does not permit this. If you would like to study this on your own it will reward you greatly.

JOB

We have covered 17 *Historical Books* of the Bible, up to this point in our study, *now* we will look at the five *Poetic Books* of God's Word, namely, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. These five Books are *experiential*, while the past seventeen Books concerned *a nation* - these five concern *individuals*. The seventeen deal with the Hebrew race = there five deal with the human heart.

The Book of Job deals with one of the greatest mysteries of life - *Suffering*. The question that rings out all through the book is, "*Why do the righteous suffer?*" Job, a man described as being "*perfect*," is stripped of wealth, children and health. He bears these afflictions with fortitude. He does not understand the cause of these calamities, but resigns himself to the thought that God sends evil upon men, just as He sends good, and that being God, He has a right to do as He pleases with His own creatures.

**Men must accept evil uncomplainingly
just as they accept good at God's hands.**

Job's friends reasoned and argued that, since suffering was the result of sin, and that Job was the most afflicted of all men, therefore, Job must be the most wicked of men. At the conclusion of the discussion between Job and his friends, After the three friends of Job (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) have spoken, Elihu speaks up, explaining that God had a purpose in sending suffering to men and explains that God does chasten man for the purpose of bringing him nearer to Himself at times.

We see that God used afflictions as a trail of Job's character.

The central message of the Book of Job is "*Blessing Through Suffering*," or why do the godly suffer? The solution is found in the explanation of the prologue and in the blessing of God upon Job in the epilogue.

A brief explanation of the Book of Job is necessary to understanding it. Chapter 1 and 2 are not poetry, but a historical *prologue* to the poem. The poem begins in Chapter 3 and it ends at Chapter 42:6. The final eleven verses are not poetry but a historical *epilogue* to the poem.

The simple fact that gives the whole Book meaning is that Job did not know the divine counsel of God. Between the prologue, which shows how Job's trials originated in the Counsels of Heaven, and the epilogue, which shows how Job's trials and afflictions served as enrichment and blessing, we have a group of older men giving advice on "*why*" these things happened to Job. They knew nothing of God's reasoning and they were theorizing in the dark. We are to see that when affliction comes, God has a reason. If Job had known the reasons for his afflictions there would have been no faith involved on his part. The Scriptures are as wise in their reservations as in their revelations. Job was not meant to know the reasons - and in this lies the message of the Book.

1. Satan's Attack on Job - Chapters 1 to 2:10

Some have suggested that this Book of Job is fiction. The Scriptures state that this Book of Job is **factual**. - Ezekiel 14:14 and James 5:11.

In this passage - the *prologue* - we hear the conversation of between God and the Devil. This is divine revelation of what happened just as we find elsewhere in Scripture. In Revelation 12:10 Satan has access to God as "*the accuser of the brethren*." Then in Zechariah 3:1-2 Satan is standing in the Lord's presence to accuse Joshua. The most striking proof is in Luke 22:31, which states, "*And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.'*"

There are some things we should remember about Satan:

- (A) Satan is accountable to God
- (B) Satan is neither omnipresent nor omniscient.
Only God has that power of knowing all and is always present.
- (C) Satan can do nothing without God's permission - Job 38:11
- (D) With every permission God gives Satan, there is limitation - Job 1:12 and 2:6

The "*sons of God*" mentioned in 1:6 are angels who appeared before God on certain occasions, [more correctly translated "*the creatures of God*"], to give a report on their ministry on earth (Hebrews 1:14). As a Judas among the apostles, Satan appears with the angels. In Job 1:7 Satan says what his activity concerning the world is. 1 Peter 5:8 describes Satan as "*a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour.*"

It must be kept in mind that God holds Job up as a "*perfect, God-fearing man*," one who has escaped the corruption of the world. Satan, even, admits this fact, however, he impugns Job's motive. His contention is that Job is serving God for the sake of policy, because it brings him prosperity. In assailing Job, Satan attacks also God, for his words carry the insinuation that God is not able to win the "*unselfish*" love of man. God, desiring to vindicate His own character and that of His servant, has no alternative but to subject Job to a trial. It is comforting to note that

Satan's affliction of the children of God is only by Divine permission. From Chapters 1:21 and 2:10 we see that Job satisfied God's confidence in him.

2. Job and His Friends - Chapters 2:1 through 31:40

We have seen the cause of Job's afflictions from the Divine viewpoint. We shall now listen to the opinions of his friends concerning the cause of his troubles. It should be remembered that their utterances in themselves are not inspired, for the Lord Himself charged them with error (42:8). It is the **record** of those utterances that are inspired. Though these men said many things that were true, they did not present the whole truth.

Learn the following points summing up the discourses of Job's friends:

- (A) They contend that suffering is the result of sin. Therefore, if a person is afflicted, it must be taken for granted that he has transgressed.
- (B) The measure of affliction indicates the degree of sin. They argue that, since Job is the most afflicted of men, he must be the greatest sinners
- (C) They tell Job that if he will repent of his sins God will restore his happiness. They warn him that his trying to justify himself will only delay his restoration.
- (D) They admit that sometimes the wicked prosper, but they claim that this prosperity is only transient, for it will soon pass away and retribution overtake them.

We may sum up Job's answers to his friends as follows:

- (A) Job maintains that it is possible for a righteous man to be afflicted. He considers it cruelty on the part of his friends to accuse him of sin because of his afflictions. He himself does not understand God's purpose in afflicting him. He takes it for granted that God, in distributing good and evil, neither regards merit nor guilt, but acts according to His sovereign pleasure. He believes that there are times when a sufferer has a right to justify himself and repine at God's decree.
- (B) Later, Job retracts some of his extravagant assertions, and admits that God generally afflicts the wicked and blesses the righteous. Still he insists there are exceptions to the rule as, for example when a pious man is afflicted. Because of these exceptions, it is unjust to conclude a man is sinful because of afflictions.
- (E) He believes that it is our duty to adore God - even through suffering calamities not deserved - however, we should abstain from harshly judging of those who, when distressed, send forth complaints against God.

3. Elihu's Message - Chapters 32 through 37

Elihu's discourse may be summed up as follows:

- (A) He tells Job that his boasting of his integrity made it appear that were due him, from God, (33:8-13). God is no man's debtor (35:7). Job was righteous, however, he has

no claim on God, for all men are sinners in God's eyes.

(B) He admits that calamities can be punishment for sins committed, however, at the same time they can also be corrective. He states that suffering can be inflicted on the righteous and, if the object of that affliction is attained and the sufferer acknowledges his fault, God will bless him with greater happiness than he had before (33:14-33). He then sets forth the majesty and perfection of God in creation, and admonish Job for trying to *reason* with God instead of humbling himself and confessing that he was at fault - Chapters 36 and 37.

4. Jehovah's Answer to Job - Chapters 38:1 through 42:16

God does not argue with Job, but, rather, He gives him the most effective revelations, by which He challenges Job on his own mistaken grounds. He first challenges Job on the mistake of calling the Almighty into question. In judging God, Job was assuming a power that was never intended for man, namely, that which belongs only to the Eternal, the Creator of all things.

In chapters 38 and 39, God challenges Job's ability to judge from the standpoint of one being acquainted personally with all things in their original creation. This silences Job, a man of so brief a span of existence and knowledge.

God reveals His amazing skill in fashioning and, with great thought and tender care, governing the most frightful monstrous dinosaurs of the ancient world - behemoth and the leviathan - evidently as an illustration of His skill in formulating and controlling the most frightful troubles that an all-wise and loving Father may permit the "*roaring lion*" to inflict. This brings Job out of silence into adoration of God. He confesses that what he had learned *theoretically* before the certainty of Divine wisdom and goodness, *now* is a blessed reality to him, so satisfying and rejoicing his heart that all thought of arguing was now forever curbed.

5. Conclusion - Chapter 42:7-17

The last verses of Job illustrate a New Testament verse found in James 5:11, "*Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy*" (that is, you have seen in the issue of God's dealings with Job, the exercise of His compassion and tenderness).

A Bird's-eye view of the Structure of the Book of Job

<p>PROLOGUE Chapters 1 & 2</p>	<p>DIALOGUE Chapters 3 through 42:6</p>	<p>EPILOGUE Chapter 42:7-17</p>
<p>Job's devotion in prosperity 1:1-5</p>	<p>Job - Opening Lamentation - Chapter 3</p> <p>FIRST TRIAD</p> <p>Eliphaz - Chapters 4-7 Bildad - Chapters 8-10 Zophar - Chapters 11-14</p>	<p>Job's proven integrity - 42:1</p>

Satan's lie and slander 1:6-19 Job's devotion in adversity 1:20-21	SECOND TRIAD Eliphaz - Chapters 15-17 Bildad - Chapters 18-10 Zophar - Chapters 20-21	Job's Friends rebuke 42:8 Job's trial ended 42:10
Satan's further slander 2:1-8 Job's devotion in extremity 2:9-13	THIRD TRIAD Eliphaz - Chapters 22-24 Bildad - Chapter 24-31 <i>Elihu speaks</i> - Chapters 32-37 God: <i>Closing Intervention</i> - Chapters 38-41	Family restored 42:11 Job's prosperity 42:12-17

Actually the Book of Job is considered to be the oldest Book of the Bible. The reason it is placed where it is found in the Canon of Scriptures is because of its chronological order of events. It is impossible to prove fully who the author of the Book of Job really was, but there are certain facts that make it seem that the main part of the book was written by one person. It was written before the Law as given to Moses. [There is not even the slightest reference to the Law or any of its institutions.] It could be that Job was the author of all except the last verses giving the record of his end, or, it could be that the book was the work of two men, these could have been Job and Moses. In either case, or both cases, the Book could have been produced during the 40 years Moses was in the desert.

Whoever wrote the Book of Job had to receive a special revelation from God concerning the scenes and conversations in heaven of Chapters 1 and 2. The author was especially inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21) to record the events and conversations between Job and his friends meant that one would have had to be present to listen, or, to somehow, acquire records of all that was said in the various speeches.

Job lived 140 years after the experience of calamities (Job 42:16), which would bring him into the period of the life of Moses. One hundred and forty years of leisure after his trial would certainly provided him with more than enough time to work on a record of his experiences, even leaving out the idea of divine influence and help in recording the many details of the conversations. How much more evidence does one need to conceive himself of the idea that Job, Moses, or, whoever God might choose, could have written the Book of Job by divine inspiration!

Moses received a revelation concerning the creation and many other things which form a part of his writings, so, if this Book of Job was not written by Job, then it could have been written by Moses, in part or in it entirety.

Job 1:1 mentions "*the land of Uz*," which is the vast wilderness section of the country from Arabia-Petra to the Persian Gulf. This was the same area where, for years, Moses herded the flocks of Jethro, priest of Midian,. Job and Moses could have spent much time together. This much is certain, Moses accepted the Book of Job as part of the divine revelation of God entrusted to the Hebrew people, and thus delivered it to future generations.

It is a personal belief on my part, because of what I believe to be a revelation of God to

me, that the friends of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, represent the dimensions of man, that is his soul [*mind, will and emotion*]. The arguments of Eliphaz are based entirely upon experiences - his knowledge - *what he knows!* - I believe it represents man's "**mind**," his ability to rationalize, to reason things out, to make an intelligent approach to life. Bildad bases his arguments on *traditions* - his debates are built upon **emotion** - how he "*feels*" concerning life and its answers to what happens to a person. On the other hand, Zophar's comeback are the result of a hard-nosed person of **will-power**. His arguments are build on the *assumption* that "*he knows what is right and no one is going to change his mind!*" He comes across like a dictator barking his orders, demanding that his will is preformed.

God's message to anyone living for Him is to "*die to self*" - or the soul's dictation to man!

Elihu represents man's "*spirit!*" While it is true that all that Elihu conveys is not accurate, it illustrates the fact that man's spirit is not always right, but, rather, it is only as the Holy Spirit is in complete control of one's spirit that it can be trusted to be accurate in its leading.

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT - THAT IS MY CONVICTION!

PSALMS

The Book of Psalms is composed of one hundred and fifty spiritual songs and poems used by the church in all ages in worship and devotional exercises. The Book of Psalms was used as the hymn-book of the second Temple.

Like all other Books of the Bible, the Book of Psalms is, "*God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Psalms have their original setting in the arena of human experience. Remember that the five poetic Books are experiential.

The Book of Psalms was written in Palestine and Babylon from about 1,500 to 450 B.C. One hundred Psalms have names prefixed to them. They are Moses (1) - David (73) - Solomon (2) - Asaph (12) - Heman (1) - Ethan (1) - and sons of Korah (10). David and Solomon wrote several of the remaining 50 without author's names. Aurthership of others cannot be determined. Ezra is perhaps the collector and compiler of Psalms in its present form.

When the collection of Psalms was brought together as one - the Hebrew title for the collection was "*Tehillim*," meaning praise songs. the Creek translators gave it the title "*Psalmoi*," meaning "*songs to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument*," and this was the title used in the days of Jesus (Acts 1:20). Jesus authenticated the Psalms when He referred to this Old Testament Book of Psalms in Luke 24:44.

This collection of Psalms was the inspired prayer and praise Book of the nation Israel in their Temple worship; the Jews today use them in the synagogue; the Christians of the New Testament times sang them (Colossians 3:16 and James 5:13); and all the denominations of Christendom use them today. They are loved because they speak of what all of us feel during this life.

The Book of Psalms is a collection of inspired Hebrew poetry, setting forth the worship and describing the spiritual experiences of the Jewish people. It is the most personal portion of the Old Testament, giving us a revelation of the heart of the Jewish saint, and running over the

whole scale of his experiences with God and man. In the "*historical*" books we see God speaking **about man**, describing his failures and successes; in the "*prophetical*" books, we see God speaking **to man**, warning the wicked and comforting the righteous in the light of the future. But in the "*Psalms*" we see **man speaking to God**, pouring forth his heart in prayer and praise; and speaking about God, describing and exalting Him for the manifestation of His glorious attributes.

As the Old Testament saint spake to his God, whatever be his experience, whether of prosperity or adversity, blessing or chastisement, highest ecstasy or deepest despondency, there predominates one note all through his worship - that of ***praise to God, Almighty***. He is able to praise God in all circumstances, for His faithfulness in the past is a guarantee of His faithfulness in the future. Also, it is this comparison of the past and the future that has been the occasion for the introducing of the prophetical element into the Psalms. For as the Scribes or Prophet saw the failure of Israel's earthly kingdom and king, he broke forth into inspired utterance concerning the coming of God's glorious kingdom, and of His glorious King - the Messiah.

One might sum up the theme of the Psalms by the following:

**God is to be praised in every circumstance of life;
and this because of His faithfulness in the past,
which is a guarantee of His faithfulness in the future.**

The Book of Psalms is called, "*the Book of David*," because he wrote a large number of them. The following is a classification of the Psalms by authors as designated by the superscription:

Author	#	Which Psalms did these authors write?
1. David	73	3 through 9; 11 through 32; 34 through 41; 51 through 65; 68 through 70; 86; 101; 103; 108 through 110; 122; 124; 133; 133; 138 through 145
2. Asaph	12	50; 73 through 83 [Asaph was David's choir leader at Jerusalem]
3. Korah	10	42; 44 through 49; 84 and 85; 87 - [descendants of korah]
4. Solomon	2	72 and 127
5. Ethan	1	89
6. Heman	1	88
7. Moses	1	90
Anonymous	50	There is reason to think that David wrote some of these; example Psalm 2 is described to David in Acts 4:25.

The central message can be summed up in: "*Praise Ye the Lord*," or it could be, "*Praise through Prayer*"

The 150 Psalms in the Book of Psalms were divided into five divisions from the time of Ezra. The "*Midrashim*," meaning "*interpretation*" was the "*commentary*" of that day, explaining the Scripture. The Midrash (or Jewish Comment) on the first Psalm states, "*Moses gave to the Israelites*"

*the five Books of the Law, and as a counterpart to these, David gave the Psalms which consist of five Books. The first five Books of the Bible, the **Pentateuch**, is the "five-fold Book of Jehovah to the congregation and, likewise, the Book of Psalms gives the five-fold Book of the congregation to Jehovah."*

	BOOK 1 41 Psalms Begins at Chapter 1	BOOK 2 31 Psalms Begins at Chapter 42	BOOK 3 17 Psalms Begins at Chapter 73	BOOK 4 17 Psalms Begins at Chapter 90	BOOK 5 44 Psalms Begins at Chapter 107
Doxology at	41:13	72:18-19	89:52	106:48	150:6
Worship Theme	Adoring Worship	Wondrous Worship	Ceasingless Worship	Submissive Worship	Perfected Worship
Authors	Mainly David's	Mainly David's & Korah's	Mainly Asaph's	Mainly Anonymous	Mainly David's

In the Hebrew Bible the Book of Psalms is divided into 5 Books, evidently to correspond with the 5 Books of Moses (the Pentateuch).

BOOK 1 **Psalms 1 through 41**

This section is called the *Genesis* Book of 41 Psalms. Its general theme concerns man-God's counsels from the beginning to the end in relation to man. It begins, like Genesis, with God's blessing upon man (Genesis 1 and 2, with Psalm 1), showing him that his blessedness consists in obedience to and occupation with God's Word. It continues with man's fall and rebellion (Genesis 3 through 11 with Psalms 2 through 15). It ends with hope of redemption through Christ (Genesis 12 through 50 with Psalms 16 through 41), concluding with a benediction and a double "*Amen*" (Psalms 41:13).

BOOK 2 **Psalms 42 through 72**

This section is called the *Exodus* Book of 31 Psalms. Its general theme concerns Israel as a nation - Israel's ruin, Redeemer, and redemption. It begins, like Exodus, with a cry from the depth of ruin and despair (Exodus 1 through 3 with Psalms 41 and 42). It continues with God's mighty works of deliverance (Exodus 4 through 27 with Psalms 44 through 50) and with backslidings, defeats by enemies, and hardships (Exodus 16 through 27 with Psalms 51 through 55). It ends with god's redemptive work for Israel and His reign over them (Exodus 19 through 40 with Psalms 56 through 72). It concludes with a benediction and a double "*Amen*" (Psalm 72:19).

BOOK 3 **Psalms 73 through 89**

This section is called the *Leviticus* Book of 17 Psalms. Its general theme concerns the Sanctuary and its purpose concerning God and man. The Book begins with the Sanctuary as related to man, revealing the basis of fellowship with God (Leviticus 1 through 7 with Psalm 73

through 83). It continues with the Sanctuary as related to God, showing the walk and relationship of the redeemed before God (Leviticus 8 through 27 with Psalms 84 through 89). In nearly every psalm of this book the Sanctuary, and man's relation to it are mentioned. It concludes with a benediction and a double "Amen" (Psalm 89:52).

BOOK 4 **Psalms 90 through 106**

This section is called the Numbers Book of 17 Psalms. Its general theme concerns Israel and the Gentiles on earth - the counsels of God revealing no hope for man in the earth apart from God. It records the walk of man in his earthly pilgrimage to a better world and a better life. It begins with Israel in the wilderness taking account of themselves (Numbers 1 through 8 with Psalms 90). It continues with proper order, and instructions for the future (Numbers 9 through 14 with Psalms 91 through 94), rest anticipated (Numbers 15 through 26 with Psalms 95 through 100), and the basis for entering into rest (Numbers 27:36 with Psalms 101 through 106). It concludes with a benediction, one "Amen" and one "Hallelujah" (Psalm 106:48).

BOOK 5 **Psalms 107 through 150**

This section is called the *Deuteronomy* Book of 44 Psalms. It contains God and His Word, showing that all blessings of man (Book 1), of Israel (Book 2), of the Sanctuary (Book 3), and of the earth and all men (Book 4), are based upon obedience to the Word of God (Deuteronomy 8:3). Disobedience brought man's sorrows, Israel's dispersion, the Sanctuary's ruin, and earth's miseries; and it is only by obedience to God's Word that these curses will be removed. While the other books are distinguished by several divisions, this Book is, like God's Word itself, a perfect whole. It is the only one of the five Books with an even number of Psalms.

Note that the Doxology appears at the end of each Book. Your Bible will probably have the 5 divisions indicated at the top of each section.

As one begins to examine the Psalms, he realizes that there is a variety of subjects covered. The following gives a sample of the major subjects found in the Psalms:

1. INSTRUCTION - Psalms 1, 5, 7, 15, 50, 73, 94, 101

(A) Psalms of instruction: On the character of good and bad men, their happiness and misery (Psalm 1); on the excellency of the divine law (Psalm 19:119); on the vanity of human life (Psalm 90); duty of rulers (Psalm 82); humility (Psalm 131).

2. HISTORY - (In reference to Israel) - Psalms 78, 105, 106, 136.

3. PRAISE - Psalms 106, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 135 and 146 through 150

(A) Psalms of praise and adoration: Acknowledgment of God's goodness and care (Psalms 23 and 103); acknowledgement of His power and glory (Psalms 8, 24, 136, 148).

4. CONFESSION - Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 130, 143

5. SUPPLICATION - Psalm 86

6. THANKSGIVING - Psalms 16 and 18

7. MESSIANIC - Prophecies concerning Christ

The Psalms are full of Christ (in His two advents) His first advent in humiliation, and His second advent in glory.

(A) In these Psalms Christ is not only referred to, but He actually speaks and we get a wonderful glimpse into the inner heart life of Jesus. In these Psalms we find some of our Lord's prayers, *pre-written*, which is basic testimony to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

(B) Take Psalm 22 for instance. This is an amazing pre-written account of our Lord's death on the cross and through the human writer, the pre-incarnate Christ Himself actually speaks as though He were already on the cross.

(Read Matthew 27:35-36 with this 22nd Psalm)

This Scripture gives us part of the happenings surrounding the cross, however, Psalm 22 tells us what Jesus *thought* and *said* as He hung on the cross. This, then, is prophecy in detail that actually came to pass even to the words spoken. (Compare Psalm 22:1 with Matthew 27:46).

As you read Psalm 22 and compare it with Matthew 27, it seems as if they were written at the same time, however, in reality hundreds of years separate the writers of these two chapters and, when we consider the fact that death by crucifixion was a thing *unknown* when Psalm 22 was written. Crucifixion was introduced hundreds of years later by the Romans - another proof that the inspiration of the Scriptures is a fact.

(C) The Messianic Psalms are a rich study of their witness to Christ.

They witness to His **Person** - Psalm 2:6-7

They witness to Christ as the **Son** of man - Psalm 8:4-6

They witness to Christ as the **Son of David** - Psalm 89:3-4 and verse 27

They witness to Christ as to His **offices**, as **Prophet** - Psalm 22:22; as **Priest** - Psalm 110:4; and as **King** - Psalm 2.

The Principal Messianic Psalms are: Psalms 2, 8, 16, 20 through 24, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50, 55, 61, 68, 69, 72, 89, 96, 98, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132.

In these Psalms we have Christ's birth, betrayal, agony, death, resurrection, ascension, coming again in glory and His reign - all pictured with inspired vividness.

(D) There are groups of Psalms that go together. For example, the group you are most likely to remember would be Psalms 22, 23 and 24.

These should be remembered as follows:

Psalm 22	Psalm 23	Psalm 24
Suffering Savior	Living Savior	Exalted King
The Good Shepherd	The Great Shepherd	The Chief Shepherd

John 10:11	Hebrews 13:20	1 Peter 5:4
Past Cross	Present Crook	Future Crown

8. IMPRECATORY PSALMS (Cursing, or calling down judgment)

While there are Psalms which express anger against enemies and evil doers, and seem to produce a great deal of perplexity, we must remember that a faithful Hebrew, considered God's enemies as his own enemies and he prays to honor God's righteousness by inflicting punishment upon those who denied the sovereignty of God.

Some of the "Cursing" Psalms are: Psalms 35, 52, 58, 69, 83, 109, 137 and 140.

For example, Psalms 139:21-23, "*Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord, and abhor those who rise up against You? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thought.*"

9. THE WORD OF GOD

All of the teaching in the 119th Psalm is around the Word of God. This is the longest chapter of the Bible and it reveals the heart of God. Every verse speaks of then Word of God, or law, or precepts, or statutes of God.

Interestingly, in this 119th chapter of Psalms there are 22 sections of 8 verses each - one section for each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

As you read through the Book of Psalms, always keep in mind that they are the expression of human experience written through Divine inspiration. They will meet a need in every life if they are read for enrichment and for meditation.

What a storehouse of precious Truths!

PROVERBS

We now turn from the devotional reading of the Psalms to the practical wisdom of the Proverbs. This Book is meant to be to our *practical* life, what the Psalms are to our *devotional* life. This is a Book of Divine wisdom applied to earthly conditions.

A "*proverb*" in our English, means a brief saying instead of many words. *Proverbs are short statements drawn from long experiences.* A proverb does not argue - it assumes.

The Book of Proverbs is a collection of short, pithy statements setting forth moral lessons. The purpose of the Book is declared from the very beginning; namely, the impartation of wisdom to young men (1:1-7). It is the practical Book of the Old Testament, applying the principles of righteousness, purity and godliness to everyday life. The wisdom it teaches is not merely fleshly wisdom and prudence, but a wisdom base on a "*reverence*" for the Lord (1:7). We may thus sum up its theme: "*Practical wisdom resting upon and rising out of religious character.*" - A proper reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom!

The Book of Proverbs is a springboard into God's wisdom!

God promised Solomon, "Ask for whatever you will and I will give it to you" [1 Kings 3:45]. Solomon asked God for "wisdom," and the Book of Proverbs is the result of that request. Solomon was given wisdom as God had promised, and he is the only man to receive Godly wisdom, *without demonstrating* it in his life. The wisdom that is spoken of in the Book of Proverbs is a wisdom that comes *only* as one applies the principles given in this Book. The Book of Proverbs is not just *theoretical* [head-knowledge], but, rather, it is down-to-earth, believable, workable, Godly wisdom. It is not a book of theory, but it is principles for living!

One finds in the Book of Proverbs a collection of moral and religious maxims containing instruction concerning right living. Also, one will find brief discourses on Wisdom, Justice, Temperance, Industry, Purity, etc.

Solomon himself wrote most of the proverbs (1 Kings 4:32; Ecclesiastes 1:13 and 12:9). From the reference in places to the "*Words of the wise*," it is believed that besides his own proverbs, Solomon collected some of those current in his time and incorporated them with his own. The last two chapters were written by Agur and Lemuel, about whom the Bible tells us nothing. Interestingly, according to 1 Kings 4:32, Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and, yet, here in the Book of Proverbs we have only 917 of these proverbs.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

1. A connected discourse on the value and attainment of true wisdom - Chapters 1 through 9
2. Proverbs, headed "*The Proverbs of Solomon*" - Chapters 10 through 22:16
3. Renewed admonitions on the study of wisdom, headed "*the words of the wise*"
- Chapters 22:17 through 24:34
4. Proverbs of Solomon collected by the men of Hezekiah - Chapters 25 through 29
5. The wise instructions of Agur to his pupils, Ithiel and Ucal,
and lessons taught to King Lemuel by his mother - Chapters 30 and 31

The Book of Proverbs says things in short repeat - or back-up - statements. This is called "*parallelism*." There are three kinds of parallelism throughout the Book of Proverbs:

1. **Synonymous Parallelism**
Here the second clause restates that is given in the first clause
(Example: Proverbs 19:29)
2. **Contrast Parallelism**
Here truth stated in the first clause is made stronger in the second clause
by contrast with an opposite truth.
(Example: Proverbs 13:9)
3. **Synthetic (or Completive) Parallelism**
Here the second clause develops the thought of the first
(Example: Proverbs 20:2)

The Book of Proverbs is inspired and placed in the Scripture by the Holy spirit of God. The spiritual value comes in the reading of these proverbs as compared to modern man's so-called proverbs.

God had promised to give to Solomon "*wisdom*," and God did exactly that. As far as we know Solomon is the only man who was given wisdom by God (*godly wisdom*) without living it be experience.

Understanding the first seven verses of the Book of Proverbs will greatly enhance one's comprehension and enable him to receive insight into the whole of this Book of Proverbs.

After the title and the author, stated in verse 1, there is a series of parallel statements, four in number, which are the essence of the Book of Proverbs.

1. "*To know*" - an **active** word, including the idea of *doing!*
2. "*Wisdom*" - the goal of the book is to get Godly wisdom. The Hebrew word means "*that which controls or makes firm.*" It has the meaning of practical, moral intelligence, which will produce strength of character. It is knowledge which will fashion one's life.
3. "*Instruction*" refers to method and process. It has the meaning of acting out wisdom. It is also translated "*discipline.*"
4. "*Understanding*" comes from the root word which means "*to be able to distinguish, or separate, good from evil.*"
To "*receive the instruction of wisdom,*" verse 3 tells us these things will result:
 1. "*Justice*" - a word meaning a judge who rules what is right and what is wrong, meaning to do the **right** thing.
 2. "*Judgment*" a legal term meaning "*to do what is just.*"
 3. "*Equity*" - meaning doing what is "*fair,*" coming from a word meaning to make smooth, straight or level.

The Book of Proverbs, if studied and applied, will give one wisdom, moral character and discipline, as he actively pursues this Godly wisdom, and it will enable him to see things from God's point of view and manifest itself in being **right, just** and **fair** in all of life's situations.

ECCLESIASTES

The Book of Ecclesiastes is God's record of man's argument about life - his experience and reflection about life while out of fellowship with God. The Book of Ecclesiastes shows the utter fallacy of pursuing worldly pleasures, attempting to make these things the chief end in life - or the source of happiness. The Book of Ecclesiastes shows that the final conclusion of life is to the fear God and keep His commandments. This Book of Ecclesiastes shows what the chief pursuit in life, the only eternal rewarding pursuit is.

The Book of Ecclesiastes was written in Palestine about 1000 B.C. by Solomon (1:1, 12; 2:7-9; 12:9-10). It records Solomon's reasoning *under the sin* while he was in a backslidden condition. (2:10-22; 3:18-22; 7:23).

The word "*Ecclesiastes*" means preacher. It seems that Solomon refers to himself as "*a preacher*," as he teaches publicly the lessons he learned after his sad experience of backsliding.

Solomon wrote three Books - the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Songs of Solomon. In the Book of Proverbs one learns about the wisdom which has its source in God. **Now**, in Ecclesiastes we read about "*natural*" wisdom, attempting to seek truth and happiness, apart from God.

Solomon. He wrote the Book of Proverbs during the early part of his reign, when he walked with God, however, he wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes during the latter part of his reign when sin had separated him from God. In the Book of Proverbs there is heard from his lips a note of joy and contentment as he meditates upon the blessings of divine wisdom, however, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, we hear a note of sadness, despair and perplexity as he sees the failure of natural wisdom to solve human problems from God (1 Kings 11:1-8). Solomon still retained riches and wisdom. Possessed of these he began his quest for truth and happiness, but he seeks these things apart from God! The result of this quest is expressed in the ever-recurring phrase "*all is vanity*." This phrase means "*emptiness*," or "*worthlessness*."

The Book of Ecclesiastes teaches, above all else, the emptiness of everything apart from God. One can easily note that the word "*vanity*" is a key word, used 37 times and does not mean only foolish pride, but, rather, it has the meaning of "*emptiness of everything apart from God*."

Ecclesiastes says to us, "*Love not the world neither the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*" - 1 John 2:15-16

Solomon learned the following truth which sums up the theme of the Book of Ecclesiastes: **Without God's blessings, wisdom, position, and riches do not satisfy, but, rather, bring weariness and disappointment.**

The Book of Ecclesiastes can be structured as follows:

1. The Theme - "*All is vanity*" {empty} - Chapter 1:1-3
2. Seeking Satisfaction in Life - Chapters 1:4 through 12:12
 - (A) Through nature and science - Chapter 1:4-11
 - (B) Through wisdom and philosophy - Chapter 1:12-18
 - (C) Through pleasure - Chapter 1:1-11
 - (D) Through materialism - Chapter 2:12-26
 - (E) Through fatalism and self-centeredness - Chapters 3:1 through 4:16
 - (F) Through religion - Chapter 5:1-8
 - (G) Through wealth - Chapters 5:9 through 6:12

(F) Through morality - Chapters 7:11 through 12:12

3. A spiritual admonition - Chapter 12:13-14

In reading the Book of Ecclesiastes, one will find together with much sound teaching, must that is at variance with other teaching of the Bible. (For example 2:24) One should keep in mind that the Book of Ecclesiastes is the **inspired record** of the **uninspired utterances** of a "*natural*" man, reasoning about human experience and divine providence. In the same way the Bible contains many utterances of wicked men - the **utterances** are uninspired, but the **record** is inspired.

1. THE VANITY OF HUMAN PLEASURE AND WISDOM - (Chapter 1 and 2)

Solomon, in 1:1-3, gives the theme of his discourse, which is the "*vanity*" [or *emptiness*] of all human effort and endeavor. All effort is vain, because the mind that would try to search out the secrets of life, apart from God, can never be satisfied. Men come and go without discovering the solution of life's problems. The world continues to exist with its unsolved mysteries (1:4-18). The conclusion is that men's *theoretical* wisdom fails.

In Chapter 2, Solomon applies his *practical* wisdom to the problem of finding happiness, or satisfaction in life. He tries mirth (2:1-2), wine (2:3), building (2:4), wealth and music (2:5-8), however, the result of his quest is stated in verse 11 - **disappointment!** He is filled with despair and weariness as he sees that with all his wisdom, he is not any better off than a fool in his attempt to solve the problems of life (2:12-19). As he considers that the riches which he has labored so hard to accumulate and which have not satisfied, he will have to leave to one who has not worked for them, he is overwhelmed with the sense of the emptiness and worthlessness of all of his efforts (2:20-23). He comes to the conclusion that the best thing possible for the "*natural*" man, is to get the greatest amount of pleasures out of this life, at the same time doing his best to live a rather moral life (2:24-25).

2. EARTHLY HAPPINESS, ITS HINDRANCES AND MEANS OF ADVANCEMENT

- Chapters 3 through 5

Solomon reasons that in order to attain to happiness, one must rejoice in its blessings and make a righteous use of them (Chapter 3). At best, human happiness is limited, because all human action and effort is restricted by and depends on an unchangeable higher law. Natural wisdom comes to the conclusion, "*Whatever comes, whether good or evil, must come, because everything has its time. Man cannot change this order, so he might as well submit to it and derive all the happiness he can from life*" (3:1-15).

True happiness is restricted because of the natural man's ignorance of the things of the future life. So uncertain to the natural man is the hope of a future life that he wonders whether he is any better off than the animals in this respect (3:15-21). Because of this uncertainty of a life beyond, the natural man reasons that there is nothing better for him to do than to just enjoy the life that now is (3:22).

In Chapter 4, Solomon begins to name the hindrances to happiness (4:1-16), mentioning the personal misfortune of many men (4:1-6), the evils of social life (4:7-12), and the evils of civil life (4:13-16).

In Chapter 5, Solomon suggests that happiness is to be attained by devotion to the worship of God (5:1-7), by refraining from injustice and violence (5:8-17), and by a temperate enjoyment of the pleasures and treasures of life granted by God (5:18-20).

3. TRUE PRACTICAL WISDOM - Chapters 6: through 8:15

True wisdom does not consist in striving after earthly sources of happiness (6:1-12), because even those who possess wealth do not attain to a true lasting enjoyment of them (6:1-6), and never escape from the feeling of their emptiness and of the uncertainty of the future (6:7-12).

True wisdom consists in a contempt of the world and foolish lusts (7:1-7), in a patient calm and resigned spirit (7:8-14), and in an earnest fear of God and a sincere acknowledgment of sin (7:15-22).

This wisdom must be preserved in spite of the lusts of the world (7:23-29), in spite of the temptations to disloyalty and rebellion (8:1-8), and in spite of oppression and injustice (8:9-15).

4. THE RELATION OF TRUE WISDOM OF THE LIFE OF MAN

- Chapters 8:16 through 10:20

God's dealings with man are sometimes mysterious (8:16 through 9:6), however, that should not discourage the wise man from taking an active part in life, rather, he should enjoy this life and use it profitably (9:7-10). Though the result of human labor is sometimes uncertain, men should not be discouraged in his search for wisdom (9:11-16).

In the presence of the insolence, pride and violence of fortunate fools, the wise man should keep his peace of mind by silence and modesty (9:17 through 10:20).

5. THE CONCLUSION - Chapters 11 through 12:7

After man's reasoning . . . some of which are true . . . others are only partially true . . . and some of absolutely false . . . he comes to a conclusion, which represents the best that the "*natural*" mind, apart from divine revelation, is capable of in its attempt to attain true happiness and favor with God.

They are as follows:

1. Faithfulness in benevolence and in one's calling (11:1-6).
2. A calm and contented enjoyment of this life (11:7-10).
3. The fear of God for young and old in view of a coming judgment (12:1-7).
4. The fear of God and the keeping of His commandments (12:13-14).

SONG OF SOLOMON

Instead of "*Song of Solomon*," the Hebrew Bible entitles this Book, "*Song of Songs*," evidently so called because of the fact that of all of Solomon's one thousand and five (1,005)

songs, according to 1 Kings 4: 32, this song is the greatest of them all. This Book is more than a collection of songs. It is a love story, glorifying true, natural affection, and pointing to the sanctity of marriage.

That this story has a typical significance may be inferred from the fact that, under the figure of the marriage relation is described God's love for Israel - (Hosea, chapters 1, 2 and 3; Isaiah 62:4) and, also, Christ's love for the Church - (Matthew 9:15; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 19:7 and 21:2). So then the theme of this Book suggests, **The love of the Lord for His people as typified by the love of the bride and bridegroom.**

In reading this Book, one should keep in mind that he is reading an oriental poem, and that Orientals are given to a plainness of speech in the most intimate of matters - a plainness of speech which is foreign (even, distasteful) to some of the Western world. Delicate and intimate as the language is in many places, it should be noted that there is nothing here that would offend the most modest Oriental.

This Song of Solomon is undoubtedly a love-song, but, nevertheless, it is very pure and beautiful. There are those who would find indecencies in whatever literature they might seek for it. However, to those who live lives of simple purity, this song is full of beauty as it utters the language of love. As to spiritual experience, this song express the relation of those who have been wooed by God in Christ, and thus have come to love and know Him.

At times, the drama of the Song of Solomon is difficult to interpret because of the hidden identity of the speakers and the length of the speeches are not always disclosed.

There are two solutions of this puzzling problem. One provides for **two principle characters**, and the other, which we have chosen, finds in this drama, **three principal characters**:

- (1) The Shepherd, representing Christ;
- (2) The Shulammite, representing the Christian; and
- (3) King Solomon, representing the world.

Solomon, realizing that his worldliness was leading people away from God, sought to make amends by warning them through this drama. Those faithful to God are identified with the Shulammite, true to her unseen lover; while most of the people, like the women of the harem, are absorbed with the splendor of the earthly king. Only Solomon would have dared to thus picture himself as a spiritual detriment to his people.

Jesus said to read the Old Testament Scripture, for they testify of Him, and nowhere is that more obvious than in this precious Book of the Song of Solomon, To receive the wealth of benefit to be found in this Book, one must be constantly alert to see where Christ fits into the story. To keep the spiritual identity of the Shepherd in constant view is important, if we are to receive the valuable lessons in this book.

The Book of the Song of Solomon was written about 1,000 B.C. by king Solomon.

This Book contains a literal story, put into a poem. The song begins with Solomon visiting in the northern part of his kingdom. At Shunem he finds a shepherdess with whose beauty and charm he was so captivated that he takes her to Jerusalem, hoping to win her for his queen of queens. However, having already been promised to a shepherd of her own community, she proves faithful to his love, she is finally married to him with the sanction of the king and her own family.

The Story Begins - The Background

Wealth is an insatiable master! The man who possesses it will feel the sting of its lash as it urges him forth on a never-ending search for something more, something that will add to his own store and cause it to surpass that of others. For years this exacting force had held King Solomon in its power and had given him no peace.

He had built cities with vineyards, gardens and orchards in which he planted all kinds of fruits. He had constructed unexcelled reservoirs and palaces. He had secured hosts of servants, men and women singers, rare musical instruments of all sorts, and great possessions of large and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before him. He had filled his storehouse with gold and silver, and with the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces.

However, the result of the demands of his ambition, Solomon turns his back on the Law of Moses, and sought far and near for those whose feminine charms graced the courts of other lands, bringing them to his harem. They were a collection, as he himself said, of "*virgins without number*" (Song of Solomon 6:8).

Occasionally he came from his own sumptuous apartments and selected a favorite from among these court ladies to return with him and keep him company. Happy and much to be envied was the woman upon whom his favor fell; to win it was the chief aspiration of each of his queens and concubines and maidens.

THE SETTING

There's an air of suppressed excitement throughout the harem, as scores of beautiful women loitered here and there in the magnificent rooms, each in herself a picture to which, not only nature, but, also the best that cosmetics could accomplish had contributed with masterly and painstaking touches to her beauty. Under foot were the floors of cedar which had come from the forests of Lebanon, and beneath there were the great and costly foundation stones of the palace, cut from solid rock. The walls were hung with the richest of tapestries; and furnishings were of purple, the finest of linen, silver and gold; and even the ceilings speaks of the wealth of their royal owner, whose income was said to approach twenty million dollars each year.

THE TITLE

Song of Solomon 1:1, "*This song of songs, more wonderful than any other, was composed by King Solomon:*

It was the anticipation of an impending visit from Solomon that arouses the harem ladies from their lethargy upon this particular day. In each heart there burned the hope that her hour of triumph had come. One young woman is frankly proclaiming her desire to be selected by the king as the story begins.

THE NARRATIVE

The Song is introduced by the Shulammitte maiden who was brought into Solomon's tents, she soliloquizes of her shepherd lover, "*Kiss me again and again, for your love is sweeter than wine. How fragrant your cologne, and how great your name! No wonder all the young girls love you. Take me with you; come, let's run! The king has brought me into his palace. How happy we will be! Your love is better than wine. No wonder all the young girls love you!*" (1:2-4).

In the midst of these elegantly arrayed women there was ushered a sunburned country girl, the Shulammitte. For a new face to appear in the harem was no novelty, but usually it was that of a foreign princess of a person accustomed to the luxury of palaces. This, however, was a maiden of humble origin from Shunem, a place nearby. She becomes conscious at once of the contrast between her own appearance and that of those about her, and with downcast eyes she continues to speak, this time to the ladies of Solomon's court:

"I am dark!, but, you are beautiful, O girls of Jerusalem, I am as dark as the ugly tents of Kedar and you girls are as lovely as the silken tents of Solomon . . . [the embarrassed Shulammitte continues] . . . "Don't look down on me, you city girls, just because my complexion is so dark - the sun has tanned me. My brothers were angry with me and sent me out into the sun to tend the vineyards, but see what it has done to me" (1:5-7).

Her dark skin ceases to be a source of annoyance to the captive maiden, however, for all the skills of the apothecary are put at her disposal to improve it, and new silken robes, with their elaborate embellishments of beaded jewels and precious metals, are such that gladdened the hearts of princesses and queens, but the thoughts of the Shulammitte were not held by dainty garments, rare perfumes and priceless gems, ***because out in the Lebanon hills, heading his flocks, there was the one object of her longing, and for him her heart craved!***

This beloved shepherd is no ordinary man of the sheepfolds, but, rather, he was one so picturesque, so noble, so winsome and with a heart so true that nothing which earth's richest, wisest, most honored sovereign could tempt her for a moment to forget her joy in him. Since her childhood he had loved her, and one day under the apple tree which stood beside her mother's cottage, they had acknowledged their love and pledged their love. Other men, even the king in all his splendor, seemed common beside him, and the possession of material things was as nothing in comparison to her rapture in the consciousness of his love!

The Shulammitte was eager to make apparent to Solomon the strength of her attachment for the matchless shepherd, for she must extract herself from the royal net, that she might marry her rustic lover, and go to live with him.

As a number of the harem ladies gather around her, she begins her campaign for freedom, addressing her distant shepherd, she says, as she speaks in deep thought,

"Tell me, O one I love, where are you leading your flock today? Where will you be at noon? For I will come and join you there instead of wandering like a vagabond among the flocks of your companions." . . . [One of the ladies from Solomon's harem asks] . . . "If you don't know why your lover is, O most beautiful

woman in all the world, follow the trail of the flock to the shepherds' tents, and there feed your sheep and their lambs . . . [In other words, "If you didn't know where your shepherd lover was, why didn't you take your flock to where his tent's were?" (1:7-8)

Solomon then arrives to inspect his new acquisition, and he says:

"What a lovely filly you are, my love! How lovely your cheeks are, with your hair falling down upon them! How stately your neck with that long string of jewels. We shall make you gold earrings and silver beads," (1:9-11).

Solomon expresses his admiration for her by comparing her to the beautiful decorated horses of Pharaoh's chariots, saying her cheeks were lovely with rows of jewels and her neck with chains of gold, and promising to make her bead-rows of gold and points of silver. Solomon promises to make ornaments of gold, silver, and jewels for her which would take the place of the strung beads of her rustic attire. However, the Shulammite girl has not forgotten the task which she had set for herself, and so, as soon as Solomon leaves, she speaks to her beloved shepherd,

"The king lies on his bed, enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume, but my beloved one is a sachet of myrrh lying between my breasts. My beloved shepherd is a bouquet of flowers in the gardens of Engedi . . . [famed for its fragrant shrubs] . . . [The shepherd speaks] . . . "How beautiful you are, my love, how beautiful! Your eyes are soft as doves." . . . [The Shulammite girl speaks out again] . . . "What a lovely, pleasant thing you are my beloved shepherd, lying here upon the grass, shaded by the cedar trees and firs" (1:12-17).

The Shulammite maiden claims to be like a wild flower of the field, *"I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley."* . . . [The shepherd answers her by referring to the comparison she made of herself and declared that, like the lily which excels the thorns among which it grows, she, likewise, excels her companions] . . . *"Yes, a lily among thorns, so is my beloved as compared with any other girls"* . . . [She replies] . . . *"My lover is an apple tree, the finest in the orchard as compared with any of the other youths. I am seated in his much-desired shade and his fruit is lovely to eat. He brings me to the banquet hall, and everyone can see how much he loves me. Oh, feed me with your love - your 'raisins' and your 'apples' - for I am utterly lovesick. His left hand is under my head and with his right hand he embraces me"* (2:1-6).

Solomon, realizing the futility, at least for the present, of any further effort to win her, turns his attention elsewhere, and the Shulammite, separated, again, from her lover and back in the royal tents, speaks to the women about her and tells them of her love for her shepherd,

"O girls of Jerusalem, I adjure you by the gazelles and deer in the park, who follow their own instincts, that you do not attempt to stir up, or awaken my love, until it pleases" (2:7).

As she reminisces, she is so homesick and uncomfortable in her false position, that she cannot imagine herself at home again and mentions the recurrence of a sweet memory, she vividly pictures.

"Ah, I hear him - my beloved! Here he comes, leaping upon the mountains and bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or young deer. Look, there he is behind the wall, now

looking in at the windows. My beloved said to me, 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers are springing up and the time of the singing of birds has come. Yes, spring is here. The leaves are coming out, and the grapevines are in blossom. How delicious they smell! Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.' My dove is hiding behind some rocks, behind an outcrop of the cliff. Call to me and let me hear your lovely voice and see your handsome face. The little foxes are ruining the vineyards. Catch them, for the grapes are all in blossom" (2:8-15).

This enthusiasm for her shepherd arouses the interest and the curiosity of the others of the harem, and when they ask her where he was to be found that they might see him, she answers,

"My beloved is mine and I am his. He is feeding among the lilies! . . . [She, longingly addressing her absent shepherd] . . . " Before the dawn comes and the shadows flee away, come to me, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices. One night my lover was missing from my bed. I got up to look for him but couldn't find him. I went out into the streets of the city and the roads to seek him, but I searched in vain. The police stopped me, and I said to them, 'Have you seen him anywhere, this one I love so much?' It was only a little while afterwards that I found him and held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my childhood home, into my mother's old bedroom. I adjure you, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and deer of the park, not to awake my lover. Let him sleep" . . . [one of the occupants of the harem glancing out of the window sees King Solomon's bridal coach approaching, the Shulammitte girl asks] . . . "Oh, Women of Jerusalem, Who is this sweeping in from the deserts like a cloud of smoke along the ground, smelling of myrrh and frankincense and every other spice that can be bought? . . . [one of the women answers] . . . "Look, it is the chariot of Solomon with sixty of the mightiest men of his army surrounding it. They are all skilled swordsmen and experienced bodyguards. Each one has his sword upon his thigh to defend his king against any onslaught in the night. For King Solomon made himself a chariot from the wood of Lebanon. Its posts are silver, its canopy gold, the seat is purple; and the back is inlaid with these words: 'With love from the girls of Jerusalem! Go out and see King Solomon, O young women of Zion; see the crown with which his mother crowned him on his wedding day, his day of gladness" (2:16 through 3:11).

The procession of Solomon returning from Shunem back to the city. Those in the procession, dressed in their white robes which flowed in the breeze looked like pillars of smoke in the distance, and the scent in the wind was like myrrh and frankincense and various powders from the merchants. The ladies of the court were commanded to go forth to meet and welcome their king back to the city.

The beloved shepherd comes to Jerusalem to rescue the Shulammitte. He obtains an interview, and again expresses his delight in her.

"How beautiful you are, my love, how beautiful! Your eyes are those of doves. Your hair falls across your face like flocks of goats that frisk across the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are white as sheep's wool, newly shorn and washed; perfectly matched, without one missing. Your lips are like a thread of scarlet - and how beautiful your mouth. Your cheeks are matched loveliness behind your locks. Your neck is stately as the tower of David, jeweled with a thousand heroes' shields. Your breasts are like twin fawns of a gazelle, feeding among the lilies" (4:1-5).

The Shulammitte proposes to return with her shepherd lover.

"Until the morning dawns and the shadows flee away I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense" (4:6) The beloved shepherd immediately offers assistance, emboldened by her beauty and by her faithfulness, he says, "You are so beautiful, my love, in every part of you" (4:7).

There is a complete change of character in this address of the beloved shepherd from that of the previous ones of the *sensuous king*. The shepherd does not waste words in compliments, but quickly states his purpose. He wants his *"bride to be"* to come down from the heights . . . and the tinsel . . . away from all that threatens her to him. When later he does warmly praise her, it is for the steadfastness of her love and the wealth of her spiritual fruits, which please and comfort him.

The shepherd speaks of her as a garden shut up within bolts and bars and a spring or a fountain, locked up from all but himself.

"Come with me from Lebanon, my bride. We will look down from the summit of the mountain, from the top of Mount Hermon, where the lions have their dens and panthers prowl. You have ravished my heart, my lovely one, my bride; I am overcome by one glance of your eyes, by a single bead of your necklace. How sweet is your love, my darling, my bride. How much better it is than mere wine. The perfume of your love is more fragrant than all the richest spices. Your lips, my dear, are made of honey. Yes, honey and cream are under your tongue, and the scent of your garments is like the scent of the mountains and cedars of Lebanon. My darling bride is like a private garden, a spring that no one else can have, a fountain of my own. You are like a lovely orchard bearing precious fruit, with the rarest of perfumes; nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, and perfume from every other incense tree, as well as myrrh and aloes, and every other lovely spice. You are a garden fountain, a well of living water, refreshing as the streams from the Lebanon mountains" (4:8-15).

The Shulammitte declares that all she has is for his pleasure in verse 16. Could it be that the reply of this impassioned speech came from the same tongue which so glibly refused the advances of the world's rich and most famous king? Oh, yes, because this Shulammitte girl recognizes in the noble shepherd a depth of soul, and a wealth of spirit which made Solomon's splendor seem like glittering tinsel. As the bud expands in the light of the sun, she joyfully yields to her shepherd the most sacred treasures of her heart. Her answer quiets his aching heart and brings him the blissful assurance which he seeks.

Her shepherd calls her *"a garden,"* and, so, she responds, *"Whatever will cause me to fit your companionship better" . . .*

"Come, north wind, awaken; come, south wind, blow upon my garden and waft its lovely perfume to my beloved. Let him come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits" (4:16).

The shepherd responds, now I know you are mine, *"I am here in my garden, my darling, my bride! I gather my myrrh with my spices and eat my honeycomb with my honey. I drink my wine with my milk. Oh, lover and beloved, eat and drink! Yes, drink deeply! (5:1).*

The Shulammitte falls asleep with her heart full of inexpressible joy. The next morning she tells her companions of a dream she had about her beloved shepherd.

"One night as I was sleeping, my heart awakened in a dream. I heard the voice of my

beloved; he was knocking at my bedroom door. 'Open to me, my darling, my lover, my lovely dove,' he said, 'for I have been out in the night and am covered with dew.' But I said, 'I have disrobed. Shall I get dressed again? I have washed my feet, and should I get them soiled?' My beloved tried to unlatch the door, and my heart was thrilled within me. I jumped up to open it, and my hands dripped with perfume, my fingers with lovely myrrh as I pulled back the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but he was gone. My heart stopped. I searched for him but couldn't find him anywhere. I called to him, but there was no reply. The guards found me and struck and wounded me. The watchman on the wall tore off my veil. I adjure you, O women of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved one, tell him that I am sick with love." . . . [The women of the harem ask the Shulammitte maiden] . . . "O woman of rare beauty, what is it about your loved one that is better than any other, that you command us this?" (5:2-9).

With cheeks glowing and eyes snapping, the Shulammitte maiden breaks forth in a torrent of praise for her matchless shepherd. And, in her desire to express her heart, she draws upon the resources of the palace and of the mountains for comparisons, and even these words are far too inadequate, as she does her best to describe what the eyes of her spirit has seen.

"My beloved one is tanned and handsome, better than ten thousand others! His head is purest gold, and he has wavy, raven hair. His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks, deep and quiet. His cheeks are like sweetly scented beds of spices. His lips are perfumed lilies, his breath like myrrh. His arms are round bars of gold set with topaz; his body is bright ivory encrusted with jewels. His legs are as pillars of marble set in sockets of finest gold, like cedars of Lebanon; none can rival him. His mouth is altogether sweet, lovable in every way. Such, O women of Jerusalem, is my beloved, my friend" (5:10-16).

Again, the harem ladies show their interest in the remarkable "person" whom the Shulammitte had championed with such unstrained praise, they too wanted to know about such a man, and they ask . . .

"O rarest of beautiful women, where has your loved one gone? We will help you find him . . . [She replies] . . . "He has gone down to his garden, to his spice beds, to pasture his flock and to gather the lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. He pastures his flock among the lilies!" (6:1-3).

During the discussion, Solomon enters and hears the impassioned defense of the shepherd by the Shulammitte, whose fervor is only intensified by the king's presence. All of Solomon's other loves could not cause him to forget the Shulammitte and he renews his wooing, not as an owner of a new possession, but as a suitor resolved to win her heart. Filled with admiration for her, and yet aware of a strength of purpose in her before which king Solomon is helpless, he listens until she finishes her speech, and then he says:

"O my beloved, you are as beautiful as the lovely land of Tirzah, yes, beautiful as Jerusalem, and how you capture my heart. Look the other way, for your eyes have overcome me! Your hair, as it falls across your face, is like a flock of goats frisking down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are white as freshly washed ewes, perfectly matched and not one missing. Your cheeks are matched loveliness behind your hair. I have sixty other wives, all queens, and eighty concubines, and unnumbered virgins available to me; but you, my dove, my perfect one, are the only one among them all, without an equal! The women of Jerusalem were delighted when they saw you, and even the queens and concubines praise you" (6:4-9).

The ladies of the harem are fascinated with the Shulammitte's unusual display of spirit and want to know how she happened to be there, a vineyard girl among princesses, so they ask:

"Who is this, arising as the dawn, fair as the moon, pure as the sun, so utterly captivating?" . . . [The Shulammitte girl replies] . . . "I went down into the orchard of nuts and out to the valley to see the springtime there, to see whether the grapevines were budding or the pomegranates were blossoming yet. Before I realized it, I was stricken with terrible homesickness and wanted to be back among my own people" . . . [the harem ladies answer] . . . "Return, return to us, O maid of Shulam. Come back, come back, that we may see you once again. Why should you seek a mere Shulammitte? Because you dance so beautifully" (6:10-13).

The Shulammitte's companions notice and comment on the attractiveness of her person:

"How beautiful your tripping feet, O queenly maiden. Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of the most skilled of craftsmen. Your navel is lovely as a goblet filled with wine. Your waist is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, yes, lovely twins. Your neck is stately as an ivory tower, your eyes as limpid pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is shapely like the tower of Lebanon overlooking Damascus. As Mount Carmel crowns the mountains, so your hair is your crown. The king is held captive in your queenly tresses" . . . [The king comes forward as if to take the Shulammitte in his arms saying] . . . "Oh, how delightful you are; how pleasant, O love, for utter delight! You are tall and slim like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters of dates. I said, I will climb up into the palm tree and take hold of its branches. Now may your breasts be like grape clusters, the scent of your breath like apples, and your kisses as exciting as the best of wine, smooth and sweet, causing the lips of those who are asleep to speak" (7:1-9).

With dignity that repulses the ardent king and kept him at a distance, the splendid Shulammitte had made herself mistress of the situation. With a finality which shows Solomon the futility of detaining her any longer, and with an exaltation of spirit which shamed the sensuous king and his companions to silence, she proudly states,

"I am my beloved's and I am the one he desires! (7:10)

The Shulammitte girl realizes that the hour of her release has come, and sends word at once to her wonderful shepherd that she is free to marry him. Looking forward to her shepherd's arrival, she eagerly pictures their meeting and says:

"Come, my beloved, let us go out into the fields and stay in the villages. Let us get up early and go out to the vineyards and see whether the vines have budded, whether the blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates are in flower. And there I will give you my love. There the mandrakes give forth their fragrance, and the rarest fruits are at our doors, the new as well as old, for I have stored them up for my beloved. Oh, if only you were my brother; then I could kiss you no matter who was watching, and no one would laugh at me. I would bring you to my childhood home, and there you would teach me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, sweet pomegranate wine. His left hand would be under my head and his right hand would embrace me. I adjure you, O women of Jerusalem, not to awaken him until he please" (7:11 through 8:4).

The shepherd loses no time in coming for his loyal bride-to-be, and soon they were on their

journey to the very spot where they first pledged their love, and there they renew their vows. Some observers, seeing them approaching, greet them,

"Who is this coming up from the desert, leaning on her beloved? . . . [As they sight the home of her childhood, the shepherd says] . . . "Under the apple tree where your mother gave birth to you in her travail, there I awakened your love. Seal me in your heart with permanent betrothal, for love is strong as death, and jealousy is as cruel as Sheol. It flashes fire, the very flame of Jehovah. Many waters cannot quench the flame of love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man tried to buy it with everything he owned, he couldn't do it" . . . [Gathered with her family and the wedding guests in her mother's cottage, the bride says to her brothers, when I was a little girl, you said,] . . . "We have a little sister too young for breasts. What shall we do if someone asks to marry her? If she has no breasts, we will build upon her a battlement of silver, and if she is a door, we will enclose her with cedar boards . . . [She answers] . . . "I am slim, tall, and full-breasted, and I have found favor in my lover's eyes. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon, which he rented out to some farmers there, the rent being one thousand pieces of silver from each. But as for my own vineyard, you, O Solomon, shall have my thousand pieces of silver, and I will give two hundred pieces to those who care for it" . . . [Now, the bridegroom, so long in the background, says to his bride] . . . "O my beloved, living in the gardens, how wonderful that your companions may listen to your voice; let me hear it too" (8:5-13).

Joyfully the radiant bride turns to the bridegroom, the one altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand to her soul and with unconcealed eagerness to begin her life of sweet and intimate companionship with him, she answers:

"Come quickly, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or young deer upon the mountains of spices" (8:14).

ISAIAH

We have come to the final section in our study of the Old Testament. The Book of Isaiah begins the final group of writings in the Old Testament. We have finished twenty-two Books and now we have come to the last seventeen, the Books of the prophets.

Reviewing for a moment, the first second of the Old Testament are seventeen in number, falling into a subdivision of:

The first **FIVE BOOKS** of the Old Testament (The "*Pentateuch*")
- Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Then comes twelve "*Historical*" Books - Joshua through Esther

After which comes five "*Poetic*" Books,

- Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon.

*These are sometimes referred to as the "**Middle Books**" because they come in the middle between two sets of seventeen Books!*

The last seventeen Books of the Old Testament are the Books of the Prophets and, like the first seventeen Books of the Old Testament, they fall in to subdivision of twelve and five.

FIVE - Major Prophets

TWELVE - Minor Prophets

The common idea today is that prophecy is a matter of foretelling, however, in Scripture, "*prophecy*" is **NOT** merely prediction. As we study these Books of the prophets, keep in mind that the word "*prophet*" does not mean "*before-hand*," but, rather, has the meaning of "*one who speaks in the place of another*."

A good example of this can be found in Exodus 7:1, where Aaron was to speak in the place of Moses, and God said, "*I have made Aaron thy brother to be thy prophet*."

Prophecy, in the non-predictive sense, is declaring a truth by the inspiration of God. Prophecy, in the predictive sense, is a declaring of the future which can only be by the direct inspiration of God. (Such as in Isaiah 2:1)

The supreme example of the Messiah-Prophet is described by God when He speaks through Moses and states, in Deuteronomy 18:15, "*The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers You must listen to him*." Peter, speaking in Acts 3:22-23, telling how Christ fulfilled Deuteronomy 18:15, states, "*For Moses said, `The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything He tells you. Anyone who does not listen to Him will be completely cut off from among His people.*"

The prophet dealt with the moral and religious life of people.

Many of the passages of the Book of Isaiah are among the finest in literature!

Because of the loveliness of the Book of Isaiah, some have studied this prophecy as a botanist studies flowers, dissecting and analyzing them. However, we must be extremely careful with our examination of this beautiful Book, that the unity is not forgotten. Like a botanist examining a rose, the different parts must not be pulled to pieces for examination, if the magnificence of the whole is to be obtained.

The Book of Isaiah is a miniature of the Bible, having 66 chapters corresponding with the 66 Books of the Bible; 39 chapters in the first section dealing with law and judgment, which corresponds with the message of the 39 Books of the Old Testament. The Book of Isaiah has 27 chapters in the second section, which corresponds with the 27 Books of the New Testament. One can see the similarity both in number and message of comfort and salvation through Christ. The theme of the first section is one of coming judgment upon Israel, and captivity because of sin and apostasy, and judgment on many Gentile nations as well. The theme then turns to the latter-day restoration of Israel under their Messiah. The theme of the last section is one of mercy, comfort, and eternal restoration under the Messiah.

Of all the prophetic writings the Book of Isaiah is the most beautiful and sublime. In none of the other Books do we obtain such a glorious view of the Messiah and of His kingdom. Because of its emphasis of God's grace and His redemptive work in relation to Israel and the nations, the Book of Isaiah has been called, "*The Fifth Gospel*," and its author, "*the Evangelist of*

the Old Testament."

The Two Divisions of The Book of Isaiah

The first division covers chapters 1 through 39, and the keynote of this first section is "*Denunciation.*" As one reads this first segment of Isaiah he can hear the rumblings of God's wrath against apostate Israel and against the idolatrous nations surrounding her. In these chapters are prophesied Israel's captivity by the Babylonians, and the tribulation and judgments of the last days.

The second division covers chapters 39 through 66, and the keynote of this second section is "*Consolation.*" This section contains prophecies of Israel's return from the Babylonian captivity and of their final restoration and gathering to Palestine in the last days.

The theme of the Book of Isaiah can be summed up as follows: *The wrath of God resulting in Israel's condemnation and tribulation; the grace of God resulting in their salvation and exaltation.*

The prophet Isaiah, of course, is the author and was called to the ministry in the reign of Uzziah (Chapter 6) His name, "*salvation of Jehovah*" describes his ministry and message. He prophesied between 757 and 697 B.C., during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and even during reign of the wicked king, Manasseh. Isaiah was a statesman as well as a prophet. He speaks and acts in connection with the public affairs of the nation of Israel. Tradition tells us that he was put to death by the wicked Manasseh by being sawed asunder.

THE FIRST DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The first division of the Book of Isaiah - (Chapters 1 through 39) - can be divided into two sections:

1. The condemnatory section, - Chapters 1 through 35

These Chapters contain, for the most part, rebukes of Israel's sins

2. The historical section, - Chapters 36 through 39

These Chapters contain the account of the Assyrian invasion, and God's merciful deliverance of Jerusalem and Hezekiah's healing.

These Chapters form a link between the, serving as an addendum to the first 35 Chapters. They record the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity (39:5-8), which was the penalty of Israel's sins condemned in Chapters 1 through 35. Because of this same prophecy, these Chapters - 36 through 39 - form an introduction to the second section which deals with Israel's restoration from captivity.

This first section of the Book of Isaiah (1-39) reveals:

1. The Judgment of God - God's Government

(A) Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem - Chapters 1 through 12

(B) Judgment on nations - Chapters 13 through 23

(C) Judgment on the world, ending in Israel's redemption

- Chapters 24 through 27
- (D) Warnings and promises - Chapters 28 through 35
- (E) Historical - Chapters 36 through 39
(See 2 Kings Chapters 18 through 20)

In this first division of the Book of Isaiah [1-39] Isaiah is given a divine revelation concerning prophetic points. He sees things to come to pass in his own time, however, he **also** sees the coming captivity by Babylon (39:6).

2. The Comfort of God - God's Grace

- (A) Jehovah and idols - Chapters 40 through 48
(Deliverance from captivity through Cyrus)
- (B) The Coming Messiah - Chapters 49 through 57
(Redemption through suffering and sacrifice)
- (C) Final restoration and promised glory - Chapters 58 through 66
(The future glory of the people of God)

In this section of the Book of Isaiah [40-66] Isaiah sees the coming of Christ, both Christ first coming [Chapter 7] and Christ's second coming [Chapter 11 and 61]. He sees and proclaims finally - the millennium and the new heavens and the new earth - Chapter 66.

This second division also is a **consolatory section** - Chapters 40 through 66. It contains a chastised Israel and promises of restoration and blessing.

1. Prophecies Concerning Judah and Jerusalem - Chapters 1 through 12

Isaiah begins his prophecy with a vigorous denunciation of the sins of Judah and Jerusalem. In chapter one he strikes the chief keynotes of the entire book. He describes Israel's utter apostasy, an apostasy so great, that were it not for the fact that Jehovah in His grace had left a remnant, the nation would have been exterminated as were Sodom and Gomorrah (1:1-9). Apostate Israel has still the form of godliness, but it is simply an empty formality which is a stench in Jehovah's nostrils (1:10-15). Then follows a promise of pardon (1:16-23), and a promise of restoration through judgment (1:24-31).

Chapter 2 through 4 contain three pictures of Zion:

- (A) Her exaltation in the last days (2:1-4), after the ushering in of the millennial kingdom.
- (B) Her present condition of ungodliness, pride and idolatry (2:5 to 4:1)
- (C) Her purification by the fires of judgment in the last days (4:2-6)

Isaiah continues his denunciation of the sins of Judah and Israel (Chapter 5).

- (A) In the Parable of the Vineyard is shown Israel's punishment for their failure

to fulfill the responsibilities that their blessings and peculiar privileges have laid upon them - 5:1-7 (Compare this with Matthew 22:23-46).

- (B) Six woes are pronounced against the nations (5:8-24); against the miserly rich (5:8-9), against lovers of pleasure (5:11-12), against skeptics (5:12-19), against preachers of false doctrine (5:20), against the self-righteous (5:21), and against unjust judges (5:22-23).
- (C) Judgment against the nation is prophesied in the form of foreign invasion (5:25-30).

Chapter six contains the account of Isaiah's call to the ministry:

- (A) The vision - the glory of Christ (6:1-4) Compare John 12:41.
- (B) The effect of the vision - the prophet's consciousness of his own sinfulness (6:5)
- (C) His cleansing and his call - (6:6-8)
- (D) His message - the judicial blinding of Israel for their willful rejection of the light (6:9-10) Compare with Matthew 13:14; John 12:39-40 and Acts 28:25-28.
- (E) His cry "*How long will Israel's blindness last?*" (6:11).
The general import of the answer in verse 12-13 is that this condition will last until there has been a long captivity and exile and a return of a faithful remnant. (See Matthew 23:39; Luke 21:24; and Romans 11:25.)

Chapter seven to 9:7 contains a warning to the king of Judah against forming an alliance with the king of Assyria. The kings of Israel (of the 10 tribes) and of Syria had united to invade Judah (7:1) and were planning to place a strange king on the throne of David. Ahaz, fearing for the safety of Judah and for the continuance of the throne of David was preparing to make an alliance with the king of Assyria (1 Kings, Chapter 16). It was at this point that Isaiah was sent to Ahaz to reassure him and to exhort him to trust in Jehovah instead of the king of Assyria, for the plans of his enemies would be frustrated (7:1-9). Ahaz fears that the line of David will cease if his enemies succeed in capturing Jerusalem (7:6). Therefore Jehovah Himself gives him a sign that the house of David will endure forever. This sign is the birth of a child from a virgin (7:14 - Compare with Matthew 1:21), a child who shall be a light to those Israelites sitting in darkness (9:1-2), and who will reign over the house of David forever (9:6-7).

Chapters 9:8 to 10:4 contain an account of the calamities which Jehovah sent upon the ten tribes, but which have gone unheeded. These calamities were: foreign invasion (9:8-17), anarchy (9:18-21), and impending captivity (10:1-4).

Chapter 10:5-34 sets forth the Assyrian nation as the instrument of God's judgment upon Judah. The nation upon whom Judah once relied for help. (Ahaz sought alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria), however, this nation has now become a scourge against them. Though Jehovah has commissioned the Assyrian nation to chastise Israel, yet He will judge Assyria for their pride and arrogance against the One who had used them (10:5-19). Israel will then learn not

to put their trust in idolatrous nations (10:20). However severe Israel's chastisement may be in any age, God in His mercy will always leave a remnant who will form the kernel of a new nation (10:20-23). The Jews are not to fear the king of Assyria, who will march upon Jerusalem, for Jehovah will destroy him in a supernatural way (10:24-34). Compare 2 Kings Chapters 18 and 19.

As the prophet predicts Jehovah's deliverance of Israel from the Assyrian, the fulfillment reaches over to the end-time when Israel will be delivered from the *antitype* of the Assyrian - the Antichrist, and when the Messiah, the Son of Jesse, will establish all Israel in their land, and usher in the millennial kingdom (Chapters 11 and 12).

2. Prophecies of Judgments on the Nations - Chapters 13 through 23

The events prophesied concerning the nations in Chapters 13 through 23 were fulfilled in a few generations after their prediction. While these prophecies found a near fulfillment by Israel's return from captivity it should be remembered that *many of them have a future fulfillment in the last days*. the end of prophetic panorama is the millennium, the age bringing Israel's final restoration and subsequent exaltation. In comforting and exhorting the nation, the prophets pointed to that far-off event and, anything short of this, would not promise a permanent blessing for the nation.

With this thought in mind - "*Israel's final restoration*" - Isaiah, by the inspiration of the Spirit, predicted the **future** in the light of the **present** - he made present and imminent occurrences a type of future and remote events.

For example: When prophesying a **soon-coming** national tribulation, after restoration, Isaiah would usually look beyond these events into the future and foretell Israel's **final** tribulation and **final** restoration in the last days. This principle is known as the "*Law of double reference*," and is found operative in all prophecy in general. The following are the **TEN** nations mentioned in this section:

(A) **BABYLON** - Chapters 13:1 through 14:27

The destruction of the Babylonian Empire by the Medes and Persians is foretold. This event, to Isaiah is a foreshadowing of the destruction of the empire of Antichrist together with its emperor and his inspirer, Satan (14:9-17). This follows Israel's restoration (14:28-32).

(B) **PHILISTIA** - Chapter 14:28-32

The Philistines are warned not to rejoice over Israel's invasion by the Assyrians, for such will be their fate also. (14:32 looks forward to Israel's future restoration.)

(C) **MOAB** - Chapters 15 and 16

The destruction of Moab by the Assyrians is predicted within three years from the time of the utterance of the prophecy. (Note: reference to "*last days*" 16:5.)

(D) DAMASCUS (Syria) - Chapter 17

In addressing to Syria a warning of coming judgment, the prophet mentions also her ally, Ephraim (the ten northern tribes). For Israel there gleams a ray of hope of restoration in the last days - 17:6-7, and 13.

(E) ETHIOPIA - Chapter 18

This chapter describes Ethiopia as in great excitement, sending ambassadors all over the then known world, seeking help against the expected Assyrian invader. Isaiah tells these ambassadors to return and quietly watch Jehovah bring to naught the attempt of the Assyrians to conquer Judah.

(F) EGYPT - Chapters 19 and 20

Here are prophesied the judgments of Jehovah upon Egypt - civil war, subjugation beneath an oppressor's yoke and national decadence. Looking forward to the millennial days, Isaiah sees Egypt restored, and together with Assyria, forming an alliance with Israel - 19:18-25.

(G) THE WILDERNESS OF THE SEA - (Babylon) - Chapter 21:1-10

Another prophecy of Babylon's subjugation by the Medes and Persians.

(H) DUMAH - (Edom) - Chapter 21:11-12

Edom is seen in great anxiety making iniquity concerning the future. The answer is disappointing but compassionate

(I) THE VALLEY OF VISION - (Jerusalem) - Chapter 22

Isaiah pauses in his denunciations of the heathen to utter a warning against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were indulging themselves in luxury and merry-making while the enemy was standing at their door.

(J) TYRE - Chapter 23

Isaiah predicts that Tyre shall be laid waste, her commercial glory humbled, her colonies became independent of her, and she herself forgotten seventy years. However, there is also the promise of her restoration.

3. Prophecies of World Judgments Ending in Israel's Redemption - Chapters 24 to 27

In Chapter 24 Isaiah announces a general judgment of the land of Palestine and of the kings and nations of the earth, followed by Israel's restoration.

In Chapter 25 records the song that Israel will sing after their restoration, a song celebrating Jehovah's might in destroying the cities of their enemies and His faithfulness in defending Jerusalem. Jehovah will make a feast to all nations in Mount Zion, will remove the covering of spiritual blindness from their eyes, will abolish death, and wipe away all tears. All His enemies of whom Moab is typical and representative, will be destroyed.

Chapter 26:1-19 records Israel's song of praise and testimony after their restoration to Palestine. Jehovah calls upon the faithful remnant of Israel to hide in the shelter which He has prepared for them to shield them from the great tribulation (26:20 to 27:1) After the tribulation the true vineyard of Jehovah will be protected against the briars and thorns of foreign invasion (27:2-6). Israel's chastisement have been light compared to those of the other nations (26:7-11). After their chastisement they will be regathered (26:12-13).

4. Prophecies of Judgment and Mercy - Chapters 28 through 35

These Chapters contain a series of "*woes*" against Samaria, Jerusalem and Edom interspersed and ending with comforting promises of Israel's restoration and blessing.

- (A) Woe to the proud, scoffing, spiritual and civil drunken leaders of Samaria and Jerusalem - Chapter 28
- (B) Woe to Jerusalem, for the formality and insincerity of her worship - 29:1-14
- (C) Woe to those who attempt to make plans in secret, thinking to hide them for God
- 29:15-24
- (D) Woe to those who go to Egypt for help instead of trusting the Lord - Chapters 30-31
- (E) At this point the prophet introduces a picture of the millennial kingdom, where justice shall prevail, administered by Jehovah's righteous King, the Messiah - Chapter 32
- (F) Woe to the Assyrians for their treacherous dealing with God's people - Chapter 33
- (G) Woe to Edom, Israel's implacable foe, and a type of their enemies of the last days
- Chapter 34
- (H) Israel's glorious restoration to the Holy Land - Chapter 35

5. The Invasion and Deliverance of Judah - Chapters 36 through 39

This section forms an supplement to Chapters 1 through 36 in that it records the fulfillment of the predictions concerning the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians and her deliverance by the Lord (Chapters 8; 10:5-35 and 31:5-9). This same section serves as an introduction to Chapters 40 through 66 in that it records the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity (39:5-8), preparing the way for the promises of restoration.

This section - Chapters 36 through 39 may be summed up as follows:

- (A) Sennacherib's invasion - Chapter 36
- (B) Hezekiah's prayer and Jehovah's answer - Chapter 37
- (C) Hezekiah's sickness and recovery - Chapter 38

(D) Hezekiah's folly - Chapter 39**ISAIAH'S SECOND DIVISION - CONSOLATORY**

Chapters 40 through 66

1. Deliverance from Captivity through Cyrus - Chapters 40 through 48

This section predicts Israel's deliverance from Babylon by Cyrus, the king of the Persians who overthrew the Babylonian empire (See Ezra 1:4). The main thought running through these Chapters is: The greatness of Jehovah in contrast with the gods of the nations. the following is a brief summary of their contents:

- (A)** Chapter 40 is the key Chapter of this section. The prophet is exhorted to comfort Israel in view of the coming Deliverer (40:1-11), Jehovah's greatness (40:12-26), and His power to give strength to the weary (40:13-31).
- (B)** Chapter 41 has the central thought of Jehovah's power shown by His ability to predict future events (41:1-4 and 22-23)
- (C)** After predicting Israel's **temporal** deliverance through Cyrus, Jehovah now, in Chapters 42 through 43:13, promises **spiritual** deliverance through His Servant, the coming Messiah.
- (D)** This spiritual deliverance is to be effected by the blotting out of Israel's sins by the grace of God. This is the message of Chapters 43:14 through 44:23.
- (E)** In Chapters 44:24 through 45:25, there is a description of the mission of Israel's deliverer - Cyrus, king of the Persians, who is here a type of the Messiah. It should be noted that Cyrus was surnamed and commissioned by the Lord **150 years** before his birth (45:1-4).
- (F)** Chapters 46 through 47 describe God's judgments on Babylon, Israel's captor and oppressor.
- (G)** The argument of Chapter 48 is as follows: Since Jehovah, 150 years before, had predicted the restoration of Israel from Babylon through a heathen prince, the exiles could not claim that it was the power of idols that caused Cyrus to liberate them.

2. Redemption through Suffering and Sacrifice - Chapters 49 through 57

This section describes the Author of Israel's spiritual redemption - the Servant of Jehovah. The main theme is: redemption through suffering. A brief summary of these Chapters are:

- (A)** The ministry of Messiah, the Servant of Jehovah - Chapter 49
- (B)** The humiliation of the Messiah by rebellious Israel - Chapter 50
- (C)** Encouragement to the faithful remnant of Israel to trust in God both for

deliverance from their long Babylonian exile and from their present dispersion
- Chapter 51 through 52:12

(D) The rejection, humiliation, death, resurrection and exaltation of the Messiah
- Chapters 52:13 through 53:12

(E) Israel's repentance for their rejection of the Messiah to be followed by their
restoration - Chapter 54

(F) The result of Israel's restoration - the call of all nations to faith in the Messiah
- Chapters 55 and 56

(G) Comforting promises to the faithful remnant in Israel, and denunciation of the
wicked of the nations - Chapter 57

3. The Future Glory of the People of God - Chapter 58 through 66

The prevailing thought of this section is: the establishing of God's universal kingdom and
its triumph over every form of evil. A brief summary of its contents:

(A) An exhortation to practical religion as opposed to mere formality - Chapter 58

(B) An exhortation to Israel to forsake their sins which have separated between them
and God - 59:1-15

Seeing the helplessness of Israel in their iniquity and the inability of any of their leaders
to help them, God Himself, in the person of the Messiah, comes to rescue them from
their sins and from their enemies, after which He makes an everlasting covenant with
them and puts His spirit within them - 59:16-21

(C) Then follows a picture of Israel's glory after their affliction - Chapter 60

(D) Chapter 61 sets forth the twofold commission of the Messiah to bring the Gospel
of mercy at His first advent and, at His second advent, being judgment on unbelievers
and comfort to Zion.

(E) The appointing of intercessory prayers for Zion's restoration - Chapter 62

(F) Chapter 63:1-6 stands by itself. It gives a vivid picture of the Messiah as the
Avenger of His people at His second coming.

(G) Chapters 63:7 through 64:12 record the intercessory prayers of the faithful Jewish
remnant. They remind Jehovah of His mercy and grace to their nation in the past, and
plead for that same mercy and grace in the forgiveness of their sins and in the restoration
of their land.

(H) In His answer to the prayer of His people (Chapter 65:1-16), Jehovah justifies His
dealings in relation to His people. Because of Israel's apostasy He has cast them off and
turned to a people that did not seek Him neither were called by His name - the Gentiles.

In Israel, Jehovah distinguished the two classes: His own servants and the apostates. Only the former will be delivered while the later will perish.

(I) Isaiah closes his prophecy with a glorious prophecy of the coming of the millennial kingdom (65:17 through 66:24). People will grow old like the patriarchs; they will enjoy the possession of houses and vineyards (65:17-24). Even the nature of ferocious beasts will be changed (65:25).

Religion will become spiritual and universal and mystic cults will disappear and their adherents will be punished (66:1-5). Zion's population will be marvelously increased and the people will rejoice (66:6-14). After judging those nations that have gathered themselves against Jerusalem (66:15-18), Jehovah will send His servants to preach the glad tidings to them (66:19). Those who once persecuted Israel will transport them to Palestine (66:20), and from among those who were once enemies of the true religion, Jehovah will choose ministers to serve before Him (66:21), as representatives of a worship which will be universal (66:22-24).

JEREMIAH

The Book of Jeremiah was written in Palestine about 685-616 B.C., however, the Book does not follow a topical or chronological order, therefore, in studying this Book one should disregard the time element, and concentrate on the matters Jeremiah deals with in each Chapter.

The prophecy of Jeremiah might be considered the great book on *backsliding* and the dangers of apostasy. Jeremiah was the first prophet having continuous open warfare with his people. His theme seems to be that of judgment without mercy for those who become apostates and defy God. His message repeatedly refer to the immediate Babylonian captivity, the return of Israel after 70 years, another worldwide dispersion, a final regathering of Israel at the end of this age, and the reign of Messiah over Israel forever. [See 3:14-25; 7:1-7; 16:14-21; 17:21-26; 23:3-8; 30:1-31; 40:32-37 to 33:26.]

The purpose of Jeremiah's prophecy was:

1. To make clear to Israel the consequences of sin and apostasy;
2. To reveal to them their own future in the plan of God for man; and
3. To emphasize the fact that the destiny of every man is determined by his conformity or lack of conformity to God and His plan.

Jeremiah lived in a time very much like our own. Isaiah had told Judah in his prophecy that judgment was coming unless they turned to God. Isaiah and Jeremiah both carried messages of condemnation to apostate Israel. The tone of Isaiah is vigorous and severe, that of Jeremiah is mild and gentle. Isaiah's prophecy carries an expression of Jehovah's wrath against Israel's sin, while Jeremiah's prophecy expresses God's sorrow because of the same. In rebuking Israel, Isaiah dipped his pen in fire; Jeremiah, on the other hand, dipped his pen in tears. Isaiah, after his denunciation of Israel's iniquity, burst forth into raptures of joy at the prospect of the coming restoration. Jeremiah had a glimpse of the same happy event, but it was not sufficient to dry his tears or dispel the gloom of his sorrow for Israel's sinfulness, as a result of this, Jeremiah has been known as "*the weeping prophet*" (9:1; 13:17). Jeremiah's message was to notify the people of Judah that their judgment was now at hand and that nothing could save them from

punishment.

Who was Jeremiah

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth in Benjamin. He was called to the ministry while still young (1:6), in the 13th year of King Josiah, about 70 years after the death of Isaiah. Later, probably because of persecution of his townspeople and even of his own family (11:21; 12:6), he left Anathoth and came to Jerusalem. There and in other cities in Judah, he ministered for about 40 years. During the reigns of Josiah and Jehoahaz, he was allowed to continue his ministry in peace, but during the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah he suffered severe persecution. In the reign of Jehoiakim he was imprisoned because of his boldness in prophesying the desolation of Jerusalem. During the reign of Zedekiah, he was arrested as a deserter, and remained in prison until the taking of the city, at which time he was released by Nebuchadnezzar and allowed to return to Jerusalem. On his return, he tried to dissuade the people from returning to Egypt to escape what they believed to be an impending danger. They ignored his appeals and migrated to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. In Egypt he continued his efforts to turn the people to the Lord. Ancient tradition tells us that, angered by his continued warnings and rebukes, the Jews put him to death in Egypt.

Because of the lack of chronological order in the prophecies of the Book of Jeremiah it is difficult to give a satisfactory analysis of them. However, the following will help:

1. Jeremiah's Call and Commission - Chapter 1

- (A) Jeremiah's origin - from a priestly family living in Benjamin - 1:1
- (B) The time of his ministry - from the 13th year of Josiah's reign to the beginning of the Babylonian captivity - 1:2-3 (A period of about 40 years)
- (C) His call - to be a prophet to the nations - 1:4-5
- (D) His endowment - inspired by Jehovah - 1:6-9
- (E) His commission - to prophesy the fall and restoration of nations - 1:10
- (F) His message to Israel - to prophesy the coming Babylonian invasion (symbolized by the seething pot) and the imminence of that event (symbolized by the almond tree) - 1:11-16
- (G) Jeremiah's encouragement - protection against persecution - 1:17-19

2. General Message to Rebuke to Judah - Chapter 2 through 25

- (A) Jeremiah's first message to Judah - 2:1 through 3:5

In this message Jehovah reviews Israel's past, reminds them of their past blessings and deliverance, rebukes them for their present backsliding, self-righteousness and idolatry, and pleads with them to return to Him.

(B) Jeremiah's second message - 3:6 through 6:30

Jehovah reminds Judah of the fact that He cast the ten tribes out of His sight for their idolatry, and that instead of taking warning from the fate of the ten tribes, they have continued in the same sins - 3:6-10. The Lord then appeals to the Northern kingdom (in captivity) to repent, expressing His love for them and, making promises of restoration in the last day - 3:11 through 4:2. He then addresses to Judah an exhortation to repentance, and this appeal failing, He pronounces upon them the judgment of the Babylonian invasion - 4:3 through 6:30.

(C) Discourse in the Temple gate - Chapters 7 through 10

The subject of this passage is, because of Israel's formality in worship, their idolatry, their violation of God's law, their rejection of His messengers, their universal and incurable backsliding, Jehovah will give the land of Judah over to invasion and will scatter the inhabitants among the nations.

(D) The message on the broken covenant - Chapters 11 and 12

The occasion of this passage was the finding of the book of the law in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-23). The main theme of this message is God's curse upon Judah because of the violation of the Mosaic covenant.

(E) The message of the linen girdle - Chapter 13

By the symbolic actions of the prophet's putting on a girdle, burying it by the banks of the Euphrates, and then unearthing it, is typified Jehovah's election of Israel to be His own people, His rejection of them for their rebelliousness, and His humbling of them by the Babylonian captivity.

(F) Prophecies on the occasion of a drought in Judea - Chapters 14 and 15

Jeremiah, recognizing this drought as a judgment of God makes intercession for the people (Chapter 14). But so incurable has become Israel's iniquity that intercession will no longer avail, even though Moses and Samuel (two of Israel's greatest intercessors) were to plead for them - 15:1-10. Though the whole nation is to be a remnant, of whom Jeremiah is representative - 15:12-21.

(G) The sign of the unmarried prophet - Chapters 16:1 through 17:18

Jeremiah is commanded not to marry, as a sign of the imminence of God's judgments, the awfulness of which would make the single state preferable to the married. As further signs of the same event Jeremiah is commanded not to mourn (16:5), for since God had taken away peace from His people only a false consolation could be given; he is also commanded not to engage in legitimate merrymaking, for in view of impending judgment, such would be a mockery (16:9). Through the calamities prophesied in these Chapters, there gleam some rays of hope for Israel - 16:15-21.

(H) The message concerning the Sabbath - Chapter 17:19-27

The Sabbath was a sign of God's covenant between Himself and the children of Israel (Exodus 31:16-17). A violation of the Sabbath day would be equivalent to a violation of God's covenant, and would bring the penalty prophesied by Jeremiah - 17:27.

(I) The sign of the potter's house - Chapter 18:1 through 19:13

God's power to deal with the nations according to His sovereign will is symbolized by the potter's molding of vessels. God can mold Israel as a potter can a vessel. If they are rebellious He can mar them; if they repent He can remake them (Chapter 18). Since Israel persist in their apostasy God will cast them away. This is typified by the breaking of a potter's vessel - 19:1-13.

(J) Jeremiah's first persecution - Chapters 19:14 through 20:18

Jeremiah's prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem angers a priest's son by the name of Pashur, who himself had been prophesying Jerusalem's safety (20:6). He vents his anger on the prophet by inflicting on him the painful punishment of the stocks. For this act of persecution, Jehovah pronounces judgment upon Pashur, at the same time repeating the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity. The latter part of Chapter 20 reveals the effect of this persecution on the timid nature of Jeremiah. He was tempted to seal his lips and refrain from prophesying, however, the fire within him was stronger than the fire without, so he could not help but preach (20:9).

(K) The message to king Zedekiah - Chapter 21 and 22

This was uttered in response to Zedekiah's inquiry concerning Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. Evidently when inquiring of the Lord he had not the slightest intention of heeding the counsel or commandments that might be given, for the response to his inquiry is a message of severe judgment upon him (21:1-7). Jehovah then address the people offering to such who are willing to listen to Him, a means of escape from the coming destruction (21:8-10). He then offers a way of escape to the royal house from the coming judgment - an escape that can be affected by their executing judgment and righteousness (21:11-14). As examples of the sureness of divine retribution, Jehovah reminds Zedekiah of the fate of the three kings preceding him; probably repeating messages that had been delivered to them. These three kings were, Shallum, or Jehoahaz (22:11); Jehoiakim (22:18) Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin (22:24).

(L) Jehovah promises the coming of the righteous King, the Messiah - Chapter 23:5-6

God has been speaking about the unrighteous kings of Israel, He now promises the coming of the righteous King, the Messiah who shall restore Judah and Israel. Chapter 23 contains for the most part a denunciation of the false prophets, who, instead of exhorting the people to repentance by the warnings of impending judgment, were lulling them into a false security with promises of peace and safety.

(M) The sign of the figs - Chapter 24

Under the figure of good and bad figs is shown the future of those Jews of the first

deportation in the reign of Jeconiah and those of the final captivity in the reign of Zedekiah. The former would be restored and replanted in Palestine, the latter would be given up to the sword and would be scattered among the heathen.

(N) A prophecy of the seventy years captivity of Judah - Chapter 25:1-14

Jeremiah prophesies of the years of captivity, followed by the destruction of Babylon, Israel's oppressors.

(O) God's judgment of the nations - Chapter 25:15-38

Under the figure of a wine-cup of fury is set forth God's judgment of the nations.

3. More Detailed Messages of Rebuke and Judgment and of Restoration - Chapters 26-39

Contents of this section:

(A) Jeremiah's repetition of his message concerning the destruction of Jerusalem endangers his life. However, he is protected from the fury of the priests and the people by the judges of the city - Chapter 26

(B) Under the figure of yokes is set forth the defeat of Judah and the surrounding nations by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Chapters 27 and 28). This message, which was given during the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, was directed against those false prophets who were encouraging the people to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, and who were promising a speedy return of the exiles of the first exile.

(C) The message to the captives of the first exile (Chapter 29). This letter was written to instruct the exiles to prepare to make their home in Babylon for a period of seventy years, and to warn them not to give heed to those prophets who were falsely predicting a speedy return.

(D) After contemplating Israel's present captivity and coming deliverance, the prophet gazes into the future and sees Israel delivered from the final tribulation at the end of the age, restored to their land, under Messiah the son of David, cleansed from their sins and enjoying the blessings of the New Covenant that God will make with them (Chapters 30 and 31).

(E) As a sign of the coming restoration of the land, Jeremiah is led by the Lord to purchase a portion of land from one of his relatives (Chapter 32). Upon seeing the condition of the city surrounded by the Chaldeans, Jeremiah's faith seems to fail concerning the promise of restoration. Whereupon in his perplexity he goes before the Lord in prayer (32:16-25). Jeremiah is assured that nothing is too hard for the Lord, who is able to pardon and purge Israel's iniquity and restore them to their land. (32:26-44).

(F) Chapter 33 continues the theme of Israel's restoration. Their final restoration is assured by Jehovah's promise (33:1-14), by Jehovah's Branch, the Messiah (33:15-18), and by Jehovah's faithfulness in keeping His covenant (33:19-26).

(G) Chapter 34 contains a prophecy of Zedekiah's captivity and a denunciation of the

people of Jerusalem for the breaking of a covenant. The law of Moses required that Hebrew slaves be released after seven years' service. This command had long been violated. It seems that Jeremiah's preaching and fear of the coming captivity had stirred the people's conscience to the extent of making them willing to sign a covenant to release their slaves. But when Nebuchadnezzar withdrew his armies for a time, and the danger of invasion seemed to be past, the people showed the shallowness of their motives by breaking their agreement. Since they had made captives of others, they, too, would become captives, decreed Jehovah.

- (H)** The message concerning the Rechabites (Chapter 35). The Rechabites were descended from Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. They were Kenites and migrated with Israel to Canaan (Numbers 10:29; Judges 1:16; 4:11-17; 5:24 and 1 Samuel 15:6). They are held up as an example to the Jews, and the disobedience of Jehovah's divine law by the Jews is contrasted with the Rechabites unwavering obedience to the simple rules of living laid down by their ancestor.
- (I)** The writing of Jeremiah's prophecies in the days of Jehoiakim (Chapter 36). In a final attempt to bring Israel to repentance the Lord commanded Jeremiah to commit to writing all the prophecies he had uttered since the beginning of his ministry, in order that these prophecies might be repeated to the people. Jehoiakim's treatment of this writing was typical of the attitude of the nation at large and a sealing of their doom.
- (J)** Jeremiah's imprisonment (Chapter 37). The Chaldeans army that was besieging Jerusalem raised the siege in order to meet the armies of the king of Egypt who was advancing to attack them. Zedekiah, fearing lest, in the event of the Chaldeans overcoming the king of Egypt, they should return and besiege Jerusalem, sent to inquire of Jeremiah concerning the matter (37:3). Jehovah's answer was that the Chaldeans would certainly return and destroy the city. Jeremiah taking advantage of the departure of the besieging army, prepared to visit his native town, and in so doing was arrested as a deserter to the enemy. When the Chaldeans returned as Jeremiah had previously prophesied, Zedekiah again came to inquire of him. Again he was met with a discouraging reply. His treatment of Jeremiah (37:21) shows how honest reproof in the end gains more than flattery.
- (K)** While Jeremiah was still in the court of the prison (37:21) a deputation came to Zedekiah asking that Jeremiah be put to death because of the prophet's persistence in preaching that Jerusalem was doomed to destruction and that only those surrounding to the Chaldeans would escape. This message, they claimed, was weakening the courage of the people. Jeremiah was then cast into a dungeon, but was transferred to the prison court on the intercession of Ebed-melech. There he had a secret interview with Zedekiah in which he assured that monarch that his only chance of escape was his surrender to the Chaldeans (Chapter 38).
- (L)** Chapter 39 records the fall of Jerusalem, the final captivity of Judah, the death of Zedekiah, the deliverance of Jeremiah by Nebuchadnezzar, and the reward of Ebed-melech.

4. Messages After the Captivity - Chapters 40 through 45

- (A)** Offered the choice of going to Babylon with the prospect of worldly advancement or

returning to his own people, Jeremiah nobly chose the return to his own people. He returned and dwelt with Gedaliah whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor of the land. Gedaliah was brought news of a plot against his life, which he unwisely ignored - Chapter 40.

- (B) The plot of which Gedaliah had been notified was carried out and he was assassinated by Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah. Nethaniah gathered the remnant of the people that were in Mizpah and prepared to flee to Moab, but his attempt was frustrated by Johanan and the captains of the forces that were with him. Fearing that the Chaldeans would take vengeance on the remnant for the murder of Gedaliah, Johanan prepared to lead the people to Egypt.
- (C) Though the leaders had made up their mind as to their plans they inquired of the Lord as to what course they should pursue. Jehovah's answer was that their safety depended on their staying in Judea, and that their going to Egypt would mean their destruction - Chapter 42
- (D) Since this advice was contrary to their plans and intentions, the leaders ignored it and in the face of Jehovah's prohibition they went into Egypt, taking the remnant of the people with them. While in Egypt Jeremiah foretold by a type the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar - Chapter 43
- (E) Chapter 44 contains Jeremiah's last message to Judah. The remaining prophecies of the book concerning the Gentiles. It was not long before the remnant had yielded to the lure of Egyptian idolatry, and when rebuked for this by Jehovah, brazenly expressed their intention of sacrificing to the Queen of Heaven, that is, Venus. Because of this attitude on their part, their destruction is prophesied and as a sign of this, invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar is predicted.
- (F) Chapter 45 contains a message to Baruch delivered about 18 years before the fall of Jerusalem. The occasion for the message is stated in verses 1-3. The persecution arising from his writing and reading of the prophecies of Jeremiah in the reign of Jehoiakim had evidently discouraged him (45:3), and perhaps had thwarted some of his cherished plans and ambitions (45:5).

Jehovah tells him that since He is bringing evil on the whole land of Judah, Baruch is not to seek any advancement or good for himself there, but rather to rejoice in the fact that his life will be protected wherever he goes.

5. Prophecies Concerning the Nations - Chapters 46 through 51

The following nations are addressed:

(A) Egypt - Chapter 46

This Chapter contains three distinct prophecies. The defeat of Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, by the king of Babylon at the battle of Carchemish, on the Euphrates (46:1-12). It was on his way to Babylon that this Egyptian king encountered and slew King Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:20-24). The conquest of Egypt by the king of Babylon (46:13-26). The restoration of Israel 46:27-28).

(B) PHILISTIA and Tyre - Chapter 47

The invasion of these countries by Nebuchadnezzar is foretold.

(C) Moab - Chapter 48 - (Compare Isaiah Chapters 15 and 16).

Judgment in the form of invasion and devastation by the Chaldeans is pronounced upon Moab for the following reasons: their trusting in their works and treasures (48:7); their living in ease and luxury (48:11); their rejoicing at Israel's misfortunes (48:27); their magnifying themselves against the Lord (48:42). Their restoration in the last days is prophesied (48:47).

(D) Ammon - Chapter 49:1-6

Ammon is to be judged for seizing the land of Gad when the ten tribes went into captivity (2 Kings 17), when Judah not Ammon was heir to that territory (49:1); also for her pride of land and riches and her carnal security (49:4). This same nation assisted the Chaldeans in their attacks on Judah (2 Kings 24:2) and later exulted at her fall (Psalm 83:1-7). For Ammon restoration is promised in the latter days (49:6).

(E) Edom - Chapter 49:7-22

Jehovah pronounces the sentence of utter destruction upon a nation which always was Israel's implacable enemy (Numbers 20:18; Ezekiel 25:12-14, and Chapter 35; Amos 1:11 and Obadiah 1).

(F) Damascus, Capital of Syria - Chapter 49:23-27

This city was invaded by Nebuchadnezzar five years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

(G) Kedar and Hazor - Chapter 49:28-33

Kedar was the country of the Arabs; Hazor, a neighboring country.

(H) Elam - Chapter 49:34-39

The judgment of dispersion is pronounced against this nation, perhaps for helping Nebuchadnezzar against Judah. Their restoration is promised in the latter days.

(I) Babylon - Chapters 50 and 51 - (Compare Isaiah, Chapters 13, 14 and 47)

In the preceding chapters we learned that Jehovah used Babylon as a scourge upon Israel and upon the surrounding nations. But the fact of her being used by Jehovah will not save her from judgment for her sins (Jeremiah 27:7). Compare God's dealings with the Assyrian nation (Isaiah 10:4-34 and 37:36-38). For the record of the fulfillment of the prophecies found in Jeremiah 50:1 read Daniel, Chapter 5. Remembering what was said concerning the law of double reference, we may regard the fall of Babylon as typical of the overthrow of Antichrist's kingdom and his capital possibly a rebuilt Babylon. With Jeremiah 50 and 51 compare carefully Revelation 17 and 18.

6. Retrospect: the Captivity of Judah - Chapter 52

The account of the destruction of Jerusalem recorded in 2 Kings, Chapters 24 and 25; 2 Chronicles, Chapter 36; and Jeremiah, Chapter 39 is repeated in this 52nd Chapter of Jeremiah. It is fitting that the record of the event that drew so many tears from Jeremiah and which well-night broke his heart, form the conclusion of his Book.

LAMENTATIONS

This Book of Lamentations, written by Jeremiah, looks *back* to the same event which Jeremiah anticipated in the Book of Jeremiah, namely, the fall of Jerusalem. This Book of Lamentations is a Book of Mourning, and is an appendix to the prophecy of Jeremiah, recording the keen, heart-breaking sorrow of the prophet for the miseries and desolations of Jerusalem resulting from her siege and destruction. Jeremiah's soul was caused to grieve as he saw his people taken and the holy city destroyed. The grief and lamentations expressed in Jeremiah's prophecy find their culmination here in the Book of Lamentations. The river of tears that flowed from Jeremiah's heart becomes a torrent in this Book. The leading object of the Book was to teach the Jewish people to recognize God's chastening hand in their calamities and to turn to Him in sincere repentance. Jeremiah's mournful death march has been taken up by the Jewish nation, for they chant this Book every Friday at the wailing place in Jerusalem, and they read it in the Synagogue on the fast of the ninth day of Ab, the day set apart to mourn over the five great calamities that had befallen, the nation.

The Book gets its title from the Hebrew word [also the Greek word] which means "*to cry aloud*," or *lamentations*."

The Book of Lamentations appears in the Jewish grouping of the Old Testament in the "*Writings*" (Law, Prophets, Writings) and is part of the "*Rolls*." The "*Rolls*" are made up of the five Books which the Jews read publicly at Jewish festivals, which are: **THE SONG OF SOLOMON** - is read at Passover; **RUTH**, is read at the Feast of Pentecost; **ECCLESIASTES** - is read at the Feast of Tabernacles; **ESTHER** - is read at the Feast of Purim; and **LAMENTATIONS** - is read at the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Book of lamentations is a set of five poems. The Chapters (except the middle one, the 3rd chapter, have the same number of verses, that is, *twenty-two*, the third Chapter has *three times* the number of the others, that is, *sixty-six verses*. This is because there are *twenty-two* letters in the Hebrew alphabet. In Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 - each verse begins with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The 3rd Chapter, having *sixty-six verses*, runs triplets of verses (that is, the first three verses beginning with the first letter, etc.) The fifth Chapter contains *twenty-two verses*, but does not follow this same pattern.

CHAPTER 1 - The first poem, Jerusalem is represented as a weeping widow.

CHAPTER 2 - The second poem, Jerusalem is represented as a veiled woman who is mourning among the ruins.

CHAPTER 3 - The third poem, Jerusalem represented as, and by, the weeping prophet mourning before Jehovah the Judge

CHAPTER 4 - The fourth poem, Jerusalem represented as gold dimmed, changed, degraded

CHAPTER 5 - The fifth poem, Jerusalem represented as a suppliant pleading with the Lord

As mentioned before, this Book of Lamentations is used by the Jews today to breathe out their sorrow at the sufferings and dispersion of Israel. The Lamentations are still read yearly to commemorate the burning of the Temple. Every Friday, Israelites, old and young, of both sexes, gather at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, near the southwest corner of the old Temple grounds, where an ancient wall 52 yards in length and 56 feet in height, is still revered as a memorial of the sanctuary of the Jewish people. It is a touching sight to watch the line of Jews of many nations in their black gabardines, as a sign of grief, lamenting aloud the ruin of their House whose very memory is still so dear to them, and reciting the sad verses of Lamentations and suitable Psalms, amid tears, as they fervently kiss the stones. On the ninth of the month of Ab, [falling in our month of July or August], this lament, composed about six hundred years before Christ, is read aloud in every Synagogue over the world.

The Message of the Book

The mourning over Jerusalem because of her sin - 1:18-21
 - compare this thought with Luke 13:34-35 and 19:41-44
 Confession of sin - 3:59 and 5:15
 - compare with Matthew 10:32, as well as Romans 10:9

A ray of hope - 3:21-32 and 5:21
 - Babylon was the conqueror and Jerusalem the conquered.
 In the future - it will be glory for Jerusalem and doom for Babylon (See Colossians 1:4-5 and 27).

The mercy and goodness of God - 3:21-32
 - We can say with Jeremiah "*great is Thy faithfulness*" - 3:32
 - See 1 Thessalonians 3:3

EZEKIEL

Among the Jews taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in his second invasion of Judah (in 597 B.C.) was a man named Ezekiel. Daniel had been taken captive in an earlier invasion (in 606 B.C.). Ezekiel was to be the *prophet to the Jews in exile*, while Daniel served as God's ambassador to the court of the king.

Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was a priest as well as a prophet (1:3). He was thirty years of age when he began his prophetic ministry to the Jews gathered there in Babylon (1:1). He had been carried captive to Babylon together with King Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar about ten years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He had been captive in Babylon five years when he began prophesying (1:2). For six years he told of the coming fall of Jerusalem, and this takes up one-half of the Book - 24 Chapters.

Ezekiel made his home at Tel-Abib in Babylon. There he ministered to the exiles who, for the most part, resisted his words, clinging to the false hope of a speedy return. Tradition tells us that Ezekiel was put to death by one of the exiles whom he had rebuked for idolatry. The historical events

recorded in this book cover a period of 21 years from about 595-574 B.C.

Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon during the entire period of his ministry, which began seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and which ended about fifteen years after that event. Like that of Isaiah his message was one of denunciation and consolation. The central point of Ezekiel's predictions is the destruction of Jerusalem. **BEFORE** the destruction of Jerusalem Ezekiel's chief object was to call to repentance those living in careless security; to warn them against indulging the hope that, by the help of the Egyptians, the Babylonian yoke would be shaken off (Ezekiel 17:15-17); and to assure them that the destruction of their city and Temple was inevitable and fast approaching. **AFTER** the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's principal care was to console the exiled Jews by promises of future deliverance and restoration to their land; and to encourage them with assurance of future blessings.

Ezekiel's message

The departure of God's glory from Israel
in anticipation of coming judgment;
and the return of His glory
in anticipation of future restoration

There seems to be much mystery and imagery throughout the Book of Ezekiel, making interpretation difficult, however, careful study will reveal many clear teachings of highest value to the student of God's Word.

Ezekiel was commissioned by God to rebuke Israel in captivity for her many sins, for constant and ever deepening hardness against Him, and for rebellion against His Word. Ezekiel was inspired of the Holy Spirit, who gave him messages by direct revelation, to give many of his prophecies in twenty-five pantomimes. Ezekiel's prophecies are 4 general kinds. **FIRST:** Prophecies concerning the immediate captivity of Israel and the complete destruction of Jerusalem; and the reasons for such judgment. There are found mainly in the first 24 Chapters, with a few latter-day predictions. **SECOND:** Prophecies of judgment upon other nations for their part in the sins and rebellion of Israel (Chapters 25 through 32). **THIRD:** Prophecies concerning Israel in the last days just before and up to the coming of the Messiah and Armageddon, with a few predictions of immediate judgment by Babylon (Chapters 33 through 39). **FOURTH:** Prophecies exclusively of the millennial Temple and the eternal reign of the Messiah over Israel (Chapters 40 through 48).

1. EZEKIEL'S CALL - Chapters 1 to 3

(A) Ezekiel's vision - Chapter 1

Like that of Isaiah, Ezekiel's call was preceded by a vision of the glory of the Lord (Compare Isaiah 6). the living creatures mentioned in this chapter are the cherubim, an order of angelic beings whose ministry seems to be, in relation to mankind, the guardianship and vindication of God's holiness. (See Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18-22; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:14; 2 Samuel 6:2; 1 Kings 8:6-7; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalm 18:10; 80:1; 99:1 and Revelation 4:6-8.) [Compare Ezekiel 1:28 with Revelation 1:17]

Ezekiel saw the signs of judgment in the whirlwind and fire followed by the four Cherubims with four faces - the same living beings were at the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24) and who appear at the throne of God (Revelation 4:6-8) Each had four faces - *a lion, an ox, a man, an eagle*. Interestingly, when the Son of God became flesh, He was pictured in Matthew as the lion; in Mark as the ox; in Luke as the man; and in John as the eagle.

- (B) Ezekiel's commission and message - Chapters 2 through 3:9
As in the case of Isaiah, Ezekiel's message was one of condemnation to a disobedient people.
- (C) Ezekiel's responsibility - Chapter 3:10-21
Ezekiel is appointed as a watchman over the house of Israel, with a solemn warning against neglect of duty.
- (D) Ezekiel's second vision of the glory of the Lord - Chapter 3:22-27.
Ezekiel was not to begin immediately his ministry of preaching, but was to refrain from speaking till so instructed by the Lord. He was to abide in his house until he received from the Lord the revelations concerning Israel's fate.

2. THE FATE OF JERUSALEM AND OF THE NATION - Chapters 4 through 24

- (A) Ezekiel has commanded by the Lord to be silent until instructed to prophesy (3:26-27); but though silent concerning oral messages, he is commanded to speak to the nation by means of *symbolic* actions, or signs by visual aids to impress the people and cause them to remember the message (Chapters 4 through 6) as follows:
 - First**, by a tile, (or a "brick"), and an iron pan, (or "*flat iron griddle*"), Ezekiel acts out the siege of Jerusalem [4:1-3].
 - Second**, To signify the punishment that Israel was to bear for the period of 390 years in which they had sinned (from Jeroboam's establishment of idolatry until the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar); and Judah's punishment for her 40 years iniquity (beginning at Josiah's covenanting, 2 Kings 23:3-27, and ending at the events recorded in Jeremiah 52:30, Ezekiel lies on his side a day for each year of that period of idolatry and sin (4:4-8)
 - Third**, To signify the famine that is to prevail during the siege, Ezekiel eats his bread by weight and drink his water by measure (4:9-17)
 - Fourth**, By the sign of the cutting of Ezekiel's hair is symbolized the destruction of the people of Jerusalem by famine, pestilence, and the sword (5:1-17).
- (B) A series of messages predicting desolations upon the land and judgments upon the people
- Chapters 6 and 7
- (C) A vision of the destruction of Jerusalem - Chapters 8 through 11
 - First**, One of the causes of its coming destruction - the idolatry of its inhabitants (Chapter 8). The beast worship of Egypt (8:10); the immoral rites of the worship of Tammuz (8:14); Persian sun worship (8:16).
 - Second**, A vision of the slaughter of the people and the sealing of a faithful remnant
- (Chapter 9)
 - Third**, A vision of the scattering of the altar fire over Jerusalem, perhaps symbolic of the burning of the city (Chapter 10).
 - Fourth**, The departure of God's glory from Jerusalem - a sign of coming judgment
- (Chapter 11)
- (D) By the signs of Ezekiel's removing as a fugitive and his partaking of his food as if in time of famine, is set forth the nearness of Judah's captivity (Chapter 12). Then follows a denunciation of the prophets who falsely predict peace and a speedy return from captivity (Chapter 13), and of those leaders who with insincere motives inquire of the Lord concerning the same matter (Chapter 14).
- (E) Israel's worthlessness is set forth under the figure of a burning vine (Chapter 15), and her faithlessness under the figure of a harlot (Chapter 16).

- (F) In the parable of the great eagle is shown the punishment of Zedekiah's treachery in breaking his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar, and in calling the aid of Egypt in rebelling against him (Chapter 17).
- (G) Jehovah's vindication of Himself against the charge that He was punishing the present generation for the sins of their fathers (Chapter 18)
- (H) A lamentation over the fall of the house of David - (Chapter 19)
- (I) A review of Israel's history illustrating their faithlessness and Jehovah's suffering and faithfulness, and teaching that His fidelity is a guarantee of their future restoration, even though that restoration must come through the purging fires of tribulation (Chapter 20).
- (J) By the sign of the sighing prophet and the sword of God, is again repeated the warning of Jerusalem's coming destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (Chapter 21). Notice the prophecy of the overthrowing of the throne of David until Messiah come (verses 26-27).
- (K) An enumeration of Jerusalem's sins, which will bring her through the fiery furnace of affliction for her purification (Chapter 22) .
- (L) Israel's and Judah's apostasy and punishment is set forth under the parable of Aholah and Aholibah, the two faithless and adulterous women (Chapter 23).
- (M) Jerusalem is compared to a boiling pot and her inhabitants to the bones and meat within, producing a vile scum; this is typical of the seething wickedness of the city (Chapter 24:1-4). The destruction of her Temple, and pride of the nation, is symbolized by the Lord's taking away of Ezekiel's wife (Chapter 24:15-20).

3. PROPHECIES AGAINST THE NATIONS - Chapters 25 through 32

Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel has a message for the nations surrounding Israel (For instance, comparing Isaiah 13 through 23 and Jeremiah 46 through 51, one finds that these messages are of judgment based in most cases on these nations' treatment of Judah. The following nations are mentioned:

- (A) **The Ammonites** - Chapter 25:1-7
The cause of judgment: their rejoicing at Judah's calamity (25:3); the form of judgment: Invasion and desolation.
- (B) **Moab** - Chapter 25:8-11
The cause of Judgment: their insinuation that Judah was no better than the heathen who worshiped idols - an indirect thrust at Jehovah (25:8); the form of judgment: invasion.
- (C) **Edom** - Chapter 25:12-14
The cause of judgment: their attitude toward Judah in the day of their calamity (25:12); the form of judgment: retribution at the hands of Israel.
- (D) **Philistia** - Chapter 25:15-17
The cause of judgment: their taking advantage of Judah's calamity to vent their old hatred upon them (25:15); the form of judgment: destruction
- (E) **Tyre** - Chapters 26 through 28
The cause of judgment: rejoicing over Jerusalem's fall, in expectation of profiting by their loss (26:2); the blasphemous exultation of her prince (28:2, 6). Note in 28:12-19, Ezekiel looks past the prince of Tyre, to the one who is empowering him - Satan, the god and prince of this world; second, the form of judgment: invasion and destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and perpetual desolation.

(F) Zidon - Chapter 28:20-24

The cause of judgment: they were a pricking brier to the house of Israel (that is, they were the means of ensnaring the Israelites into sin and the instruments for punishing them) Compare Numbers 33:55; the form of judgment: slaughter and pestilence.

(G) Egypt - Chapters 29 through 32

The cause of judgment: the arrogance and pride of her king (Chapter 31); their promising help to Israel and the failing them in the emergency (29:6-7); the form of judgment: slaughter, captivity, abasement among the nations, foreign oppression, destruction of idols and permanent loss of native ruler.

4. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL - Chapters 33 through 48

Up to this point Ezekiel's message had been that of impending doom for Jerusalem and captivity for the people, however, now that his predictions have been fulfilled, the element of consolation predominates in his prophesying.

(A) Ezekiel's commission is renewed, and after the arrival of the news of the capture of Jerusalem, he is allowed to speak plainly to the people instead of preaching by means of signs and symbols.

- (B) A rebuke of the false shepherds of Israel who drive and oppress the flock, and the promise of the coming of the true Shepherd who will gather and feed the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Chapter 34).
- (C) The punishment of Israel's enemies, of whom Edom is representative, the gathering of Israel, their complete restoration to a restored land of Palestine and their conversion (Chapters 35 through 36).
- (D) By the vision of the valley of dry bones is symbolized Israel's present national death and future national resurrection, when the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel shall be united under King David and the whole nation bound to Jehovah by an everlasting covenant (Chapter 37).
- (E) Chapters 38 through 39 record the attack of the Gentile nations on Israel after they have been restored to Palestine.

Read these two chapters in connection with Zechariah 12:1-4 and 14:1-9; Matthew 24:14-30; Revelation 14:14-20 and 19:17-21. Russia is referred to in 38:2 (*Meshech*, or Moscow and *Tubal*, or Tobolsk). "*The chief prince*," is more correctly translated "*prince of Rosh*." and Rosh, Hebrew scholars nation of Russia

- (F) The glory of Jehovah which departed from Israel before their captivity, now departed from returns to abide in the Millennial Temple, of which we find a detailed description in Chapters 40 through 48.

DANIEL

The Book of Daniel is, for the most part, a prophetic history of Gentile world-power from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the coming of Jesus Christ. The prophets in general emphasize God's power and sovereignty in relation to Israel, and they reveal Him as guiding the destinies of His chosen people throughout the centuries until their final restoration. Daniel, however, emphasizes God's sovereignty in relation to the Gentile world-empires, and reveals Him as the One controlling and overruling in their affairs, until the time of their destruction at the coming again of His Son.

The vision revealed in the Book of Daniel is that of the overruling God, in wisdom knowing and in might working; of kings reigning and passing of dynasties and empires rising and falling, while God enthroned above rules their movements.

The theme of the Book of Daniel may be summed up as follows:

God revealed as the One controlling
the rise and fall of the kingdoms of this world
until their final destruction,
and establishing His own kingdom.

The Book of Daniel is the Old Testament "*Apocalypse*" while Revelation is then New Testament "*Apocalypse*." [*The word "Apocalypse" means, "an unveiling of the secret purposes of God."*] The secret purposes of God can never be known until they are revealed by God. The manner in which the events are unveiled in the Book of Daniel is mainly by visions. In the Book of Daniel the word "*vision*" or "*visions*" appear 32 times. Because of its many visions, the Book of

Daniel has been called, "*The Revelation of the Old Testament.*"

The visions in the Book of Daniel are prophecies of the Gentile world kingdoms from Daniel's day to the Millennium and eternal kingdom of God on earth. (See 2:38-45; 7:17-27; 8:20-25; 9:24-27; 11:40-12:13.) Daniel also records the history of Babylon and Medo-Persia under Nebuchadnezzar (2:1 through 4:37), Belshazzar (5:1-31; 7:1 and 8:1), Darius the Mede (6:1-28 and 9:1), and Cyrus and Persian (10:1 through 11:1).

Daniel sees the world kingdoms that were to oppress Israel from his day to the setting up of God's kingdom on earth.

The themes of the Book Daniel are the themes which are found in New Testament prophecy - namely, the manifestation of the man of sin [*the Antichrist*], the great tribulation, the return of the Lord, the resurrection and the coming judgments of mankind.

Daniel is distinctly the prophet of "*the times of the Gentiles*" - Luke 21:24. His vision sweeps the entire course of Gentile world rule to its end and onto the Messianic kingdom of our Lord.

The Author

Daniel was of the tribe of Judah and probably a member of the royal family (1:3-6). While yet a youth he was carried captive to Babylon in the third year of King Jehoiakim (2 Chronicles 36:4-7), and eight years before Ezekiel. Together with three other young men he was stationed at the court of Nebuchadnezzar for special training in the learning of the Chaldeans. There he attained to one of the highest ranks in the kingdom, a position which he retained under the Persian rule, which succeeded the Babylonian. He prophesied during the whole of the captivity, his last prophecy being delivered in the reign of Cyrus, two years before the nation's return to Palestine. Because of his unblemished life amid the corruptions of an oriental court, he is one of those mentioned by Ezekiel as outstanding examples of piety. Ezekiel also bears witness to Daniel's wisdom (Ezekiel 28:3).

The Book of Daniel covers a period from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus, about 73 years, from 607 to 534 B.C.

1. Introduction: Daniel and his companions - Chapter 1

Daniel's resolve. Daniel was a truly great man. As concerning personal holiness, he lived a blameless life amid the sensuality of an oriental court; as concerning wisdom and knowledge, he excelled the greatest of Babylon's wise men; as concerning position, he occupied one of the highest stations of the kingdom. Verse 8 reveals the secret of his success: "*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile him . . .*" It was customary among the Babylonians to throw a small part of food and drink on the earth as an offering to the gods, in order to consecrate to them the whole feast. For Daniel to have partaken of such food would have been to sanction idolatry; therefore, like Moses and Joseph, he "*choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.*" As in the case of Joseph, Daniel and his companions were well rewarded for their faithfulness.

2. God's control of the nations of the world in relation to their development and to His kingdom - Chapters 2 through 7

- (A) In response to an unexpressed desire on the part of Nebuchadnezzar to know the future of his great empire. God gave him a dream, which interpreted by Daniel, gave that monarch a revelation of the rise, progress and fall of Gentile world-power during that period described by Christ as "*the times of the Gentiles*" (Luke 21:24). But the "*the times of the Gentiles*" we mean that period of time during which world dominion is in the hands of the Gentiles instead of the Jews, and during which the Jews are under Gentile rule. This period began with the captivity 606 B.C., and will end with the coming of Christ. The succession of world empires composed of various metals. In the diminishing value of the metals composing the image may be seen the deterioration of world empires in relation to their character of government.

The dream which God gave to Nebuchadnezzar was of a great image, "*huge and dazzling, towering above you, frightening in appearance*" (2:31). This *image* we find one of the most deeply impressive, instructive object lessons described in the entire Bible.

The following is the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

Head of Gold is the Babylonian Empire (606-538 B.C.) Daniel plainly told the king of Babylon, "***You are the head of gold.***" This *first* empire of "*the times of the Gentiles*," the power of Nebuchadnezzar, was absolute, he could do what ever he willed (5:19). His empire was a **unit**.

Breast and Arms of Silver is the Medo-Persia Empire (538-330 B.C.). [*Named in Daniel 5:28*]. This second kingdom was inferior to the first, for its monarch depended on the support of the nobility, and could not do whatever he willed, as shown by the inability of Darius to release Daniel (5:12-16). This empire was **duel**, Medo-Persia.

Belly and Thighs of Brass is the less valuable empire of Greece (330-30 B.C.). The government of Alexander was a monarchy supported by the military aristocracy that was as weak as the ambitions of its leaders. This third empire was later divided into **four parts** (7:6 and 8:8).

Legs of iron is the Roman empire (30 B.C. until 476 A.D.). This fourth world-wide empire, stamped on this image, was a still *inferior* form of government, in that the emperor of Rome was elected and his power depended upon others. Rome's borders, harassed by barbarian tribes during the 4th and 5th centuries, finally fell before the onslaught of Odoacher, king of Heruli in 476 A.D..

It is important, in studying the book of Daniel to realize that the **Church Age is UNSEEN in this vision of the Daniel's image!** Because God was giving a vision of His dealing with the nation of Israel – the period of time that we are *now* apart of – is not seen in this vision of the image. The Church Age is a *parenthesis* in God's dealing with Israel as a nation and comes between the “Legs of Iron,” representing Rome – the last great power to rule whole world. After this period of time – the Church Age is completed – God takes up His dealing with Israel again – which is, “*the feet and toes*” of the Image.

Feet and Toes, mixed Iron and Clay - The coming last World-Wide Kingdom. Since the fall of Rome, there has ***not been any world-wide ruler***, leaving this last Empire, represented by the ten toes, to come into being some time in the future!

This kingdom, to appear in the last days, is represented by ten toes, and by ten horns in Daniel 7:7 and 20 [also in Revelation 17:12].

On this image was stamped the historical outline of the *entire* period of "*the times of the Gentile.*" The setting of this vision was a time that Judah had been taken captive by Babylon and, at this *eventful hour* the Jews had ceased to be a nation, God's people had passed under "*Gentile rule.*"

A stone is cut out without hands, out of a mountain falls on the feet of the image - signifying the coming of Christ at a time when the last World-Wide Empire is ruling. It is a picture of God's destruction of Gentile world-power, and the setting up of His own kingdom on earth.

- (B) Nebuchadnezzar's image, the refusal of the three Jews to worship, and their deliverance from the fiery furnace - Chapter 3
- (C) Nebuchadnezzar's tree vision, his abasement and his restoration - Chapter 4
- (D) Daniel's personal history under Belshazzar, Daniel's interpretation of the writing on the wall and Darius - Chapters 5
- (E) Daniel's history under Darius, his deliverance from the lion's den - Chapter 6
- (F) The vision of the four beasts - Chapter 7

This Chapter 7 treats the same subject as Chapter 2 - the rise and fall of the Gentile power. In Chapter 2 the empires were viewed from the **political** viewpoint, that is, as man sees these World-Wide Empires. We see their deterioration in form of government, however, in Chapter 7 these World-Wide Empires are viewed from the **moral** viewpoint . . . from God's point of view . . . in their relation to their fierce and destructive characters as expressed by their symbolization as wild beasts.

In Chapter 2 the vision was adapted to the viewpoint of Nebuchadnezzar who saw superficially the world-empire as a splendid human figure and the kingdom of God as a mere stone at first. In Chapter 7 the vision was adapted to the viewpoint of Daniel, who saw the empires in their true character of wild beasts, and who from the first saw the superiority and triumph of the kingdom of God.

The following is the interpretation of the vision of the beasts:

The **Lion** signifies Nebuchadnezzar's empire. This period, covered by these wild ravenous beasts, is the "*the times of the Gentiles,*" refers to the period of time that Gentiles would rule over Jerusalem. Jesus referred to this period in Luke 21:24, when He said, "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" Daniel 7:4 has reference to Nebuchadnezzar's experience recorded in 4:16-34.

The **Bear** symbolizes the Medo-Persian empire. Its being raised on one side is expressive of the superior strength of the Persian empire. The three ribs in its mouth represent three

kingdoms this empire subdued - Lydia, Egypt and Babylon.

The **Leopard** represents the Grecian empire. The wings denote the swiftness, and rapidity, of Alexander the Great's conquests. The four heads signify the four divisions into which the empire was divided after the death of its ruler.

The **Indescribable, Diverse, Beast** represents the 4th kingdom in succession of "*the times of the Gentiles*," the strong and terrible Roman empire. Mentioned by name in John 11:48; Acts 2:10 and 16:21). this is a non-descriptive beasts for there is nothing on earth to compare it with. It is dreadful, terrible, strong beast with great *iron teeth* symbolizing the same as the iron on the image of 2:40-43. In fulfillment it devoured the other beasts and stamped upon them with its feet, meaning it conquered all the territories of the first beasts - Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. It was different from all beasts before it, not only in a republication form of government, but also in power, greatness, extent of dominion, and length of duration. The 10 horns symbolizes kingdoms in the later days, the last form of the Old Roman Empire (7:23-24; Revelation 13 and 17:8-17). Horns always symbolizes kings (7:7-8, 23-24; 8:8-9, 20-23; Revelation 17:8-17). The ten horns signify the ten kingdoms into which it will be divided in the latter day.

Out of these horns comes another - which is Antichrist. The days of these ten kingdoms will witness the coming of Christ when He returns **with** His saints in power and great glory and He will destroy the great world system and its ruler. [Those interested in making a deeper study of this prophecy should read Revelation 13 and 17 in connection with these verses.]

3. Daniel's visions in relation to the fortunes of God's people - Chapters 8 through 12

(A) **The vision of the ram and the goat** - (Chapter 8). The following is a brief interpretation of this vision:

The two-horned ram represents the empire of Medo-Persia,

The he-goat signifies the Grecian empire which destroyed the Medo-Persian.

The "*notable horn*" of the he-goat represents Alexander the Great, the ruler of the Grecian empire.

The four horns coming up after the breaking of the great horn represent the four divisions of Alexander's empire after his death, known today as Greece, Turkey, Syria and Egypt.

The "*little horn*" coming out of one of these four divisions of Alexander's Grecian Empire (8:9-14, 23-27; and 11:40-45).

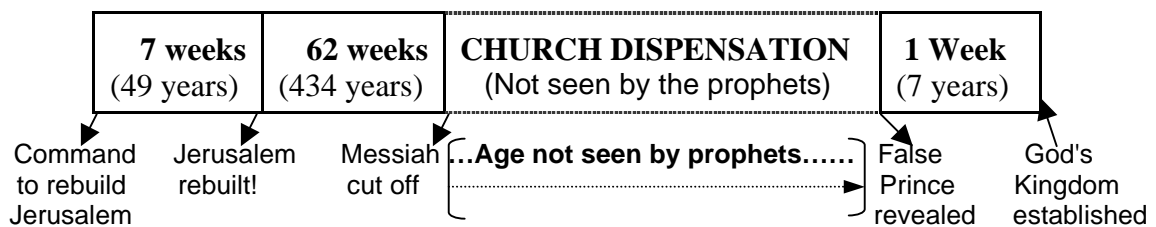
Some believe that the predictions concerning the "*little horn*" were fulfilled in a Syrian king name Antiochus Epiphanes, who in his fierce persecution of the Jews, defiled their sanctuary and attempted to abolish their religion, however, according to 8:17, 19 and 23, it is a prophecy to be fulfilled "*in the last days*." Therefore, it would have reference to the Antichrist. And

Antiochus is a type of the end time ruler, during the Tribulation period, the Antichrist.

(B) The vision of the seventy weeks - (Chapter 9).

On learning from the prophecies of Jeremiah that the 70 years of Israel's captivity were accomplished, Daniel went before the Lord in intercession for his people. While praying an angel was sent to reveal unto him the future of Israel. The nation was indeed to be restored from captivity, but that restoration was not the final one. A period of 70 "*weeks*" [weeks of years] was to intervene before the consummation of Israel's history (9:24). By careful calculation scholars have found that this period sets the exact date of Christ's first coming and fixes the time of the reign of the Antichrist.

The 70 weeks [*weeks of years*] are divided into three periods (9:25-26).



Note, first there is a 7 weeks period, (49 years) and that this period was to be reckoned from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem which decree was given in March, 445 B.C. during the reign Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1-10). the period of the 49 years represents the time occupied in the building of the wall as mentioned in Daniel 9:25.

Note further, that an additional period of 62 weeks (434 years), would elapse and then, "*Messiah would be cut off.*" Again, reckoning from March, 445 B.C., when the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given . . . [making allowance for the different calendar used in those days, and allowing for leap years] . . . the 483 years, or 69 weeks, ended April 32 A.D. *The exact month and year in which Christ entered Jerusalem as the Messiah Prince* (Matthew 21:1-11). After this period the Messiah, indeed, was to cut off.

We have accounted for 69 of the 70 weeks - (483 years out of the 490), however, there remains yet one more week (7 years) to be fulfilled. Between the 69 weeks and the last week is a *gap*, during which period time is not reckoned in relation to Israel, because it is the Church Dispensation, of which we are now a part of.

This *gap*, filled by the Church Age, was not revealed to the prophets of the Old Testament. The last week (or 7 years) mentioned in Daniel 9:26, does not find its fulfillment unto the appearing of Antichrist, the "*false prince*," at the end of this Age.

Daniel 9:27 affirms that a certain ruler will make a covenant with the Jews for a period of the 7 years, which covenant he will break after three and a half years, and after which he will wage war against the religion of the Jews. This implies that the last 3 1/2 years of the 7 will be a time of tribulation for the Jewish people. The Book of Revelation mentions a like period of 3 1/2 years. (Stated in days, months and years, but always adding up to three and a half years. - Revelation 11:2-3, 9; 12:6, 14; 13:5)

This period is always associated with the reign of Antichrist, the tribulation of the Jewish people and the pouring out of God's judgments in the earth - a period which is to be followed by Christ's return **with** His saints . . . [*the rapture of the saints having taken place 7 years earlier*] . . . and the restoration of Israel. Thus we see that the last week of the 70 still awaits fulfillment.

(C) Daniel's last vision - Chapters 10 through 12

These chapters contain a prophetic history of God's chosen people from the time of Darius until the coming of the Messiah.

The following are the contents of these Chapters:

Chapter 10 - Daniel's vision of the glory of the Lord

Chapter 11:1-20 - The wars between two of the four divisions of Alexander's empire - Egypt and Syria, the kingdom of the South, and the kingdom of the North.
[Palestine had a definite relation to these struggles
between these countries for she was a buffer state.]

Chapter 11:21-35 - A prophetic description of Antiochus Epiphanes, the great Syrian persecutor of the Jews and a type of Antichrist.

Chapter 11:36-45 - Daniel now looks from Antiochus, the type, to Antichrist, the antitype, and describes the Antichrist.

Chapter 12:1 - The Great Tribulation and the deliverance of the Jewish people

Chapter 12:2-3 - The resurrection

Chapter 12:4-13 - The last message to Daniel. He is told that the words he has written are closed and sealed until the time of the end, that is, the visions would not find their complete interpretation until the time of the end. The prophecies he had written were not for himself (1 Peter 1:10-12), but for those living at the end of time, at which time the wise - (those having *spiritual* wisdom) - would understand. Compare 12:10 with Matthew 24:15). With Daniel's instructions contrast those of John in Revelation 22:10.

HOSEA

We now come to the first of the "*Minor Prophetical Books*," Hosea. These next twelve books are termed "*minor*," not because they are less meaningful, but, rather, they are referred to as "*minor*" because of their length, when they are compared to the writings of "*Major*," or longer, Books of other Prophets.

Hosea was a contemporary of Amos - both prophesying to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Hosea has been referred to as "*the prophet of Israel's zero hour*." Israel had degenerated into such spiritual depravity that God's judgment could no longer be delayed. Reading 2 Kings 14:23 through 15:31 will give the historical background of the time of Hosea. This passage

covers the record of the terrible sins of idol worship and unbridled sex in that time.

The Book of Hosea is a great admonishment to repentance addressed to the ten tribes, during the fifty, or sixty, years preceding their captivity. The cup of iniquity had been fast filling up. The kings and priests were murderers and given to debauchery; idolatrous priests had lured the people away from the worship of Jehovah; when in trouble Israel, instead of turning to God, resorted for help from Egypt, or, at times, from Assyria; the people in many cases were imitating the moral vileness of the Canaanites; they were living in a careless security, interrupted only in times of danger by a feigned repentance; above all, God and His Word were forgotten. These sins of Israel, in her backslidden condition, is summed up by the prophet as the sin of "*spiritual adultery*," and is illustrated by his own experience in his marrying an unchaste woman and her forsaking him for another lover.

Scriptures shows that God often used drastic measures to speak to His people. Those of the time of the Old Testament did not have God's complete Word as we do today, therefore, God would use signs and symbolic actions in order to provide forceful illustrations for the prophet's message to arouse the people's attention at times when they refused to give heed to the spoken word.

Remember, the actions of Jeremiah with the girdle in Jeremiah 13, or his thrilling experience at the potter's house (Jeremiah 19)? Do you recall, in Jeremiah 27, the heavy rope which Jeremiah wore about his neck to illustrate a lesson God wanted to teach Judah and, how dramatic it must have been when he, publicly, tore this yoke from his neck and broke it? (28:11) Or, remember the time, in Ezekiel 4, when God told Ezekiel to take a brick, drew a symbol of Jerusalem on it, then, after retreating some distance away, go through the motions of a siege against the city? Ezekiel was to set up an iron pan, representing a wall around the city and, after thus portraying, he was to "*set his face against it*," and begin throwing rocks, and other things, at the brick in back of the iron until the brick was destroyed. After which Ezekiel was to lay on his left side, daily in public for **390 days** and then on his right side, daily, for an additional 40 days. All this pantomime to show Israel the years of her "*iniquity*," to symbolize the coming siege of Jerusalem and the coming destruction of Judah.

It was because of the serious situation of Israel, God, took extreme measures . . . (what would appear to be outlandish to our way of thinking) . . . and asks Hosea to illustrate, by marrying Gomer, the "*spiritual adultery*" which Israel was committing against Him.

Israel's sin was more grievous than that of the nations surrounding her. The sins of these other nations were offensive, however, they did not have a relation to Jehovah and, therefore, would not be held as accountable as Israel. Israel's sin was that of unfaithfulness to her "*Husband*," Jehovah, who delivered her from Egypt, provided for her, and with whom she entered into sacred vows of obedience and faithfulness at Mt. Sinai. However, instead of putting this adulterous wife to death as the law prescribed, Jehovah manifests love toward her that was above human love, He receives her again unto Himself.

Hosea was a prophet of the northern kingdom, (the ten tribes). He prophesied at the same time as Amos in Israel and Isaiah and Micah in Judah. Hosea's prophetic ministry is the lengthiest of all the prophets. The historical events referred to in the Book of Hosea cover a period of about 60 years from about 785 B.C. to the time of the captivity of the ten tribes.

The following will serve as the theme of Hosea = Israel, the unfaithful wife, abandoning her Husband and, Jehovah, the compassionate Husband, receiving her again.

1. Separation: Israel the Unfaithful Wife of Jehovah - Chapters 1 through 3

(A) Hosea's marriage to an unchaste - Chapter 1

As mentioned on the previous page, "*God used symbolic, drastic actions in order to provide forceful illustrations to arouse people's attention because they refused to give heed to His spoken Word.*" God, certainly, did so through the life of Hosea. Hosea is commanded to marry an unchaste woman as a sign to Israel that they, as the wife of Jehovah, had been unfaithful to their vows of fidelity. This union must have shocked the people, and that is exactly what it was intended to do, in order that, on their enquiring concerning this union, they would discover that they themselves were represented by Hosea's unfaithful wife.

Hosea's motive in marrying was a pure and lofty one. He was to give the woman his name and his protection, and lift her out of her former life of moral degradation onto the same high place on which he lived.

But *why* does he do this? Is it not clear that Hosea's marriage with this unchaste woman illustrates Jehovah's marriage with an unchaste people? Did Israel have anything more to commend her to God's love and care when He took her to Himself, than this woman when Hosea married her?

God had told Moses to say to Israel, in Deuteronomy 9:4-6, "*Don't say to yourselves, 'The Lord has helped us because we are so good!' No, it is because of the wickedness of the other nations that He is doing it. It is not at all because you are such fine, upright people that the Lord will drive them [Israel's enemies] out from before you! I say it again, it is only because of the wickedness of the other nations, and because of His promises to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that He will do it. I say it yet again: Jehovah your God is not giving you this good land because you are good, for you are not - you are a wicked, stubborn people.*"

And Isaiah, God's prophet had said, "*Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance, who seek the Lord! Consider the quarry from which you were mined, the rock from which you were cut! Yes, think about your ancestors Abraham and Sarah, from whom you came. You worry at being so small and few, but Abraham was only one when I called him. But when I blessed him, he became a great nation.*" (51:1-2).

The children of Gomer were given names symbolical of God's judgments on the nation of Israel:

JEZREEL, means, "*God will scatter*," declaring to Israel the doom of both the house of Jehu and of the nation of Israel. Jezreel was the royal city of Ahab and his ancestors. It was here that Jehu exercised his greatest cruelties. It was here that the Assyrians routed the armies of Israel.

LO-RUHAMMAH, which means, "*unpitied*," predicting God's withdrawal of mercy from His people.

LO-AMMI, means, "*not my people*," prophesying to Israel that the time would come when God would disclaim His people, Israel.

(B) The restoration of Israel in the last days and their union with Judah under the Messiah
- Chapter 1:10-11

(C) Israel, the unfaithful wife - Chapter 2

This second chapter gives us a more expanded view of Israel's guilt and misery and their final restoration. It contains an explanation of the signs of chapter one. After enjoying Jehovah's goodness and protection, Israel deserted Him and joined herself in an idolatrous union to Baal (2:1-8). Because of this Jehovah will strip her of all His gifts and bring her land into desolation (2:9-13). Through tribulation Israel will return to her husband Jehovah to whom she will be betrothed forever (2:14-23).

(D) Jehovah the faithful husband - Chapter 3

As a sign of Jehovah's mercy and love toward His people, Hosea is commanded to take back his unfaithful wife who had deserted him. (3:1) She had been sold in slavery from whence Hosea redeems her (3:2). However, before full restoration to conjugal rights there would intervene many days during which she was to live free from impurity (3:3). In like manner, Israel was to remain free, for a period, from all idolatry - until the time of her restoration to full covenant privileges under Messiah (3:4-5).

2. Condemnation: Israel the Sinful Nation - Chapters 4 through 13:8

In the first three chapters Jehovah spoke of Israel's unfaithfulness to Him by means of the symbol of Hosea's marriage. In Chapters 4 through 13-4 He speaks in plain language to the nation, speaking of the different sins that went to make up Israel's apostasy. This section of Scripture consists of many discourses that do not lend themselves readily to analysis. We may sum up the theme of this section as follows:

Israel's sin and guilt and Jehovah's exhortation to repent.

3. Reconciliation: Israel the Restored Nation - Chapters 13:4 through 4:1

- (A) Though Israel has destroyed herself through sin and died as a nation, God will bring her national resurrection - Chapter 13:9-16 (Compare with Ezekiel, Chapter 37)
- (B) Like teaching a child to pray, Jehovah gives Israel the very words she should use in returning to Him - Chapter 14:1-3
- (C) As soon as Israel is ready to pray the words of repentance Jehovah is ready with words of blessing and restoration - Chapter 14:4-9

JOEL

Joel was a prophet to the nation of Judah. Nothing is really known about Joel except what we read of him in the very first verse of his book, "*The Word of the Lord came to Joel, son of Pethuel.*" The name "*Joel*" means, "*One to whom Jehovah is God.*"

It is believed that Joel prophesied during the early days of Joash, 870 to 865 B.C. (of whom we read of in 2 Kings 12), because there is no mention of Babylon, Assyria, or the Syrian invasion in Joel's writings. The only enemies mentioned in Joel are the Philistines, Edomites and the Egyptians. And, the Temple services and the priesthood are represented as flourishing as it was under the high priesthood of Jehoida, who placed Joash on the throne (2 Kings 11) and who was priest in the early years of Joash.

The occasion for Joel's prophecy was an unusually severe invasion of destructive insects - *locusts* - which devastated the land, destroying the harvests, and bringing on a general famine. The prophet sees in this calamity a visitation from God and refers to it as a type of the *final* world judgment, which Joel refers to as, "*the Day of the Lord*" (1:15). Like many of the other prophets, Joel **predicts the future in the light of the present**, regarding a present and imminent event as a type of a future event. Joel sees in the invasion of the locusts a foreshadowing of the coming invasion of the Assyrian army (2:1-27, Compare with Isaiah, chapters 36 and 37). Evidently, which army would invade the land was unknown to Joel, because he does not mention them by name.

However, Joel looks still farther into the future and sees the invasion of the locusts and Assyrians as typical of the final invasion of Palestine by the confederated armies of Antichrist.

Taking "*Day of the Lord*" as the central thought, and remembering that the same expression is used as referring to that invasion of the locusts and the Assyrians, we will sum up the theme of Joel as follows:

1. The Day of the Lord seen as immediate as the invasion of the locust - Chapter 1

Joel begins with an account of the recent locust plague, that had so devastate the land.

One writer of that particular period of time, writes, "*The land over which the locusts devastating hordes have passed at once assumes the appearance of sterility and dearth, Well did the Romans call them the 'burners of the land,' which is the literal meaning of the word 'locust,' On they move, covering the ground so completely as to hide it from sight, and in such numbers that it often takes three of four days for the mighty host to pass by. When seen as a distance this swarm of advancing locusts resembles a cloud of dust or sand, reaching a few feet above the ground as the myriads of insects leap forward. The only thing that momentarily arrests their attention is a sudden change of weather, for cold benumbs them while it lasts. They also keep quiet at night swarming like bees on the bushes and hedges unto the morning sun warms and revives them and enables them to precede on their devastating march. They have no leader, yet they falter not, but pass on in serried ranks, urged in the same direction by an irresistible impulse, and turn neither to the right nor to the left for any sort of obstacle. When a wall or house lies in their way, they climb straight up, going over the roof to the windows. When they come to water be it a puddle or river, a lake or an open sea, they never attempt to go around it, but unhesitatingly leap in and are drowned; and their dead bodies floating on the surface form a bridge for their companions to pass over. The scourge thus often comes to an end, but it as often happens that the decomposition of millions of insects produce pestilence and death.*"

2. The Day of the Lord seen as imminent, the Assyrian invasion - 2:1-27

A. The invasion of the Assyrians typified by the locust invasion - 2:1-11

There had been a literal plague of locusts in Joel's day and God has Joel to use this as a symbol of the invasion of the Assyrians, which was to come. They would be as locusts because of their number and destructive influence. The plague of the locusts was also symbolizes the destruction of the "*Day of the Lord*," which begins with the Great Tribulation and extends through the Millennial Kingdom.

B. A call to repentance - 2:12-17

C. A promise of deliverance - 2:18-27

3. The Day of the Lord seen as future, the final invasion - 2:28-3:21

Joel projects his vision into the time of the end and he sees:

- A.** The outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jewish nation (2:28-29). This prophecy had only a partial fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost.
- B.** The signs preceding the Lord's coming (2:30-32)
- C.** Armageddon and the judgment of the nations (3:1-16)
- D.** The restoration of Israel (3:17-21)

"Tell your children about it, let you children tell their children, and their children another generation" Joel 1:3.

Here's a word covering four generations, from us to our children, to our grandchildren, showing us how the truth of God's Word can remain in a family for a long, long time!

In Deuteronomy 5:9 Moses stated that *"the sins of the fathers would be passed down through the family to the third and fourth generation."* This verse in Joel is a **positive** assurance that the blessing of the Lord will also reach down to the fourth generation. This truth is that our family is included in the promises of salvation. Again and again we read in Scripture the familiar phrase, *"You and your household..."* The truth we have received from God has the potential for spreading through a family, and even through a whole family tree.

The first consideration of Joel's prophecy warns that those who are disobedient to God will be punished, that their future will be one of desolation. When are we going to learn that all sin is sin against God? Sin is disobedience to God's moral law. Sin can be expressed by *"doing what God has forbidden, or by failing to do what He has commanded."*

Joel notes that the *heathen* nations surrounding them have disobeyed their Creator. However, this disobedience is not limited to the pagan. Israel had been disobedient also and, because they had received a more clear and full revelation of God than the heathen, they will be judged even more severely.

Because of their disobedience, God will first judge the heathen. They will reckon with the One who rules the universe. In every generation there are those who think they can outwit, or defeat, God. Joel reminds us that, *"they cannot escape judgment."* These disobedient heathen would face the inevitable encounter with the living God.

The covenant people . . . (be they Israel or the New Testament Church) . . . are not immune to God's displeasure and discipline, either. Joel's prophecy shatters man's false security.

Joel warns that *"beautiful Israel*, with a landscape one resembling Eden, will rapidly be reduced to a desolate wilderness (2:1-11), as the plague of locusts, the palmerworm, the cankerwoam and the caterpillar come from God to punish the sins of those who should have known better. Whenever one persists in sinning, they will face up to the consequences of such rebellion (Matthew 7:21-29).

The word of the Lord that came to Joel is for more than a warning of coming judgment, or impending punishment. It is also a clear call to exercise genuine sorrow for sins. God's call came first to leaders. The priests who serve at the altar and minister in His holy presence, are called to put on sackcloth and mourn for the sins of the people. The elders are to be summoned to the house of God, that they may cry out to the Lord (1:13-14).

This same call goes out to the people (1:15-20). They will see how even the land and the beasts of the field will be effected because of their sins.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT FROM THE PEOPLE?

Does God want *external* acts of penance, such as "*rending the garments or keeping a fast?*" No! God looks for more than an *outward* ritual, but, rather, He looks for true sorrow and repentance. He says, '*Rend your heart and not your garments.*'"

Martin Luther, in admonishing to repent, said:

"To repent means to feel the wrath of God in earnest because of one's sin, so as to experience anguish of heart and be filled with a painful longing for the salvation and mercy of God. Repentance is begun when we acknowledge our sins and are sincerely sorry for them; it is completed when trust in the mercy of God comes to this sorrow and hearts are converted to God, and long for the forgiveness of sins."

Fortunately, the call to repentance which Joel announces is linked to the **hope** of God's mercy. Without that hope, the penitent sinner would still be in despair. The wayward are encouraged to come back to God, for He is merciful (2:13-14), "*for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love . . .*" This is the kind of encouragement penitent sinners need. When the Spirit of God convicts us, and we realize our true condition, we can know that the Lord delights in mercy.

Ask the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well . . . ask the dying thief at Calvary . . . ask Simon Peter . . . ask Saul of Tarsus . . . they will all testify that God responded to their repentance with His wonderful **grace!**

Joel prophesies the "*Good News*" that the forgiveness of sins can be found in God alone! He prophesies that God promises a repentant people better times! The Lord will restore to them "*the years that the locusts have eaten*" (2:21-22). However, when we obey God, we should look for blessings *beyond* those that He supplies through the world of nature. God offers us the great and wondrous blessings of His grace.

The benefits of this gift are clearly promised in the words of Joel, "*He will send us the Holy Spirit!*" (2:28-29) This was partially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. The Spirit was poured out on sons and daughters. Peter states on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:16, "*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.*" The Spirit's presence in their lives gave them a clear perception of God's truth. When the Spirit comes into our lives, He enables the soul "*to see.*" We can have a knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. He is the Light that shines into our hearts . . . our Teacher . . . our Guide . . . through His Word. We come to know the Son by the Holy Spirit who leads us to God, the Father. The Spirit regenerates us . . . illumines our minds . . . equips us to participate in God's family . . . sanctifies our personalities . . . conforms us to the likeness of God . . . and will raise us from the dust of death at the last day!

Even though the name of Jesus does not appear in the book of Joel, the reality of salvation through Christ can be read between the lines of the prophet's message. For instance, Joel 2:32 states. "*And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,*" is repeated in Romans 10:13, where it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The outpouring of the Spirit not only will cause people to be aware of their sinful state, but will direct them to, "*call on the name of the Lord*" for salvation. Out of their depths of their sin, burdened down with guilt and fear, they will cry to Him who is able to save. He answers their cry and sets them free from the penalty and power of sin. What **Good News** for sinful man!

The true people of the Lord are all those who call on the name of the Lord and depend on Him alone for their salvation!

The last promise mentioned in the book of Joel concerns *future* blessings (3:17-21). In overcoming the powers of evil and protecting His elect (whosoever will) the Lord will reveal Himself in all His glory and grace. He will dwell in the midst of His people as a purifying presence. The Lord's redeemed will know pardon and peace.

Joel encourages us to believe that God will bring about transformation, as the "*new heaven and the new earth*" become a glorious reality! (Revelation 21:1). And, most wonderful of all, the Lord will dwell in the midst of His people forever! (Revelation 21:2-4, 22-27; 22:1-5, 20). The Lord Jesus will reign in person and the land will be a land of milk and honey!

"I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten." Joel 2:25

The word "restore" is vital to our spiritual walk. God promises restoration in many areas of our lives. We begin our journey of faith with a fresh vision - a burning desire, a devoted willingness to go all the way with Him.

As time passes, a devourer comes along to consume these blessings of God. If we don't know the principles of spiritual warfare, we may give ground and lose some of these precious gifts. This verse is a promise that that which has been lost is going to be restored to our church, our family and our individual lives. Whatever the devil (the **devourer**) has consumed!

The natural world doesn't have such a promise for rejuvenation, and renewed vision and strength. It is so absorbed with the aging process that restoration doesn't fit in with its way of thinking.

*What a great promise to take hold of
for a loved one that has lost out along the way of life.*

The rich promises of Joel are followed by a solemn description of the judgment of all nations in the valley of decisions in the end times. The nations will give an account of themselves to the God of Israel who will judge those who have rebelled against Him.

God alone controls the course of history!

Amos

Amos, the author of this Book, was a herdsman (1:1 and 7:14-15). God called him to prophesy to the Northern Kingdom of Israel chiefly and to the whole house of Jacob (3:1, 13). He ministered during the reign of Uzziah, King of Judah, (2 Chronicles 26) and Jeroboam, King of Israel (2 Kings 14:23-29). He prophesied during a time of national optimism. Business was booming, boundaries were enlarging, but below the surface, greed and injustice were festering. Hypocrisy replaced true worship, a false sense of security prevailed, the people were calloused to any of God's dealings. Not even famine, drought, plagues, destruction, could bring the people to their knees.

It is noted that there was a certain sameness in the themes of many of the prophets, as the message of Amos was that of judgment to come and restoration to follow. This corresponding "*similarity*" in the message of the prophets can be explained by the fact that there was one predominating cause that brought forth their message, namely, national sin; therefore their message was in most cases one of condemnation. However, while they had a message of rebuke for the nation at large, they had also a message of consolation and restoration for a faithful

remnant. Amos views the sin of Israel in relation to the great privileges granted them, and shows that because of the great privileges that were theirs and because of their failure to walk worthy of the favors Jehovah had bestowed upon them, their punishment would be greater than that of the heathen who have not had the same advantages as they (3:2).

The theme of Amos may be stated as follows: *The setting forth of the sins of a privileged people, whose privileges brought them great responsibility and whose failure under that responsibility brought them a judgment according to the light they had received.*

AUTHOR

Amos was a native of Tekoa, about six miles south of Bethlehem, inhabited chiefly by shepherds to which class he belonged, being also a gatherer of sycamore fruit. He had not been officially ordained as a prophet, neither had he attended the school of the prophets; his only reason for preaching was a divine call (7:14-15). His ministry was primarily to the Ten Tribes, although he had also a message for Judah and the surrounding countries.

Bethel was the principal scene of his preaching, perhaps the only one. When he had delivered several addresses there Amaziah, the chief priest of the royal sanctuary, sent a message to the king, who seems not to have been present, accusing the preacher of treason. It seemed that Amaziah feared that the oppressed poor might be stirred up to revolt against their lords and masters. The threats of coming judgment would disturb many hearers. The denunciations of cruelty and injustice would awaken many echoes. The priest's language shows all the contempt which is highly placed official feels towards an interfering nobody, a fellow who thinks he gains a livelihood by prophesying (7:10-17). Even though Amos' messages were met by opposition by the priest, Amaziah, he was undaunted, faithful and bold in reproving sin and calling for repentance. On reaching home Amos doubtless put into writing the substance of his speeches.

Amos is quoted in the New Testament twice. Acts 7:42-43, Stephen quotes Amos 5:25-26, and Acts 15:16-17, Paul quotes Amos 9:11.

1. Judgment of Surrounding Nations - Chapters 1 and 2

Israel and Judah are included in this denunciatory message against the nations, for Jehovah is seen as the Judge of all nations administering impartial judgment. Notice how each of these messages begins, "*For three . . . yea, four.*" This was a figurative way of declaring that God does not act immediately in judgment, but that He waits in order to give every nation the chance of repentance.

- A. Judgment on Syria for cruelty - 1:3-5
- B. Judgment on Philistia for selling Israelites into slavery - 1:6-8
- C. Judgment on Phoenicia for breaking their covenant with Israel - 1:9-10
- D. Judgment on Edom for causing Israel to suffer - 1:11-12
- E. Judgment on Ammon for violence against Israel - 1:13, 15
- F. Judgment on Moab for injustice - 2:1-3
- G. Judgment on Judah for despising the law - 2:4-5
- H. Judgment on Israel for immorality - 2:6-16

2. Judgment on Israel - Chapters 3 to 9:6

The judgments are set forth in three discourses - (3:1 through 6:14)

Each begins with the words, "*hear this word*"

- A. The theme of this first discourse (Chapter 3)
Israel's ingratitude for God's love and favor and their failure under responsibility calls for punishment (3:1-3); which the prophets announced, not at random, but by God's commission which they cannot but fulfill (3:4-8). From this judgment only a remnant (3:12) will escape (3:9-15).
- B. The theme of the second discourse (Chapter 4)
Because of the oppression of the nobles (4:1-3) and the general idolatry of the nation (4:4-5) they have been chastised (4:6-11). Because these chastisements have been unheeded Israel, they were commanded to prepare to meet their God in the last and worst judgment of all (4:12-13).
- C. The theme of the third discourse (5:1 to 6:14)
Impending judgment may be averted by seeking Jehovah (5:1-15). For those who scornfully wish to see the day of Jehovah, it will come of the nation's departing from God's true service just like their fathers, they, too, will be led into captivity (5:21-27), woe to those who live in carnal security as though that captivity were not impending (Chapter 6).

The five visions of judgment - (7:1 through 9:6)

- A. The locusts (7:1-3)

These were typical of the Assyrians who were constantly ravaging Israel. At the intercession of the prophet., God promises that all Israel shall not be utterly destroyed.

B. The burning up of the deep (7:4-6)

This probably refers to the drying up of the waters and a consequent drought.

C. The plumbline (7:7-9)

As a sign that judgment is about to be meted out according to righteousness. This last message brought persecution upon the prophet from Israel's high priest (7:10-17)

D. The basket of summer fruit (8:1-3)

This was symbolical of Israel's ripeness for judgment. Then follows a message (8:4-14) the theme of which is as follows: because Israel has despised the Word of God, God will bring on a famine of that same Word.

E. The Lord standing upon the altar (9:1-6)

The Lord is seen commanding to smite and slay, showing that the order is being given for the judgment to begin.

3. The Restoration of Israel- (9:7-15)

A. The dispersion of Israel is for their sifting and purification (9:7-10)

B. After that is accomplished the Davidic kingdom will be re-established (9:11)

C. Then the whole nation Israel will be the head of the nations (9:12)

D. the land of Palestine will prosper (9:13-14)

E. And Israel will inherit it forever (9:15)

Obadiah

The name of "*Obadiah*" appears twenty times in the Bible, representing thirteen *different* people. The name of "*Obadiah*" means, "*Servant of Jehovah.*" The *only* reference to this writing Prophet is here in verse one of his Book. He was God's messenger to Edom. This Book is the shortest Book of the Old Testament. The theme of Obadiah is "*Edom's great sin - violence against Judah; and their punishment - national extinction.*"

This Book carries the strongest messages of judgment found in the Old Testament. The judgment is against Edom. This Book is actually "*Edom's day in court - their arraignment, indictment and sentence.*"

In essence the Book is about:

Two Brothers - Esau and Jacob

Two Nations - Edom and Israel

Two Citizenships - Earthly and Heavenly

Antagonism between Israel and the Edomites is evident throughout the Bible. Israel was descended from Jacob and the Edomites came from Esau (Genesis 36:1). The Edomites lived in a place called Mount Seir, which was a mountainous region south of the Dead sea. It is in what we know as Jordan today. Seir means "*hairy, rugged*" and Esau was a hairy man (Genesis 27:11).

The Edomites were a proud, bitter, resentful people, ever seeking an opportunity to harm Jacob's descendants. Israel and Edom were perpetually at war. When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, Edom rejoiced over Israel's downfall, and cruelly took part in the plundering and massacre (Psalm 137:7). In days gone by God had commanded His people to treat Edom kindly (Deuteronomy 23:7). The Edomites rejected the request of Israel to travel through Edom on their journey from Egypt and would not let them tour through their land. (Numbers 20:14-21) Edom's atrocious conduct had filled up their cup of iniquity, and sentence of condemnation and annihilation was passed upon them. After Israel's restoration, Cyrus, king of Persia, overcame them, slaughtering thousands of them. They received another crushing defeat by the Jews under the Maccabees (109 B.C.) The antagonism of Edom and Judah came to a head in the time of Christ. Jesus Christ was a Jew, a descendant of Jacob; Herod, an Edomite, a descendant of Esau. After the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the Edomites were lost sight of.

The structure of the Book of Obadiah:

1. The Destruction of Edom

A. The Sin of Edom - Pride - Verses 1 through 9

B. Their greatest sin - Violence against Judah in the Day of Their Calamity
- Verses 10 through 14

C. Their Punishment - National Destruction - Verses 15 through 21

Jonah

The Book of Jonah is peculiar among the prophets in that it contains no direct message to Israel, but, rather, the message of Jonah is addressed to the Ninevites. However, though this book is not directly stated to Israel, there is a great lesson in the book for the Jewish nation - namely, that ***God is the God, not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles, and that it is the duty of His chosen people to bring the light of Divine revelation to them.***

The book of Jonah is a rebuke of the exclusiveness of the Jews who held themselves aloof from, and considered themselves superior to the Gentiles. Because of its description of the prophet's preaching to the Gentiles, Jonah has been referred to as the missionary book of the Old Testament. The theme of the book may be summed up as follows: "*God's love for the Gentiles seen in His sending of a prophet to turn them to repentance.*"

Who were these Ninevites? Genesis 10:11 states that Nimrod, (who was son of Cush, son of Ham, son of Noah), after first ruling in Babylon, went into Assyria and there, with the people referred to as Asshur, built the great city of Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire, on the Tigris River, opposite the site of the present-day Mosul, Iraq. Assyria was captured and destroyed by Babylonia and its allies, the Medes and the Chaldeans, in 612 B.C.

The Book of Jonah is a narrative of actual facts, bringing us one of the most striking revelation of God. The literal interpretation of this book is imperative because the integrity of the Scriptures and the Word of the Lord Jesus is at stake here (Matthew 12:38-41).

There is nothing in Scripture to suggest anything but that this is an actual, factual, account of what happened to Jonah. The modern critics who say that the Book of Jonah is a

fantasy, are those who look upon anything supernatural as incredible.

1. Jonah's First Commission - his Disobedience and Its Results - Chapters 1 and 2

A. Jonah's destination - 1:1-2

Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, situated on the river Tigris and, at the time of Jonah, it was at the height of its pride and prosperity. Nineveh had a circumference of 64 miles, 18 miles long and 14 miles wide, - much larger than Babylon. It was surrounded by a wall 100 feet high, so broad that three chariots could ride abreast on it, and there were 1,500 towers with fertile ground between them.. The population was about one million. The walled towns of that day enclosed large spaces for cultivation and pasture so that they were able to stand a prolonged siege.

B. Jonah's disobedience - 1:3

Historians records, "*Assyria had been laying her hand for some generations upon the nations on the Mediterranean coast, and it was a hand of a fierce and ferocious dominance. No consideration of pity was permitted to stand in the way of Assyrian policy. There was unsparing slaughter. Assyria gloated over the spectacle of the battle field, covered by the corpses of the vanquished. This bloodshed was followed by fiendish inflections on individual cities as the leading men were led forth, seized by the executioners and subjected to various punishments, all of which were filled to the brim with unbelievable horror. Some of the victims were held down while one of the band of torturers, gloating fiendishly over their fearful work, inserts his hand into a victims mouth, grips his tongue, and wrenches it out by the roots. In another spot pegs are driven into the ground. To these, another victim's wrists are fixed with cords. His ankles are similarly made fast, and the man is stretched out unable to move a muscle. The executioner then applies himself to his task; and beginning at the accustomed spot, the sharp knife makes its incision, and the skin is raised inch by inch until the man is flayed alive. The skins are then stretched out upon the city walls, or otherwise disposed of, so as to terrify the people and leave behind long-enduring impressions of Assyrian vengeance. For others long sharp poles are prepared. The sufferer, taken, like the rest, from the leading men of the city, is laid down; the sharpened end of the pole is driven in thorough the lower part of the chest; the pole is then raised, bearing the writhing victim aloft; it is planted in the hole dug for it and the man is left to die.*"

No man in Israel was ignorant of these things and not only was it possible for Jonah to know of these outrage acts, but it is very probably, that he had witnessed these horrible atrocities. Jonah knew that Assyria, the spoiler of the nations, was the appointed executioner of God's vengeance on the ten tribes of Israel.

It was into this predicament that the word of the Lord came to Jonah, "*Arise, go to Nineveh that great city and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*"

Nineveh's cup was full. Sentence was about to be pronounced. Gladder news than this, Jonah's ears had never heard. If Nineveh perished then Israel was saved! There was only one thing to be feared, *What if God's mercy seized the smiting of God's justice?*

Jonah knew that Jehovah was a merciful God and that if Nineveh cried unto Him, Assyria might be saved, and then, in Jonah's thinking, Israel would perish. So why not leave Nineveh without warning? Why not abandoned her to reap the reward of their inhumanities?

Jonah must have felt that it was a choice between God's vengeance on him, a rebellious prophet, or, he could sacrifice himself, let Nineveh perish and, by so doing, save Israel. This seems to have been Jonah's purpose and the reason for his sorrow at Nineveh's escape.

C. Jonah's Punishment - Chapter 1:4-17

No miracle in the Bible has evoked the unbelief of scientists and the ridicule of infidels as the story of Jonah's being swallowed by a whale. Down through the years, there have been those who have claimed that the throat of a whale is not sufficiently wide to permit the passage of a man, however, Jesus, Himself, confirmed the actuality of this established fact (Matthew 12:40).

In recent years there have been accounts of men being swallowed by whales - *and even surviving!* However, those who believe in God's Word do not have to have *natural proof* to believe, for it is a miracle. The true believer needs no external proof of the Word. He believes it because God said it!

D. Jonah's prayer and deliverance - Chapter 2

In his prayer, Jonah quotes abundantly from the Psalms. He identifies himself with the saints of old, appropriating their experiences as recorded in the Word of God.

There is a probability that Jonah actually did die and was raised from the dead because Jesus said that Jonah's experience in the whale's belly was a type of His bodily resurrection. Jesus states in Matthew 12:40, "*For as Jonas [Jonah] was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*"

In Jonah 2:2, we are told that Jonah, while in the belly of the whale, "*cried out of the belly of hell*" [The Hebrew word is "*Sheol*," the place of departed spirits and the same place Jesus went to in the three days after He died.

3. Jonah's Second Commission, His Obedience, and Its Results - Chapter 3

History records that the Ninevites worshiped the fish-god, Dagon, whom they pictured as part human and part fish. The Ninevites believed that Dagon came out of the sea and founded their nation, and that messengers came to them from the sea from time to time. Could it be that God sent Jonah to them "*out of the sea*" in order that they would listen and hear the message He commanded Jonah to bring to them? There is little doubt that the news of Jonah's being "*cast up from the sea*" would have accompanied him to Nineveh.

<p>It is true that for centuries it was unknown just where the capital city of Assyria was located, however, a mound named "<i>Yunnas</i>" (the Assyrian form for "<i>Jonah</i>") was located and the archaeologists began to dig there and the walls of the city were found.</p>

This third chapter answers three questions:

- A.** Is it possible that a great heathen city like Nineveh would be moved by the preaching of an obscure Hebrew preacher? In answering this question, let us remember that Jonah preached to them at a time when they were experiencing an alarming decline of power. There was possibly an expectation of coming calamity, and the presence of a prophet, who had been thrown up by a fish, certainly would have been sufficient to stir the superstitious people, who believed that their god sent messengers from the sea.
- B.** Was it likely that the state would interfere and issue a decree urging a prolong fast? Was action of this kind in accord with Assyrian custom? To answer, history shows that such fasts were ordained by past emperors whenever enemies were gathering against them, and prayers were made to the "*sun-god*." The prophets of Nineveh, heeding Jonah's word, declared that it was necessary to appease the anger of heaven, and the king accordingly issued his proclamation urging the solemn service of humiliation.
- C.** Was it the Assyrian custom to cause even the beasts to share in the humiliation (Jonah 3:7)? Again, history gives us the answer to this question. Herodotus records that, when the Persians were in Greece, a battle was fought in which a general, endeared to the whole army was slain and, "*on their arrival at the camp, the death of Masistius spread a general sorrow through the army, and greatly afflicted Mardonius himself. They cut off their hair from themselves, their horses, and their beasts of burden, and all Boeotia resounded with their cries and lamentations. The man they had lost was, next to Mardonius, most esteemed by the Persians and their king. Thus the barbarians in their manner honored the deceased Masistius.*"

4. Jonah's Complaint and God's Answer - Chapter 4

Jonah still had a lingering hope that the city would be destroyed (4:5). He was still influenced by a misguided patriotism that had blinded him to mercy. God dealt gently with His servant and by an object lesson rebuked the cantankerous and vindictive spirit of the prophet. Jonah was willing to spare a worthless gourd yet was angry because God had spared a great city and its teeming population. If Jonah was willing to spare the gourd should not God spare Nineveh?

Micah

Micah was a prophet in Judah, his book deals also with Samaria and Gentile nations, reproving all for their sins, and warning of impending judgment and captivity of Israel. He also sees their future restoration in the Kingdom of the Messiah and great events of the latter days. God had warned Israel many times regarding what would befall her if she continued in sin and rebellion, but she was becoming more openly rebellious and backslidden in heart and life. God was becoming less tolerant of her mock worship, ritualism, and sins; and finding it necessary to invoke the judgment terms of Mosaic covenant. God had to formulate a plan of action that would eventually bring Israel back to repentance so that He could fulfill righteousness. In the first 3 chapters we have God's case against Israel with predictions of judgment and captivity, and a promise of blessing to the remnant. Chapter 4 and 5 deal mainly with the Millennium, with a reference to the Babylonian captivity and the first advent of the Messiah (4:9-10; 5:1-2), followed by references to God having to give up Israel to dispersion among the nations until the second advent of the Messiah (5:3). In 6:1-7:6 God takes up His case against Israel again, and

finally the book ends with later-day events when God's covenant with Abraham will be performed (7:7-20).

The purpose of the book is one of many, expressing the ultimate purpose of God in all His dealings - to bring Israel and all mankind back to the place of conformity to His eternal will and plan, so that the blessings He originally promised man may be finally and completely fulfilled.

Micah prophesied about 772-222 B.C. at the same period of time as Isaiah and, no doubt, they would have had contact with each other. Their prophecies resembles each other. (Compare Isaiah 2:1-4 with Micah 4:1-5.) In fact, Isaiah's prophecy seems to be, at times, an enlargement of Micah's prophecy.

Like Isaiah's prophecy, the prophecy of Micah may be divided into two main sections: ***Judgment Declared*** and ***Blessing Promised***. In the first division Micah presents a picture of a sinful nation doomed to captivity; in the second, a redeemed people enjoying millennial blessings. In the first division Micah shows Israel as misled and destroyed by false rulers; in the second, he presents us the same people restored by Messiah, the true Ruler.

The theme of Micah is: ***Israel, destroyed by false leaders,
and saved by the true Leader, the Messiah.***

Micah came from a city about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem, named Moreshethgath. He had a message for both Judah, the Southern Kingdom, and Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Micah prophesied during the reigns of Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea over Israel and Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah over Judah (2 Kings 15:23-30). Micah predicted the captivity of these kingdoms. His largest work was done during the reign of Hezekiah who was deeply moved by his prophecies (Jeremiah 26:10-19). His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem was an indirect means of saving the life of Jeremiah when he was about to be put to death for making a similar prediction.

1. Judgment Declared - Chapter 1 through 3

- A. Judgment upon Samaria for her incurable disposition to idolatry - 1:1-8
- B. Judah has been affected by her sinfulness and has become involved in her guilt - 1:9-16
- C. Because of the wickedness of rulers and people the nation will go into captivity - 2:1-11
- D. A rebuke of the leaders of the people for their indifference to truth and righteousness, and for their mercenary motives - (Chapter 3). Judgment of:
 - (a) Civil rulers (3:1-4), (b) Prophets (3:5-10), (c) Priests (3:11).
- E. The nation will suffer for the sins of its leaders, for it shares in their iniquity
(3:12 with Jeremiah 5:31)

2. Blessing Promised - Chapters 4 through 7

Though Zion will be destroyed (3:12), yet in the last day it will be restored and exalted.
- (4:1-8)

In Chapter 4 we have the *future* kingdom.

In Chapter 5 we have the *future* king.

How thrilling to realize that these Hebrew preachers of 25 centuries ago told of things which are still to happen. Chapter 4 and 5 show that these things are still future and await the Millennial era.

Note: Chapter 4:1 refers to events that will transpire "*in the last days.*" Note also that verse 2 mentions that nations, other than Israel, will be apart of the Messianic Kingdom.

However, in 4:9 Micah's message changes from the future tense to the present, "*now dost thou cry*" and verse 10, "*Now shalt thou go*" and verse 11, "*Now many nations are against thee*" and 5:1, "*Now . . . God laid siege against us.*"

In 5:3, *He [God] give them up UNTIL*" - the return of Jesus Christ

In 5:2 is the remarkable prediction of the very place where Christ would be born. Micah's prophecy was so plain that when the Magi asked Herod, "*Where the king of the Jews would be born,*" the Scribes gave a definite answer (Micah 5:2 with Matthew 2:5).

Looking at Micah 5:3, it states "*Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites,*" note, that between the first half of this verse and the second half, this present Church age intervenes, which Micah, nor any of the Old Testament prophets, could not foresee. The remainder of the chapter 5 looks to the Kingdom Age yet future.

Chapter 6 and 7 are in the from of a conversation between Jehovah and His people. The high mark of these pleadings is in 6:8, "*He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*"

God pardons and forgets - 7:18-19.

Six specific prophecies of Micah, who prophesied has been fulfilled:

1. The fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. - (1:6-7)
2. The invasion of Judah in 702 B.C. - (1:9-16)
3. The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. - (3:12 and 7:13)
4. The captivity in Babylon in 586 B.C. (4:10)
5. The return of Israel from captivity - (4:1-8; 7:11 and 14-17)
6. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem - (5:2)

Micah's words are primarily a vision for the future. For the present, there is dismay, helplessness and captivity for Israel (4:9-10). Ultimately Israel's enemies and captors will be punished (4:11-13). Israel's troubles will last unto the return of Messiah, their true Ruler (5:1-2). Foreordained from eternity to be Israel's Savior, He is a pledge of Israel's deliverance from all their enemies and their final restoration (5:3-15). God challenges His people to testify, if they can, if He ever did aught but acts of kindness to them from the earliest times of their history - if

they can produce any excuse for their forsaking Him (6:1-5).

They are religious, but their religion is a mere formality (6:6-7) that does not produce that practical righteousness which God requires (6:8). Their conduct proves that they are keeping the statutes of Omri and works of Ahab - wicked kings of Israel (6:9-16). The corruption of the nation is universal (7:1-6). It seems almost impossible to find a good man, an honest ruler, or a faithful friend. A man's enemies are those of his own household.

Yet, there remains a faithful remnant, represented by the prophet, who lift up their voice in intercession for their nation (7:1-14). Their prayer is answered by God who promises restoration (7:15-17). Looking through the gloom of his own times, Micah praises the faithful God who will yet restore Israel and purge them from their sins and thus fulfill the covenant made to the fathers (7:18-20).

Nahum

The theme of the Book of Nahum is the destruction of Nineveh. It is a complement and counterpart of the message of Jonah, by whose ministry, the Ninevites were lead to repentance and saved from impending doom. Nahum has the same subject as Jonah - "*the destruction of Nineveh.*" However, it is now 120 years later, and Nahum, pronounces the judgment of God in the form of utter destruction against Nineveh, who had turned from their former repentance and, had again, given themselves to idolatry, cruelty, and oppression.

Nahum's object was to inspire his countrymen, the Jews, with the assurance that even though their position might be alarming, as exposed to the attacks of the mighty Assyrian, who had already carried away the Ten Tribes, however, the Assyrians would fail in his attack on Jerusalem (Isaiah 36-37), and Nineveh, the Assyrians' capital, would be taken and the empire overthrown . . . not because of any arbitrary exercise of God's power, but because of the iniquities of the its people. Although God had spared the city of Nineveh because of repentance in Jonah's day, her destruction, which God had predicted, was now upon her because of the inhabitants returning to sin and rebellion against God.

Very little is known about the man, Nahum, only that he was a native of Elkosh, a village in Galilee. He, evidently, came from the area of Capernaum, since the name "*Kapher-Nahum*" means Village of Nahum. We know that Nahum prophesied during the early part of the reign of Josiah, since he mentions the fall of No-Amon, or Thebes (3:8) which occurred in the latter part of Manasseh's reign.

1. Jehovah the Righteous Judge - Chapter 1

Before describing the judgment of Nineveh, the prophet describes the judge, Jehovah, whom he shows to be, not an unjust, impulsive executioner, but, rather He is One who is slow to anger, who waits patiently for the fruits of repentance before punishing.

The permanent value of this book is that it sets before us, as no other book of the Old Testament, the picture of the wrath of God.

Let no one imagine, when they think of the anger of God, that it is anything like the hot,

passionate, blind, foolish, blundering temper of man. God is slow to anger, yet, one crossing over into that which demands punishment, God is as irresistible as the hurricane that whips the sea into fury, or the tornado that sweeps the land with desolation.

Notice, in the book, the words, *jealous, vengeance, wrath, anger, indignation, fierceness, and fury,*" when describing the overwhelming fact of the anger of God. In man, wrath becomes his master, and drives him, however, God is always Master of His wrath and uses it to bring about His purposes.

Verse 1 - The burden of Nineveh

Verse 2-8 - God is a jealous God visiting judgment on His adversaries,
yet He is slow to anger, and in judgment remembers those that trust Him.

Verse 9-11 - It is vain for the Assyrians to imagine that they can resist the Lord
and destroy His people.

Verse 12-14 - For God will surely deliver His own

Verse 15 - Because the Lord will deliver His people,
they are to remain loyal to Him and to His service.

2. Jehovah's Righteous Judgment - Chapter 2 and 3

The destruction of Nineveh, though the capital of a great and flourishing empire of Assyria, is foretold by the prophet Nahum. It was a city of vast extent and population, and was the center of the principal commerce of the world. Its wealth, however, was not altogether derived from trade. It was a "*bloody city,*" full of lies and robbery (3:1). It plundered the neighboring nations; and is compared by the prophet to a family of lions, which "*fill their holes with prey, and their dens with flesh to feed their young*" (2:11-12).

At the same time Nineveh was strongly fortified, its mammoth walls were 100 feet high, and wide enough on the summit for three chariots to be driven abreast on them, with 1,500 towers bidding defiance to all enemies. Yet, so totally was it destroyed, that, in the second century after Christ, not a fragment remained of it, and its very site was long a matter of uncertainty.

2:1-13 - The siege and capture of Nineveh

3:1-7 - The sins of Nineveh, the causes of her judgment.
Nineveh fell in 608 B.C. according to the prophecy of Nahum.

3:8-19 - Nineveh's doom will be as sure as that of the Egyptian city
of No-Amon, a city that was once populous and powerful

As we see the ungodly flourish and, often, beat down the innocent we remember that God has pledged Himself to avenge in a day to come. Read Luke 18:7-8 and Romans 12:19.

One cannot help but notice the *balance* in which Nahum pictures God throughout this book. Though his prophecy is delivered against the powerful Assyrian capital of Nineveh, Nahum's prophecy also presents a wonderful vision of Jehovah as the God of both justice and grace. He shows that God cared for Israel because of His adoption and covenant with them, and, though the Israelites had separated themselves from the commandments of God, yet God's covenant remained in force and God was their Father and Protector. The God which Nahum describes in such vivid colors is opposed to evil, and, yet He also is open to receive all who turn to him for help.

The consequences of stressing only one aspect of Biblical revelation and neglecting others is distortion. Think of the consequences of teaching only the holiness and justice of God. You would be picturing God as relentless, harsh, judgmental and vindictive, One who delights in the destruction of the depraved. Or, suppose that you focus exclusively on the love, patience and grace of God. Then, you run the risk of turning His fatherly kindness into mere permissiveness. You've manufactured a God Who gratifies the self-centered in their self-indulgence; forbids no evil by any authoritative command, accepts the ethics of the new morality, and fails to express His holiness in the punishment of sin.

Nahum points the way to a balanced view of God. Our theology, drawing on the fullness of God's self-revelation in the written Word and the Word made flesh, also should reflect the wholeness of His truth.

Habakkuk

When Habakkuk arrived upon the stage, the nation of Judah was in "*death throes*." Although she had been repeatedly called to repentance, this nation stubbornly refused to change her sinful ways. Habakkuk, knowing the hardheartedness of his countrymen, asks God how long would this intolerable condition continue. God replies that the Babylonians would be His *chastening rod* upon the nation of Judah. This announcement sends the prophet to his knees. He acknowledges that "*the just shall live by faith, not by sight*" (2:4). Habakkuk, then, concludes by praising God's wisdom even though he doesn't fully understand God's ways.

Obadiah's words concerned the "*fate of Edom* - Nahum's words concerned "*the fate of Assyria*," now, Habakkuk's words concerns "*the fate of Babylon*."

The book of Habakkuk presents a picture of a man of God, perplexed by the problem of what seems to him to be God tolerating evil. Habakkuk, surrounded on every hand by wickedness, sees sins going unpunished and, it appears to the prophet, evil is prevailing. At first his cry for judgment goes unheeded by God. Then, when his prayer is at last answered and judgment is pronounced, he is further perplexed that the instrument of God's judgments, which is the Chaldeans, (another name for, the Babylonians), who are more wicked and more worthy of punishment than the victims, the children of Judah. Habakkuk is full of doubt and questionings, however, he takes his perplexities to God, who dispels them, and presents a solution to Habakkuk's problems. The answer is summed up in a statement which is the heart of the book of Habakkuk - that is, "*The just shall live by his faith*" (2:4). That is, no matter how gloomy the outlook and how triumphant evil seems, the just man must not judge by appearances, but rather by God's Word; through the wicked may live and prosper in their wickedness and the righteous suffer, men of faith are to live a life of faithfulness and trustfulness. Habakkuk learned this

lesson well, for, whereas his prophecy begins with mystery, questioning and doubt, it ends with certainty, affirmation, and faith.

1. The Conflict of Faith - Chapter 1 and 2

A. Habakkuk's first conflict - 1:1-4

The prophet sees evil and violence on every side, the law violated, and the righteous persecuted. He cries out to the Lord to visit judgment on Judah because of this condition, but seemingly his cry is unheeded. He pours forth his perplexity in these words, "*Lord, how long must I beg for Your help before You listen? How long before You save us from all this violence?*"

B. God's first answer - 1:5-11

Though it may sometimes appear that God is silent and indifferent, yet He is working. In due time, He will visit judgment upon wicked Judah, using as His agents the terrible Babylonians.

C. The prophet's second conflict - 1:12 through 2:1

The first problem is solved - God would punish the evil doers in Zion, by allowing the Babylonians to invade them, however, this solution suggests another problem, Why would God punish His people by a nation less righteous than they? (1:13)

The question Habakkuk asked was, "*How can God use the Babylonians to judge His people?* (1:12). *How can it be His will when He is too pure to look upon sin and iniquity?* (1:13) *How can You, Lord, allow the Babylonians, who are so sinful, to trample upon Your people, Judah?*" (1:14-17).

D. God's answer - 2:2-5

The Babylonians have been commissioned to execute judgment on Judah, however, in their arrogant pride, they exceeded their commission. Though the wicked may prosper in their iniquity, and the righteous suffer, yet children of God are to live a life of faithfulness to God, a life inspired by faith in His promises and His justice (2:4). Though God would use the Babylonians as a scourge upon His people, yet they would not go unpunished (2:5-20). Habakkuk is to write this prophecy of Babylon's ultimate overthrow and post it where all may read it (2:2). Though its fulfillment may be delayed, the righteous are to wait patiently for it, trusting in God's Word (2:3).

2. The Triumph of Faith - Chapter 3

A. At first Habakkuk was wondering why God seemed to delay judgment on the sins of His people (1:2-3). Now, that he has heard the Lord's sentence, he is afraid and prays that God may repeat . . . (on behalf of His people) . . . His work of deliverance as of old, and that He would have mercy in the midst of judgment - (3:1-2).

B. Habakkuk presents a vivid picture of God's going forth in the day of old to save His people, the implication being that His past mercies to Israel are a pledge of His future mercies toward them - (3:3-16).

C. Habakkuk has learned his lesson of faith. Whatever be his circumstances or that of his people, however, dark and hopeless the outlook, he will rejoice in the Lord, the God of his salvation (3:17-19).

Zephaniah

Zephaniah gives more of his background than do the other prophets. In verse 1 he says he is the great-great grandson of King Hezekiah. He prophesied in the days of Josiah and he was therefore a contemporary with Jeremiah. He was a prophet of Judah. Joel and Zephaniah are the prophets of judgment against Judah - yet both tell of a glorious deliverance.

The frequent recurrence of the phrase, "*the day of the Lord*," shows immediately that Zephaniah has a message of judgment. However, in common with the other prophets, he also has a message of restoration for Judah. The book of Zephaniah has been compared to "*a barren desert - no life, no flowers, no fruit, none of the beauties of nature, nothing but a world swept by a hot, suffocating, sand-laden wind of the wasteland.*" If this is so, what is the reason for it? When one realizes the conditions described by Zephaniah, it becomes more understandable.

Zephaniah describes the circumstances: "*Men settled on their lees in luxury, denying the interference of God. A city that did not obey God's voice, would not receive correction, did not trust in the Lord and would not draw near to God. Men and city materialized, self-centered, luxurious - rulers, princes, judges, prophets, and priests alike corrupt.*"

The whole condition may be expressed in one word - chaos! That of chaos consumed, disorder disorganized, evil conditions destroyed, until the city appears before the eye of the astonished prophet as a wind-swept landscape with not even a blade of grass to be found.

Some have suggested that the same man who wrote the first two chapters could not have written chapter three, because the contrast is so great between of the picture the awful, sweeping, irrevocable judgment, and that of the blessed restoration written of in chapter 3. It has been stated that "*No one can imagine that the same man wrote both.*" All of which only shows the blindness on the part of some people's understanding of God's Word.

The last picture, found in chapter 3, is that of our enthroned Lord, the picture given in this last chapter, is that of a new order - songs instead of sorrow - service instead of selfishness - and - solidarity instead of scattering. After all, this is the intent of God's judgment. This very contrast is what demonstrates the unity of authorship

On the whole, Zephaniah is a fierce and grim book of warning about the coming day of the Lord. Desolation, darkness, and ruin will strike Judah and the nations because of the wrath of God upon sin. Zephaniah looks beyond judgment, however, to a time of joy when God will cleanse the nations and restore the fortunes of His people Israel. The book begins with God's declaration, "*I will utterly consume all things from off the land*" (1:2) but it ends with the promise, "*At that time will I bring you again*" and "*turn back your captivity before your eyes*" (3:20).

1. A WARNING OF JUDGMENT ON JUDAH - Chapter 1

A. A sweeping, destructive judgment announced - (1:1-3)

- B.** A prophecy of the overthrow of idolatry - (1:4-6) - [Fulfilled in Josiah's reign]
- C.** The coming punishment of Judah is set forth under the figure of a sacrifice, the victims representing the people, and the guests, the Chaldean invaders - (1:7)
- D.** The judgment will fall on all classes: on the rulers and their children (1:8); on their servants who plunder the people (1:9); on the merchants (1:10-11); and on those who live in luxury, indifference and skepticism (1:12-13)
- E.** A description of the day of the Lord, the day of His vengeance on the guilty (1:14-18).

2. A CALL TO REPENTANCE - Chapters 2 through 3:7

- A.** A warning to the wicked to repent in order to escape judgment (2:1-2)
- B.** An exhortation to the just to persevere in meekness and righteousness in order that they may be hid in that day (2:3).
- C.** This call to repentance enforced by the certainty of judgments on the surrounding nations (2:4-15).
- D.** Jerusalem shall not escape, because she has failed to heed the warning conveyed by the fate of those nations whom God had punished (3:-1-7).

3. A PROMISE OF RESTORATION - Chapter 3;8-20

- A.** The judgment are the nations, in the last days, will be followed by their conversion and the institution of the universal worship of God (3:8-9).
- B.** God will purge from Israel those who relaxed in self-righteous pride of their covenant privileges; and, purged from these sinners, Israel will be a humble, trustful and holy nation (3:12-13).
- C.** God will lift His chastening hand from Israel, will bless the remnant, punish Israel's enemies and will dwell in the midst of a restored and exalted nation (3:14-20).

Haggai

Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are known as the *Post-Captivity prophets* because they were God's messengers during this period of restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple. the main appeal of Haggai and Zechariah was to inspire the Jews to finish building the Temple which had been discontinued.

Haggai was the first of the prophets prophesying after the captivity. [Ezra 1-7 gives an historical background of the time in which Haggai prophesied.]

Under the favorable decree of Cyrus, the Jewish remnant returned to their land under the leadership of Zerubbabel, their governor, and Joshua, their high priest. After settling in the land,

the people set up an altar of burnt offerings on the site of the Temple. Two years later, amid great rejoicing, the foundations of the Temple were laid. Their rejoicing soon turned into sadness, for, through the efforts of the hostile Samaritans, the work was ordered discontinued by an imperial decree. During which time the people became indifferent and selfish, and instead of building the Temple, they neglected the things of the Lord became occupied with the beautifying of their own homes. As a result of this negligence, these Jews were punished with drought and barrenness. Their enquiry concerning the reason for these calamities gave Haggai the occasion for his message, in which he declared that the people's selfish indifference in regard to the needs of the Temple was the cause of their misfortunes. For sixteen years the Temple remained unfinished until the reign of Darius, when that king issued an order permitting its completion. Into this backslidden condition the prophet, Haggai, was sent with a message from God.

The Book of Haggai divides itself into four distinctly messages:

1. First Message: The neglect of the second Temple's completion - Chapter 1

A. The excuse for the neglect (1:1-2).

"The time is not come that the Lord's house should rebuilt." The people were probably waiting for some special revelation from God before they would perform what they knew to be their duty. These Jews were postponing what they had gone to Jerusalem to accomplish. They were satisfied to sit in their homes and *wait* unto the time came and they *felt* like doing it.

B. The cause of the neglect - the people's selfishness (1:3-4).

They did not wait for any special command to build and embellish their own homes.

C. The punishment for the neglect - drought and barrenness (1:5-11).

D. The repentance for the neglect (1:12-15).

The people set to work on the Temple.

2. The Second Message: The glory of the second Temple - 2:1-9

A. The people's discouragement (2:1-3).

Remembering the magnificence of Solomon's Temple, the people were evidently discouraged by the thought that the present Temple would not equal it in beauty and glory. They knew that it would lack the Shekinah glory that filled the first Temple.

B. The Divine encouragement (2:4-9).

The glory of the second Temple will be greater than that of the first, declares God, for Messiah Himself, the Lord of glory, will enter it. This was fulfilled at Christ's first coming when He entered the Temple (John 2:13-25 compared with Malachi 3:1). There may be a more complete fulfillment at His second coming.

3. Third Message: Sacrifices without obedience (to rebuild the Temple) will not sanctify - 2:10-19

A. A parable (2:10-14).

The lesson contained in these Scriptures is as follows: holiness is not contagious, but evil is. The sacrifices offered on the altar were not sufficient to sanctify a land which the disobedience of the people had polluted. Therefore the land was barren. The faint aroma of sanctity coming from the altar was too feeble to saturate the secular atmosphere of their lives. Haggai argues that Israel's sacrifices for sixteen years had been unclean in God's sight, and had brought them no blessing, because the Temple was in ruins. And, even though they had returned to the land, and eventually rebuilt the Temple, their hearts were far from God.

B. A warning (2:15-18).

The blight upon the land was caused by disobedience.

C. A promise (2:19)

Now that the people have set themselves to work in earnest, the Lord will bless them.

4. Fourth Message: The safety and perpetual existence of the house of Israel (2:20-23)

This message is directed to Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah. The message is the same as in verses 6-7 and speaks of the final purpose of God. Gentile power will come to an end "*in that day*" and the Lord will make Zerubbabel a "*signet*" - a sign of authority, a guarantee of the greater than David. It point to Messiah. Zerubbabel was honored by a place in both genealogies of Christ (Matthew 1:12-17 and Luke 3:27). Christ is truly the Son of Zerubbabel as well as the Son of David. Zerubbabel was, and is, a "*signet*" - prefiguring Christ. Christ the greater Son and the Antitype of David and Zerubbabel shall be the signet of God whereby He shall imprint His will, His perfect ideal upon all nations.

A. The coming world commotions (2:20-22).

Comparing Haggai 2:6-7 with Hebrews 12:26-28, we see here a reference to the final world upheaval preceding Christ's second coming.

B. The assurance of safety (2:23).

The national disturbances in Zerubbabel's time had perhaps made him fear for the safety of his nation. As a representation of the house of David and an ancestor of the Messiah, he receives a promise of protection and safety for himself and his people. All the nations of the world shall be shaken, but the Jewish nation under Messiah, of whom Zerubbabel is a type, shall be established.

Zechariah

Theme” The immediate and future restoration of Israel as a nation again in Palestine, particularly their eternal restoration under the Messiah. The book is primarily Messianic in message and concerning this, the prophet's vision and clearness of thought are almost without parallel. The book opens with 10 visions, (1:7-6:8) then we have prophecies and sermons to encourage restored Judah as a nation (6:9-8:23). In chapters 9-11 we have messages concerning the deliverance of Judah from enemies, the 1st and 2nd advent of the Messiah, the Grecian Empire under Antichrist, material and spiritual rain, the battle of Armageddon at the 2nd advent of the Messiah, the rejection of the Messiah at His 1st advent, the dispersion, and the regathering of Israel in the last days. Chapters 12-14 picture the siege of Jerusalem by Antichrist, the

Messiah's 2nd advent, Judah's part in the battle of Armageddon, the repentance and conversion of Israel, and the millennial and eternal reign of the Messiah over all nations.

Purpose: to encourage and inspire Judah in their national restoration after the Babylonian captivities; and to assure them of God's present and future blessings in fulfillment of the covenants made with their fathers.

Zechariah was a contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1, Haggai 1:1 and Zechariah 1:1) Zechariah supplemented the message of Haggai. He was both priest and prophet. He was the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, a prophet (Nehemiah 12:4) - which means that Zechariah was of the family of Aaron.

Zechariah's mission was to encourage by the promise of present success and future glory, the Jewish remnant, who were disheartened by present distress and who were slow to rebuild their Temple. The people had good reason for being discouraged. They had once been a free nation, having king and constitution, however, now they had returned to a country under foreign rule, to a country without a king, and stripped of power. Their present condition presented a dark picture, but Zechariah made this serve as a dark background of a more glorious scene, as he, by a series of visions and prophecies, depicted a restored Jerusalem protected and indwelt by the Messiah, and capital of a nation exalted above all others. Besides the promise of future glory, the prophet gave promises of present success and achievement, for he assured the remnant that their Temple would be rebuilt in spite of opposition. But Zechariah could offer no permanent encouragement short of the promise of Messiah's coming. Israel's present experience is but a foreshadowing of their future experience. As it was through the chastisement of the Babylonian captivity that the nation was purged of the sin of idolatry, so it will be by the fires of the great tribulation that Israel will be purified from its sin of sins - the rejection of its Messiah and King (13:8-9; 12:10 and 13:1).

From the time of Zachariah and Haggai, the priesthood takes the lead in the nation. The history of God's people falls into three main periods:

From Moses to Samuel - Israel under Judges
From Saul to Zedekiah - Israel under Kings
From Jeshua to 70 A.D. - Israel under Priests

1. Symbolical: Visions of Hope - Chapter 1 through 6

Chapter 1:1-6 forms the introduction to the book of Zechariah. The remnant are admonished to take warning from the fate of their fathers, who disobeyed the voice of the prophets, and suffered as a consequence. Zechariah warns that the people are to obey the message of the present prophets, Haggai and himself, whose words will be fulfilled as surely as those of the former prophets.

Zechariah then has a series of visions:

(A) The vision of the rider among the myrtle trees - 1:7-17

The riders of the horses - red speckled, and white - are invisible agencies of God sent

forth into the earth to accomplish various missions. They are God's scouts that report conditions to Him. These reported that all the earth was still and at peace (1:8-11). The horses are not symbolic, but real and literal creatures, actual spirit horses created to live in heaven and used by those going back and forth between earth and heaven for the purpose seen here, and perhaps many other capacities. That spirit horses do exist is clear from 1:8-11; 6:1-8; 2 Kings 2:11; 6:14-17 and Revelation 19:11-21.

(B) The vision of the four horns - 1:18-19

Horns are symbolic of kings or kingdoms (Daniel 7:8, 23-25 and Revelation 17:12-17), this refers to 4 kings or Gentile powers that would be permitted to scatter Judah, Israel and Jerusalem (1:17). Since 1:16-17 predict a future restoration under the Messiah, it is only logical to think that the 4 horns which did this before Zechariah's day are not the only powers referred to - others must be included who would scatter them after the prophet's day up to the time of the future fulfillment of the regathering under Christ. This line of thought better fits the exact facts of history and prophecy. Of the 8 great world powers who oppressed Israel, in the whole length of the *times of the Gentiles* only 4 empires have scattered and will yet scatter Israel, Judah and Jerusalem - they are:

1. Assyria - (2 Kings 15:29; 17:1-41)
2. Babylon - (2 Kings 24:1-25:30)
3. Rome - (Daniel 9:26 and Luke 21:20-24)
4. Future Revised Greece - (Revelation 12:6 and 14)

Four Gentiles powers not scattering Israel

1. Egypt (2 Kings 23:33-37)
2. Medo-Persia - (Ezra 1:1-4 and Nehemiah 2)
3. Greece - (Daniel 8:21)
4. Revised Rome (Daniel 7:23-24)

(C) The vision of the Carpenters - 1:20-21

The Hebrew word can mean: "*metal smiths - fabricators - artificers - carpenters - craftsmen - engravers - masons - workers - or builders.*" The idea is that in the restoration of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, under the Messiah, the powers that scattered them will be defeated by the carpenters, and full restoration will be accomplished. They are to undo all that the 4 horns of the Gentiles have done, these, the carpenters will "*fray*" (The Hebrew word "*chared*" has the meaning of "*terrify - cause fear - make afraid - discomfort - or, drive away*" the horns of the Gentiles (the 4 Gentile world powers who scattered all Israel)

Scriptural this evidently refers to:

1. Christ - (Matthew 24:29-31 and Revelation 19:11-21)
2. The heavenly angels - (Matthew 24:31 and 2 Thessalonians-10)
3. Resurrected saints - (Zechariah 14:5 - Jude 1:14-15 - Revelation 19:14)
4. Revived earthly Israel - (Zechariah 14:14)

(D) The vision of the Man with the measuring line - Chapter 2

This was a symbol of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It will be rebuilt without walls because of the coming increase of population and because God Himself will be as a wall of fire

round about her.

(E) The vision of Joshua the high priest and Satan - 3:1-7

The high priest was ministering in garments that were not holy or proper for high priests. His filthy garments were taken away, his iniquity was cleansed, and he was clothed with the appropriate attire. The high priest's miter was also placed upon his head (3:3-5). Then the angel that stood by gave him a charge concerning conditions he should meet to be the high priest, and be blessed (3:6-7). After that he was given a prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of Israel (3:8-10)

(F) The vision of God's servant, the Branch - 3:8-10

"*The Branch*" was now made a proper name, by Zechariah, through inspiration. He is the man whose name is called "*the Branch*" (3:8 and 6:12). Previously, prophets had predicted Him to be the branch of the Lord (Isaiah 4:2), and the branch of David (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15).

(G) The vision of the golden candlestick and the two olive trees

The purpose of this vision was to encourage Joshua and Zerubbabel in their work of restoring the Temple and the nation of Judah after the Babylonian captivity. First they were shown that the true source of power was not by might nor by human power, but by the Holy Spirit anointing (4:5-7); and Israel was assured that despite the hindrance of the work on the Temple, Zerubbabel would finish (4:8-10). Then the angel explained what the 2 olive trees symbolized, further assuring Zerubbabel that God would be with him in his work as He was with the two anointed men now standing before Him (4:11-14).

After applying the message to Zerubbabel, the angel explained the full meaning of the olive trees. They represented the two anointed ones (men) who, having been translated without seeing death, stand before the God of all the earth until the time they are to appear on earth again as the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3-11 and verse 14.

(H) The vision of the flying scroll - 5:1-4

Zechariah is first amazed by the size of this scroll - 20 feet, ten inches by 41 feet and eight inches! (5:2) After learning of the scroll's size, the prophet received an explanation of what it contained (5:3-4). After the completion of the Temple, God will punish those violating His laws.

(I) The vision of the Ephah - 5:5-11

Like the vision before this, the Ephah was of things flying in the air. [An ephah was a measure of about 1 bushel and 3 pints] Upon seeing the ephah the prophet inquired as to what it was, and meant the woman in the middle of the measure, which had a talent of lead for its lid. And, who were the two women, "*with wings like those of a stork, who lifted the ephah between heaven and earth, and bore it to the land of Shinar and set it upon its base?*"

Zechariah saw that when the lid, made of a talent of lead, was lifted up a woman was seen sitting in the middle of the ephah (5:7). [A talent of lead weighed over 122 lbs. which was an extreme weight for a lid to an ephah.] Yet, this "*talent of lead*" did not hold the woman

(whom Zachariah learns is a picture of wickedness) down . . . illustrating the power of wickedness.

In verse 8 the angel explains that the woman represents wickedness) The two women carrying the ephah was borne forward by the wind and "*stork wings*" (referred to in particular).

The main theme of the vision was wickedness - building a house for it and establishing it upon it base. An ephah was a measure of commerce, and where it was to be established is clear - in the land of Shiner or Babylon (5:9-11). One thing is certain - Babylon will be the center of activities in the East during and the last days - in commerce, religion, and politics. It will be rebuilt and become the capital of the Antichrist. He will come from Syria, which will take in Babylon in those days - (for the Syrian division of the old Grecian empire included all the countries of Syria and Iraq). The coming of the Antichrist from Syria and Babylon will be in perfect harmony with all Scriptures. We see from Isaiah 13 and 14; Jeremiah 50 and 51; Revelation 14:8; 16:17-21; 17:1-18 and 18:1-24 that Babylon will play a great part in latter day events. not only as the political capital of the kingdom as the Antichrist, but as the headquarters for the religious system called "*Mystery Babylon.*" It will be a great commercial center of earth as pictured in Revelation 18. Antichrist will reign from Babylon during his rise to power over the 10 kingdoms of Daniel 7:23-24; Revelation 17:12-17, as taught in Isaiah 14. Then, he will leave Babylon to make his capital in Jerusalem the last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week, and will reign there during 42 months of his power over all nations (Daniel 9:27; 11:40-45; Revelation 13:5; 17:12-17). This passage, Zechariah 5:5-11, pictures the restoration of Babylon as the seat of wickedness in the last days.

2. Practical: Exhortations to Obedience and Piety - Chapters 7 and 8

The visions which God gave to Zechariah to reveal to the people, were occasioned by an enquire of representatives of the Jews who inquired about the fasts they had been observing for many years, as to whether they should continue to fast in commemoration of the fall of Jerusalem (7:1-3). The word of the Lord came to Zechariah rebuking them for their hypocrisy and revealing why their prayers had not been heard (7:5-14).

There is no prediction in this section. Remember, the word of the Lord was not all prediction, but primarily instruction regarding how to live, showing what God's will is in daily life.

It is noticeable that not one of the feasts or fasts that God had commanded is even mentioned here. Every observance was something new which they had started and kept during the 70 years only; and each one had to do with calamity upon Jerusalem and the remnant left after the city was destroyed.

The following lessons are contained in the prophet's answer:

(A) God desires obedience rather than fasting. It was the disobedience of the people that brought on the judgments that were the occasion for the fasts (Chapter 7).

(B) When the cause of fast and mourning - sin - is removed, then Israel's fasts will be turned into feasts (7:19). That day is coming, for Israel will be finally regathered and Jerusalem will become the religious center of the earth (Chapter 8).

3. Prophetical: Promises of Glory through Tribulation - Chapters 9 through 14

First Burden: Chapter 9 through 11

9:1-8 = Deliverance from enemies - (With Isaiah 13:1 and Nahum 1:1)

9:9 = Messiah first advent - (With Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1; Luke 19:28; John 12:12)

9:10-11 = Messiah's second advent - (With Matthew 24 & 25; Mark 13; Luke 21)

9:12-17 = God Judah's defense against Antichrist and the Revived Grecian Empire at Armageddon

10:1-2 = Material and spiritual rain - (With Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23-32; and James 5:7)

10:3-5 = Judah made strong to fight at Armageddon (With Zechariah 14:14 and 12:4-9)

10:6-8 = Judah and Joseph regathered

10:9-12 = Dispersion and regathering of Israel in one view

First Advent and rejection of Messiah:

11:1-6 = **The result, Wrath** (With Matthew 24:2 and Luke 21:20-21)

Cause of the wrath:

11:7-9 = Symbol of beauty (graciousness) and bands (union).

11:10-11 = Beauty (graciousness) cut off:
no more mercy on Israel until Messiah's second advent
(With Matthew 23:39 and Romans 11:25-27)

11:12-13 = Messiah sold by the flock

11:14 = THEN bands (union) was cut off: Israel again dispersed
(With Luke 21:20-24 and Ezekiel 37:1-25)

11:15-17 = Antichrist to come to Israel to teach them how to appreciate a good shepherd (With John 5:43)

Second Burden - Chapters 12 through 14

12:1-3 = Siege of Jerusalem by Antichrist (With Isaiah 13:1; Zechariah 9:1; Ezekiel 38

and 39, and Revelation 19)

12:4-9 = Messiah's second advent: Judah's part at Armageddon (14:14)

Conversion of Israel:

12:10 = The outpoured Spirit: the crucified Messiah revealed

12:11-14 = Repentance of Israel (With Isaiah 64)

13:1 = Israel accepts the cross

13:2 = Idolatry and spiritualism destroyed

13:3-5 = False prophets executed

13:6 = Crucified Messiah revealed

13:7 = How Israel's redemption was purchased (With Matthew 26:31)

Purpose of Tribulation

13:8-9 = Rebels purged from Judah

The day of the Lord:

14:1-3 = Begins at Armageddon

For a study on, " <i>the day of the Lord</i> ," see: Isaiah 2:10 & 17-21; Isaiah 34:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15-3:14; Amos 5:18; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 14; Malachi 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).
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14:4-7 = Messiah's second advent: Physical changes in Palestine

14:8 = River of the sanctuary (With Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Revelation 22:1-2)

14:9 = Extent of Messiah's reign

14:10 = Physical changes in Palestine (With Isaiah 35)

14:11 = Jerusalem restored (With Ezekiel 48)

14:12-13 = How the armies at Armageddon will be destroyed
(With Ezekiel 38:17-39:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; and Revelation 19)

14:14 = Spoil and Judah's part at Armageddon (With Zechariah 10:3 and 12:4-9)

14:15 = Plague on the animals

14:16 = Mosaic feasts established

14:17-19 = Judgment on disobedient nations in the Millennium

14:20-21 = Character of the kingdom

Malachi

We come now to the last Book of the Old Testament, Malachi, who prophesied after the days of Nehemiah, at a time when the condition of the Jews had become deplorable. Malachi is "*the bridge*" between the Old and the New Testament (3:1). 400 years of silence is between the voice of Malachi and the "*voice of one crying in the wilderness*" (John 1:23).

Malachi, the last of the prophets, testifies as do his predecessors, to the sad fact that Israel has failed. He presents a picture of a people outwardly religious, but inwardly indifferent and insincere, a people to whom the service of God has become an empty formality, performed by a corrupt priesthood whom they did not respect. Under the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah the people were willing to acknowledge their faults and make amends; but now so hardened have they become, that to the charges of God they offer insolent denials (Malachi 1:1-2; 2:17 and 3:7). Worse still, many profess a skepticism as to the existence of a God of judgment, and others, question the value of serving the Lord (2:17; and 3:14-15). As a ray of light shining upon this dark scene is the promise of the advent of the Messiah, who will come to the deliverance of the faithful remnant and to the judgment of the nation. The book closes with a prophecy of the coming of Elijah, Messiah's forerunner, and then the curtain drops on Old Testament revelation, not to be lifted again until four hundred years later, when the angel of God announces the coming of Him who is to go before the coming One in spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17).

Theme: There are 14 statements of accusation from God and 10 denials - rebellious answers - from Israel. One of the greatest evidences of backsliding is a person's hyper-critical spirit, his readiness to question everything, even God's own statements, and his willingness to find fault with everybody, even the Lord. The book of Malachi is a rebuke against the many sins of Israel, of which 32 are listed therein. The prophet pronounces the moral judgment of God upon the exiles returning from Babylon more than Haggai and Zechariah do. Furthermore, his book contains some of the most wonderful prophecies we have of the 1st and 2nd advent (3:1-5), and of the ministry of Elijah and Enoch preceding the 2nd advent (3:17-4:6).

The **purpose** of the book of Malachi was to rebuke the returning exiles for their many sins, to point out to them . . . at the very outset of their return and restoration as a nation . . . that God would not tolerate their sins anymore than He did the sins of their father (for which they went into ruin, destruction as a nation, and captivity); to warn them of coming judgment if they would continue in sin; and to reveal to them certain events of the future in connection with the Messiah at His 1st and 2nd advents.

1. Warning and Rebuke: Messages to the Rebellious - Chapter 1:1 through 3:15

(A) A message to the whole nation - 1:1-5

Malachi's message was to show God's love for the whole nation of Israel, and their ingratitude. The people rudely question God's love for them, thinking of their past afflictions, but forgetting that these were the chastening of the Almighty to purify them.

As a proof of His love to the nation, God points to His free election of their father Jacob and the rejection of his brother.

The word "***hate***" does not imply hatred in the sense that we understand it, but, rather, is here used in the sense of rejecting. Compare Luke 14:26 and Matthew 10:37 where the word "***hate***" simply means to love with a lesser affection - meaning to prefer something, or someone, less.

Edom is forever rejected of God and will be forever desolate. But Israel, forever chosen of God, will live to see Edom's desolation and will glorify God's grace and love (1:4-5).

(B) Messages to the priests - 1:6 through 2:9

The following sins are rebuked:

1. Lack of reverence for the Lord (1:6). Note the spirit of self-satisfied insensibility to sin, revealed in the reply of the priests, "*Wherein have we despised Thee?*" This attitude is manifested in all of the answers of the people and priests to God's reproofs.
2. The offering of blemished sacrifices (1:7-12). Darius and his successors had liberally supplied the priests with animals for the sacrifices (Ezra 6:8-10), however, the sacrifices were the worst of their herds. They offered to the Lord that which they would not have dared to offer to their governor (1:8). But though polluted sacrifices are offered in Palestine, among the Gentiles there were those who brought a pure offering before the Lord (1:11).
3. The performing of God's service in the spirit of indifference and discontent (1:11-12). They regarded God's service as irksome, and dishonored it by presenting the most worthless offerings.
4. The violation of the Levitical covenant (2:1-9). The Lord mentions those qualities that the covenant required in a priest: namely, (a) a close walk with God, and (b) zeal to turn many from iniquity and ability to teach (2:5-7). In these qualities the priesthood of Malachi's time were sadly lacking (2:8)

(C) Messages to the people - 2:11 through 3:15

The following sins are rebuked:

1. Sins of the family (2:10-16). Many of the people had divorced their Israelitish wives in order to marry foreign women (Nehemiah 13:28-29).
2. Skepticism (2:17). This verse forms the transition into chapter 3. The skeptics of the

day were insinuating that God delighted in evil-doers because they were the ones who seemed to prosper. And, if that was the case, why should they serve God? (3:14-15) Where is the God of judgment, they ask. The answer is forthcoming (3:1-6). The Lord whom they seek (3:1)...[whom they challenge to appear]...will come suddenly...[when they least expect it]...to His Temple and will visit judgment on priests and people. This seeming delay of judgment was not because God had changed, but, rather, it was because He had **not** changed in regard to His covenant promises and because of His unchanging mercy (3:6).

3. The withholding of the tithe (3:7-12; compare with Nehemiah 13:10-14).

(D) Predictions and Promises: Messages to the Faithful - 3:16 through 4:6

1. A message to the righteous - 3:16 through 4:3. In the darkest days of Israel's apostasy there has always been a remnant that have remained faithful to God. In Malachi's day, when the fire of religion was burning low, these faithful ones kept the flame alive. As the kings of Persia kept a record of those who had rendered them service, so that they might reward them (Esther 2:23; 6:1-2; Ezra 4:5), so God is keeping His record (3:16). These loyal ones are His jewels, His own peculiar treasure, whom He will preserve from the day of tribulation. In that day both the righteous and the wicked will be recompensed, and will silence the skeptic's sneer (3:18 with 2:17 and 3:14-15). The sun of righteousness will rise, to burn the wicked, but to shed healing rays upon the righteous (4:1-3).
2. The last exhortation of the Old Testament is (4:4), "*Remember ye the law of Moses.*" Until Messiah came, revelation was to cease temporarily. The people were to remember the law, for in the absence of the living prophets, they were likely to forget it. The law was to be their rule of life and conduct during the four hundred years of silence intervening between the last Old Testament prophet and the coming of the Prophet of prophets.
3. The last prophecy of the Old Testament (4:5-6). Before the coming of the great day of wrath, God will send the forerunner of the Messiah, Elijah, who will prepare the people for His coming. This prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist (Luke 1:17; Matthew 11:14; 17:11-12).

The Old Testament ends with the word "*curse*," but not until it promises the faithful that a "***Book of Remembrance***" is being written - containing the "*jewels*" of the Lord. And also, giving the paramount thought, "*The promised Messiah.*"

God promises, "*Unto you who fear My name shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in His wings*" (4:2).

The 400 Years between the Old Testament and the New Testament

There is a period of four hundred years of silence that separates the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, from the first book of the New Testament, Matthew. The Old Testament canon of Scripture closed with Malachi about 397 B.C.

The entire history of the United States of America, from the founding of the first colonies in Massachusetts and Virginia to the present day, would fit inside that gap with decades to spare. Yet, despite the four-century gap between Malachi and Matthew, those books are linked together in a remarkable way.

This does not mean, however, that no books of Hebrew history were being written during this period of time. During the period of 400 B.C. to New Testament times, a body of literature was produced that came to be called "*the Apocrypha*." When Jerome translated the Septuagint . . . [Greek translation of the Old Testament] . . . into Latin for the Vulgate edition of the Catholic Bible (fifth century A.D.), he expressed doubts about the validity of the Apocrypha, but he was overruled by the ruling council of the church. As a result, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Bibles contain the Apocrypha to this day. The Apocrypha was never included, however, in the Old Testament of the early Hebrew Christians and was not accepted as inspired, legitimate Scripture by Reformers such as Calvin and Luther. It was also excluded from the Authorized (King James) Version of 1611.

The Books of the Apocrypha

The term Apocrypha is applied to a collection of books, from eleven to sixteen in number, which appeared in the interim between the Old and New Testaments. They have come down in more or less close connection with the canonical books of the Bible. They have had a strange history. Ecclesiastical opinion in different periods has differed widely as to the value of the literature. The Jews of the Dispensation in Egypt placed a high estimate upon these books, and included them in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, but they were rejected from the Hebrew canon by the Jews of Palestine.

While it is commonly agreed that some of these books may contain material of literary merit, and historical value, their canonicity has been rejected, and they have been omitted from the modern editions of the Bibles, for the following reasons:

1. They were not written or approved by a prophet.
2. They were not recognized by the Jews, as inspired and a part of Scripture.
3. The last Old Testament prophet predicted that the next messenger coming to Israel from God would be the forerunner of Christ (Malachi 3:1).
4. They are never quoted by Jesus, and were ever alluded to by the apostles.
5. Most of the early Fathers regarded them as uninspired.
6. Divine authority is not claimed by their authors, and by some it is virtually disowned (2 Macabees 2:23 & 15:38).
7. The inferior quality of most of the writings as compared with the canonical books, stamp them as unworthy of a place in the sacred Scriptures.
8. The books contain statements at variance with the Bible history.

9. They are self-contradictory and, in some cases, opposed to doctrines of Scripture
10. Josephus, who lived at the time of the apostles, did not regard the Apocryphal books as Scripture and stated that the Old Testament books (the ones in our present version) were the only inspired writings (Book I, section 8).
11. The Apocryphal books were not a part of the ancient versions of Scripture.
They were first added after 300 A.D. The Laodicean Council in 363 A.D. rejected them as being uninspired, because some were claiming inspiration for them. They first appeared in the Vatican Version of the 4th century. At the Council of Trent in 1546 A.D. Catholics accepted 6 of these books as inspired and added them to their modern versions of Scripture.
12. Philo and others did not regard the Apocryphal books as inspired.
13. There is a lack of prophetic element in them; and there is an apparent imitation of the inspired Old Testament books.
14. They show free use of the imagination, which has given rise to silly stories, and the lack of spiritual force and power.

As historical texts, the Apocrypha can shed interesting light on the period of Hebrew history during the gap between the Testaments. This was the period during which Jewish culture was strongly influenced by Greek (Hellenistic) ideas, and the Hellenization of Israel can be clearly seen in these works. In fact, the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament is a sign of the Hellenistic influence. Interesting clues to certain New Testament institutions can also be found in the Apocrypha. Since the Pharisee sect of Judaism arose in the second century B.C., and the Sadducee (or Zadokite) party arose in the first century B.C. both of these groups are crucially important in all four Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus and also figure in the life of that hardened Pharisee-turned-Christian-missionary, the apostle Paul.

The apocryphal books in the Septuagint (but not included in the Scripture of the non-Hellenistic Jews) were:

- Tobit**, a book of edifying historical fiction:
- Judith**, a book of edifying historical fiction
- The Wisdom of Solomon**, a wisdom book similar to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
- Sirach** (Ecclesiasticus), another wisdom book
- Baruch**, an add-on Jeremiah, supposedly written by Jeremiah's assistant: and
- First and Second Maccabees**, epic historical works.

Also, included in the Apocrypha are fragmentary texts that are appended to the accepted, inspired Old Testament - additions to the **Book of Esther** (which appear in the Septuagint and Roman Catholic versions as Esther 10:4-10, the **Song of the Three Young Men** (inserted at the end of Daniel 3), the story of **Susanna** (which appears as Daniel 13), and the story of **Bal and the Dragan** (which appears as Daniel 14).

The Apocrypha makes interesting and even informative reading, but a careful examination of these books, comparing them with the accepted canon of Scripture, strongly indicates that these extra-canonical books do not fit in with the over all themes of God's Word. If you work your way through the Old Testament, book by book, as we have been doing, you can see clearly that every page of every book points clearly to Jesus, the coming Messiah. You do

not see Jesus clearly, if at all, in the Apocrypha. Perhaps that is one of the factors that persuaded Saint Jerome to question their validity so many years ago. In any case, I am persuaded, as are virtually all other Protestant Bible scholars, that whatever historical or literary value the Apocrypha may have, it is not the inspired Word of God.

One does not, necessarily, need a knowledge of this period between the Old and the New Testaments, in order to be able to understand what the New Testament teaches, however, it is advantageous to have some knowledge of this period, if one is to understand some of the sayings Jesus used and some of the various groups He had to face in His day.

THE BEGINNING

The condition of the Jews . . . [of the Southern Kingdom, Judah] . . . at the beginning of this 400 year period should be remembered. 200 years earlier (in 587 B.C.) Jerusalem had been destroyed and the people carried into Babylonian Captivity. [The Assyrians destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel 135 years earlier in 722 B.C.]

Babylon was overthrown by the Medo-Persian empire, as had been predicted by Daniel (Chapter 2 and 7) and Cyrus issued the order for the Jews to return and build the Temple. Under Zerubbabel a "*remnant*" returned and 21 years later the Temple was completed (in 515 B.C.). Ezra then took a small group to Jerusalem and restored the "*worship*" in the Temple - followed by Nehemiah 12 years later to build the city walls.

Such is the picture at the beginning of this 400 years period between Malachi and Matthew - the Jewish "*remnant*" were back in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, the Temple and Jerusalem rebuilt and the worship restored - but the great masses of the Jews remained in the land of their captivity.

It is in the "*remnant*" that we find Jewish history preserved between the Old and New Testaments.

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The 400 years history of the Jews between Malachi and Matthew runs in six periods:

- 1. THE PERSIAN - 538 B.C.**
- 2. THE GREEK - 333 B.C.**
- 3. THE EGYPTIAN - 323 B.C.**
- 4. THE SYRIAN - 204 B.C.**
- 5. THE MACCABEAN - 165 B.C.**
- 6. THE ROMAN - 63 B.C. to Christ**

1. The Persian Rule - 538 B.C.

The Persian rule over Palestine continued until Alexander the Great and his Greek empire in 333 B.C. This was the second empire mentioned by Daniel, which means that the Jews were under the Persian rule at the end of Malachi's writing and remained under Persian rule for the *first sixty years of the period between the Old and New Testaments*.

During this period, the *rival worship* of the Samaritans became establish. Back in 721 B.C., the Northern Kingdom of Israel (the 10 tribes) were scattered by Assyria to "*the cities of the Medes.*" The Assyrian emperor reseeded the cities of Israel with a mixed people known as "*the Samaritans.*" It was from this people that Nehemiah faced opposition on his way to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:10 and 4:1-3). This rivalry persisted through the New Testament times.

2. The Greek Rule - 333 B.C.

Alexander the Great, at 20 years of age, transformed the face of the world in 10 years. He is spoken of by Daniel in his prophecy in Daniel 7:6; 8:1-7 and verses 21-23.

3. The Egyptian Rule - 323 B.C.

This was the *longest of the six periods* between the Old and New Testaments. The death of Alexander the Great resulted in Judea falling into the hands of the *first Ptolemaic ruler . . .* [that is, Ptolemies were the line of Greek kings over Egypt] . . . Ptolemy Soter. The second Ptolemy (Philadelphus) founded the Alexandrian library and the famous *Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was made from the Hebrew to the Greek during this reign.*

Palestine was becoming the battle ground between Egypt and Syria.
(Seleucidae were the line of Syrian kings.)

4. The Syrian Rule - 204 B.C.

This was the *most tragic part of the period between the Old and the New Testaments* for the Jews. With the coming to power of Antiochus Epiphanes in 175 B.C., a reign of terror fell on all Jews. He wrecked Jerusalem, tore down the walls and killed the people. He desecrated the Temple in every way - culminating in offering of a pig on the altar of sacrifice and then erecting statues of false gods on the altar (Daniel 8:13).

5. The Maccabean Period - 165 B.C.

This was one of the most heroic periods in all history. The excesses persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes provoked the movement by the aged priest Mattathias, and carried on by his son, Judas Maccadeus. Judas Maccabeus restored the Temple and orthodox services were reinstated (following the desecration by Antiochus). Judas Maccabeus was killed in one of the battles with the Syrians. His brother, Jonathan, became leader and high priest, uniting the civil and priestly authority in one person, thus commencing the Hasmonean line of high priests (from Hashman, great grandfather of the Maccabee brothers). Jonathan was killed and Simon, his brother, was made leader. Simon was killed and his able son, John Hyrcanus, reigned 29 years. After changes among the Hasmonean leaders, the Herod family appears on the scene, leading to the Roman period.

6. The Roman Rule - 63 B.C.

Judea became a province of the Roman Empire. When the Maccabean line ended, Antipater was appointed over Judea by Julius Caesar in 47 B.C. Antipater appointed Herod, his son, governor of Galilee. He was appointed king of the Jews by Rome in 40 B.C. He murdered almost all of his own family including his wife and sons. *This was the "Herod the Great" who was king when our Lord, Jesus Christ, was born.*

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND DURING THE 400 YEARS

The political background, of course, had a great influence in changing things for the Jews, however, nothing brought more changes to them than the modifying that took place in their Jewish religious customs. There were new groups which sprung up within the Jewish community during this period of time between the Old and the New Testaments, such as the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and new institutions such as the Synagogue and Sanhedrin.

Because of these changes which took place in Jewry, during this period between Malachi and Matthew, it helps in understanding Jesus' time to have an knowledge of just what took place to bring these changes about.

The **Oral Law**, which had been given orally for generation, was committed to writing about the end of the *second century A.D.* into the **TALMUD** and remains the authority for Jews to this day. In our Lord's day the **Oral Law** was still mainly *oral*. Jesus contradicted its obstacles in Matthew 15:1-9 and, in the Sermon on the Mount, said six different times, "*Ye have heard that it was said - but I say unto you.*" His way of referring to the Scriptures was, "*It is written.*"

1. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

The Pharisees held that the "*Oral Law*" was given orally to Moses . . . to Joshua . . . to the elders. . . to the prophets . . . and then to the men of the Great Synagogue. *The Pharisees were the interpreters of the "Oral Law."*

The Sadducees rejected all this, believing that only "*the law*," (the *Pentateuch*) was God's Word. They denied the spirit world of angels . . . immortality . . . resurrection from the dead (Acts 23:8) . . . while the Pharisees affirmed all of these doctrines. These two groups were always opposing each other.

The name "*Pharisee*" means "*separatists.*"
The name "*Sadducees*" means "*righteous ones.*"

You will find references to the Pharisees in Luke 7:7:39; Luke 15:2 and Matthew 9:11, and many other places in the New Testament.

The Sadducees are mention in Matthew 16:11; 16:1 and 22:23 and in Acts 23:6.

2. SCRIBES

From the time of the Babylonian Captivity, there developed a new line of scribes who wee not just transcribers, or secretaries, but a new body of men who became the expounders, guardians and teachers of the Scriptures. They became a *distinguished order* in the nation.

They must be distinguished from the priests and the Pharisees. They are mentioned in Scriptures along with the Pharisees in Matthew 5:20; 12:38; 15:1; Mark 2:16 and Luke 5:21, but this does not mean that they were alike or even together in function.

Jesus Christ denounced the scribes because of their corruption and outward piousness
- Matthew 23:13-18

3. THE SYNAGOGUE

You will find that there is not one word about synagogues as you read the Old Testament, but as soon as you enter into the New Testament, synagogues are seen everywhere. The synagogue did not exist before the Babylonian captivity. Synagogues originated after their captivity, during the time when the Jews totally turned away from idolatry, because there was no longer a Jewish Temple for them to worship in and they longed for the reading of the Scriptures, thus synagogues came into being.

Synagogue discourses were common in Jesus' day. You will find them in Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:15, 44; Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:10 and 18:19.

The synagogue was *congregational* and not priestly. The great institution of preaching had its *beginning* in the synagogue. It was from this background that the early Christian church, as organized by the apostles, took its main form of worship. The titles given to the New Testament church leaders: Elders, Bishops, Deacons are all carried over from the synagogue.

4. THE SANHEDRIN

There is another Jewish institution called "*the Sanhedrin*," which in New Testament times was the *supreme civil and religious tribunal* of the Jewish nation. WITH THE BODY OF THE SANHEDRIN MUST LIE THE REAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRUCIFYING OF OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST. Pontius Pilate was merely a "*rubber stamp*" of imperial Rome.

The Sanhedrin is referred to in all of the following verses, even though the Greek word "*Sanhedrin*" is also sometimes translated as "*council*."

Matthew 16:50	John 11:47	Acts 22:30
Mark 14:55	Acts 4:15	Acts 23:1, 6, 20, 28
Mark 15:1	Acts 5:21, 27, 34,41	Acts 24:20
Luke 22:66	Acts 6:12, 15	

The Sanhedrin was made up of the high priest: 24 "*chief priests*" who represented the 24 centers of the priesthood; 24 "*elders*" called "*elders of the people*" (Matthew 21:23); and 22 "*scribes*" who interpreted the law in both religious and civil matters. This made a total of 71 members of the Sanhedrin.

Matthew 26:59 is one of the most tragic verses in the history of Israel. It reads, "*Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death.*"

The Sanhedrin had to have the sanction of Pilate for the penalty of death which they imposed on the Lord. They met *illegally* in the high priest's palace (John 18:15) instead of, in their own council hall. Everything surrounding their actions, in reference to the death of Christ, was illegal and wrong.

With this brief background, we can see some of the institutions that were established during the 400 year period between Malachi and Matthew.