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Bible Study # 19
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Old Testament Series—Joshua

We are focusing in on the book of Joshua this evening. It has an important theme. We noticed as we went through the account of the Exodus **the parallels there are to the Christian life. There are continuing parallels in the book of Joshua.** It shows the irresistible power of God's strength to overcome the world, providing they maintained trust in God's strength and as long as the people were faithful to God and went forward. God told Joshua to be strong and of good courage, and as long as the people trusted and obeyed God, there was nothing or no one that could stand in their way. When they let things come in, there definitely were problems.

Joshua picks up the story in the conclusion of the wandering and the death of Moses and carries through for about 25 years. It covers the conquest and division of the land. Israel crossed the Jordan River right above the Dead Sea. They had been on the east side, which is now modern-day Jordan. The east side was the area the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh were to inherit.

Moses died on the east side of the Jordan. He looked across, but was not allowed to cross over. They remained there for 30 days; then it was time to move on. They crossed the river and observed the Passover in the Promised Land. It was in the midst of that that they conquered the city of Jericho, the major city of the Canaanites. We pick up the story here in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-5, "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.'"

Joshua was Moses' assistant and had been ordained by Moses to take his place

(Deuteronomy 31:14). God had a job for Joshua to do. He was to pick up where Moses left off and they were to go forward. It was time for the Israelites to enter into God's rest, in a physical sense. There was a six-year period of subduing the land and on the seventh year they rested. That was the first sabbatical year.

Verses 6-9, "'Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'"

God stressed to Joshua to be strong and of good courage. He was to be a conqueror. The word "conquer" is also translated "overcome."

Revelation 2 and 3 have different messages to seven Churches, but one thing that all have in common is that each message ends up with the statement, "to him that overcomes." Joshua stands out as an example of a conqueror. Where did that sense of courage and strength come from? I want you to note just a little bit later where that courage came from.

Joshua 5:13-15, notice, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?' So He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?' Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so." This is right before the conquest started, before they conquered Jericho.

It is very apparent to Whom Joshua was talking. Was he talking to an angel? It is apparent that he was not. That can be shown in various ways. The simplest place to go to demonstrate that it was not an angel would be Daniel 8:16-18 and Revelation 22:8-9. When a vision was shown

and an angel appeared, they fell down before the angel, and you find the angel always told them to get up, 'I am a servant of God like you are.' This Being said, 'You better take your shoes off, you are standing on holy ground—you are standing in the very presence of God, the One we know as Jesus Christ.' Joshua was checking out the area and knew he was to conquer the land. Here was this Man standing in full battle array, and Joshua said, 'Are You for us or against us?' And the Being said, 'I am in charge. You thought you were the one in charge, and I wanted you to know who really was.' Needless to say, he was completely overwhelmed. 'What do You want me to do?' 'Take off your shoes for the place where you stand is holy.'

What was the source of his courage? Joshua knew that God was fighting the battle. That is the key to our overcoming. We are not the one who is out leading the battle.

Hebrews 2:10, KJV, Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation. All we have to do is "fall in" and follow. He will conquer.

John 16:33, "...be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." This was the strength and encouragement that Joshua had.

It was a pretty intimidating thing. Moses' "shoes" were pretty big things to fill; God had used Moses in a way that He had not with anyone else. He had used Moses to establish His covenant and lead Israel for 40 years. There was never a time when the adults who came into the land couldn't remember when Moses was not on the scene—the same as us with Mr. Herbert Armstrong. Now Joshua is in the role of taking over. God encourages him here in the beginning.

Joshua 1:12-15, "And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 'Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, "The Lord your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, until the Lord has given your brethren rest, as He has given you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise.'""

God said, 'You go forward and do what I said.' He gave special instructions to the half tribe of

Manasseh and the tribes of Gad and Reuben. What were their men supposed to do? This was the agreement they had made with Moses: they were to help the Israelites conquer the west side of Jordan. *The entrance into the land is called "entering into rest."* That is important to understand because it is a spiritual analogy that Paul draws back in Hebrews 3 and 4.

Hebrews 3:11, "So I swore in My wrath, "they shall not enter My rest.'""

Hebrews 4:1, 3, 5, "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.... For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: 'So I swore in My wrath, "they shall not enter My rest,'"" ... and again in this place: 'They shall not enter My rest.'""

Joshua 2:1, "Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, 'Go, view the land, especially Jericho.' So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there." Joshua gives them instructions to spy out the land. They came to the house of Rahab the harlot. The term translated as "harlot" can also refer to "an innkeeper." This was a logical place to come. God had led them there.

Verses 2-3, "And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, 'Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.' So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, 'Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.'"" The king of Jericho already knew that they were there.

Verse 4, "Then the woman took the two men and hid them; and she said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.'"" This was not true, but that was the least of her problems.

Verse 6, "(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)"

Verse 9, "and said to the men: 'I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.'""

What Rahab had learned was that she believed God.

Verses 10-11, "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there

remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

What she heard was that He must be the true God. This is what she had learned from what she had heard, ‘I don’t know much about Him, but from what He has done for His people, He must be the true God.’ She had faith and had an attitude that God took note of. The others had heard the same thing, but they had not come to believe that this was the God of heaven above.

Verses 12-13, “Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” She asked that she and her family be extended mercy.

Verse 14, “So the men answered her, ‘Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you.’” ‘Our life is in your hands now, and if you don’t betray us and are faithful with us, we are certainly going to be faithful with you.’

Verse 15-16, “Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. And she said to them, ‘Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.’” She led them down and gave them instructions as to how to get away.

Verse 23: “So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.” The spies told Joshua what had occurred.

Joshua 3:5, “And Joshua said to the people, ‘Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’” He told the people to get prepared.

Verse 7, “And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.’” God purposed to work a miracle through Joshua similar to what He did with Moses. God wanted to show that He was still in charge and to demonstrate to the people that He was working through Joshua as He had with Moses.

Verses 14-17, “So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as those who bore the ark

came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.” The people walked across dry ground.

Joshua 4:19-20, “Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.” They set up 12 stones as a monument.

Verses 21-24, “Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: ‘When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, “What are these stones?” Then you shall let your children know, saying, “Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land; for the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”’”

By taking these stones out of the river, it stood as a reminder that the only place you could get these stones was from the river and a reminder that it had parted. This was where God parted the Jordan River, and the proof of that are these stones that came out of the river. Notice the results also.

Joshua 5:1-5, “So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel. At that time the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on

the way, after they had come out of Egypt. For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness on the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised.”

Verses 8-9, “So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’ Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.” All those born in the wilderness were circumcised.

Verses 10-12, “So the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. Now the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.” They were eating of the produce of the land on the morrow after the Passover.

Notice here that they could not eat of the new harvest until the wave sheaf was offered. This is a key verse to understand one technical point: *the wave sheaf was always offered on Sunday, the day after the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread* (Leviticus 23:11). In this case, the Sabbath did not occur during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover day was a Sabbath; the First Day of Unleavened Bread was on a Sunday; and the Last Day of Unleavened Bread was on a Sabbath. Normally it wasn’t a problem, but here the days started on a Sunday and ended on a Sabbath.

How do you count for Pentecost? Do you start from the Sunday, the first day during the Days of Unleavened Bread or the Last Day of Unleavened Bread? This verse settles it. *They ate the new produce on the day after the Passover.* The Passover had to have been a Sabbath, and they could not eat the new produce until the wave sheaf. It is apparent that the wave-sheaf Sunday, in this case, coincides with the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. We begin the Pentecost count from the first Holy Day which would be the wave-sheaf Sunday. This is really the only place you can go to prove which way you count. *The manna ceased on the second day of Unleavened Bread.* They ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan.

Verses 13-15, “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and

looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’ So He said, ‘No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’ Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.” This was when the Captain of the Lord’s host introduced Himself.

Joshua 6:1-5, “Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. Then it shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.’”

During the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, the children of Israel were marching around Jericho. They were told to compass the city once every day for six days. On the seventh day, they were to go around it seven times. The priests were to blow the trumpet and the people were to shout. God wanted them to know that He was the One providing for them when He brought them through the land. When you get ready for an invasion, you don’t circumcise the whole army. Levi and Simeon had used this as a trick to wipe out a whole city (Genesis 34). Now they were told to walk around Jericho. God wanted them to know that He was giving them the land, and He wanted the Canaanites to know also.

Verse 20, “So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.”

Verse 25, “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had.” Finally on the seventh day, the trumpets blew,

and the people shouted and all the walls came tumbling down—except the section where Rahab was.

It is interesting. In Matthew 1:4-5, Rahab became the wife of Salmon, the son of Nasson and the mother of Boaz, Jesse's grandfather. Jesse was the father of David. Rahab became the mother of the line from which sprang David and eventually Jesus Christ. Salmon (her husband) may have been one of the spies whose life she saved. She was the mother of Boaz who married Ruth (Ruth 4:18-22).

Hebrews 11:31, she is mentioned, "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." There was a complete repentance and turning around in her life. She turned towards God's way. Now notice what they were told when they came to Jericho.

Joshua 6:17, "Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent." Only Rahab shall live.

Verses 18-24, "And you, by all means keep yourselves from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, 'Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.' And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

Joshua 7:1, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the

son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel." Here was a problem. They were to come in and wipe out the whole city and not take the wealth of that city. But there was one guy, Achan, who simply couldn't resist. He thought nobody was going to know, so he took some and thought, 'What difference does that make?'

Verses 2-3, "...So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, 'Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few.'" There was a small city, Ai; you might compare Jericho and Ai with Lafayette (medium size) and Broussard (smaller). They were thinking, 'Look what we did; we wiped out Jericho.'

Verses 4-5, "So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the man of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water." They went over to Ai. The men of Ai came out and smote Israel, and Israel ran. Nobody could understand what had happened.

Verses 10-11, "So the Lord said to Joshua: 'Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.'" God told Joshua Israel had sinned.

Verses 12-13, "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.'""

Verses 16-20, "So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken; and he brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of

Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. So Joshua said to Achan; ‘My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ And Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done.’”

Brethren, do you think it is an accident that the Church quit growing in the 70s; even in some cases, it went backwards. You are reading the story right here of what happened. Until the problems were purged out, He wasn’t going to bless it and go forward. There was a serious problem contaminating God’s people. God said it has to be purged out. God says, ‘If you want My blessings you are going to have to be clean as a people.’

Verses 25-26, “And Joshua said, ‘Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.’ So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him, a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.” It was apparent that God would not allow sin in the midst. It was a very serious matter.

Joshua 8:26-29, “For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua. So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening.”

Verses 30-33, “Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: ‘an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded any iron tool.’ And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the

servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.”

Verses 34-35, “And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.” That has to be the longest sermon on record. He read all the words of the Law. He read the whole thing. They all stood there. He told them, ‘You guys had better get the point. God has made it plain; the only way you will go forward and receive what God has for you is that you have to do so in obedience to God, wholehearted in your commitment, not adding or taking away from it.’ God is not going to bless something when there is sin and corruption tainting the whole thing.

Joshua 9:1-6, “And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jevusite—heard of it, that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord. But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a far country, now therefore, make a covenant with us.’”

They didn’t want to be wiped out. ‘We have come from a long, long way. We want to make a treaty with you.’

Verse 14, “Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.” Joshua made a mistake here. He didn’t ask counsel of God.

Verses 15-16, “So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them.” They were their neighbors.

Verse 18, “But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God

of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the rulers." Everybody was upset.

Verse 19, "Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, 'We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.'" They had made an agreement.

Verses 20-21, "'This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.' And the rulers said to them, 'Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.'" A decision was made as to what was going to happen. The decision that occurred was because the Gibeonites had practiced deception. They would become bondsmen; they were to become the servants and slaves to the Levites.

It is interesting that in recent years, there was a great bit of publicity that accompanied a migration of Falasha people from Ethiopia to Israel. They were commonly known as the Black Jews. Various questions were raised as to where they came from. They were the descendants of the Gibeonites. They were in Judah until the destruction of the temple. When Judah was taken into captivity, they fled into the area of Egypt. They settled in Ethiopia and have remained there until this day. The Levites had made such good Jews out of them that they practiced the religion of the Old Testament up until our day. Josephus and other historians bring that out.

Joshua 10:1-4, "Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai and all its men were mighty. Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 'Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.'" Take note here. In Genesis 14, Melchizedek (the One we know as Jesus Christ), the King of Salem was at the site of what is Jerusalem today. "Adoni-Zedek" means "lord of righteousness." He came along and established his headquarters in Jerusalem and usurped to himself the title and prerogative of God. They were upset that the Gibeonites had made peace with them. They were going to make an example out of Gibeon.

Verse 6, "And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, 'Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us.'" The Gibeonites came to Joshua and he told them not to worry.

Verses 7-11, "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.' Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the children of Israel killed with the sword."

We find that Joshua led the Israelites up from Gilgal and fought against the Canaanites.

Verse 12, "Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.'" A tremendous miracle occurred; he told the sun to stand still.

Verses 13-14, "So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that; before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

Here was one of the greatest miracles that ever occurred. Just a matter of days earlier, Israel was smitten, they ran, and here they were facing the entire confederation of the Canaanites. The day was lengthened by 12 hours. There is no limit to what God can do for His people if they are faithful to Him, but if sin and corruption are tolerated in their midst, God will allow all kinds of problems. God would fight their battles when they were faithful to Him. When there were serious sins in the midst, God's blessing was removed. According to Jewish tradition, this day occurred on a Friday.

Verse 25, "Then Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good

courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.”

Verses 40-43, “So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.” We saw the miracles that God worked with the sun and moon standing still.

Joshua 11:19, “There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle.”

Verse 23, “So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.” The land rested from war. They entered into rest.

Joshua 12:1-24 lists all the 31 cities the Israelites took.

Joshua 14:6-9, “Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: ‘You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.’”

Caleb came to Joshua and said, ‘I want the inheritance that I am to have.’

Verses 10-11, “‘And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.’”

‘I am as strong as I was when Moses sent me out.’ Caleb was 40 when he went to spy out the land (v. 7) one year after the Exodus. He was 39 at the time of the Exodus, and now 45 years from the time he spied on the land, he is 85, 46 years after the Exodus. He was 85 when the land received the rest.

Verses 12-15, “‘Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.’ And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba, for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war.”

Caleb was 85 when the land received rest. Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years. Then there were six more years subduing the land. From the time they crossed the Jordan and had their rest was six years. The seventh year was to be a sabbatical year. What better year for them to enter into rest, so that is what happened. There are a lot of spiritual analogies drawn here.

Joshua 13:1-33 describes the boundaries. It enables us to draw a map of the Promised Land because it mentions every one of the towns. We know where every tribe was.

Joshua 15 lists which cities were included.

Joshua 16 gives the various lots.

Joshua 18:1, “Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there, and the land was subdued before them.” God established a headquarters and placed the tabernacle here at Shiloh. This was in the territory of Ephraim.

Verses 2-3, “But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?’” So, he took the area, divided up the rest of it and gave them detailed instruction down through chapters 18 and 19.

Joshua 20:9, “These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who sojourned among them, that whoever killed any person accidentally might flee there, and not die

by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.” They designated cities of refuge.

Joshua 21:41, “All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty-eight cities with their common lands.” There were 48 cities with their suburbs. Israel was divided into 48 Levitical administrative districts. The United States started with 13 states, as Israel had 13 tribes—ironies that God built in that showed that.

Verses 44-45, “The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”

Joshua 22:4, ““And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan.””

Hebrews 3:10-11, ““Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, “they always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “they shall not enter My rest.”””

Verses 18-19, “And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Hebrews 4:1-3, “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,’....” If the rest Joshua gave them was all that there was, David would not have spoken of a rest in a future tense.

Psalms 95:11, “So I swore in My wrath, ‘they shall not enter My rest.’” David wrote about a future rest 400 years after Joshua led them into the Promised Land.

Isaiah 14:7, “The whole earth is at rest and quiet....”

Isaiah 11:10, “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.”

The rest in Joshua’s day was not the ultimate rest but a physical type of a spiritual rest. You can’t

understand Hebrews 3 and 4 if you don’t understand that. Paul showed that the rest God gave to Joshua’s time was not the ultimate rest. We look forward to the time of Tomorrow’s World when we enter into God’s rest.

Joshua 22:11-12, “Now the children of Israel heard someone say, ‘Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan, on the side occupied by the children of Israel.’ And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.” A rumor got out. They were ready to go to war.

Verses 13-16, “Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, and with him ten rulers...and they spoke to them saying, ‘Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord: “What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the Lord?”””

They had jumped to the conclusion that they were building idols. A good example of what can happen when gossip occurs.

Verses 18-19, ““...“And it shall be, if you rebel today against the Lord, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the Lord, where the Lord’s tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us; by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God.”””

‘If you are not satisfied with the land, come over here, but don’t rebel against God.’

Verses 21-24, “Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel: ‘The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the Lord Himself require an account. But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, “In time to come your descendants may speak to our

descendants saying ‘What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel?’” We have not built an altar in rebellion but for fear.

Verses 26-29, “Therefore we said, ‘Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, ‘you have no part in the Lord.’” Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, ‘Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.’ Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn from following the Lord this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle.”

They said, ‘This altar is not for sacrifice, but for a witness.’ It turned out that there was really nothing out of the way about it. There was almost a war because they had jumped to conclusions. Thankfully, somebody went and asked, ‘Why did you do that?’ It was a witness, ‘that we are all part of the same nation. We know better than to build an altar to worship on.’

Ever notice how people can go off “half-cocked?” They jump to conclusions. When you start examining motives as to why they did it, then you are stepping on territories that you know nothing about. You don’t know why they did it. You can’t read their heart. They immediately assume they know, instead of going and saying, ‘I saw you building this thing, why are you building it?’ They thought they knew why they were building it. There is a very important lesson.

Joshua 23:1-2, “Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: ‘I am old, advanced in age.’” Almost 22 years had gone by.

Verse 3, “‘You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you.’” You see what God has done and you have seen all of these things.

Verses 6-8, “‘Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day.’” Be very courageous.

Joshua 24:1-2, “Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.’” Joshua gathered them all together and began to speak to them. He recounts the history, going all the way back to Abraham, and coming to Jericho.

Verses 14-15, “‘Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’”

Joshua says, ‘I know some of you are worshipping idols. It is time to make a choice. Moses is dead and I am getting ready to die. You need to make a choice of what is going to happen to you. Are you going to go back into idolatry or serve God? I know what I am going to do; I am going to serve God in sincerity and in truth.’

We can prove that Joshua wrote Scripture.

Verse 26, “Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.” He wrote the book of Joshua.

Verse 27, “And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.’”

It is interesting because this was evidently *Jacob’s pillar stone*. It was the symbol of the Covenant that God had made with Jacob and taken into the wilderness through the 40 years. It

was a witness of when God had spoken 40 years before. They had taken it with them through the wilderness. It was kept near the tabernacle and in that sense a witness, a reminder. It had been there during all the times God has spoken to them. Jacob's pillar stone—the kings of Israel were crowned on it. Jeremiah took it from Jerusalem to Ireland, and it is still the stone on which the kings of the House of David are crowned.

Verses 28-29, "So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance. Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old."

Verse 31, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel." Basically, they obeyed God during the time of Joshua and the contemporaries of Joshua, the elders that had been there. They didn't last very long. We are going to note that when we get into the book of Judges in the next Bible study.

There is an important lesson to learn, and we see it over and over. The people as a whole, when the leadership is strong, tend to reflect the leader and fall into line; when it is not strong, they go the path of least resistance. That is the tendency of human nature. A second generation comes along, takes things for granted, and begins to let it slip. I think we do well to consider the warnings mentioned in Joshua in the context of the end of this age and the Laodicean era. There is a certain parallel we need to meditate on and consider. There is the tendency to develop familiarity and as new generations come along, to not take it too seriously. After Joshua's death and the death of that group of elders, things began to slide. I think we can find parallels in what was happening in ancient Israel that can make the book of Joshua come alive.

Bible Study # 20
June 14, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—Judges
(Chart at end)

I have a chronology of the book of Judges that lists all of the judges. I think this will be helpful to you as we start going through the judges that we are talking about. **Judges is an interesting and very important book because of the lessons that it contains.** Many times it is a book that people have had difficulty with because it seemed to them to be continual strife, fighting, all types of atrocities and terrible things that seemingly occurred. Many have had difficulty with that in trying to understand.

Samuel evidently wrote the book of Judges, though later editorial comments were added in, perhaps by Ezra, at the time the Old Testament was edited prior to the conclusion of the Canon. **The book of Judges certainly underlines the inability and unwillingness of Israel to keep the terms of the Covenant. Everyone was only interested in doing his own thing.**

To get the picture of what was going on in the book of Judges, I think we need to understand the analogy of our own nation's history. During the time of the book of Judges, following the death of Joshua, Israel was not really united under one central government with a centralized administration. Rather, there were 12 independent tribes loosely confederated together. This was comparable, frankly, in many ways to the United States under the Articles of Confederation after the Revolutionary War.

If you want to understand the book of Judges, you have to kind of put yourself in the picture of the settling of the frontier—the settling of the Old West with all the Indian Wars and the strife that was going on because that's really what you had. You had a "rough-and-ready" frontier type of circumstance where a new land was being settled. Some of these judges were kind of like some of the circuit judges of the "Old Judge Roy Bean" variety or the "law west of the Pecos" type of a thing.

That's really the comparable situation to Israel under the Judges. It was the kind of strife and circumstances that characterized the settling of the Old West. Remember the circumstances? There really was not a lot of organized law and order. There was a lot of strife, things going on here and there, the constant threat of some of the Indian wars, and things of that nature.

Sometimes it was difficult to separate the good guys from the bad guys. That's the kind of situation you find in the book of Judges, a period of the frontier. You had 12 independent tribes loosely confederated together, a lot of things going on that could be compared to the circumstances of the Old West.

Let's note the chronology chart. We had another chronology that started with Abraham and brought it down to Moses, but this chronology basically picks it up from Moses coming down to the entrance into the Promised Land under Joshua in 1403 B.C., and then six years later in 1397 B.C., Israel entered into rest. Joshua died about 16 years later in 1381 B.C. There was a period of several years of the elders that outlived Joshua that brings us down to 1374 B.C. We begin a period of oppression by Mesopotamia and then the first of the judges, Othniel.

He was a younger brother of Caleb. We note him here in a lengthy period. He established a certain degree of centralized authority. What you have to realize is that, even when you had a judge ruling, it was not an organized central government in the sense that Israel had later under the kings or that we would think of in our nation today. It was still comparable to the United States during the period prior to the Constitution when you had the semi-independent states that were loosely confederated together. If they could agree on something, they did it; and if they couldn't agree, they didn't.

This was the circumstance, and there was not strong leadership most of the time. The judges were the ones who administered God's law, but it was more of a "circuit-rider-type" judge. People would come to him for matters to be judged. He would lead them during times of warfare. What it came down to was Israel showed unwillingness on their own, as individuals, to really submit to God and obey the laws of the Covenant. In the aftermath of every judge's death, we see what happened—Israel would begin to go after other gods.

We see this 40-year period of Othniel's judgeship ending up with Israel being oppressed by the Moabites. Then God raised up Ehud to deliver them. That went on for a period of time until the Israelites were oppressed by the Canaanites in 1228-1208 B.C. We note here, right around that time period, the birth of Eli. Now God raised up Barak and Deborah to drive out the Canaanites in 1208 B.C. Then we had the period of oppression by the Midianites, and in the aftermath of this oppression by the Midianites, God raised up Gideon. Gideon was

the last judge that exercised authority over all of the tribes until you come down to Samuel. The death of Gideon marked the collapse of centralized administration.

Eli began his high priesthood about 20 years after Gideon's judgeship began, about halfway through Gideon's judgeship. You will note on the right side of the sheet there is the part showing the judges and explanatory information; on the left hand side shows the other events going on.

At Gideon's death the nation fractured. One of Gideon's sons sought to establish himself as king. This son was half Canaanite. It didn't work. It only lasted for about three years. In the east, the Ammonites began to take over. In the north, Abimelech tried to take over. He was part Canaanite. In the south and west, the Philistines tried to take over. You find the nation fracturing into three sections. During this time Eli was high priest.

We find during this time, in the north, Tola and later Jair fighting in the area where the Canaanites (Abimelech) had been. Then Jephthah and later Ibzan, Elon and Abdon were fighting in the east against the Ammonites. Samson was fighting in the west and in the south against the Philistines. Then it was Samuel who basically took over in the aftermath of all of that. The Philistine power collapsed when Samson pulled the temple down and destroyed the entire leadership of the Philistines. That marked the beginning of Samuel's judgeship, and there was a consolidation where Samuel basically became, after a few years, judge over all of Israel. From the time when Samuel first began his judgeship after the collapse of the Philistine power, there was a period of about 40 years that brings us down to the beginning of the monarchy with the coronation of King Saul and later King David's reign.

With the death of Gideon, all pretense of a centralized government collapsed. The Canaanites, Ammonites and most of the Philistines dominated Israel for most of a generation. Samuel, the final judge, restored limited centralization. His judgeship gave way to the monarchy of Saul.

Judges 3—16 form, for the most part, a continuous narrative of the history of Israel under the judges.

Judges 11:26 is essential for establishing the chronology of the book. You may have wondered how we came up with dates.

The key to the chronology of judges is Judges 11.

Judges 11:26, “While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for 300 years, why did you not recover them within that time?” From the time that Israel entered into the land until this time when Jephthah overthrew the Ammonites was a period of 300 years. Note here that we dated from the entrance into the land under Joshua, 1403 B.C. Three hundred years later brings us down to 1103 B.C., the time that Jephthah overthrew the Ammonites. It provides a basis for dating the material. By dating Jephthah's government, we can date the others from that. We can go forward and backward and date everyone from Jephthah because with him we have a date that dates us back to the time of the entrance into the land. That ties in with the Exodus.

Judges 1—2 and 17—21 are basically inset chapters. They serve to give a flavor of life in those days. You had a situation that sometimes bordered on anarchy. That's made plain at the end of the book of Judges.

Judges 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” That was the problem. Everyone was simply doing his own thing.

Judges 3:1, “Now these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan...” This explains much of the problems for Israel. The more Israel mixed and mingled with the world, the more like the world they became, even to the point that God withdrew His protection. Instead of Israel overcoming the world, they were overcome by their own carnal desires to be like the world. There is an important lesson to learn from the book of Judges.

Verse 4, “And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.” Why did God allow some of the Canaanite tribes to remain behind? They were to test Israel by them. But notice the problem.

Verses 5-7, “So the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons: and they served their gods. So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God and served Baals and Asherahs.” God made sure that they had an alternative if they chose to use it. When God calls us and

begins to work with us, He does not remove all the temptations and all of the problems. We remain living in the world around us. One of the reasons we go through some of these things is to demonstrate our priorities. Are we going to obey the commandments of the Lord or not? What happened here? What did Israel do? They began to compromise.

I think it is important to understand the tactics of Satan the devil as he seeks to subvert the people of God. There are various tactics that we have noted throughout. One of the tactics that he is most adept at using is that of *compromise*. We are surrounded by the world, and we begin to compromise, a little thing over here, a little thing over there, and something else. We begin to mix and mingle and become part and parcel with the world until our values become watered down.

Now here we see intermarriage being a problem. We look at two aspects of it. One, the spiritual aspect and what happened when Israel began to marry with other nations. You begin to involve yourself in unions that are not based and oriented in serving God. The principle here is why *God tells converted Christians that they are not to become unequally yoked* (2 Corinthians 6:14). That's the principle as to why it's wrong to date outside the Church. It simply leads to compromise and leads to involving yourself in situations that are going to pull you down and pull your values away. So, part of the problem is religious; it led them into a spirit of compromise.

Another part is not only did Israel lose their spiritual identity, but they would eventually lose their physical identity. This is a matter of concern to God because God established the separate human families. God established the identities of the various branches of the human family, and Israel began to lose their identity—physically, culturally, spiritually and in every way. If this circumstance had continued on, without God's intervention, they would have lost their identity as a people and would have dropped from the pages of history. Well, God in His mercy allowed them to find themselves in a "jam."

Verse 8, "Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years." Isn't it interesting how when hard times come, people begin to think about God? Sin is for the good times when living is easy. When the going gets

rough, that's when people begin to say, 'Oh, God, please deliver me.'

What was the old joke they had back in World War II? —There weren't any atheists in foxholes. About the time somebody was floating around on a life raft in the Pacific, there really weren't any atheists out there. All of these philosophical ideas someone might have had kind of disappeared. People were making promises right and left, 'I'll do anything, just please get me out of here.'

Judges 1:1, we note, "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass..." This is the setting. After the death of Joshua and the elders that outlived him died, Israel went further and further afield. They didn't last. They lasted until the "water got hot" again. Remember the last thing Joshua told them. He warned them of what they were going to do, and sure enough, they did it.

Verses 27-28, "However, Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out."

You see, they thought they had come up with a better idea. Instead of driving them out, 'why don't we keep them here and make slaves of them.' That was not what God told them to do, and it became a never-ending source of problems. It led them into various problems and compromises.

Judges 2:7, "So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel."

Verse 10, "When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel." That was the generation that had known the wandering.

Verses 12-15, "and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of

plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.”

Verses 16-18, “Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. And when the Lord raised up judges for them; the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved with pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them.” He delivered them out of the hand of the enemies because He felt sorry for them.

Verse 19, “And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.” This is the story over and over in the book of Judges—Israel went astray. When Joshua and the elders died, Israel went astray. They were oppressed; God allowed them to be punished and then had mercy on them and raised a judge. But they never really got the point; as soon as the judge was not around to enforce obedience to God and God’s law, then away they went, over and over, the ups and downs of history. How short a time lessons are retained! Lessons don’t last very long. We see it in history and we see it here in the book of Judges.

I think, brethren, we had better do well to take heed to ourselves. Understand! God inspired these examples for a reason. God has allowed us to learn certain lessons in this age, today in His Church. We kid ourselves if we think that lessons are permanently implanted. The tendency of human nature is to forget the lesson. And if we forget the lesson, we repeat the mistakes. It is important that we continue to take heed to ourselves, to go back and to learn from the lessons that God has allowed us to experience

Judges 2:2, ““And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?””

We note here as we did in Judges 1:28 what Israel did in regard to the Canaanites in the land. They made tributaries of them. They didn’t totally drive them out, and they were a source of trouble ever after. What did God say the results of Israel’s treatment of the Canaanites would be?

Verse 3, ““Therefore I also said, ‘I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.’”” God said, ‘Look, you didn’t listen to what I said, and therefore I am not going to entirely drive them out. They are going to be here as thorns in your side.’ The result was going to be strife and the idolatry of the Canaanites would serve as a snare.

Verses 16-19, “Then the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.”

These four verses summarize the history of the rest of the book of Judges. When you read verses 16-19 of Judges 2, you have the summary of the whole story. God would raise a judge and deliver them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. They wouldn’t listen to the judge and they would soon enough go into idolatry again. When the judge was dead, they went all the way and corrupted themselves. This cycle is repeated over and over and over.

Now we find that God allowed the Mesopotamians to come in and oppress them for eight years—and then God raised up the first judge.

Judges 3: 9-11, we read, “When the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the Lord delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of

Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.” Again notice what happened. They learned the lesson for how long? –For about a generation. Othniel, the first judge, was the nephew of Caleb; he was the son of Kenaz who was Caleb’s younger brother. He judged Israel for this period. Israel had rest, we are told, for 40 years.

We emphasize, going through the book of Judges, this point of entering into God’s rest. *Obedience leads to rest.* Entering into God’s rest, God gave them rest from the inhabitants around. This term “rest” is important because the Apostle Paul, back in Hebrews, uses it. It applies to the Sabbath and to the Millennium, of which the Sabbath is a type. It is all tied in together. Realize that what God gave Israel was a physical type of what we have in store for us.

As we come through the story, we find that the children of Israel did evil.

Verses 12-14, “And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the city of palms. So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.” He gathered together allies; he smote Israel and oppressed them for a period of 18 years.

Verses 15-24, “And when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now, Eglon was a very fat man.) And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. But he himself turned back from the stone images that were at Gilgal, and said, ‘I have a secret message for you, O king.’ He said, ‘Keep silence!’ And all who attended him went out from him. And Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, ‘I have a message from God for you.’ So he arose from his seat. Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for

he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out. Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them. When he had gone out, Eglon’s servants came to look, and to their surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, ‘He is probably attending to his needs [KJV, “covers his feet”] in the cool chamber.’”

Ehud managed to get right in there where he was. He told Eglon he had a message for him and stabbed him. We are told that Eglon was fat and Ehud couldn’t get the dagger out. Eglon was a pretty good-sized fellow. Ehud left him in there and escaped. Since he closed the door, they were figuring he was going to the bathroom. That’s what the term “cover his feet” means. That is a King James euphemism for “going to the toilet.” So, they figured that was what must be going on.

Verse 25, “So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened them. And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.” Finally they got worried about him and decided to go in, and when they came in, he was dead.

You read these stories. That’s why I said at the beginning, to understand it you have to put yourself in the circumstance of the Wild West, the shootouts and all of the kinds of things that were going on back and forth. You had an absence of strong law and order enforced. You had champions; you had heroes who kind of rose up, came in, stepped out and took action. God would utilize that individual to restore a certain amount of independence or law and order, but it never really solved the problem.

I think it is interesting that recently there was a circumstance where the modern nation of Israel launched an attack against one of the leaders of the PLO over in North Africa. They marched right in, assassinated him and left. You have to understand that from their standpoint, they literally read the book of Judges for strategy. They didn’t read it for spiritual lessons; they read it for strategy. They considered themselves in the same circumstances, and they read it for strategy. See what they did, they went in and did the same thing. They read it strictly from a carnal standpoint. What works? Obviously it does work from that standpoint because it suits God’s purpose. We find the same things over and over and over. The book of Judges is the bloodiest book of the whole Bible.

The bottom line of the book of Judges is the end of the book, the last verse. This is the bottom line. This is why the book of Judges reads the way it does.

Judges 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” *That’s the key to understanding the whole book.* Everybody did his own thing. God saved Israel in spite of themselves. God had a job, a purpose and a promise He had made to Abraham. He utilized individuals who did all kinds of things.

Judges 3:30, “So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.”

Judges 4:1-3, “When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he harshly oppressed the children of Israel.”

Verses 4-5, “Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountain of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.” She was a prophetess. God gave revelation through her.

Verses 6-8, “Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, ‘Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, “Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?”’ And Barak said to her, ‘If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.’”

Let’s understand. “Barak,” whose name meant “lightning,” was the son of “Abinoam,” whose name meant “the son of sweetness.”

Judges 5:7, notice, “...until I, Deborah, arose, arose a mother in Israel.” Deborah arose as a mother in Israel. Notice the state of things. Israel had sunk to the place that God said, ‘You are like a bunch of little kids.’ It was, in a sense, to shame the men of the nation who had so abdicated their responsibility that God said, ‘I am going to raise a woman as a mother in Israel, to take you by the hand and lead you because you are acting like a bunch of little kids, a bunch

of little Momma’s boys. You need Momma to come and take you by the hand because you are not acting like men.’

Here was Barak who was raised up to do a job and he said, ‘Oh, I don’t know; I’m not going to go up unless you are going to go up with me. If you’ll go up and hold my hand, I guess I’ll go.’ Deborah was so disgusted.

Judges 4:9, “So she said, ‘I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.’ Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.”

‘If you are that much of a weakling,’ she said, ‘you’re not going to get any honor out of it. You’re not going to kill the enemy general; he’s going to die at the hands of a woman.’

This is a picture of the state of things in Israel. The nation had sunk to a point where there was no proper masculine leadership, and it is to the shame of the nation that they were in that state. This is what happens when you get away from God. There wasn’t the kind of courage, boldness and proper kinds of masculine leadership that should have been there.

God said, ‘All right, I’ll show you. I’ll raise a righteous woman who is the everlasting shame of the men involved—a woman who will exemplify more courage and trust in Me than any of you men. I will use her like a mother to take you by the hand and lead you up there.’ It was to evidence the state of things. It shows God used Deborah like a mother to Israel.

Verses 17-21, as we go through the story, Jael (a woman) was the one who actually killed the general Sisera.

Judges 5 is the song of Deborah.

Judges 5:31, “Thus let all Your enemies perish, O Lord! But let those who love Him, be like the sun when it comes out in full strength. So the land had rest for forty years.” Undoubtedly there were lessons learned in some of this.

We find Barak listed in Hebrews 11:32 as one of the men of faith. He didn’t start off as a man of faith. That’s one of the things to understand.

Many of those you find listed in Hebrews 11 as men and women of faith didn’t start off as men and women of faith. They started off fearful, cowardly and timid, with all kinds of apprehension, all kinds of things. God worked with them and brought them to a point where they came to trust Him and to walk with Him.

Again there is a lesson there. Sometimes we read the story of these individuals and think they were just born walking tall, born heroes. The heroes of

Hebrews 11 were not born heroes. *They were made heroes through the working of God in their lives.*

God worked with Barak. Obviously, there was a lot of change that took place in Barak from the time that he was so timid that he said, 'Not me, no way, unless you hold me by the hand and take me up there.' Can you imagine a successful general saying that? Think of generals that have led the armies of this nation; can you imagine them telling their mother or some woman, 'If you take me by the hand and lead me up there, if you will stand there next to me, I guess I'll go and fight the enemy.' That's ridiculous. Can you imagine General Patton doing something like that or General MacArthur or various ones?

This is the state of things. God took people who didn't have what it takes naturally, and He supplied their needs. Hebrews 11 tells us many of these individuals, out of weakness, were made strong. God didn't take them because they were the strongest, most bold and courageous people around. Sometimes He took them because they were the weakest, and He showed what He could do.

Things lasted and the land had rest for 40 years. Judges 6:1, "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord [Kind of like a broken record, put it on and play it back every chapter.]. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years."

Verses 2-5, the Midianites would wait until the Israelites had sown a crop and the crop was about ready to harvest, then they would come up with the Amalekites and the children of the East. They just came up and harvested the crop.

These were terrorist raids. Again, go back to the situation and think of some of the Indian raids in the Old West. The settlers would come in and have their little community, and the Indians would come down on the warpath to terrorize the place, burn it down and send everybody scurrying for cover. This is basically what was going on, and frankly, some of these people they were fighting against were very much akin to some of the Indians. In fact, some of the North American Indians are actually descended from the Hittites. You find a number of similarities. You find the same people in the same situation doing the same kinds of things.

Verse 6, we find that Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and they cried out to the Eternal.

Verses 7-10, "And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet to the

children of Israel, who said to them, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. Also I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But you have not obeyed My voice.'""

Verse 11, "Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites." Gideon is back here hiding behind the winepress with a little dab of wheat, kind of beating it out, looking around, afraid the Midianites would come down and discover what he was doing.

Verse 12, "And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, 'The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!'" And Gideon said, 'WHO, ME?'

Verse 13, "And Gideon said to him, 'O, my Lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles, which our fathers told us about, saying, "Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.'"

'If the Lord is with us, why has all of this befallen us, and where are all the miracles we heard about?'

Verses 14-15, "Then the Lord turned to him and said, 'Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?' So he said to him, 'O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my father's house.'"

He said, 'My family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. Not me, you got me mixed up with somebody else. I can't do it.'

Verse 16, "And the Lord said to him, 'Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.'" God said, 'Look, I am going to be with you.'

Verse 17, "Then he said to Him, 'If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.'"

Verses 18-21, Gideon offered a sacrifice and brought out the sacrifice and the fire came out of the rock and consumed the flesh.

Verse 22, "Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, 'Alas, O

Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face.” Just about that time it dawned on him that not everybody reached out his staff and fire came up out of the rock. About this time it was kind of impressive, so he got scared again. ‘Oh, no, I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face.’

Verse 23, “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.’” He was told he wasn’t going to die.

Verses 24-25, “So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Shalom. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him, ‘Take your father’s young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image [KJV, “grove”] that is beside it.” God told him to take his father’s young bullock and use it to pull down that altar of Baal and cut down the grove.

Verses 26-30, “and build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down.’ So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the Lord had said to him. But because he feared his father’s household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built. So they said to one another, ‘Who has done this thing?’ And when they had inquired and asked, they said, ‘Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing.’ Then the men of the city said to Joash, ‘Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it.’”

They said, ‘Bring out your son because we want to kill him.’

Verse 31, “And Joash said to all who stood against him, ‘Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!’”

Joash said, ‘Why would you plead for Baal? Let him take care of himself. If he’s a god, let him plead for himself. Somebody threw his altar down; let him take care of it himself.’

Verse 32, “Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, ‘Let Baal plead against him,

because he has torn down his altar.’” Gideon was nicknamed “Jerubbaal,” which meant “let Baal plead.”

Verses 33-34, “Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him.” He said, ‘Now what have I gotten myself into?’

Verse 36, “Then Gideon said to God, ‘If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said...’” ‘Give me a sign.’

Verses 37-38, “look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said.’ And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.”

He put out a fleece and there was going to be dew just on the fleece and everything else was going to be dry. Well, God worked that miracle to encourage him, and then Gideon looked at it and thought, ‘Maybe that was an accident. Let’s try it again.’

Verses 39-40, “Then Gideon said to God, ‘Do not be angry with me, and let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew.’ And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.” He said, ‘This time let’s let the fleece be dry and everything around it be wet.’ It happened.

Judges 7:1-2, “Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley. And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, “My own hand has saved me.”’”

God told Gideon to get the people together. Gideon got them together and God told him the people were too many. ‘You have too many, too big an army.’ Now Gideon didn’t think he had one big enough, but God said, ‘I think your army is a little big.’

Verse 3, “Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, “Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.” And twenty-two thousand

of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.” God told him to get them all together and tell anybody who was scared to go home, so 22,000 left and 10,000 remained. The 10,000 that stayed were the ones that were too scared to admit they were scared. Two-thirds of his army left. Now he thought the army was a little on the small side; but when two-thirds of them got up and left, it’s kind of like when Travis drew the line at the Alamo and nobody stepped over. You kind of get the state of things. When Gideon drew the line, two-thirds of them left. This would tend to make you a little nervous.

Verses 4-6, “And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, “This one shall go with you,” the same shall go with you; “This one shall not go with you,” the same shall not go.’ So he brought the people down to the water. And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.’ And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.”

God told Gideon he thought he still had too many, so he brought them down to the water. When they got down there to drink, God told him to separate them. All of those that got down and lapped water like a dog were put on one side and the others were put on the other side. When they put them together, they had 9,700 that drank water like people and 300 that lapped water like a dog.

Verse 7, “Then the Lord said to Gideon, ‘By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place.’” God told him, ‘By the 300 that have lapped will I save you. Take the 300 that lapped water like a dog and stick them over here. That’s your army. Send the others home.’ So, they left. Gideon, needless to say, was a little on the nervous side.

Verses 10-11, “‘But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, and you shall hear what they say; and afterward, your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.’ Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.”

Verses 13-14, “And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his

companion. He said, ‘I have just had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed.’ Then his companion answered and said, ‘This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.’”

God had him go down to the valley, where the Midianites were, to eavesdrop. When he eavesdropped on the Midianites, he was shocked because he found they were more scared of him than he was of them because they had been having dreams.

Verse 12, “Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all of the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.” Gideon saw these guys, and it looked like a bunch of grasshoppers covering the hillside. He thought, ‘Oh, no, I have 300 that lap water like a dog. God sent the other 31,700 home, and He left me with 300 that lap water like a dog. And I have this bunch out here that I am supposed to “take care of”.’

Verse 15, “And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, ‘Arise, for the Lord has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.’” Gideon was encouraged; God was really going to take care of this.

Verse 16, “Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.” God had him divide the 300 into three companies.

Verses 18-19, “‘When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”’” So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.”

When Gideon blew the trumpet, they broke the pitchers, and all these lamps looked like a campfire. It looked like the Midianites were surrounded by 300 companies of men, but it was just 300 men—not 300 companies of men, just 300 scattered around. All of a sudden, just out of nowhere, when they broke the pitcher, the Midianites saw lights and it was like, ‘Oh no, we are being attacked.’

Verse 20, “Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, ‘The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!’”

Verses 21-22, “And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to...” God sent a spirit of confusion in the ranks. The Midianites and Amalekites fell on top of each other and began to butcher away until they wound up virtually wiping themselves out. God gave Gideon 300 men to defeat the whole Midianite empire. It shows what God can do. God wanted Israel to realize He was delivering them.

As we come down, we find the elders of Succoth whose attitude had been rotten to Israel.

Judges 8:4-6, “When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who were with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. Then he said to the men of Succoth, ‘Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.’ And the leaders of Succoth said, ‘Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?’”

Verse 16, “And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught [disciplined] the men of Succoth.” When Gideon came back, he gave them a little “frontier justice.” He gave them a whipping with thorn switches. They got the point when it was all over.

Verses 22-23, “Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.’ But Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord God shall rule over you.’” He said, ‘I am not going to do it.’

Verse 28, “Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.”

Judges 9:1-2, “And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother’s brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother’s father, saying, ‘Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: “Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over

you, or that one reign over you?’” Remember that I am your own flesh and bone.”

After Gideon’s death, his son Abimelech tried to take over. He wanted to be king. It was at the death of Gideon that marked the collapse of centralized administration. Abimelech tried to take over in the area where the Canaanites were. This lasted for a few years until they were overthrown.

Verses 56-57, “Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers. And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.”

Judges 10:1-3, “After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, ... He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir. After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years.” Following Abimelech’s overthrow, you had Tola and Jair.

Judges 11:1-3, “Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah. Gilead’s wife bore sons; and when his wife’s sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, ‘You shall have no inheritance in our father’s house, for you are the son of another woman.’ Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob: and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.”

We read of Jephthah. He was an individual who had a rough life. He was an illegitimate son and was not accepted by the others in the family. He fled from his brethren. It was kind of a bandit crowd—Jesse James and his band of men—that’s what you had. You have to really get the picture of the book of Judges. That is what you had. You had a breakdown of law and order and centralized administration of authority. You had shootouts and gangs and Indian wars. That’s what you had all the way through the book of Judges.

Verses 4-8, “Now it came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel. And so it was, when the people of Ammon, made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. Then they said to Jephthah, ‘Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon.’ So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, ‘Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father’s house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?’ And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, ‘That is why

we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

Jephthah put things together. He was going to fight against the Ammonites who were oppressing Israel. This would be the area on the east side of the Jordan River. Then we read of his foolish vow.

Verses 30-32, “And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, ‘If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.’ So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands.”

Verse 33, he smote them throughout this whole area and subdued them.

Verse 34, “When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing, and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.” About this time he realized what a stupid thing he had vowed.

The statement is made, as we read down, of exactly what happened.

Verse 39, “And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man...” On the basis of Jewish tradition is the fact that she actually never married. She was basically shut up after this period of time.

Verses 39-40, continuing, “...And it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.”

Verse 37, “Then she said to her father, ‘Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I.’” The indication was that she was not literally put to death, but in the figurative sense. She never married. This is at least the traditional Jewish understanding of it. Whether that is exactly what happened or not, it simply leaves it as an unclear statement. But I think it demonstrates the state of things in some of the individuals. You read about Jephthah and the problems that existed.

Judges 12:4, “Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim.” They even had civil war.

Verse 7, “And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.”

Verses 8-15, in the aftermath of this, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon judged for a short period of time. On the one hand, Israel was fighting the Canaanites, and on the other hand, they were fighting the Ammonites.

Judges 13:1, “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.” The Philistines were in the south and the west. Israel fell under Philistine power for 40 years, which would be from the death of Gideon until the death of Samson.

Verses 2-5, “Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat any unclean thing. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.’”

We pick up the story of Samson. Samson’s story contains quite a bit up to chapter 16. Samson was a Nazarite from his mother’s womb and was given the power of supernatural strength as a result of that. This was the basis; Samson was to be under a Nazarite vow, and God gave him a gift of supernatural strength. Samson may have been the strongest man.

Samson liked riddles. I could give you a riddle: who was both the strongest and the weakest of the men that you read of? It would have to be Samson. He, on the one hand, was very strong, and, in other ways, he was very, very weak. He was very weak in character. His great weakness, of course, was his affinity and lust for Gentile women.

Judges 14:1-3, “Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, ‘I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.’ Then his father and mother said to him, ‘Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised

Philistines?’ And Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me well.’”

“She pleases me well.” The Hebrew is, “She is right in my own eyes.” Remember, that’s the whole story of Judges—“every man did that, which was right in his own eyes.”

His father said, ‘Look, can’t you find someone of your own people?’ And Samson told him, ‘No, she’s the one that’s right in my own eyes. She’s the one that I want.’ With this kind of attitude, Samson was an individual whom God had to deal with to bring him to a certain point. Samson was a big brawling Irishman, a Danite. Samson had a problem; the problem was this affinity that he had for these women.

You find that, up until the end of his life, the only time Samson fought against the Philistines was when he avenged himself. One of the lessons that we need to learn is that *God can sometimes use people in spite of themselves*. God sometimes uses carnal individuals to accomplish His work. They do it for the wrong reasons and motives, but God has a result that he wants to come out. God was going to deliver Israel. He utilized Samson and worked to teach Samson a lesson in the meantime. Samson ultimately learned that lesson. Samson trusted his strength. Yet, in reality, in the things that were really important, Samson was very, very weak. He kept going back to this weakness time after time.

Samson got mad because he wanted this woman. She was obviously not the kind of person he should have married, but Samson wanted her. He saw her and he liked her.

Verses 12-15, Samson proposed a riddle. He put a contest with these Philistine men. They wanted to win; so they put pressure on his wife to tell them what the riddle was.

Verse 16, “Then Samson’s wife wept on him, and said, ‘You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me.’ And he said to her, ‘Look, I have not explained it to my father or my mother; so should I explain it to you?’”

Verse 17, she wept before him and said, ‘You don’t love me.’ She nagged away until he told her. She explained the riddle to the Philistine men, and they won the bet.

Verse 18, “... And he said to them: ‘If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle!’” He knew what his wife had been up to.

Verses 19-20, “Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took

their apparel, and gave the changes of clothing to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father’s house. And Samson’s wife was given to his companion, who had been his best man.” He was mad and didn’t go back; so they gave his wife to someone else.

Judges 15:1-2, “And after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, ‘Let me go in to my wife, into her room.’ But her father would not permit him to go in. Her father said, ‘I really thought that you thoroughly hated her, therefore I gave her to your companion.’”

A little while later, Samson decided he was going to go and make up, and he found out that his wife was now living with somebody else. A really fine situation he’d gotten himself involved with. So, now he’s mad again. When he got mad, he was ready to take vengeance.

Verses 4-5, he caught 300 foxes, took firebrands and tied these foxes’ tails together. He put a firebrand in the midst of the two tails and turned them loose. They burned up all the corn of the Philistines, and the Philistines were mad. You have this kind of strife going back and forth.

Verse 15, “He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it.”

Verse 20, “And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.”

Judges 16:1, “Then Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.” This was the way he was.

Verses 2-3, “When the Gazites were told, ‘Samson has come here!’ they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, ‘In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him.’ And Samson lay low till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.” He tears the gates off when they try to lock him in. You know the story.

Then he meets up with “delightful” Delilah, and again the same old thing. She, of course, betrays him and he’s taken prisoner. His hair is cut, and now God allows him to learn a lesson.

Judges 16:21, “Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.” They took Samson and put out his eyes. For a period of time, they tied him up to a gristmill like an ox to

push this thing around and grind the grain. While he was in that state, undoubtedly, he had a lot of time to think. He couldn't even look at anything. He was blind and was tied up. All he could do was walk in a circle all day long, pushing this big heavy stone around and around.

If you've ever seen these old gristmills, they had a grinding stone, one on top of another. They would have a post attached to it and would usually have an ox that would simply walk around and around. Well, they had Samson tied to it, and all he could do was walk around and around in a circle, grinding grain, blind—day in and day out, month in and month out. He had a lot of time to think.

Verse 25, finally they brought him in and were going to make him perform for them.

Verse 27, all the leadership of the Philistines was there in this temple.

Verse 28, "Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes.'" Samson had come to a point of repentance. God gave him the strength, and he collapsed the temple.

Verses 29-30, he pushed the two center supports out, and when they collapsed, the whole roof fell in and everybody there was slaughtered. This put a stop, temporarily, to the power of the Philistines.

That really runs the story, in terms of chronology, through Samson who was contemporary with Samuel. We will pick up that story in Samuel.

Judges 17—21 give us some insets.

Judges 17 talks about a man from Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah.

Verse 9, Micah decided he was going to hire a priest. He met up with this fellow—a Levite.

Judges 17:10, "Micah said to him, 'Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten shekels of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance.' So the Levite went in." He was going to hire a preacher for himself. It shows you the situation. 'Boy, I am going to be in good shape now; I am going to have a Levite being my priest.'

Verse 5, "The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest." He had made some little idols. He had his sons doing the job, but when he saw a real live Levite come along, he thought, 'Well, I'll hire one of those.'

Judges 18:1, "In those days there was no king in Israel." So, five men of the tribe of Dan came along and met up with this priest and said, 'Hey, come with us.'

Verses 19-20, "And they said to him, 'Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?' So the priest's heart was glad;" He said, 'Boy, I have a better job.' He got a calling to a little better church.

Kind of reminds you, if you have ever associated with some of the Protestant churches, you can always tell when the preachers knew that God was calling them. That was when they got a bigger church with a better salary offered to them. They could always hear the Lord's voice then. They knew He was calling when the salary went up and the church was a little bit bigger. They knew He must be in it. That was the situation here.

The tribe of Dan went into idolatry right at the very beginning. This was the situation.

Verses 30-31, "Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh." This was the situation.

In verse 30, the term "Manasseh," if you look it up in any of the commentaries, is not Manasseh in the original. It is Moses. Gershom was Moses' son. This is Moses' grandson. The Jews were so embarrassed about that, they added a little "n" up at the top, not as a part of the word, but just as like an addendum. When they read it in the synagogue, they would read Manasseh instead of Moses. They preserved in the text Moshe, but they inserted the letter up above the word. When they read it, they read it as Manasseh because they felt like it was an embarrassment to Moses to have his grandson be the first one to go into idolatry. So, they decided to amend it. But if you go back and check the genealogy, Gershom was Moses' son, and any of the commentaries will bring that out.

Judges 19:1, "And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel," You find this situation. It describes the religious state of things. The Levites weren't doing their job. That is made plain in chapters 17—19.

In Judges 20, you had serious problems of homosexuality that had become apparent, and

almost the whole tribe of Benjamin was wiped out because of that.

You find, in Judges 21, a kind of conclusion to the story; the survivors of the Benjamite raid were allowed to go down and take wives. There was just the confusion, the strife and anarchy, all of the problems that existed in the nation.

The summary of the whole thing was Judges 21.

Judges 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” People were simply doing their own thing. They did what pleased them. They were not out to please God; they were out to please themselves. That kind of state of things describes the confusion and strife of the book of Judges over and over.

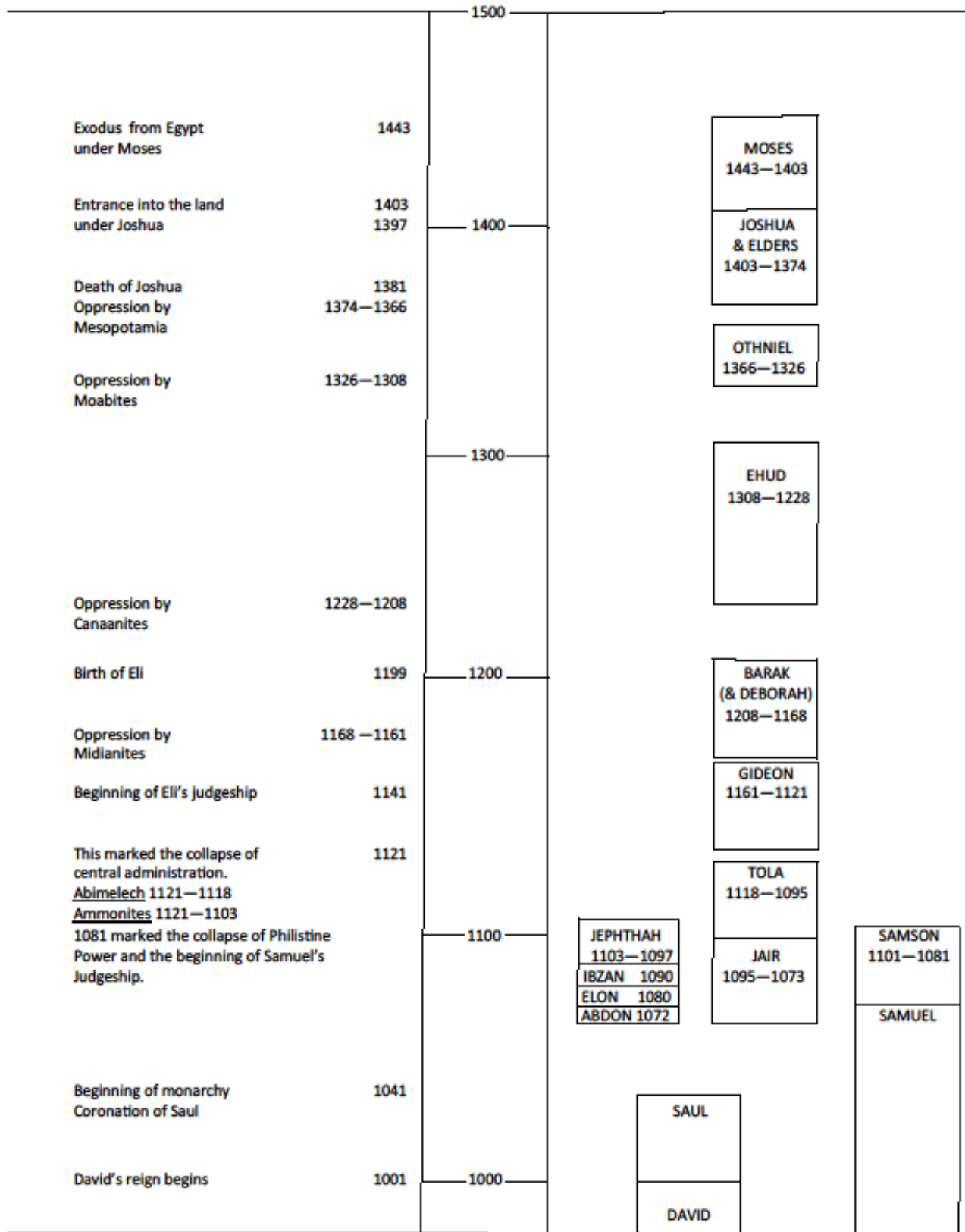
There are lessons that we have to learn, lessons of government. What happens, what are the results, when there isn't strong leadership? There is anarchy and things tend to fall apart. There are lessons of human nature, history, many, many lessons that are to be derived from the book of Judges.

To really get the picture, you have to put yourself back in the concept of the Wild West, the frontier, because that's what it was. It was the settling of a nation, the time of the pioneers. It was the time of the carving out of a nation. It was analogous to the time early in the history of this country when the settlers were coming in, fighting the Indian wars and all of the strife and turmoil that went on among and between them. That's the story of the book of Judges. They were people who had not learned the lesson that God had for them, and God allowed certain things to become apparent.

With this we have now completed the five books of the law and the books of Joshua and Judges. We will now go through Samuel, Kings and Chronicles in kind of a harmonized version. Samuel and Kings are chronological; the story starts in 1 Samuel and continues through the end of 2 Kings. Chronicles parallels Samuel and Kings and tells the story from a different vantage point. As we go through, we are going to go through by sections. The first portion will deal with the first 9 chapters of Chronicles and the first 15 chapters of 1 Samuel which is basically the history of Israel between the end of the book of Judges and, let's say, the time of Eli and Samuel, and on up to just prior to David's kingship. It will give us—as we begin to go through that section and over the course of the next few Bible studies that we will complete—an

overview of the historical survey of the Old Testament.

CHRONOLOGY OF JUDGES



Bible Study # 21
July 12, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—1 Samuel 1—15 and 1
Chronicles 1—9
(Chart at end)

1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings are a story flow. They are known as the “Four Books of the Kingdom”—the First Book of Samuel, otherwise called the First Book of the Kings; the Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of the Kings; the First Book of the Kings, commonly called the Third Book of the Kings; the Second Book of the Kings, commonly called the Fourth Book of the Kings. They were one book that consisted of four volumes. Samuel and Kings were written to continue the historical information after Joshua and Judges.

Chronicles is different. It covers the same material, but covers it in a different way. Chronicles serves as a supplement to Samuel and Kings, not a replacement. **To give you a story flow, we are harmonizing Samuel, Chronicles and Kings.**

The thing you note about Chronicles is that it was written at a much later time than Samuel and Kings. Samuel and Kings had already been completed. Chronicles was prepared in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, at the close of the Old Testament period to summarize the history of the Old Testament. It was written from a priestly standpoint centered at Jerusalem.

1 & 2 Samuel deal with material concerning Saul and David. Chronicles zeroes in on a handful of kings. Chronicles tells us very little about the northern kingdom—Israel is only mentioned in passing. The history of the reign of King David is focused on.

Then we focus in on Solomon, Jehosphaphat and Josiah. It focuses on specific periods in history to emphasize parts of the story that had not been deemed that important 200 years earlier when Samuel and Kings had been written.

In Chronicles the historical events are presented from a religious angle, a priestly standpoint. To remind the Jews of their patriarchal origins, it gives a summary of genealogies. It summarizes information that was necessary from a historical standpoint, information that would have been otherwise lost. It served to remind the Jews of their patriarchal beginnings by tracing the genealogies all the way back to Adam.

One of the things important in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah was to establish lineage. It was important that this documentation be presented in a

right way. The line from which the Messiah would come had to be documented.

Chronicles is devoted to the reign of King David. It centers in on Jerusalem as God’s chosen city and the dynasty of David as God’s chosen line of kings. Chronicles focused in on the Covenant God made with David. It served to point out to the Jews the falseness of the Samaritans’ claim, which said the worship of God did not have to be centered in Jerusalem. Remember the question the woman at the well asked Christ?

John 4:20-23, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.’” This argument was still going on at the time of Christ.

Romans 3:1-2, “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.” The Jews were the ones responsible for preserving the Hebrew (Masoretic) text. This is where you look for the authoritative information, not the Samaritan text.

Chronicles was written to emphasize to the people at the time between the testaments (the fifth century B.C. to the time of Christ, a 400 to 500-year period), whom they needed to look to. It was written during a time of competing claims of who represented God. It was written to explain to the Jews from generation to generation why it was they needed to look to Jerusalem and the authority there as representative of God, and not the authority somewhere else that may claim they represented God.

Samuel wrote the early part of 1 Samuel, basically that part on up until his death. It was continued by others in prophetic office. Isaiah is credited among the Jews as writing part of it. Jeremiah evidently put the finishing touches on it.

Samuel and Kings along with Joshua and Judges constitute that part known as the **Former Prophets**. They give us a narrative of the history of Israel and Judah. All history has been prophecy, and all prophecy will be history. It’s just a matter of your time frame.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 Minor Prophets are the **Latter Prophets**.

Chronicles gives a summation of the whole Old Testament. Ezra wrote it at the time of the

restoration. The book of Ezra picks up the story where Chronicles leaves off.

1 Chronicles 2, 3, and 4 give a lot of detailed information on genealogy. The Jews were coming back from Babylonian captivity. They needed to know where their roots were—the connection they had with the past. From the time Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah (the first captivity) until the time when the Jews began to return was basically 70 years. (It has been 70 years since World War I, and people don't have a clear memory). The Jews were dislocated and taken to Babylon. The younger generation was coming back, the younger people who were born in Babylon. It was their grandparents who had come from Judah. The younger generation was coming back to Judah. This was an arduous trip.

Some portions of the Bible have had more importance for certain periods of time. We wonder why all these genealogies are stuck in there. It is perhaps more important for us to understand Matthew 24 than to understand the intricacies of 1 Chronicles 23 and 24, but for the Jews, it was very important. All portions of the Bible are important—they all have importance, but sometimes some parts had greater importance at certain periods of time. Matthew 24 would not have been important to them; it was not even written.

The Jews that returned needed a sense of continuity—how they were related to the generations that came before. It provides us a framework of understanding. It gives us some details that do have significance in prophecy and details how the Bible fits together.

1 Chronicles 5:1-2 is important, “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's—”

There was a distinction between the birthright and the scepter. This is spelled out. It was information that would have been taken for granted, but now it needed to be spelled out. That needed to be clarified or people simply would not have understood.

1 Chronicles 6 provides information concerning the Levites, the genealogy of the Levites.

1 Chronicles 7—8 list various tribes, the genealogy of Saul.

1 Chronicles 9:1, “So all Israel was recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they were inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel.” It gives information.

1 Chronicles 22 goes back and gives us the story of things they reconstituted in the temple. These things had been established for many years, but there had been a break for many years. These things were actually established all the way back to King David and Samuel. By the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, you are well over 100 years after the final destruction of Jerusalem. People came on the scene and simply didn't understand. (We don't understand the way things were functioning during the time of the War Between the States.)

1 Samuel 1:1, KJV, “Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.” He is called an Ephrathite.

In 1 Chronicles 6, genealogy of Levi is given.

Verse 27, he was a Levite, not an Ephraimite. “Ephraimite” means “Ephrah,” the ancient name for Bethlehem. I call it to your attention because in some cases it is translated “Ephraimite” (NKJV, “Ephraimite”).

1 Samuel 1:3-5, “This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh...And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughter. But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb.”

Verses 10-12, “And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, ‘O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me, and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.’ And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth.” Hannah vowed a vow. He would be a Nazarite from his mother's womb.

Verse 17, “Then Eli answered and said, ‘Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him.’”

Verse 20, “So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, ‘Because I have asked for him from the Lord.’”

Verse 24, “Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh. And the child was young.” He was probably four years old before he was completely weaned. He was brought to the temple in Shiloh.

Verses 25-28, “Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, ‘O my lord! As

your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition, which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord.’ So they worshipped the Lord there.” He grew up there and was a servant to Eli.

1 Samuel 2:18, “But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod.” He served there in the tabernacle from boyhood up.

At this time we come across a real problem, the situation with Eli.

1 Samuel 2:12, “Now the sons of Eli were corrupt [KJV, “sons of Belial”—sons of the devil]; they did not know the Lord.”

Verses 13-17, “And the priests’ custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come with a three-pronged flesh-hook in his hand while the meat was boiling. Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the flesh-hook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Also, before they burned the fat, the priest’s servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, ‘Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you but raw.’ And if the man said to him, ‘They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires,’ he would then answer him, ‘No, but you must give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force.’ Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.”

The scriptures say they were the sons of the devil, reprobates. They were not following the instruction that God had given the Levites. They were misappropriating what belonged to God. They came in and took what they wanted, generally the best part and before they burned the fat. They weren’t interested in serving God. They were interested in what they could get.

What kind of respect do you think people had for the priesthood and the tabernacle? People abhorred it. It gave people a bad attitude. Were the people in authority setting the right example? No. What would you have done if you had lived at the time of Eli? Go out and worship Dagon? These things are here for our admonition.

There were people in the 1970s that used the excuse about what some people in high places were doing to just go off and do something else. The point is God will take care of the problem. You don’t follow the lousy example. As Christ said, respect the Pharisee’s authority, but do not do according to their works (Matthew 23:2-3). They

are not practicing what they preached. If somebody is a hypocrite, that is human nature. What if what the hypocrite said was right? Christ said to do what he said that was right, but don’t do what he did.

Verses 22-24, “Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear, you make the Lord’s people transgress.’” He said, ‘Now you boys know better than that; you are setting a bad example.’ But he didn’t do anything about it. You know what God had to say about that?

Verse 29, “‘Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My habitation, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourself fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?’” God said, ‘You honor your sons above Me. You have placed them above Me. They should have been taken out and stoned. You have allowed this situation to continue on and on and on.’ Eli was not doing these things himself, but he tolerated it. He made excuses for them.

God allowed it to go on for years before He did something about it. God prepared someone—Samuel. I think it is important for us to notice because there are people who have lost sight of some of these examples and when they become aware of certain problems in the past, they didn’t handle it the proper way. If they had read 1 Samuel 2, they would have seen there is nothing new under the sun. They were slain by the Philistines. When Eli heard the news, he fell backwards and died from a heart attack.

1 Samuel 3:19-20, “So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord.” God placed Samuel there. God will deal with things, but He will do so in His time.

What would you have done if you had been there? Yes, keep your eyes on your daughters; take your offering. If the priests steal, God will take care of it. God is capable of taking care of Himself. That priesthood was blotted out forever. God can take care of things. These events parallel the time of Judges.

Eli and Samson were contemporaries. Even if you don’t have anyone to look up to and respect, even in that kind of situation, here was Samuel. It’s possible to do what you ought to do even in the context of others who are not. Samuel did not use the excuse to go and do what Eli’s sons were doing. He grew up in that circumstance, and he believed what was taught at the temple, not what was practiced.

When Samuel was a little boy about age ten or 12, God ceased talking to Eli who was the high priest. This was a terrible insult to the high priest.

Verses 1-6, "Then the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days [KJV, "the words of the Lord were very precious"]; there was no widespread revelation. And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel. And he answered, 'Here I am!' So he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' And he said, 'I did not call; lie down again,' and he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, 'Samuel!' So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' And he answered, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.'" Samuel thought it was Eli talking.

Verses 7-8, "(Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.) And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. Then he arose and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you did call me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy." It dawned on Eli that God was talking to Samuel.

Verses 11-14, "Then the Lord said to Samuel: 'Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.'" Finally, God told Samuel what He wanted him to tell Eli.

Verse 18, "Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, 'It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him.'"

Verses 19-21, "So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord. Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord."

Samuel had a reputation as he grew up. He was different than the others. He had the respect of the people because he did what he was supposed to do. *In the midst of corruption, he quietly did what he had to do.* It is an important message for all people

at all times. God puts these things here and shows us how we ought to conduct ourselves if we ever find ourselves in these circumstances.

1 Samuel 4:3, "And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, 'Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.'" They regarded it as a good-luck charm.

Verse 7, "So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, 'God has come into the camp!' And they said, 'Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before.'" They were superstitious about the ark.

Verse 8, they remembered the Egyptians.

Verses 10-11, "So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died."

Verses 15-18, "Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. Then the man said to Eli, 'I am he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line.' And he said, 'What happened, my son?' So the messenger answered and said, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured.' Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years."

1 Samuel 5:1-4, "Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only the torso of Dagon was left of it."

Dagon had fallen off his throne. It had bowed down to worship and fell over. Only the stump was left.

Verse 5, "Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day." Ever heard of it being bad luck to step on a threshold? This is where that came from; it became a pagan custom.

Verses 6-7, "But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and

struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, 'The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god.'" They decided they didn't want the ark to stay there.

Verses 8-12, "Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the lords of the Philistines, and said, 'What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?' And they answered, 'Let the ark be carried away to Gath.' So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away. And so it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction, and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors [KJV, "emerods"] broke out on them. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, 'They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people.' So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people;' For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven."

They decided they didn't want the ark to stay there. 1 Samuel 6:1, "Now the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months." It was there seven months.

Verses 2-3, 'How do we get rid of it?' They could understand a little bit. They said, 'We'd better send it back with a trespass offering along with it.'

Verses 4-12, "Then they said, 'What is the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?' They answered, 'Five golden tumors and five golden rats, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. Then take the ark of the Lord and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering in a chest by

its side. Then send it away, and let it go. And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us; it was by chance that it happened to us.' Then the men did so, they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. And they set the ark of the Lord on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left."

They didn't know where their calves were. Can you imagine a cow not turning to the left or right? Sometimes God uses things in a humorous way to illustrate a point. These two old cows had enough sense to follow God's instructions, just as God used the donkey to talk to Baalam.

Verses 15, "The Levites took down the ark of the Lord and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the Lord."

Verse 16, "So when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day."

Then what happened?

Verses 18-21, "...even as far as the large stone of Abel on which they set the ark of the Lord, which stone remains this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth Shemesh said, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?' So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, 'The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up with you.'" 'Come and get it from us.'

They treated the ark with a lack of reverence. Not even the Philistines had done so to it. The Israelites should have known better. The Levites surely realized that God had warned the Israelites that death would come to any who looked into it or touched it except by its carrying poles on the shoulder. There was a lack of reverence. The ark represented God's throne. Such disrespect was bound to bring on an awful penalty.

1 Samuel 7:1-13, "Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it

was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, 'If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.' So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.' So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day, and said there, 'We have sinned against the Lord.' And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. So the children of Israel said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.' And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. And the men of Israel went out to Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.' So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel."

Verse 15, "So Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life." I would call your attention to something here. When Samson collapsed the walls of the Philistine temple, it marked the collapse of the Philistine power and the beginning of Samuel's judgeship. Samson and Samuel were contemporaries.

1 Samuel 8:1-7, "Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons

do not walk in your ways. Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations.' But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give a king to us.' So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.'" Samuel's sons were not following his example.

Notice the logic. The reason they wanted a king was to be like everyone else. God took it personally. God said, "They have rejected Me." Notice what Samuel told them.

Verses 11-18, "And he said, 'This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots.... He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your menservants and your maidservants and your finest young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day.'" "

'You are going to have the draft, a big government bureaucracy, a big income tax and you will gripe about those things throughout the rest of your history.' Ever hear of the fourth tithe (vv. 15, 17)? This is what the king started. This is where the income tax started. By the time of Solomon, it was so oppressive that the people were ready to revolt. The people are still complaining about all these things. "The Lord will not hear you." 'You wanted it; you got it. You want to be like the nations, you will get all the problems the nations get.'

1 Samuel 9:1-2, "There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish.... And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome young man. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people." From Saul's shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people, probably about seven feet tall. He was taller than anyone else in the country.

Verse 21 shows how Saul first met Samuel, "And Saul answered and said, 'Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?'" "

1 Samuel 10:1, "Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said: 'Is it

not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance?” Saul was anointed.

Verses 21-22, “When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, ‘Has the man come here yet?’ And the Lord answered, ‘There he is, hidden among the equipment.’”

He went and hid in the closet. He didn’t want to get in front of anyone. He had somewhat of an inferiority complex. Instead of learning to place confidence in God, Saul dealt with his problems the wrong way. Moses had a low opinion of himself and his abilities, but Moses learned to get out of the way and let God work. Saul had a low opinion, but he got in the way and tried to cover his feelings of inferiority by bluffing. He wound up in a horrible state with demon problems, and he died of his own hand. A person who has this kind of problem can go two ways. Moses handled it properly. Saul was an example of an individual who did not do so.

Verse 24, “And Samuel said to all the people, ‘Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?’ So all the people shouted and said, ‘Long live the king!’” We have Saul’s coronation.

Verses 25-26, the people were sent away.

1 Samuel 11 tells the story of Saul getting stirred up to action and going out and winning the battle.

1 Samuel 11:14-15, “Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.’ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.” Saul was confirmed king; all tribes were united under Saul’s leadership. They rejoiced greatly.

In 1 Samuel 12, Samuel begins to recount the history and to remind them of the ups and downs.

Verses 12-13, “‘And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ when the Lord your God was your King. Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the Lord has set a king over you.’” God gave them an impressive-looking king. He looked like a king should look. God gave them what they asked for.

1 Samuel 13:14, God chose a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22). David was not impressive on the outside but on the inside.

1 Samuel 11:19-25, “And all the people said to Samuel, ‘Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves.’ Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And do not turn aside, for then you would go after empty things, which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.’”

The first half of Saul’s reign was active; the second half was inactive. 1 Samuel 13 was the 20-year period of his active reign. The second 20-year period was an inactive reign.

1 Samuel 13:2-3, “Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeath of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent. And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, ‘Let the Hebrews hear!’”

Verse 5, “Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, ...”

Verses 6-9, “When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.’ And he offered the burnt offering.”

We come to the first great sin that Saul committed as king. Samuel was late. The point was Saul should have waited, even if everybody left and there was nobody but Saul and God. He offered the burnt offering himself, which was contrary to the Law.

Verses 10-12, “Now it happened, as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. And Samuel said, ‘What have you done?’ And Saul said, ‘When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within

the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, “The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.” Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.”

Just about the time he was finished, Samuel showed up. ‘You were late; so I thought I would take over.’

Verses 13-14, “And Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.’” His kingdom was not to continue.

1 Samuel 14:24, “And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So none of the people tasted food.”

Verse 27, “But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened.” Jonathan ate some honey. You begin to see the erratic way Saul begins to function. This is a situation that shows some of the things of his character and leadership.

Verses 29-30, “But Jonathan said, ‘My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies, which they found! For now there would not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?’”

Verses 43-45, “Then Saul said to Jonathan, ‘Tell me what you have done.’ And Jonathan told him, and said, ‘I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!’ And Saul answered, ‘God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan.’ But the people said to Saul, ‘Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great salvation in Israel? Certainly not! As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.’ So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.”

Verses 47-48, “So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of

Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed them. And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.”

Verse 52, “Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.”

1 Samuel 15:1-3, “Samuel also said to Saul, ‘The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I will punish what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”’” The Lord said, ‘Smite the Amalekites; don’t spare anything.’ What happened?

Verse 9, “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.” He took Agag the king alive. He destroyed what he didn’t want.

Verses 10-11, “Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, ‘I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.’ And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night.” The Lord said, ‘It makes Me sorry I ever made him king.’

Verses 13-15, “Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.’ But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?’ And Saul said, ‘They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.’” Saul said, ‘We are going to sacrifice them to God.’

Verse 17, “So Samuel said, ‘When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?’”

Verses 20-21, “And Saul said to Samuel, ‘But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your

God in Gilgal.” He said, ‘I have obeyed, but maybe not in every detail. The people took of the spoil.’

Verses 22-23, “Then Samuel said: ‘Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.’” To obey is better than sacrifice.

Verse 24, “Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voices.’” Saul was not a leader but a follower.

Verses 32-33, “Then Samuel said, ‘Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.’ So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, ‘Surely the bitterness of death is past.’ But Samuel said, ‘As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.’ And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.”

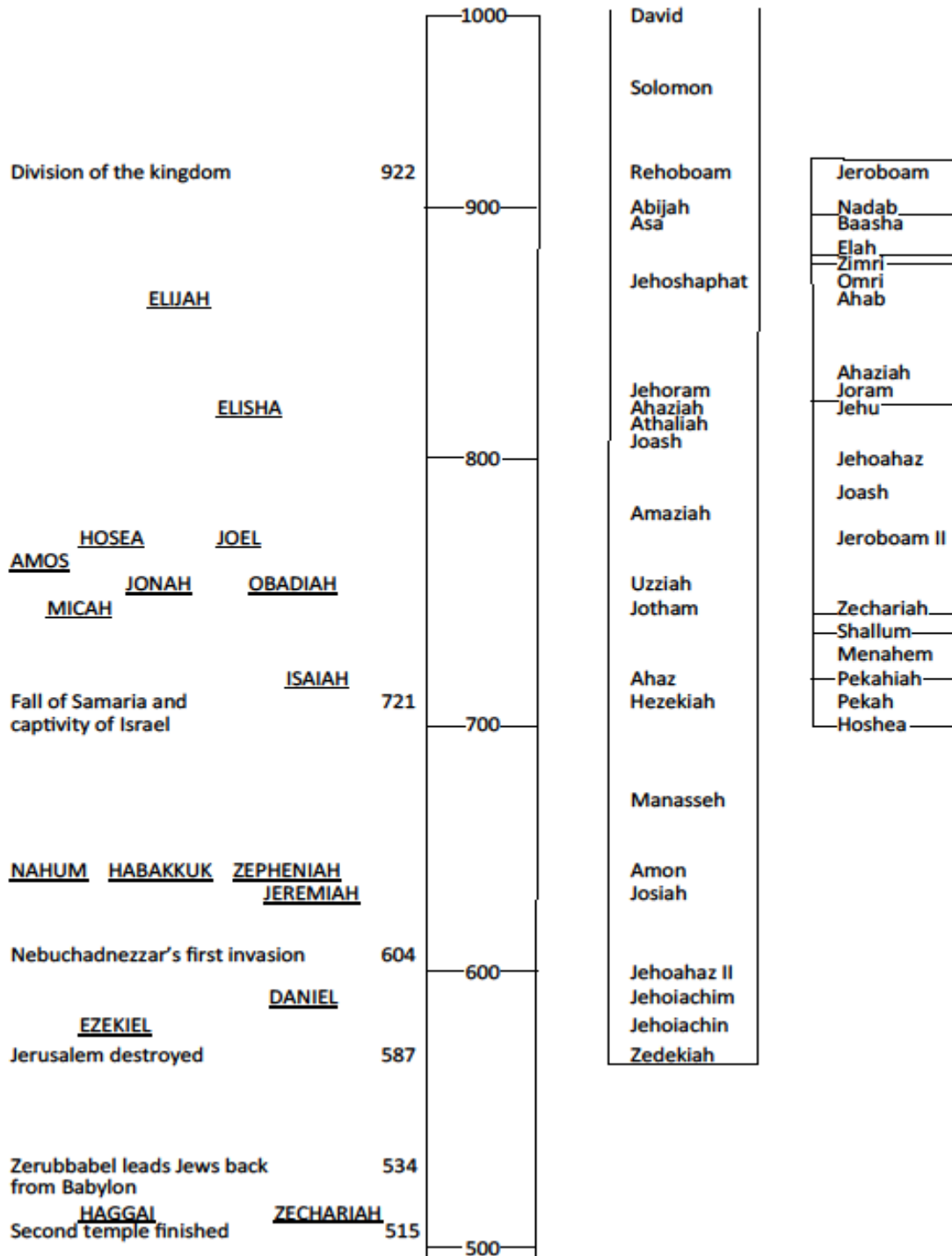
Samuel executed Agag himself. Saul had not only let him live, but he had let some of his family get away because later on in the book of Esther (3:1), you read of “Haman the Agagite.” There would never have been that problem if he had done what he was told.

Verse 35, “And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.” Saul didn’t follow instructions. That was the real key, the real problem. He didn’t do what God told him to do. He had his own ideas, his own approach.

Perhaps we can get an overview of this, as people sought to take things into their own hands to solve the problems. Realize human nature remains much the same generation to generation, to the extent that we learn the lessons that are recorded here—what Samuel did, what Saul did—and how we might respond to certain things that happen in our lives. This is an overview of God working with Israel.

1 Samuel will be completed next Bible study, and then we will begin to get into 2 Samuel.

Chronology of Kings & Chronicles



Bible Study # 22
July 26, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—1 Samuel 16—31 and 1 Chronicles 10

We are covering the remainder of 1 Samuel. The chapters this evening **introduce one of the most central characters in the entire Bible, and that is David.** More space is devoted to David than to any other man, with the exception of Jesus Christ. The latter half of 1 Samuel **deals with his being chosen as king and the death of Saul.** David's life can be divided into four component parts: David the shepherd boy, David the hero, David the outcast and David the king. We will, this evening, **focus in on David the shepherd boy, David the hero and David the outcast.**

We are introduced to David the shepherd boy as he is caring for his father's sheep and as a skillful musician playing for the king. Later as a teenager about 18 years of age, David is the slayer of Goliath the great warrior, then the son-in-law of Saul. He went very quickly from David the hero to David the outcast, going to Ahimelech and later collecting a following. After his encounter with Saul, David dwelt among the Philistines, the point at which Saul is killed. We will cover the final 30 years of David next Bible study.

Now why did God spend so much time on the life of one individual? Undoubtedly, there are characteristics that God wants us to focus upon, that He wants us to understand and appreciate. He greatly valued David. God said David was a man after His own heart. I think that would be quite a compliment. And to say that of me or you, that is quite a compliment, a wonderful thing to have said. Why was David such an outstanding man after God's own heart? I think his most outstanding characteristic is his absolute faith in God to properly govern and to vindicate him.

We learn in 1 Samuel the lesson that is expressed in Psalm 34.

Psalm 34:19, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all." That was a lesson that David learned. That is a lesson that we may learn through example in this portion of 1 Samuel. *The lesson of this section is the importance of patient faith, to trust God to solve problems His way.* –Patient faith.

I was reminded of the context of when I first went through this portion of material. It was a time about 13 years ago in Corpus Christi, 1975-

1976. For those of you who were around at that time, you would recognize how appropriate and important the topic of patient faith was. We were going in a direction that was ungodly. What do you do? You patiently trust God—as David did—to solve problems His own way.

How important is the topic of patient faith? When everything around you is ungodly, what do you do? It was interesting what David's approach was when he was on the run from Saul. It is interesting what David did in that context. Saul wanted to "nail David's hide to the wall," literally. He ducked; he stayed out of Saul's way. He did not provide Saul a target to shoot at. What do you do when those in authority are after you? Seek to avoid a confrontation.

The second thing was what he didn't do. He didn't take it into his own hands to overthrow Saul. He didn't try to resolve the problem by using human reasoning. He committed it into the hands of Him who judges righteously. Sometimes we find ourselves "under the gun" by someone wicked in authority. You don't provide a target and you don't try to overthrow them.

1 Samuel 16:1, "Then the Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.'" Samuel mourned for Saul. God said, 'How long are you going to mourn for Saul; I want you to go to Jesse's house.'

Verse 2, "And Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.' And the Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.''" Samuel said, 'If Saul hears of that, he will kill me.' It shows how far Saul had gotten from God. He would have killed God's prophet. He wouldn't have had any hesitation. God said to just go and tell him you are there to sacrifice for Me, which he was.

Verse 3, "Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

Verse 5, "And he said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.'" Then he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice." Jesse and his sons were called to the sacrifice.

Verse 6, "So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him.'" When Samuel saw Eliab, the oldest, he said, 'That's him; he has to be the one! Look at him, a striking fellow.'

Verse 7, “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” God said, ‘Didn’t you learn that lesson the first time around when we anointed Saul? Just because he looks like a king, doesn’t mean he is a king. Don’t be impressed by outward appearance. The Lord sees what man doesn’t see. The Lord looks on the heart.’

Verse 10, “Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The Lord has not chosen these.’” Seven sons came before Samuel; he said, ‘Not this one’ every time.

Verse 11, “And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are all the young men here?’ Then he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel said to Jesse. ‘Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.’”

‘Well, there is the youngest, the baby in the family.’ They didn’t even think to call him in. ‘He is tending sheep.’ Samuel told Jesse, ‘You go get him; we will not eat until he gets here.’

Verse 12, “So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, ‘Arise anoint him; for this is the one!’” “Ruddy” means “red hair and freckled face,” not what is thought of as typically Jewish—like the royal family. That strain in Judah came through the family of David. He was not the one they would have noticed and that Samuel would have picked out.

Verse 13, “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.”

Verses 14-15, “But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul’s servant said to him, ‘Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you.’” An evil spirit with God’s permission troubled him, not that God afflicted him. There comes a point at which, if we open ourselves up to that influence through various moods and things, we become receptive to Satan’s influence. Saul didn’t handle his problems in a proper way and he became receptive to Satan’s influence. Because of the moods and attitudes that he allowed himself to dwell on, he became less and less receptive to God’s influence and more and more receptive to Satan’s influence. How do you become more

receptive to Satan’s influence? –When you begin to reflect the moods and attitudes of Satan.

The basis is that God looked on the heart. Saul may have looked like a king; David didn’t. During this time Saul was having these problems. He was subject, increasingly, to demon influence taking advantage of these attitudes.

Verse 16, “‘Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well.’” It was decided that they would seek out a skillful musician.

Verses 17-19, “So Saul said to his servants, ‘Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me.’ Then one of the servants answered and said, ‘Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him.’ Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, ‘Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.’”

Verse 21, “So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer.” They brought David before Saul.

Verses 22-23, “Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, ‘Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight.’ And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.”

Do you know why the distressing spirit would depart from him? Why did David, playing on a harp, make a difference? This is a very important scripture to understand as to why some music should not be listened to. Music sets a mood. I can create any mood I want to by the music I play. I can make you happy, sad, excited or discouraged. I can soothe you and relax you, stir you up, motivate you—any mood I want—with the right music. There is music to create a frenzied feeling, music to make you march to go to war. It not only affects the mind, but it also affects the nervous system. You can see blood pressure changes and heart rate changes. It sets a mood and atmosphere. It affects the emotions.

What happened? Saul would sit and nurse grudges, feel sorry for himself and go into rages. He was getting more and more off balance. Before he got so bad, someone who was a

beautifully skilled musician played and it changed his mood. It was soothing. It put him in a different frame of mind. It put him in a better mood and created a positive atmosphere, a beneficial effect.

As time went by and Saul didn't deal with the root of his problem, these things that were beneficial finally came to a point where it was no longer enough. You have to ultimately deal with the root of the problem. If you don't deal with the root of the problem, then eventually these things lose their value. The music no longer "did the trick."

Realize that the same things apply today. We allow ourselves, our families and children to be continually tuned into the wrong kind of influences, the wrong kind of spirit influences. Parents don't realize the extent that many rock groups are into demonism and the occult. If you look at some of them and they look like a bunch of demons, they obviously are not going to tune you into the right thing.

Philippians 4:8, "Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."

It is important for us to realize that the mood and the atmosphere that is created by music are very important. It is not only the words. The words are important, but it is also the music and the beat itself. Music has an emotional impact. There is a range and different music for different occasions—festive and somber occasions. There is nothing wrong with that variety. The result should be positive, uplifting and focusing in on what is right and good and harmonious, as opposed to that which is depressing.

Perhaps a matter of months or a year or two goes by.

1 Samuel 17:1-4, "Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered together at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span."

The Philistines gathered their armies together and came out to challenge the Israelites. They

had a champion; his height was six cubits and a span. He was a minimum of nine feet six inches. He may have been 11 or 12 feet. He weighed hundreds of pounds, maybe 500 pounds.

Verses 5-7, "He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him." He had armor alone that weighed in the neighborhood of 200 pounds and a spear that weighed about 20 pounds.

Verses 12-14, "Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul. The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle.... David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem." David was too young to go into the military.

Verse 16, this went on for a period of about 40 days.

Verse 17, "Then Jesse said to his son David, 'Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves and run to your brothers at the camp.'" Jesse sent David to bring provisions for his sons.

Verse 23, "Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them." David got there just in time to hear Goliath. David's response was totally different than anyone else's.

Verse 26, "Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, 'What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?'" David said, 'Who is this uncircumcised Philistine to challenge the armies of the living God? Who does this guy think he is?'

Verses 28-29, "Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, 'Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.' And David said, 'What have I done now? Is

there not a cause?” They told him, ‘Hush, he might hear you and eat you for a breakfast snack.’

Verses 30-32, “Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones did. And when the words, which David spoke, were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him. Then David said to Saul, ‘Let no man’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.’” David was not intimidated.

Verses 33-35, “And Saul said to David, ‘You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are not but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.’ But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and stuck and killed it.’” David was not afraid of anything. He said he killed a lion and a bear to get back his lambs. ‘I have never run from anything in my life. When I was a teenager, I went after a bear and got my lamb back.’

Verse 36, “Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he had defied the armies of the living God.” He said, “This uncircumcised Philistine is going to be like one of them.’

Verse 37, “Moreover David said, ‘The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the Lord be with you!’” David had confidence; His confidence was in God. He walked with God even as a young boy, as a teenager. He had a confidence and a boldness that God appreciated.

Do you realize how much it went against the grain for David to have to wait all those years for God to act? He was impetuous to go out and do something. God wanted to “season” him before he became king. God said, ‘You trusted Me when I acted instantly; can you trust Me if I wait 12 years? When you were facing a lion or a bear and you prayed to Me, I backed you up. You trusted Me when I acted immediately, but can you trust Me if you don’t know when I am going to act?’ For some people, taking action is very difficult. David was the opposite; he tended to act quickly. When he was faced with a problem, he was ready to go charging off and doing something. How does God go about making us

into God? He knocks off everything that doesn’t look like God. God doesn’t always work with us in the same way.

Verse 42, “And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, ruddy and good-looking.” David, a little red-haired freckled-face boy, went out there to meet the Philistine.

Verse 43, “So the Philistine said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.” He cursed David by his gods.

Verses 44-46, “And the Philistine said to David, ‘Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!’ Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.’” They are going to know the determination of the battle is not who has the most swords. David stepped out with faith and confidence.

Verses 48-49, “And it was so, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.” The rock had knocked him out.

Verse 51, “Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.” He cut off his head. It scared the Philistines to death.

Verse 52, “Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron.” Then they chased the Philistines.

Verses 55-58, “Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, ‘Abner, whose son is this youth?’ And Abner said, ‘As your soul lives, O king, I do not know.’ And the king said, ‘Inquire whose son this young man is.’ Then, as

David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, 'Whose son are you, young man?' And David answered, 'I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.'"

Some have wondered why Saul didn't recognize him. Perhaps a year had passed since Saul had last seen him, but how much attention does someone in Saul's position pay to someone in David's position, playing music?

1 Samuel 18:1-4, "And it was so, when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt." David and Jonathan really took to each other, a very close friendship; they became very close friends.

Verses 5-9, "So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. So the women sang as they danced, and said: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?' So Saul eyed David from that day forward."

Who was out to get whom? He suspected David of what he was out to do. So often those who are accusing are guilty of those things. He had an accusing attitude. He figured David had the same attitude he had.

Verse 10, "And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied [announced or proclaimed] inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand." Saul brooded about problems. He let it "eat away" at him and fester. He allowed a root of bitterness that "ate him away."

Verse 11, "And Saul cast the spear, for he said, 'I will pin David to the wall with it.' But David escaped his presence twice." He tried to kill David. Soothing music was no longer sufficient to solve the problem.

Verses 12-16, "Now Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them." Saul was afraid of David. He could see that God was with him. David did what he was supposed to do and the more he did, the more Saul became afraid.

Verse 17, "Then Saul said to David, 'Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles.' For Saul thought, 'Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.'"

Verse 19, "But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife." Saul promised him the older daughter and then gave her to someone else.

Verses 20-21, "Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. So Saul said, 'I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' Therefore Saul said to David a second time, 'You shall be my son-in-law.'"

Verse 25, "Then Saul said, 'Thus you shall say to David: "The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies."' But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines."

He wanted David to kill some Philistines. Saul thought David would get killed. Saul was becoming more and more jealous. He was not a man of his word. He put stipulations on the marriage of David and Michal that would have caused David's death. He kept changing his mind even though he had promised. Saul feared David because he was loved by the people.

1 Samuel 19:4-5, "Now Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, 'Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you,

and because his works have been very good toward you. For he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?" Jonathan tried to speak good things about David to his father.

Verse 6, "So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, 'As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed.'" He would vacillate back and forth. He would say he was going to do better and then would go back.

Verses 9-10, "Now the distressing spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand. Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night."

Then, again, he tried to kill him.

Verse 12, David escaped.

Verse 18, "So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth." Samuel had a school of the prophets there; "*Naioth*" means "schoolhouse" in Hebrew.

Verse 20, "Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied."

Verse 24, "And he [Saul] also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'" Saul began to rant and rave, carry on and lay down naked. The word "naked" means "unclothed," in the sense of being without his royal armor. He was just really carrying on, and that led people to deride him more.

1 Samuel 20:1, "Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, 'What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?'"

Verse 5, "And David said to Jonathan, 'Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening.'" This was a family occasion similar to Thanksgiving.

Verse 6, "If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.'" David's absence from the household was going to be noticed because he was the son-in-law.

Verses 12-14, "Then Jonathan said to David: 'The Lord God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, may the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the Lord be with you as He has been with my father. And you shall not only show me the kindness of the Lord while I still live, that I may not die.'" David and Jonathan put this thing together. He knew what Saul's attitude was going to be.

Verse 15, "but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the Lord has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." Jonathan was not jealous. That is a real friend when someone else is going to get something that they would have gotten. He said, 'Remember our friendship when you become king.'

Verses 18-23, "Then Jonathan said to David, 'Tomorrow is the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. And when you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. Then I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a target; and there I will send a lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come'—then, as the Lord lives, there is safety for you and no harm. But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you'—go your way, for the Lord has sent you away. And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the Lord be between you and me forever.'" David planned to escape when it became apparent that Saul was not going to relent.

1 Samuel 21:1, "Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, 'Why are you alone, and no one is with you?'"

Verse 10, David fled to Achish the king of Gath for the fear of Saul.

Verses 12-15, "Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the

king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them, feigned madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate and let his saliva fall down on his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, 'Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?'" They chased him off.

1 Samuel 22:1-2, "David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him."

David escaped to Adullam. The group that David gathered at the cave is the same bunch that gathered at the Alamo and various places. For instance, at the Alamo, there were people that came and didn't want to miss the fight. David collected a band of malcontents trying to get out of debt, a rough bunch. They had a tremendous amount of respect for David and looked to him. That was kind of the core that became his mighty men.

Verse 9, "Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, 'I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.'" This Edomite went back and told, and Saul sent soldiers back down there.

Verse 11, "Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob. And they all came to the king."

Verse 13, "Then Saul said to him, 'Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day?'"

Verses 16-17, "And the king said, 'You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!' Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, 'Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me.' But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord." Saul sent word and the soldiers came in. The Israelite soldiers were reluctant to kill the priests.

Verse 18, "And the king said to Doeg, 'You turn and kill the priests!' So Doeg, the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod." Doeg slew 85 people.

Verse 19, "Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep—with the edge of the sword."

Verses 20-21, "Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests." It shows, again, how far Saul had gone. Once he had gone that far, then nothing could stop him.

1 Samuel 23:16-18, "Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, 'Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that.' So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house." This shows David's and Jonathan's friendship.

1 Samuel 24:2-4, "Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) Then the men of David said to him, 'This is the day of which the Lord said to you, "Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe."

The men were saying to David, 'Look, God has delivered him in your hands.' David wanted to make a point, so he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. He cut off the bottom part of it.

Verses 5-6, "Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. And he said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.'" David's attitude changed after it happened; he admitted that he was wrong to do something to embarrass Saul. He was the Lord's anointed.

Verses 7-9, "So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and

went on his way. David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, 'My lord the king!' And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. And David said to Saul: 'Why do you listen to the words of men who say, "Indeed David seeks your harm?"' He told Saul he was sorry. Do you want to know why he is a man after God's own heart? He was willing to admit error. He said, 'You think I am trying to get you; I could have killed you.'

Verse 10, "'Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, "I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed."'" 'I will not lift up my hand against you.'

Verse 12, "'Let the Lord judge between you and me, and let the Lord avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you.'" He said, 'God's going to take care of you, but I am not.'

Verses 16-17, "So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. Then he said to David: 'You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil.'" Saul was sorry and was going to do better.

Verse 22, "So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold." Saul went to his home, but David realized that he was not to be trusted. He just went to another cave.

1 Samuel 25:1, "Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran."

Verse 4, "When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep."

Verse 7, "'Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel.'" David had disciplined his men and provided law and order and protection in the area.

Verse 9, "So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David and waited." They said, 'Nabal you have benefited from us being here, being protected from the Philistines and marauders.'

Verses 10-11, "Then Nabal answered David's servants and said, 'Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?'"

He refused to give food to David and his men.

Verse 13, "Then David said to his men, 'Every man gird on his sword.' So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies." David was incensed. He was a man of action and he had to learn to wait on God.

Verses 14-18, in this, Nabal's wife, Abigail, was there to try to run interference for him.

Verse 23, "Now when Abigail saw David, she hastened to dismount from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground."

Verse 25, "'Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal [Fool] is his name, and folly is with him. But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.'" She brought stuff to David and said, 'Please don't come in and do this thing you are thinking of doing.'

Verse 36, "Then Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light." Nabal had a drinking problem. A point you might consider: you don't ever try to talk to somebody when they are "loaded." Abigail understood that. We can see Abigail's wisdom.

Verse 37, "So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone." She waited until he sobered up. It scared him so badly that he had a heart attack and fell over dead. David didn't take matters into his own hands. God dealt with it.

Verse 39, "So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, 'Blessed be the Lord, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil. For the Lord has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head.' And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife."

1 Samuel 26:1-2, "Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, 'Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, which is opposite Jeshimon?' Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand

chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph.” Years had gone by, and everybody knew that Saul and David were really “on the outs.” They recognized David was an enemy of Saul.

1 Samuel 28:4-5, “Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.” We find the situation that, as the battle continued with the Philistines, Saul was going out to fight against Achish.

Verses 6-7, “And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, ‘Find me a woman who is a medium...at En Dor.’” He was so far off the track; he decided to go to a witch to bring up Samuel. You can see how bad he had gotten by this time.

Verses 9-11, “Then the woman said to him, ‘Look you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?’ And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, ‘As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.’ Then the woman said, ‘Whom shall I bring up for you?’ And he said, ‘Bring up Samuel for me.’” He became frightened and went to the witch to bring up Samuel.

Verse 13, “And the king said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, What did you see?’ And the woman said to Saul, ‘I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.’” The picture here is of someone ascending out of the earth.

Verse 14, “So he said to her, ‘What is his form?’ And she said, ‘An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle.’ And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down.” He thought it was Samuel, but this is not what happened.

The woman was the one who saw something and she described it to Saul. Saul assumed it to be Samuel. This was simply a demon spirit that the witch saw—a lying spirit, no different than the kind of things in séances.

Verses 17-19, ““And the Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, namely, David. Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the Lord had done this thing to you this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with you into the

hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.” We see the situation; he was told he was going to die.

1 Samuel 31:2-3, what finally happened, “Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul’s sons. Now the battle became intense against Saul; and the archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.”

Verse 4, “Then Saul said to his armor bearer, ‘Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.’ But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.” Saul committed suicide.

Verse 5, “And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him.”

1 Chronicles 10:13-14, the parallel account, “So Saul died for his unfaithfulness [KJV, “transgression”] which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.”

You see here the very tragic end of King Saul and the story of the introduction to David and the role he was to play in God’s plan and purpose for him. I think there is a lot to learn here from this example of the story of Saul and David. Realize that God teaches us not just by commandment, “you shall and you shall not,” but by example. That is why so much of the Bible is taken up showing examples. What we want to learn is how they handled things properly and what mistakes were made. If we read the examples, we can learn how to handle circumstances and things that happen to us.

Bible Study # 23
August 23, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—2 Samuel 1—20 and 1
Chronicles 11—20

This evening we **are continuing our historical survey of the Old Testament**. We are focusing quite a bit on King David. In reality, two whole Bible studies in this series, the last Bible study and this one, **focus almost entirely on King David**. There is a reason for that. Next Bible study we will get the concluding matters pertaining to David and the beginning of Solomon's reign. These sections dealing with King David are very important. *They provide a background for the future history of Israel; and in reality, they provide a background for all of prophecy.*

There are lessons for the individual in the example of David and others whose lives are mentioned and detailed here. If we are going to learn from someone's example, it is important to see what the person or various individuals did. Then you are able to read God's reaction to what they did and gain insight.

There is the broad grouping of the law, the Prophets and the Writings. Notice the difference by which we're taught. All through we're taught God's law, but in the books of the law—the first five books—we are given direct statements, "you shall do this, you shall not do that." There is a direct statement of law. Of course, there are also some examples, and we went through that, but there are many direct statements of law. We are taught in that way.

Now in this section, the Prophets' section (this is the historical portion of the Prophets), we are taught and instructed not primarily by any direct statement or commandment. Direct statements or commandments are virtually not given in this section. What we have, *continually in this section, are the examples of individuals, what people did and how God reacted to what they did.*

As we continue the outline of King David's life from last Bible study, we would basically outline David's life in four sections: David the shepherd boy, David the hero, David the outcast and David the king. Last Bible study we focused on David the shepherd boy, David the hero, and David the outcast. This evening, we **are focusing in on David the king**. We ended with the death of Saul last time. As we pick up the story, we will go through the first 20 chapters of

2 Samuel this evening. There is a parallel account in 2 Chronicles 11—20.

We start out with David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan. Then we focus in on David ruling over Judah. David did not immediately become king over all Israel. Rather, David was acknowledged as king over Judah from Hebron. Then after about seven years of reign over Judah from Hebron, David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and then began to reign over all Israel, over all 12 tribes.

We then note David bringing the ark into Jerusalem. The ark had been in various places since the time that Israel had brought it through the wilderness in the tabernacle. There wasn't one permanent sanctuary. Shiloh was the location for a period of time. The ark was at various locations, but now David brought it into Jerusalem.

Then we find God making a covenant with David, called the Davidic Covenant. It is an important section. It becomes very important for prophecy to understand the special covenant God made with David. We notice the boundaries of David's kingdom being extended and established.

Then we focus on David's sin with Bathsheba, the story of Amnon's crime and Absalom's subsequent rebellion. Next is David's sin in numbering Israel, Adonijah's rebellion, David's charge to Solomon and finally the death of David.

From a prophetic standpoint, 2 Samuel 7:12-16 is one of the most important sections of Scripture because we have the promise that God made to David, that David's dynasty would go on forever. This obviously ultimately looks forward to the Messiah.

2 Samuel 7:16, notice here, "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." That obviously goes on into the future. Forever is a long time.

What did we find stated of the Messiah in the book of Luke when the angel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary?

Luke 1:32-33, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Jesus Christ is going to sit on David's throne. That's what it says. Jesus Christ the Messiah is going to sit on the throne of David, and He is going to reign forever. This is based on 2 Samuel 7:16 where God told David, "Your

throne shall be established forever.” This is obviously a promise that has overtones of the Messiah because if the throne is to be established forever, then it has to ultimately be inhabited by someone other than just a simple human being. It is ultimately going to be occupied by Jesus Christ. That’s what the angel told Mary prior to His birth, that He would sit on the throne of His father David and His Kingdom would continue forever.

Is Christ, right now, sitting upon the throne of David? I think it’s important to understand that, and you can prove very clearly that Jesus Christ is not sitting on the throne of David right now. Notice what it says here in Revelation 3:21, Christ’s message to the Laodicean Church.

Revelation 3:21, ““To him who overcomes, I will grant [future tense] to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame [past tense] and am sat down [present tense] with My Father on His throne.”” Christ is going to sit on His throne, and whose throne is it? It’s going to be the throne of David. He is going to sit on the throne of David and those that overcome will sit on that throne with Him.

“As I also overcame and am [presently] sat down with My Father [God the Father] on His throne.” Christ, right now, is not sitting on the throne of David; He is sitting with God the Father on the Father’s throne in heaven.

David’s throne was not in heaven. David’s throne has never been in heaven. David’s throne is a throne on the earth over Israel, and ultimately to expand out to rule over all the earth. Christ overcame; He conquered and as a result, was seated with the Father on the Father’s throne. Those who overcome will sit with Him (future tense) on His throne when he returns to occupy that throne. Then we will also be able to sit with Him on that throne.

Matthew 25:31, that’s what He says, ““When the Son of man comes [future tense] in all His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then will He sit on the throne of His glory.””

Verse 34, ““Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.””” When Jesus returns in glory, He is going to sit on the throne of His glory, which is the throne of David. He’s coming back to sit on a throne that does exist. He’s not coming back to a non-existent throne. He’s coming back to a throne that does exist; otherwise, how could He occupy it. If the throne of David ceased to exist thousands of years ago,

how can it be said that Christ is coming back to sit upon that throne?

2 Samuel 7:16 is a remarkable prophecy. In fact, we might note what God told David through Nathan the prophet.

2 Samuel 7:12-16, ““When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name [this is referring to Solomon]; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.””

God specifically told David, ‘Look, I am going to establish your descendants upon a throne forever. If they sin, if they transgress, I will correct them, punish them and chasten them. I am not saying they won’t be dealt with if it’s needed, but what I am promising you is I will not take My mercy from them in the way I took it from Saul when I just simply removed his family from the kingship. Regardless of what your descendants do, I am not going to break the promise I am making to you. I will punish them if they need it, but I am not going to take My mercy from them.’

We have here the basis of understanding this promise God made to David. On the basis of this, we have to realize the throne of David has to exist as a literal throne somewhere on the earth today and be occupied by descendants of David ruling over modern descendants of ancient Israel. That throne has to exist. It did not cease at the time King Zedekiah was taken, had his eyes put out, was led away in chains to Babylon, and the city of Jerusalem and the temple were burned. That was not the end of the dynasty of King David because God had made a promise and God’s word stood sure.

God punished the descendants of David at various times through history, but that dynasty has continued down until today. And, of course, that dynasty does exist and is currently occupied by Queen Elizabeth II, sitting on the throne of David. She is a direct descendant of King David.

That dynasty was preserved as Jeremiah the prophet took some of Zedekiah’s daughters and went from the Middle East to Ireland. One of the

daughters, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, had married a son of the high king of Ireland. She married him; the two of them, and a child that they had, went with Jeremiah the prophet and others traveling from Jerusalem to Ireland in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem. That royal house was the royal house that ruled as the high kings of ancient Ireland from Tara for many centuries until the throne was overturned in 841 A.D. by Kenneth MacAlpin who was the king of Scotland and a descendant of that royal house.

The insignia or the symbol of that throne was Jacob's pillar stone (Genesis 28:11-22), that physical rock of the covenant. This physical symbol of the covenant was removed from Tara and taken to Scone in Scotland. Subsequently for several centuries, the kings of Scotland were crowned on it, and then at a later date, King Edward I of England who was a descendant of that royal house, moved the stone from Scone to London. When Jesus Christ returns it will finally be taken back to Jerusalem as the sign of the throne of David.

As we go through the book of Kings, we will notice that the kings in Jerusalem were crowned on the pillar, on that same stone. We will notice some insight into that a little later in this series of Bible studies. I think it is important to focus in on this set of scriptures because it is a key to understanding Bible prophecy—and it's rooted right here.

One of the greatest lessons that can be learned, just in terms of personal lessons and examples, comes from the aftermath of David's sin with Bathsheba. It is clearly shown that sin hurts; sin has physical consequences. You can repent, be sorry, have regret and genuine repentance, but there are physical consequences that inevitably follow. The more serious the sin is, the more serious the physical consequences. When God removes our sin and forgives us, He does not erase all of the physical consequences that are the result.

We find here examples of what happened in the aftermath in David's family. David's conduct and example during the years his children were growing up left much to be desired, and he reaped headaches by the ton even though he afterward repented of his earlier conduct. There were problems that he had during the formative years of his children that had an impact, and he reaped those consequences during those latter years. God records that. He does not gloss over all of the mistakes that some of His servants made. God tells us that David was a man after

His own heart. There was a certain attitude; there were certain things that were a part of David's character that God placed great value on, but David had certain problems. God does not hide those or gloss over them; He records them so that we might see and learn.

Now as we go through this section in 2 Samuel, one of the things that we notice is David's reaction to the death of Saul. His reaction was one of grief.

2 Samuel 1:17-18, "Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow; indeed it is written in the book of Jasher." The book of Jasher was a historical book. It was simply a secular record that was available that gave details that are not preserved in the biblical account. At the time that the biblical account was written, you will find a number of references in these historical books referring you to secular sources that people of that day were familiar with. In other words, it's as though we might write a summary account of something today and then in that summary account, refer you to various secular sources where you could go for more details if you wanted them.

David honored and respected Saul, right up to the end. He respected and honored Saul's office. Saul is an individual who certainly didn't conduct himself as worthy of a lot of honor or respect. David's honor and respect was not grounded on the basis that Saul was such a wonderful, deserving fellow. It was based on the premise that Saul was God's anointed. God had set Saul in a high office, and that office was to be respected.

We run into an apparent discrepancy in the account of Saul's death as it is given in 2 Samuel 1 by comparison to 1 Samuel 31. We might note that and understand.

2 Samuel 1:1-10, "Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag, on the third day, behold, it happened that a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. So it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. And David said to him, 'Where have you come from?' So he said to him, 'I have escaped from the camp of Israel.' Then David said to him, 'How did the matter go? Please tell me.' And he answered, 'The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.' So David said to

the young man who told him, 'How do you know that Saul and Johathan his son are dead?' And the young man who told him said, 'As I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said to me, 'Who are you?' So I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still remains in me. So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord.'"

1 Samuel 31:4-5, we find that Saul had told his armor bearer, "Then Saul said to his armor bearer, 'Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.' But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him."

We get the idea from 1 Samuel 31 that Saul committed suicide and 2 Samuel 1 that the Amalekite killed him. There are two explanations. One is simply that the Amalekite lied that he came there and saw Saul lying there dead. He recognized the body because of the royal insignia that Saul had on, and he thought that this was a good chance for him to move "one up." He would grab these things off the body and bring them to David and say, 'I have killed your enemy. He's your enemy; he was after you and was trying to get you. I came on him; he was fallen out there, and I finished him off. I brought you these things to give them to you because I am saying by this that I recognize you as the next king.' He thought, 'Boy, I will probably be rewarded—he will probably think this is great.' But David didn't think so.

2 Samuel 1:14-16, "And David said to him, 'How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?' Then David called one of the young men and said, 'Go near, and execute him!' And he struck him so that he died. So David said to him, 'Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, "I have killed the Lord's anointed.'"" David had this fellow executed.

This ought to answer the question, by the way, that some have asked in recent days about

euthanasia, so called "mercy killings." It has been debated in the press of recent days if that is all right.

Either one of two things happened: Either the Amalekite lied or Saul had certainly fallen on his sword as it says in 1 Samuel 31, but perhaps he managed to botch that like he did everything else and did a halfway job of suicide. Seeing that Saul had fallen on the sword, the armor bearer committed suicide. Then when this Amalekite came walking along, Saul had maybe managed to miss a vital spot and was lying there wounded, not yet dead. The armor bearer had only thought that he was dead. He saw him fall on the sword, but maybe it didn't pierce all the way through. That's certainly a possibility. The Amalekite came along and saw Saul wounded himself, but not actually having finished himself off, and he went ahead and did it.

Whether that was the case or whether he simply exaggerated to get a reward, it is apparent here that God does not approve of so-called "mercy killings." And David, acting as God's representative, didn't approve of that. There is certainly a great deal of difference between actively taking a life and, on the other hand, withholding the type of extreme measures that much of the current medical technology has sought to foist off on people. You can't equate at all the matter of actively taking a life, whether it is by injection or some other sort of thing and of someone who is an innocent victim, who is lying there in pain as Saul was. Saul even asked the guy to finish him off, but that doesn't matter. Your life doesn't belong to you; it belongs to God. You don't have the right to take it, nor does anyone else.

God did give the charge to the civil government that whoever sheds blood, by man shall his blood be shed. God gave that charge to Noah in the aftermath of the flood (Genesis 9:6). It's repeated in Romans 13:1-4 that God has set the civil government to bear the sword and to execute vengeance against those who perpetuate crime and violence. But that is talking about constituted authority, not somebody who takes it upon himself to go out and do that.

Of course, we as Christians are ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) and are not part of that constituted civil authority. We are not involved in that from a standpoint of actively taking part, but you certainly gain from this some insight that this is not God's way. That is not to say that if somebody gets sick, you can't equate the refusal to be hooked up on all kinds of artificial support systems, things that never were a part of

anything God designed or established, but simply represent man's technology. You can't equate that with an active taking of life, whether by a doctor or by someone else. Again, there's certain insight into God's perspective into some of these things that we can see.

Saul ends up as a very tragic figure. Saul was a man who sought to solve his problems his own way. Even at the end, what did Saul do? He turned to a witch and then tried to commit suicide when it didn't work out his way. Nowhere did Saul ever truly repent and turn to God.

You might make the contrast. Samson had to go through some tragic things and learn some tragic lessons, but at the end, what did he do? He prayed to God. He went to God and said, 'Oh God, please be merciful, give me a chance to at least make up for my lack in what I've done in carrying out the job You gave me to do.' He came to see himself and asked God for His mercy and forgiveness. God extended that. Saul never did repent. He just continued to bumble along and try to solve his own problems his own way and ended up in a tragic way.

2 Samuel 2:1, "It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, 'Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?' And the Lord said to him, 'Go up.' David said, 'Where shall I go up?' And He said, 'To Hebron.'"

Verse 4, "Then the men of Judah came and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah."

Verse 11, "And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months."

Verses 8-10, "But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David."

In the meantime there was a descendant of Saul who was crowned king over the northern tribes of Israel. His name was Ishbosheth, the son of Saul.

Verse 8, "Abner the son of Ner"—his name is kind of an unusual name. "Ab" in Hebrew means "father." His name literally translated meant "father of Ner," so in the verse he was "father of Ner the son of Ner." Abner was the commander of Saul's army, the commanding general. He took this son of Saul who had survived and made

him king over the areas of Northern Israel. This man (Ishbosheth) was set in place and reigned over Israel two years.

The House of Judah followed David, and David was king in Hebron seven years and six months.

Verses 12-16, then we see the account of the battle that takes place; there was fighting back and forth, and Joab was the commander of King David's troops. Abner was the commander of the other troops, the men of Israel.

Verse 17, "So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David."

Verse 18, KJV, one young man who was a brother of Joab was a very fast man. It describes him as light of foot as a wild roe. In other words, he could run like a deer. He really would have been an Olympic star.

Verse 19, he pursued after Abner.

Verses 20-23, seeing he was on his heels, Abner finally turned and killed him.

2 Samuel 3:1, "Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker."

Verses 2-5, it then gives an account of some of David's sons.

Verses 6-8, there came to be a falling out between Abner and Ishbosheth.

Verses 9-10, "May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the Lord has sworn to him—to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba."

Verse 20, "So Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him." They had a meal, sat and ate and discussed the matter. When the time came for them to leave, Joab came out from David and told Abner he had a message.

Verse 27, "Now when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there stabbed him in the stomach, so that he died for the blood of Asahel his brother."

Verse 28, "And afterward, when David heard it, he said, 'My kingdom and I are guiltless before the Lord forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.'" Joab very treacherously killed Abner to get revenge because of the slaughter of his brother. When David heard it, he was really upset and disgusted at this. There was a difference in something that took place in battle

and a treacherous assassination. It gives a little insight into Joab's character.

Joab was a valiant man; he was a fighter, a real go-getter in a lot of ways. Joab was a very self-willed individual. He was going to do whatever he wanted. If Joab agreed with what the boss said, he would do it; if he didn't, he would still do what he wanted to do. He could be very treacherous and very sneaky. David proclaimed mourning for Abner and gave him a state funeral. He said, 'This is terrible; this is no way to treat this man—we were not at war.'

Verse 36, "Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people." David became very popular. Whatever the king did, it pleased the people, and they understood that David had no part in the slaughter of Abner.

2 Samuel 4:1-2, "And when Saul's son [Ishbosheth] heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled. Now Saul's sons had two men who were captains of troops. The name of one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin."

Verse 4, "Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. So his name was Mephibosheth." Jonathan had a son who was crippled.

Verse 5, "Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon."

Verse 6, these individuals, who were trusted servants of Ishbosheth, came in while he was lying down for a nap at noon. They came in as though they were getting something and smote him in the stomach.

Verses 7-8, "For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plains. And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king. 'Here is the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life; and the Lord has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants.'" They actually beheaded him and brought this gory thing to David in Hebron, saying, 'We have brought you the head of the son of your enemy Saul.'

Notice what David told them when they came to him.

Verses 9-10, "Then David answered Rechab and Baamah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, 'As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, when someone told me, saying, "Look, Saul is dead," thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag—the one who thought I would give him a reward for his news.'" He said, 'He thought he would have a reward for his good news. He was coming to get a reward, telling this tale, bragging about having killed Saul and thinking I was going to reward him. I executed him because he committed murder. He slaughtered the Lord's anointed.'

Verse 11, "'How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?'" They thought they would be rewarded. They had treacherously slaughtered their master. They had assassinated him, brought his bloody head to David and said, 'Hey, now you can be king over the whole nation. We have finished off your enemy and the son of your enemy.'

David said, 'If I would execute a passerby who killed the king, how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house on his bed. You who he trusted, you did a thing like this. If I executed this Amalekite that finished off Saul, you think I am going to let you go free? You guys are nothing more than common murderers. You sneaked in and murdered a man while he was asleep and you come here thinking I am going to reward you?'

Verse 12, "So David commanded his young men, and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged them by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron."

2 Samuel 5:1-3, "Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, 'Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the Lord said to you, "You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel." He had already been anointed king over Judah.

Verse 4, "David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years."

Verse 5, “In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.” Now we come to the point where he became king over all the land.

Notice one thing—God tested him. God said David was a man after His own heart. What are some of the characteristics that we know? David was a man that valued loyalty. David did not appreciate treachery. God values loyalty; He places great value on it.

The capital at Jerusalem is established.

Verses 6-7, “And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, ‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking, ‘David cannot come here.’ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).”

Let’s notice a parallel account.

1 Chronicles 11:4-8, “And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. Then the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, ‘You shall not come in here.’ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). Now David said, ‘Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain.’ And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief. Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the City of David. And he built the city around it, from the Millo to the surrounding area. Joab repaired the rest of the city.”

Jerusalem spread out from there, but that was the original portion of the city. Every city has its original settlement and then spreads out. Well, Jerusalem spread out from this stronghold [KJV, “castle”], this fortification on Mount Zion.

The situation was that David put siege around the city, and Joab was the one that came up with a way to get in. Joab figured it out and was the first one into Jerusalem. He went up first and he was the chief.

2 Samuel 5:8, he did so by climbing through the water shaft that connected Jerusalem with its only water supply at that time, which was known as the virgin’s pool. They diverted it and climbed up through this water shaft. They went in through the pool, climbed up through the water shaft, got into the city and were able to open the gates.

You read here of the exploits of these mighty men of David. This bunch of men that followed him was a tough bunch of hombres. They were outlaws and outcasts and everything else, but what they had in common was honor, respect

and loyalty that they had for David. They had gathered themselves to him while he was hiding in the cave of Adullam.

In 2 Samuel 6, we find the bringing in of the ark.

Verse 1, David gathered together Israel.

2 Samuel 6:3, “So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.”

Verse 5, “Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the Lord on all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.” They were playing instruments of music and there was great celebration, a parade and a march—all of the “hoopla.”

Verses 6-7, “And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah and God struck him there for his error [irreverence]; and he died there by the ark of God.” When they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, the ark kind of wobbled on the cart, and Uzzah put out his hand to steady it. When he did, he was struck dead.

There was a reason for that. To begin with, they weren’t doing what God had instructed. God had given instructions in the law how the ark was to be carried. There were poles it was to be carried with, and the Levites were to carry it on their shoulders. They had completely disregarded the instructions. They had not gone back and followed the instruction. The instruction in the law was to not touch the ark or you died. The ark is holy and sacred; don’t treat it carelessly.

There was a lesson that needed to be made. The real problem got back to the fact that the leaders used human reason to determine the manner of bringing in the ark instead of doing things as God commanded. God allowed this to happen and this example to be recorded that we might have impressed upon us the absolute importance of doing what God says and the way He says to do it.

If God says carry it on poles, don’t stick it on a cart and figure that ought to do. If God says the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God, don’t figure the first day ought to do just as well. If God says do something, do it the way He says it. Don’t use human reasoning: ‘I don’t see what difference it makes; this should do just fine. God should be satisfied with this.’ That really is not wise thinking, and this example is recorded here. We read of this tragedy that occurred.

Then David began the construction of a palace there in Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 14:1, “Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house.” He obtained the materials and the craftsmen from Hiram king of Tyre up in the area of modern day Lebanon.

2 Samuel 7:1-3, a short time later, “Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.’ Then Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.’” David told Nathan he was living in this palace that he had and the ark of God was reposing in a temporary dwelling. ‘I think we ought to build a temple.’ Nathan thought that was a good idea, but God very quickly told him, “No.”

Verses 4-5, “But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, ‘Go and tell My servant David, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Would you build a house for Me to dwell in?’””

Verses 11-16, “...Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”

David’s desire to build a temple after his own palace was built is made plain in 2 Samuel 7:1-3, but God, in the aftermath of that, said, ‘No, you’re not going to build the temple. You’re not going to build a house for Me, but I am going to build a house for you.’ Then we went through the promise of the Davidic covenant, the promise that God made to David of establishing his family forever.

We are going to note in the next Bible study the reason why God didn’t let David build the temple. It doesn’t state it right here, but the reason was that David was a man of much blood. David had shed much blood. David was a man of

war, and that was something that God was just not going to allow David to do. Solomon was a man of peace, and God allowed Solomon to be the one to build the temple. David prepared for it.

David continued to show his loyalty to the memory of Jonathan.

2 Samuel 9:1, 3, 5, 7, 13, “Now David said, ‘Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’... ‘There is still a son of Jonathan who is lame in his feet.’... Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.... So David said to him, ‘Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually.’... So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king’s table. And he was lame in both his feet.”

David wanted to find out if there was any of the family of Saul left. When he found out Mephibosheth—the little crippled son of Jonathan—was still alive, he brought him to the palace, sought to reward him and to provide for him.

In 2 Samuel 10:1-2, we find the story where the king of Ammon died and David was going to send representatives to the funeral.

Verses 3-4, this young upstart son of the king of Ammon decided maybe these guys were spies and he was going to show them how tough he was and humiliate them. He held them up to public ridicule, made a mockery out of them and, in that sense, insulted not only them, but insulted the nation.

If the United States sends an ambassador somewhere and that ambassador is treated in a wrong way, that is not an insult to him as a person so much as it is an insult to the nation because he is there not representing himself, but the nation.

2 Samuel 10:5, 7, “When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, ‘Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.’... Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men.” David dealt with it.

Verses 8-19, he sent in the army and dealt with the Ammonites. This is the way he retaliated, dealing in a carnal world with carnal people. This was the thing these people understood.

There was a time when basically the United States government followed this example, and

we didn't have many ambassadors mistreated. If something like this happens every time your ambassador gets mistreated, there are not very many countries that "pick on" your ambassador. This is the case.

In 2 Samuel 11, we focus in on one of the most serious things David got into—that was the sin with Bathsheba.

Verse 2, you know the account and how he saw Bathsheba out on her rooftop bathing.

Verse 4, he decided to see if Bathsheba would come over to the palace. He arranged this rendezvous and the adultery that took place.

Verse 5, the adultery was compounded because Bathsheba turned up pregnant. Because her husband Uriah was off in battle, it was going to be very apparent that it wasn't his child.

David began to compound sin with another, thinking, 'Well, I can cover it up.' It was not just the original sin; it was the cover up, kind of like Watergate. This was kind of the Watergate of ancient Israel. He was going to have a cover up.

Verse 6, 'I am going to get Uriah back here to spend the night at his home, and then when the child is born, nobody will know. Well, the baby will be just a few weeks premature; nobody will be the wiser.' But as generally happens with cover ups, something goes awry.

Verse 9, Uriah was a soldier's soldier. He decided, no, he wasn't going to go back home and stay with his wife because all the rest of the men were out in battle.

Verses 14-17, then David really became desperate and scared and compounded his sin even further when he gave Uriah a message to take back to Joab. The message said, 'Look, when you get in the fiercest battle, put Uriah in the front of the battle. Then you withdraw the rest of the men.' He thought, 'Put Uriah in a situation where he is going to get killed in battle to get rid of him. Let him get killed, and then as soon as it is appropriate, I will marry the widow. This will cover up the whole thing and nobody will be the wiser.' Well, of course, that's not the way it worked.

In 2 Samuel 12:1-7, Nathan confronts David with the seriousness of what he had done. As he went through and told the story, he ended up finally by pointing his finger and saying, 'You, Oh king, are that man.'

I'll bet you could have heard a pin drop in there. There is no doubt that everybody all around—all the servants and guards—had been gossiping about what had been going on for weeks. When you think you are hiding something and nobody knows, believe me, everybody around there who

worked in the palace knew—all the guards and the maids. You can imagine something like that would spread like wildfire. Everybody was gossiping. Nobody would say it in front of the king, but they all knew what was going on. They weren't totally dumb. Ever notice sometimes people think they are going to put something over on someone. It doesn't generally work. David had gone through all this stuff to try to hide and cover up his sin. He hadn't covered it up from anybody. And then his sin was exposed in front of everyone publicly.

But one of the major reasons David was a man after God's own heart is recorded in his reaction to that. Time after time you read, particularly when someone was in a high office and they were confronted with the seriousness of what they did, they got mad at the one who confronted them. 'Boy, I'll fix you; I'll throw you in jail. I'll kill you.' That was Saul's reaction and the reaction of various kings. David didn't do that. David knew he was wrong and admitted it.

If you want to read David's reaction, go to Psalm 51. That's David's psalm of repentance, and you won't find one instance of self-justification there. David offered God no excuses. He didn't say, 'Yeah, I know I made a mistake, but she was at fault, too. She shouldn't have been up there on that roof with her clothes off.' He offered no excuses. He didn't try to say, 'Other people have done the same thing and that Uriah was a clod (or this or that) and Bathsheba tempted me.' David offered no excuses.

2 Samuel 12:13, he said, "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord....'"

Psalm 51:4, "'Against You and You only have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight—....'"

Go through Psalm 51 and read it. Contrast it with someone who was confronted with sin, going all the way back to Adam and Eve. What's the normal human reaction? —Blame somebody else, make excuses, try to justify yourself. 'Yeah, I know, but "so-and-so" did it, too. And they did worse than what I did. They made me do it, etc.' David offered no excuse. Go through and read Psalm 51. I think it is a very important key to understand the importance of that reaction.

2 Samuel 12:10, what was the penalty David suffered? The penalty was that the sword was never going to depart from his house. He was going to physically pay a penalty for this. He was going to find himself ensnared in things that were just going to go on and on.

By the time of 2 Samuel 13:1-2, David's kids are just about grown. Since David had all these various women, he had a bunch of children who

were only half brothers and sisters. There began to be a lot of problems. One of the problems was one of the daughters, Tamar. She was a very beautiful daughter, and one of her half brothers, Amnon, wanted her. He wanted to have her.

Verses 3-14, finally, he tricked her into a situation and raped her. She had turned him down and said, 'No, I don't want to have anything to do with you.'

Verses 22-34, her brother Absalom was so infuriated by what Amnon had done that he murdered his half brother and wound up fleeing. Years went by. Joab entreated David to forgive Absalom and let him come back.

2 Samuel 14:23-24, "So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, 'Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face.' So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face." David wouldn't have anything to do with him, but he let him come back. Absalom came back and was plotting vengeance.

2 Samuel 15:2-6, "Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, 'What city are you from?' And he would say, 'Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel.' Then Absalom would say to him, 'Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you.' Moreover Absalom would say, 'Oh, that I were made judge in the land and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice.' And so it was, whenever anyone came near him to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

Absalom began to set about trying to ingratiate himself to the people and to take over. He tried to win the hearts of the masses with political maneuvers; he had a conspiracy going to ultimately stage a coup and capture control of the government. He was going to overthrow his father.

Verses 12-14, "Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor...., And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number. And a messenger came to David, saying, 'The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.' So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, 'Arise, and let us flee; or else we

shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.'" Absalom finally launched a revolution.

Undoubtedly, one of the major things that affected David was that he realized the consequences where his whole family was unraveling, and David lacked heart to fight against his son. He didn't want to do that; he felt like he had brought all these things on himself. He fled Jerusalem rather than have the city destroyed in some kind of battle. David was looking to God to somehow give him some kind of relief from this.

When we go through the battles and the situations related to that in chapters 16, 17 and finally in chapter 18, we find the circumstances of Absalom's death. David had given instructions that he didn't want Absalom killed, but what did old Joab do? He always did whatever Joab wanted to do.

2 Samuel 18:9, Absalom had long hair and only cut it once a year. He was racing through the woods trying to get away and got tangled up in an oak tree. As a result, he couldn't get out of the brush and was dangling up there.

Verses 10, 14-15, someone went and told Joab, and Joab came up there and murdered him. He just stabbed him through. Joab figured that was what needed to be done and he did it.

One of the things you note here, Joab didn't have any compunctions about doing what he wanted, whether that was the instruction or not. Joab figured David was wrong. He said, 'This kid's a punk; he ought to be executed. He's a troublemaker; I never should have brought him back here.' So, we see this situation.

Let's conclude here by noting some of the greatest strengths and weaknesses of David and contrasting them with some of the greatest strengths and weaknesses of Joab.

David evidenced many positive characteristics: faith, loyalty, zeal and wholeheartedness. I think these were certainly some of the most outstanding characteristics that David evidenced. He showed great faith, great loyalty, a tremendous amount of zeal and wholeheartedness in what he did. Perhaps his greatest failing was as a family man. He had a weakness in this area and a weakness for women. He did, frankly, a poor job of childrearing. Part of the problem was that he often allowed emotion to rule him. Rather than his head ruling the heart, his heart ruled his head. You see, that is the problem.

God has given us both. God has given us a mind and He has given us emotions. We are a combination of mind and emotion, of head and heart, but when the heart rules the head, you have trouble. The head is intended to rule the heart. It's not emotionless rule, but it is a matter that when we act on impulse and act emotionally to things rather than thinking it through, we are going to suffer the consequences.

The result of this impulsiveness and emotionalism that was often there led to a lack of consistency and got David into some problems. It caused him to get involved in things that had long-term consequences. He exemplified a tremendous amount of faith, loyalty, zeal and wholeheartedness; God greatly honored and appreciated David for these qualities. But God does not gloss over the weaknesses of David. David had many family problems, and we will note some of those a little bit further. David learned many of those lessons, but by the time he really got the point, most of his kids were pretty well grown. He couldn't go back and undo what he had done. Many of these things David taught Solomon, and undoubtedly, a lot of it is reflected in what Solomon says in the book of Proverbs. Solomon was the son of David's old age. Solomon was young; he was just a teenager when he sat on the throne. The other children were much older and had gotten into trouble as a result of David being too busy to tend to things at home.

Joab also had great strengths and weaknesses. He had tremendous courage and personal bravery. You couldn't find anyone more courageous and brave, but he had a treacherous streak. Perhaps his greatest failing was his inability to carry out orders properly. He was stubborn and insisted on doing things his own way. He was self-willed. He was right and the world was wrong. If he thought he was right, he didn't care if the boss said otherwise—he was going to do it his way. That led him to an untimely end.

As we look at some of this, it is important that we realize that God has a reason for recording both positive and negative characteristics, the strengths and the weaknesses of these individuals. God wants us to learn from these examples. We gain insight and learn lessons if we are able to read and see ourselves in some of these things. We can see things that we have done, and to the extent that we look and learn from the examples of others, we don't have to make the same mistakes and reap the same consequences.

Here we set the stage with the expanding out of Israel and the firm establishment of the throne. We set the stage for Israel to reach its height, its pinnacle, under the time of King Solomon. We will go into some of that in the next Bible study as we see what advances as God has created a nation under the rulership of King David and his descendants. With that we will be concluded this evening.

Bible Study # 24
October 11, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—2 Samuel 21—24; 1 Kings 1—11; 1 Chronicles 21—29 and 2 Chronicles 1—9

Last Bible study we were in 2 Samuel and the life of David. This evening we **are primarily focusing in on King Solomon**. It was during his reign that Israel reached its height and was the recipient of the choicest bounties of heaven. His kingdom stretched from the Euphrates to Egypt. Ezion Geber was an industrial city. The kingdom of Solomon set astride all the great trade routes of Europe.

The first part of King Solomon's reign was, in reality, a type of the millennial reign. The name "Solomon" means "peace." One of the statements made of the reign of Solomon and characteristic of it was "each man under his vine and his fig tree" (1 Kings 4:25).

Micah 4:4, "But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid;" It refers to the Millennium.

It was a time of abundance, wealth and prosperity in ancient Israel. Solomon hired and contracted Phoenician sailors. They even conducted expeditions to the new world. The Phoenician alphabet was very similar to the Hebrew. So, Solomon's navy literally had a worldwide impact. Solomon's navy left out of a port on the Red Sea and three years later came back to a port on the Mediterranean Sea. They circumnavigated the earth. Solomon's fleet returned every three years.

The story of Solomon's life from God's perspective is found in Ecclesiastes. In the midst of blessings and prosperity, there are also potential problems. This section in Samuel and Kings and the parallel account in Chronicles is the time that we find the building of the temple. The tabernacle had been situated in various locations, but at this time there was a permanent structure built. David had desired to build it. He had been a man of war, and because of certain things, God did not want him to build it.

There was a courtyard that enclosed the temple itself, and then you had the temple. To get an idea of the temple, the actual inner part was a rectangle that measured 90 feet by 30 feet. The Holy of Holies was actually a cube 30 feet by 30 feet by 30 feet. The Holy Place measured 60 feet by 30 feet by 45 feet. Surrounding the temple on two sides and the rear were rooms or apartments.

John 14:2, remember when Christ made the statement, "'In My Father's house are many mansions;'" He called the temple "My Father's house." There were three stories with 33 rooms per floor. There were entrances from the front side. The roof of the temple proper was 45 feet. The roof of the apartments on the sides and rear was 30 feet. The porch rose to a height of 180 feet. This great columned porch in front was set in a great courtyard, which was many times larger than the temple itself. In the court were the brazen laver and the altar of sacrifice. The back half would be in the inner court and was located about half way behind the two great columned porch. The priests' hall and the Israelites hall consisted of the very finest of things.

Let us get on into our material.

2 Samuel 23:1-5, "Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse. Thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel: 'The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: "He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain." Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase?'"

Verse 8, "These are the names of the mighty men whom David had:" It gives their acts of valor accomplished.

2 Samuel 24:1, "Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, 'Go number Israel and Judah.'"

1 Chronicles 21:1, "Now Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel." God wanted the nation to trust Him, not trust in the military. Satan incited him and stirred him up to do that.

2 Samuel 24:3-4, "And Joab said to the king, 'Now may the Lord your God add to the people a hundredfold more than there are, and many the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?' Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. So Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel."

Verse 10, "And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said

to the Lord, 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly.'" David was feeling guilty about it. He knew he had done the opposite of what God would want him to do.

Verses 12-13, "'Go and tell David, 'Thus says the Lord: 'I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.'" So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, [1] 'Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or [2] shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or [3] shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me.'"

God gave David a choice, and "none of the above" wasn't one of the choices. Not many of us have a chance to choose our trial.

Verse 14, "And David said to Gad, 'I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.'" He chose three days of disease epidemics. He would rather take his chances of falling into the hands of God. He would rather be dependent upon God's mercy than man's mercy.

Verse 16, KJV, "...the Lord repented him of the evil and said to the angel..." What does that mean "the Lord repented"? Did God make a mistake? No, let's understand these words. "Repent" literally means "to be sorry" and the word "evil" is a word that means "adversity, calamity or affliction." What it means is that God felt pity. He looked down and had pity and mercy on what was happening.

Verse 16, NKJV, "And when the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the destruction,"

Verse 17, "Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, 'Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house.'"

'It is my fault. Let it be against my family. Spare the people.' Where do you ever find Saul saying it was his fault? Ever see people where it was never their fault, always somebody else's fault? Everything they encounter is somebody else's fault. With Saul there was the inability to repent and change from the mistakes because he never took responsibility for anything. David made mistakes, but he took responsibility for those mistakes and he repented and grew. God was preparing him for a job. God has an overview of

things. Why do we do things this way? God knows what He is doing and what He is accomplishing. He is far more concerned about the long-range outcome on out into eternity.

Verses 18-25, "And Gad came that day to David and said to him, 'Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.' So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. Then Araunah said, 'Why has my lord the king come to his servant?' And David said, 'To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.' Now Araunah said to David, 'Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king.' And Araunah said to the king, 'May the Lord your God accept you.' Then the king said to Araunah, 'No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which cost me nothing.' So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel."

1 Kings 1:1, "Now King David was old, advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm." David had loss of body heat; he had health problems.

Verse 5, "Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, 'I will be king'; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him." He figured he was next in line.

Verse 6, "(And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, 'Why have you done so?' He was also a very good-looking man. His mother had borne him after Absalom.)" He was a spoiled brat. His father had never put his foot down. Many of the problems David encountered later in life with his children came from his child rearing. He was entangled with various women. When a person is not really fulfilling his responsibilities at home, they try to make it up to their kids by giving them things instead of their time. They try to compensate by giving them things. His kids had not been properly disciplined, and by the time he learned his lesson, they were grown. David couldn't turn the

clock back 25 years. He never called Adonijah into account for what he did; he was a spoiled brat who thought he could do what he wanted to do.

Adonijah was the younger brother of Absalom. David was dying and there began to be a power struggle. Adonijah was trying to take the kingdom. This was not God's intention. It was apparent that God had already chosen Solomon. Solomon was a young teenager at this time; he was not even grown. God had made plain to David through the prophet that it was to be Solomon.

Verses 33-35, "The king also said to them, 'Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, "Long live King Solomon!" Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.'"

Solomon is brought in and seated on the throne while David is yet alive. David did not wait until after he died for Solomon to be anointed as king. It was important that the succession be established before the leader died. If the selection is not clear, then you are going to have confusion, and we know who the author of confusion is.

Verses 50-52, "Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, 'Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, "Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'" Then Solomon said, 'If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.'"

1 Kings 2:1-2, "Then the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 'I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.'" He charged Solomon. He is talking to one who is still a young teenager. He is talking to a young person who is going to be taking the throne.

Verses 3-4, "'And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Lord may fulfill

His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, "If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul," He said, "you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"

Verses 5-9, he gives him some final advice as to how to handle certain problems.

Verses 10-11, "So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. The period that David reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years."

1 Chronicles 22:1-5, "Then David said, 'This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.' So David commanded to gather the aliens who were in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. Now David said, 'Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries, I will now make preparation for it.' So David made abundant preparations before his death."

Verses 6-9, "Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the Lord God of Israel. And David said to Solomon: 'My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the Lord my God; but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days.'" "Solomon" is derived from "Shalom" which means "peaceful."

Verses 10-12, "'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'" Now, my son, may the Lord be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the Lord your God, as He has said to you. Only may the Lord give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the Lord your God.'" He continually reminded him, 'Obey God, put God first, keep the

Commandments, and God will bless you and back you up.’

Verses 13-14, “Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the Lord charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be dismayed. Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.” He did all of these things to prepare. There were millions of dollars in gold in today’s prices.

1 Chronicles 23:1-5, “So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel. And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. Of these, twenty-four thousand were to look after the work of the house of the Lord, six thousand were officers and judges, four thousand were gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the Lord with musical instruments, ‘which I made,’ said David, ‘for giving praise.’” Talk about a choir, a gigantic orchestra and choir of 4,000.

Verse 6, “And David divided them into divisions [KJV, “courses”] among the sons of Levi:” They couldn’t crowd in and do this all at one time, so David divided them into courses. There were 24 courses (1 Chronicles 24:7-18). Each course served for two weeks and rotated, and then they all served together during the Festival seasons. It would take in the whole year. They could rotate through.

Understand this and look at the book of Luke.

Luke 1:5, “There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the division [KJV, “course”] of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.” Zechariah was ministering in the temple in his course, which was the eighth division (course) of Abijah. The Sabbath-to-Sabbath rotation began the first Sabbath of Nisan. Course one served the first week; course two, the second week. All priests served during the three annual Festivals, so all the courses served the week of Passover. Course three served the fourth week; course four served the fifth week, etc. The course Abijah was on duty was at the beginning of the ninth week. The following week was Pentecost, so he would have remained for the tenth week as well.

In verses 23-24, when his course was finished he went home. John the Baptist was conceived shortly afterwards. Nine months later would be spring.

In verse 36, John was six months older than Jesus Christ, thus Jesus was born in the fall. You can derive the time of Christ’s birth within a few weeks, through the courses, another proof that Christ was clearly born in the fall. It’s a matter of putting together what the Bible itself gives.

1 Chronicles 24 lists the divisions of the priests and the various functions. Things needed to be organized and David is trying to get things organized prior to his death.

1 Chronicles 25 names the musicians to go with the 24 divisions.

1 Chronicles 26 lists the gatekeepers.

1 Chronicles 27 details the military divisions, the leaders of tribes and other officials.

1 Chronicles 28:1-11, “Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor. Then King David rose to his feet and said, ‘Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. But God said to me, “You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.” However the Lord God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons (for the Lord has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. Now He said to me, “It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.” Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave it as an inheritance for your children after you forever. As for you, my son Solomon, know

the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it.’ Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat.” He gave him all this instruction.

Verse 13, “also for the division [course] of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord, and for all the articles of service in the house of the Lord.” He gave him the courses of the Levites.

Verses 19-20, “‘All this,’ said David, ‘the Lord made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.’ And David said to his son Solomon, ‘be strong and of good courage, and do it; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.’”

1 Chronicles 29:1-2, “Furthermore King David said to all the congregation: ‘My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced; and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the Lord God. Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might:’” Solomon was the only one of David’s children that God chose to work through. David had prepared all these things.

Verses 7-9, “They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. ... precious stones.... Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the Lord; and King David also rejoiced greatly.”

Notice what David prayed to God after this.

Verses 10-15, “Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation; and David said: ‘Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty, for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. Now

therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You. For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and without hope.’”

‘We thank you God for the chance to give an offering because everything we have is Yours.’ When we give an offering, we give God what He has already given us. We see the end of David’s reign here.

Verses 26-28, “Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the period that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and thirty-three years he reigned in Jerusalem. So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place.”

2 Chronicles 1:3, “Then Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness.”

Verses 6-7, “And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, ‘Ask! What shall I give you?’” God gave Solomon a vision that night, and said, ‘Ask whatever you want and I will give it to you.’

Verse 10, “‘Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?’” Solomon, of course, asked for wisdom. He lacked wisdom, but one thing he wanted was wisdom to be the king.

Verses 11-12, “And God said to Solomon: ‘Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who have been before you, nor shall any after you have the like.’” ‘You didn’t ask for riches, long life, etc. I am going to give you great wisdom and many other things.’ Wealth increased tremendously.

2 Chronicles 2:1-2, “Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the Lord, and a royal house for himself. Solomon selected

seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry stone in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.” This describes the work force put together to build the temple and royal house.

2 Chronicles 3:1-2, “Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.”

Chapters 3 and 4 give details about the temple.

Chapter 5 is the dedication of the temple.

2 Chronicles 6:16, “Therefore, Lord God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, “You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, to walk in My law as you have walked before Me.”” God’s promise to Solomon: there will not fail to be one to sit on the throne of Israel.

2 Chronicles 7:8-9, “At that time Solomon kept the Feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.” The dedication of the temple and the eighth day they made a sacred assembly.

Verse 11, “Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king’s house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the Lord and in his own house.”

God warned Solomon not to turn away.

Verses 14-22, “if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, “You shall never fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.”

But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you,

and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land and this house?” Then they will answer, “Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.””

1 Kings 4:21, “So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the [Euphrates] River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt.” Solomon reigned from the Euphrates River to the Egyptian border. He ruled over a tremendous area.

Verse 24, “For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphshah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him.” He ruled over everything west of the Euphrates and had peace on all sides.

Verse 25, “And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” This is a picture of the Millennium.

Verses 29-33, “And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon’s wisdom exceeded the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men...and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish.”

He was an expert. He could tell you about everything from plants to shrubs, fish and creeping things. He knew about everything.

Verse 34, “And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.” He had a tremendous reputation. He excelled everyone everywhere. God gave Solomon exceptional wisdom and knowledge.

1 Kings 5 describes some of the things that occurred.

We come to a verse that is important in establishing the chronology of the Bible.

1 Kings 6:1, “And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.”

The reason this is essential, this verse can be put together with Exodus 12.

Exodus 12:41, “And it came to pass at the end of four hundred thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass, that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.” The 430 years began with the confirming of the covenant made with Abraham when he was 99 years old (Genesis 17:1-10). If you didn’t have this verse, you would have to wade through the book of Judges and some of the judges overlap.

The fourth year of Solomon was the 480th year of the Exodus. Then you can add the 40 years of David and Saul, the wandering in the wilderness and the time you have for all the judges to fit in. From the time of Solomon’s reign down to the time of the captivity is an easier way to document it. Then we have 1 Kings 6:1 that gives you the time that elapsed between the Exodus and King Solomon. With those two verses you can jump back almost 1,000 years in chronology.

Verse 7, “And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.” I want to quickly call your attention to that. God had the temple made as a pattern of something spiritual. What is God doing now? He is building a spiritual temple.

Ephesians 2:20-22, “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.”

Peter tells us we are living stones.

1 Peter 2:5, “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” When is that temple going to be assembled? It will be assembled in the resurrection. All the rough edges are being hammered off now. When the stones got to the construction site, it fit. It was cut to order. God is not going to squeeze us in there. He is knocking off the rough edges now. Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone. Everything else has to start around that.

1 Kings 6:38, “And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.” It was finished in seven years.

1 Kings 7:1, “But Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house; so he finished all his house.” He was building his own house 13 years.

1 Kings 8 is a parallel account of the dedication of the temple as noted in Chronicles.

1 Kings 9:4-9, “Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, “You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.” But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will be exalted; yet everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?” Then they will answer, “Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity on them.””

Verse 10, “Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king’s house”

Verse 26, “King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.” —Phoenician sailors.

Notice something that I think is interesting; notice what the Queen of Sheba noticed about the people around Solomon.

1 Kings 10:8, “Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom.”

Verses 6-7, “Then she said to the king: ‘It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw it with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.’” Generally, you hear

something and it gets stretched. But she found out she had not even heard everything. 'It is better than I thought.'

Verse 22, "For the king had merchant ships [KJV, "navy [ships] of Tarshish"] at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys." Tarshish is the area of Spain.

Verses 23-24, "So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart."

Verses 25-27, "Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses and mules, at a set rate year by year. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland."

Silver was so plentiful it had almost lost its value. He had tremendous wealth and prosperity; everything was going for him.

Ever notice so many times when people have everything going for them, this turns out to be a problem. It gets their eyes off God. And that is what has happened to this nation. God has given us everything. God has given us the choicest bounties of heaven. Have we really appreciated it and given God the credit?

All of this leads us up to the rest of the story and that is what we begin to notice in chapter 11.

1 Kings 11:1-4, "But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. For surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David."

He had a thousand women and his wives turned away his heart after other gods. His mind began to get on pleasing them and was pulled in a thousand ways. It goes to show that a person can

have a gigantic blind spot. He had a weakness and indulged himself.

Verses 5-8, "For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods." They wanted him to build places for them.

God was angry.

Verses 9-10, "So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord commanded." God saw the problem coming and warned him not to go after other gods.

Verses 11-12, "Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, 'Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your day, for the sake of your father David; but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.'" He said, 'I am going to rend the kingdom from you and give it to your servant—not in your lifetime, but at the time of your son.'

Verse 13, "However I will not tear away the whole kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen." God said, 'All right, I am going to remove the blessings (kingdom). I will not do it 100 percent because of your father.' There began to be problems here in the later years of Solomon. What we find prophesied is going to happen. His son, Rehoboam would only reign over Judah.

Verses 26-39, "Then Solomon's servant, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also rebelled against the king. And this is what caused him to rebel against the king: Solomon had built the Millo and repaired the damages to the City of David his father. The man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph. Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out

of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, 'Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David. However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever."'"

Verses 40-43, "Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place." Rehoboam would reign over Judah.

2 Chronicles 9 gives the account of the Queen of Sheba coming to Jerusalem.

Verses 30-31, the end of Solomon's reign and his death.

There are a lot of lessons to gain. If you want to get some insight into Solomon's experiences, go

to the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon could not take God's word for it. The way to prove God's way is to do it. Do it and see if it works.

Malachi 3:10, "'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove [test] Me now in this, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'"

The way Solomon tried to prove God's way was to go out and do the opposite, and then he wanted to see if he got the curses. Solomon's experiments were to see if there was some other way. Solomon lived his life and at the end said, 'Fear God and keep His Commandments; that is what it's all about' (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Solomon lived a life of experience. He said, 'There is nothing you can do that I haven't already done—nothing on a grander scale.'

The Bible contains the ups and downs of those with whom God was working and was written down as examples for us. We can look, learn and understand; we are able to grasp the things that God is doing and are able to understand what God was accomplishing in these people's lives. We can go through Solomon's life and understand these lessons. We don't have to "reinvent the wheel" and do it the hard way. In many ways, Solomon's life is a very sad account of an individual who had so much going for him, and yet he began to look into the wrong places for fulfillment and satisfaction. It should give us some insight as to the pitfalls.

Solomon's reign also shows parallels to the Millennium. A lot of prosperity and abundance can be a dangerous thing. We can never take prosperity for granted. It is a matter of being thankful and appreciative.

If we allow ourselves to begin to compromise, we are on a dangerous road. It leads to compromise in other areas. Solomon's entanglements with all these women began a path of compromise. Once you start compromising, you are going in a direction that leads to more and more compromises.

It sets the stage for the period of history that we are going into next, the time of the divided kingdom and the ups and the downs. This sets the stage for it. This is how the nation got into this division. Blessings come from God. God gives them and God can remove them.

From this we have the closing period of King David's reign and somewhat of a perspective of the time of King Solomon. We are going to finish the book of 1 Kings next time. Go through and read it. If there are areas where you have

questions, make note of them. The idea is to give you an overview, a survey, of this period of Bible history.

Bible Study # 25
October 25, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—1 Kings 12—22; 2 Kings
1—2; 2 Chronicles 10—20

(Chart at end)

I have another sheet that I will pass out to you that I think will also aid in the material that we are covering this evening. We are continuing our Bible study, our historical survey of the Old Testament. We are completing the first book of Kings. The handout we are passing out is a chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel. We are getting more into the historical section with the completing of the book of 1 Kings and **going into quite a bit of detail on the history of many of the kings of Israel and Judah in the aftermath of King Solomon's death.** I think this particular chart will be of help to you.

If you will notice, this chart covers approximately a 500-year period. It begins at the time of King David and comes down through David and his son, Solomon. We spent several Bible studies going through the material about Saul and David and then the last time on Solomon. We note that in some of these areas, God spends a lot of time; there are a lot of details that are given on the lives of certain individuals. Then as we come down, speed picks up. God devotes a lot less space and attention to certain of these individuals. We are going to cover some of this tonight.

The date 922 B.C. was a significant date because that date reflected the death of King Solomon and the division of the kingdom. Israel, of course, was 12 tribes. They had been united under the kingship of Saul who was the first king. And then we have the death of Saul. If you remember, there was a temporary split in the kingdom because the northern ten tribes clung to the dynasty of Saul for a period of seven years. They went along for a while under the dynasty of Saul. Judah recognized David as king. He had been the one who had been anointed king by Samuel at an earlier time. Judah recognized David as king while the northern tribes recognized the dynasty of Saul. This continued along for about seven years and then there was reconciliation after the assassination of Saul's son by some of his servants. The ten tribes sent emissaries down to David and said, 'Look, we would like to reunite the kingdom. We would like for you to be king over all of us.'

The entire 12 tribes were reunited under David. David reigned 40 years. We went through the

ups and downs of his life and many of the lessons that God would have us to draw from that. We saw that at the time of David's death, God chose David's son Solomon to sit on his father's throne. Solomon inherited that throne. God made a covenant with David, a covenant of a perpetual kingship. God made a promise to David that if his descendants did not obey Him and did not follow the covenant that God had made, He would deal with them. He would punish them. God would punish them with the rod of men, but God would not deal with them as He dealt with Saul and remove His mercy from him. So, there was a distinction. God said He would not take away the kingship from David's dynasty. God had made a promise: 'I have made a covenant with you, but on the other hand, I will punish them if they do not obey.' God would deal with them. God admonished Solomon. Solomon, of course, in his later years got into a variety of problems. Solomon's "chickens came home to roost," so to speak.

We pick up the story this evening with the death of Solomon. Solomon's son Rehoboam is to be the next king. Now, we find that what Solomon sowed was reaped by his son. It's important to realize that what we do can certainly have implications, not only for us, but also for those who come after us.

1 Kings 11:42-43, "And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place."

1 Kings 12:1, "Now Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king."

Now there was a man with whom Solomon had had trouble. He was a servant of Solomon, had gotten into problems and had proved to be a "thorn in the side," as far as Solomon was concerned. His name was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He had been exiled to Egypt.

Verses 2-3, when he heard about the death of Solomon, he decided he was going to come back. He was going to come in and, in effect, run for election. He was going to try to get in on the action. He knew that Solomon had control over things that he could not overthrow, but now there was a period of transition, and Jeroboam was going to come back and see what he could "stir up."

Verses 4-5, "'Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.' So he said to them,

‘Depart for three days, then come back to me.’
And the people departed.”

What you had here was the same thing that people have been griping about ever since. If you heard the news, it’s what they were griping about in the legislature today—and that’s taxes. People have been complaining about high taxes. You remember when the people requested a king? Remember we went through that in 1 Samuel 8. When the people requested a king and Samuel was upset, God said, ‘Look, Samuel, give them what they have asked for. They have not rejected you; they have rejected Me. But you tell them what it’s going to be like to have human government.’

Remember Samuel told them three things that they were going to complain about. He said, ‘Look, you are going to complain about the *taxes* because the first thing he is going to do is lay on a heavy levy. He is going to start taxing you and it is going to increase. You are going to gripe about the taxes. He’s going to institute the *draft* and have big armies and military spending and he’s going to draft your sons to be soldiers. You are going to complain about that. Thirdly, he’s going to establish this great *big bureaucracy* and he’s going to have all these people, this giant court, that’s going to be big government. You are going to complain about that.’

God said, ‘When you complain, I’m not going to listen because I’ve already told you this is what you’re getting into.’ And the people said, ‘No, we want a king so that we can be like all the nations.’ They wanted to be just like everybody else.

Of course, nobody today has ever said that. You’ve never heard any of your children say that, have you? ‘Why, everybody has one; everybody does it. Why can’t we be just like everybody else?’ That’s what Israel said. There’s nothing new under the sun. It’s the same old excuses that have probably run back since the Garden of Eden. There’s nothing new. That’s what Israel said, ‘Oh, we want to be just like all the nations.’ The result of it was that God gave them a king.

It started out where Saul instituted taxes. They increased and increased, and by the time of Solomon’s death, the taxes were high. What you have here is the original tax revolt. They came and demanded lower taxes—“Proposition 13” or whatever you want to call it. They were going to have lower taxes.

Verse 6, “Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, ‘How do you advise me to answer these people?’” Rehoboam

consulted with the old men that had been advisors to his father.

Verse 7, “And they spoke to him, saying, ‘If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.’”

They told him, ‘Look, you are young; you are just coming into power. What you’d better do is show yourself reasonable. They have a reasonable request. You’d better show yourself reasonable; be easy with them. You’ll find that if you give in to them on this, later on they’ll give in to you on other things. This is a reasonable request and one that you had better accede to.’

But Rehoboam didn’t like what they told him. How many times people want their own way; they want to hear what they want to hear. He had originally talked to these older and wiser men who had a lot of experience, and they gave him some good advice. Because they didn’t tell him what he wanted to hear, what did he do?

Verses 8-11, “But he rejected the counsel which the elders gave him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, ‘What counsel do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, “Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?”’ Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, ‘Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us”—thus you shall say to them: “My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist! And now, whereas my father laid a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges [KJV, “scorpions”]!”’”

He went and hunted up his buddies, the young men who had grown up with him, his old drinking buddies, his old, old buddies. ‘Hey, what do you guys think I should do?’ Well, they told him exactly what he wanted to hear. They said, ‘Man, you go out there and tell those guys, “My father chastened you with whips, but I am going to chasten you with scorpions. You think you had it rough under him. You want your taxes lowered; I’m going to raise them. I’m going to really “put it to you.” You’d better not mess with me; I’m tough. I’m in charge around here.”’

All you need is somebody who is young and immature—really insecure—and he has to go around and prove to everybody that he’s in charge. Ever notice that? It happens maybe even in a job. You’re working under somebody; he’s some fresh young guy just out of school. He’s never worked on the job before, but he knows it

all because they taught it to him where he went to school. If you don't think he's in charge, just give him a chance to tell you because he wants to make sure everybody knows that he's the boss and he's in charge. This is often a problem of those who lack certain maturity, a certain seasoning, a certain experience because they really don't have that security and experience in what they know and in their authority. They feel like they have to prove something to everyone. Every time someone makes a suggestion, they take it as a challenge and they have something to prove.

Well, this was Rehoboam's problem. He got all of his young buddies and they agreed with him. The people had a very simple answer.

Verse 16, "Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: 'What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!' So Israel departed to their tents."

All of a sudden, instead of ruling over 12 tribes, he was ruling over two. If it hadn't been for God's mercy, he wouldn't have had those either. God makes it plain that it was because of His promise to King David, grandfather of Rehoboam. God in His mercy caused it to work out where Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Rehoboam—the house of David—because that was the territory where Jerusalem was located. They weren't loyal so much to Rehoboam as they were loyal to the memory and the dynasty of David.

Verses 20, "Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only."

It's interesting how the more things change, the more they remain the same. Ever stop to think that basically this nation started out with the 13 colonies. What did they do? They rebelled against the House of David over the issue of high taxes—the same old thing. It's interesting. From the time that Israel rebelled against the House of David and established their independence, they lasted as a nation just over 200 years. The time of the rebellion was 922 B.C. and the time of the captivity was 721 B.C., so it was approximately 200 years. Interesting! Doesn't particularly prove anything, but it makes an interesting parallel.

Jeroboam immediately wanted to consolidate his rule in the ten tribes. What did he start out by

doing? He used human reasoning. What did he think was going to ensure his control?

Verses 26-27, he started thinking, 'Now, if the people go down to God's temple in Jerusalem every year for the Feast and for various Festivals, after a while, they are going to get nostalgic for the House of David. They are going to start thinking about those things and are going to get over being mad at Rehoboam. They are going to go to Jerusalem three times a year for the Festivals and, chances are, they are going to get rid of me.' This was his reasoning: 'What I need to do to secure my throne is to make a break with the religion.'

Being the man of the people that he was, he said, 'Now look, you folks have had it rough. I am the reform candidate.' Ever notice, everybody that comes along, they are always the reform candidate. Everybody is going to make it better than those crooks before them. I don't care which crook gets elected, he is always going to be better than his predecessor. Nobody ever promises, 'I am going to make it worse. You elect me and I am going to make it worse. You think the guys before me messed it up; just elect me and I am going to have this thing so fouled up it's going to take 20 years to get it straightened out.' Nobody ever says that. We have some that do it over the course of time; I think that is just obvious.

Verses 28-29, Jeroboam comes alone and says, 'It's been too rough on you. You've had to go all the way to Jerusalem to worship God. You don't have to do that. I am going to build two temples. We are not just going to have one like they have in Jerusalem. We are going to have one at Dan in the north and one at Bethel in the south—just take your choice. We are going to put two golden calves—one in the north and one in the south—so you can see what you're worshipping. These are your gods.'

Remember the golden calf (Exodus 32)? That's what brought them up out of Egypt, right? Really smart! And then he decided he needed a priesthood that he could control because the priests, the Levites, were educated. They were skilled in the law of God and they weren't going to put up with this stuff. He couldn't control them. They weren't behold to him. What did he do? He decided he would fire all of God's true ministry, get rid of the priests and the Levites and would hire the lowest of the people.

1 Kings 12:28-31, "Therefore the king took counsel and made two calves of gold, and said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!' And he

set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one in Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people [KJV, “made priests of the lowest of the people”], who were not of the sons of Levi.”

He didn’t want the Levites who were educated in the law of God and understood God’s way. He went out and hired the people who couldn’t get a job doing anything else, the least educated. They were the ones who were the least capable of being hired and they preached whatever he wanted them to. He hired them; he could fire them. They didn’t know a whole lot, one way or the other. They were glad to preach whatever the “doctrine of the moment” was. They would be glad to preach it. They would preach anything for a price.

Now notice what Jeroboam did next.

Verse 32, “Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the Feast that was in Judah,”

Now I want to ask you something. Have you noticed anything last night and tonight? It’s a full moon. It’s exactly one month since the Feast. You know what this means? This would be the beginning of Jeroboam’s feast. You know when that would climax, when it would end? —A few days right after the weekend when we have an occasion coming up called Halloween.

Now let me ask you something. You know what the word “October” means? Any school kid learned what the word “October” means; it means “eighth.” The word “octopus” refers to “eight arms.” “October” means “eighth month”; “November” means “ninth month”; and “December,” “tenth month.” This should tell people something because they count December as being the twelfth month, not the tenth month. That tells you the year didn’t originally end in December. March was the beginning of the year. The year began in the spring, even on the old Roman calendar. And the months were numbered September—the seventh, January—the eleventh, and February—the twelfth. Then they moved the year ending back two months, but they kept the same names. Let people scratch their heads and try to figure that one out.

Where did Halloween come from? Where did it originate? It originated with the Druids, with the Celts in Northwestern Europe. Who were those people? They were the descendants of the House of Israel. What do we find them observing when they got to Northwestern Europe? We find them observing Jeroboam’s feast in the eighth month. What does it focus on? It is a time of

emphasis on graves being opened up, all of these things coming up out of the graves—nothing but a satanic counterfeit. It’s a Satan-inspired counterfeit of the Last Great Day and the events connected with the Feast of Tabernacles. It’s the remnant of Jeroboam’s feast of the eighth month. People go right along.

People want to know if Halloween is mentioned in the Bible. Yes, right here—Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month. Just because something is mentioned in the Bible doesn’t mean the Bible approves of it. It mentions idolatry in the Bible. It mentions a lot of things in the Bible. Jeroboam introduced his own version, a new and improved version. It was *not* a new and improved version.

One thing Jeroboam did not grasp, and all the would-be dynasty builders of Northern Israel never grasped, was the lesson of Psalm 127.

Psalm 127:1, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;” Jeroboam tried to build his own house and tried to establish his own dynasty; it collapsed. It came to an end within a couple of generations.

Saul tried to establish his own house. He was going to wipe out the opposition; he was going to establish his own dynasty—and God ended it.

David set out to build a house for God, not something for himself. God told David, ‘Because you have some sins, some things you have done, I am not going to let you build a house for Me. Your hands are stained with blood; I have forgiven you, but there are certain physical penalties that you are going to have to pay. I am not going to allow you that privilege of building a house for Me, I am going to let your son do that. But I tell you what I am going to do because I see your heart and your attitude. You want to build something for Me; I’m going to build something for you. You want to build a house for Me; I am going to build a house for you—a dynasty. I will establish it and it is going to endure forever.’ And so we see that. God established David’s dynasty.

1 Kings 13 is a very crucial chapter. It is the account of God sending a prophet to Jeroboam to warn Jeroboam of what is going to happen. God worked a miracle through this individual as a warning to Jeroboam of the seriousness of what he was doing in departing from God. Of course, Jeroboam did not learn the lesson, refused to heed it and went on his way.

Notice the chart. It comes down from David to Solomon and Rehoboam. You see the parallel picking up with Israel; there is Jeroboam. We find that Jeroboam’s dynasty was only Jeroboam

and his son, Nadab. Nadab was overthrown and another dynasty, Baasha and his son Elah came in. They didn't last but a few years; then in a very, very quick overthrow, a matter of days, Zimri launched himself as king. He was in turn overthrown by Omri who set up one of the great dynasties or one of the most enduring dynasties of Northern Israel. Ahab, Omri's son, is perhaps the most famous. Now Omri founded the most significant dynasty of Northern Israel.

We are coming down to the parallel of that. Rehoboam was succeeded by his son Abijah for just a short time, and his grandson Asa ruled for a number of years. Then Asa's son Jehoshaphat was a king who ruled for a lengthy period. That corresponded with some of the time of Omri and Ahab. This gives us the parallels.

If you will notice opposite that, you will find that this was the time of Elijah and Elisha. Elijah came on the scene about the time that Jehoshaphat ruled in Judah and Omri became king in Israel. Elijah was God's prophet for a number of years. He came on the scene perhaps 50 or 60 years after the split in the kingdom. Elijah came into prominence as God's prophet, probably about 50 or 60 years after the death of King Solomon. We see him and then later Elisha, whose ministry continued on for a period of time. We are not going to go any further this evening than around the time of Jehoshaphat and Ahab.

So you can kind of get a picture of it, I'd like to make a few comments about Omri. Omri founded the most significant dynasty in Northern Israel. His son Ahab intermarried with the Phoenicians and introduced Baal worship into Israel and indirectly into Judah. One of the children of Ahab and Jezebel intermarried with the royal line of Judah. We will note some of the problems that came in a little bit later with the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. We'll notice that in the next Bible study.

Now Omri built Samaria. Samaria became the capital city of Northern Israel and is identified throughout the rest of Scriptures and prophecy as the symbol of the northern kingdom. Omri built Samaria, and Israel achieved a certain prominence during the reign of Omri. Omri achieved such fame that the nation of Israel actually came to be called by his name.

I want to quote to you from Langer's *Encyclopedia of World History*: "The Assyrians called Israel after his name Khumri." "Bathomri"—"Bath" means "house." The House of Omri is the name that came to refer to the nation of Israel. Now that is very significant because the name in Assyrian would be spelled

Khumri and the Assyrians continued to use this name for Israel. This is the name that Israel carried into captivity as far as the Assyrians were concerned. This is the name that the Assyrians used for them.

History of France, Vol. I (a detailed history from the earliest years) makes the statement that the Kymrians, also spelled Cimmerians, migrated into Europe from the area of the Black Sea during the period of about 700 B.C. to about 300 B.C. Now the area of the Black Sea is the area where the Assyrians took the Israelites when they took them into captivity. They took the northern tribes into captivity in 721 B.C. They settled them up in the area between the Black and Caspian Sea.

Volume I of the *History of France* states that shortly after that, the Cimmerians or Kymrians (which was the Assyrian name for Israel, going back to Omri) began to migrate into Europe from the area of the Black Sea about 700 B.C. The bulk of them came in about 300 B.C. We will go into some more of that in a later Bible study, but it is interesting that here's where that name came from and why it came to be applied to Israel.

Interestingly enough, as I was mentioning earlier on Halloween, those are the people you find celebrating Halloween, the festival that is a continuation of the pagan religion that Jeroboam had introduced.

We are also going to get into some things on Elijah this evening. Elijah was raised up by God to do a work of restoring the true religion in Israel. Elijah was raised up, primarily, as God's prophet to Northern Israel 50 or 60 years after the split as things began to deteriorate. Several generations went by; actually, you had the third generation by the time of Elijah. There were elderly people alive who remembered the time of Solomon and all of that, but the generation who had any firsthand knowledge, memory of the temple of Solomon and the teachings of true religion, would have been people certainly into their 70s and 80s by the time Elijah came on the scene. We are looking at a generation that was beginning to pass from the scene, and everyone younger than that really didn't have firsthand knowledge. The nation had gotten further and further away from the knowledge of the truth; more and more paganism began to come in.

God raised up Elijah to do a work of restoring the knowledge of the true religion in Israel. Elijah stands out as the greatest of the prophets. We'll notice that he founded three schools or colleges. They were schools of the prophets to train his disciples. You can show, as well, that he visited and counseled with kings and world

leaders. He was completely uncompromising in his obedience to God. We are told that he was to be a type of the one who would come prior to the coming of the Messiah, one who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah. John the Baptist did that before the first coming of Christ.

We saw here in 1 Kings that Jeroboam got rid of the priesthood of God and sought to replace them with his own priesthood. Let's notice the parallel account back in 2 Chronicles 11.

2 Chronicles 11:13-15, "And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him. For the Levites left their common lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the Lord. Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made." All the priests and Levites left Northern Israel and came down to Rehoboam in Jerusalem.

There is one thing I would like to call your attention to here in 2 Chronicles 11. We went through the story of Solomon's life last time. Solomon is a tremendous example when it comes to the fact of how much more your example counts than your advice. Solomon gave excellent advice. The book of Proverbs is basically the advice that Solomon gave to his son. That's the way it starts out.

Proverbs 1:1, 8, "The proverbs of Solomon... My son, hear the instruction of your father, ..." Have you ever thought about that? Proverbs is what Solomon wrote to Rehoboam. He gave him advice on how to be wise. Did Rehoboam follow any of it? No. There's a lot of advice that Solomon gave Rehoboam in the book of Proverbs about avoiding immorality. Notice here what we are told about Rehoboam.

2 Chronicles 11:21, "Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters."

Verse 23, KJV, "...And he desired many wives." He had a bunch and wanted more. Would you say that he followed his father's example? He just wasn't rich enough to do it on as grand a scale as old Dad. He did the best he could; he tried. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Rehoboam couldn't begin to measure up to that, but he desired many. He regretted he had to stop where he did; he just ran out of money. What was the consequence to Rehoboam? What kind of shape did Rehoboam wind up in? Solomon gave Rehoboam some

excellent advice, but Rehoboam didn't follow Solomon's advice—he followed his example.

That should be an important lesson to all of us as parents. I don't care how good your advice is; your example is going to carry a lot more weight. We might as well learn that and "chalk it up," whether we like it or dislike it. It's a fact of life that our example is going to have a lot more impact than our advice.

As we continue on the main story thread, we come down to 1 Kings 14.

1 Kings 14:1-2, "At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, 'Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people.'" Jeroboam was very concerned and we find that, interestingly enough, Jeroboam sent his wife to a prophet of God. He didn't send her to one of the priests of the high places. When he wanted some accurate information, he went to one of God's servants.

Verse 4, "And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of age." Ahijah was very elderly by this time. He very likely had some kind of cataracts or something of that sort.

Verses 5-16, God revealed to him who was coming. Ahijah told her that this son would die; he explained what was going to happen as a result of Jeroboam's sin.

Verse 20, "The period that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place."

Verses 22-24, "Now Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were also perverted persons [KJV, "sodomites"] in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." We find that Rehoboam wasn't a particularly good king either because he allowed Judah to build high places.

Verses 25-26, "Now it happened, in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made."

Verse 30, “And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.” Most people today, if they saw the headlines of Judah and Israel going to war, wouldn’t know what that meant. They would think that was a contradiction of terms. How could the Jews be fighting Israel? Well, that’s what happened. “Jews” only refers to the tribe of Judah, the area where Rehoboam ruled. Israel referred to the ten tribes.

In verse 31, Rehoboam died. He died prior to Jeroboam; he died during Jeroboam’s 18th year.

1 Kings 15:1-3, “Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.” His son Abijam reigned three years, and he did all the bad things that his father had done.

Verses 4-5, “Nevertheless for David’s sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.” God was still merciful because of David’s sake. David had done that which was right.

Verse 8, “So Abijam rested with his fathers, Then Asa his son reigned in his place.”

Verse 9, “In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah.”

Verse 11, “Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did his father David.” Asa did a lot of good things.

Verse 12, “And he banished the perverted persons [KJV, “sodomites”] from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.” Asa was a young man during the time of Solomon’s last years. He remembered Solomon. He had seen the mess that his father and grandfather had made. Evidently Solomon had learned certain lessons during the final time of his life that are written in the book of Ecclesiastes. Asa had, perhaps, been impressed with some of those things and had seen certain results, learned certain lessons, and now he begins to turn things around.

The first thing he does is to get rid of the sodomites, to stamp out the immorality in the land and to remove the idols.

Verse 13, he removed his grandmother (who was queen mother) from office because she had made an idol in the grove and he destroyed her idol.

Verse 14, “...Nevertheless Asa’s heart was loyal to the Lord all his days.” He basically had a good attitude toward God.

Verse 16, “Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.” There was continual strife between Asa and the king of Israel who had succeeded the house of Jeroboam.

2 Chronicles 14:2-7, “Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God, for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images. He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the Lord had given him rest. Therefore he said to Judah, ‘Let us build these cities and make walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us, because we have sought the lord our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.’ So they built and prospered.” They built up and fortified the cities and increased the army.

Verses 8-9, “And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows; all these were mighty men of valor. Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah.” The Ethiopians came with this gigantic army. Asa had built up this great army, but when he saw how heavily outnumbered he was, he cried out to God.

Verses 11-12, “And Asa cried out to the Lord his God, and said, ‘Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!’ So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.” God intervened and smote the Ethiopians, and Asa won the battle.

Now we find that Asa had some problems. There are lessons that can be learned.

2 Chronicles 16:1-3 “In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up

against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, 'Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. Here, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.'"

Primarily, Asa's problems revolved around the issue of faith. Asa had a good attitude; he wanted to obey God and he made a number of reforms in the land. But Asa lacked faith.

When the king of Israel came up against Judah, he built up a fortified area that was going to control entrance and access right on the main highway, the main trade route coming into Judah. Ramah was kind of a Berlin Wall of that day, a "checkpoint Charlie"—everybody had to come through this fortified stronghold that he had made in order to get out or come in. Asa became nervous and worried about that. Instead of going to God the way he had earlier when the Ethiopians had invaded, he got silver and gold out of the treasury of the Lord's house and decided to cut a deal with the king of Syria. He got scared and compromised. He got this money out of the temple because that was the only quick access to cash that he had. He thought he'd take this money and pay off the king of Syria. He would get him to make a league with him and they would "gang up" on the king of Israel.

God sent His servant, a prophet, Hanani, to Asa. Verse 7, "And at that time, Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: 'Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand.'" God sent his servant, a prophet, Hanani to Asa and said, 'Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on the Lord your God, this thing is not going to profit you. You are going to find that the king of Syria is going to turn out to be your enemy, too.'

Verse 9, "'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.'" 'You didn't trust God. You took it upon yourself to solve it your own way. You looted the money out of the temple treasury and hired allies. You are just going to have a mess.'

Verse 10, "Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him

because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time." Asa got mad. He didn't like to be corrected; he didn't like to be told he was wrong. It made him so mad that he threw the prophet in jail and began to be harsh to some of the people. He resented being corrected. Isn't that human nature? He was going along fine, but now he lacks faith and does something he shouldn't have done. God sent His ministry, His prophet, to correct him, and Asa resented it. He got mad.

Verse 12, "And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was very severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians." Then Asa got sick; he was diseased in his feet. He didn't seek the Lord, but he went to the physician.

It would have been kind of embarrassing (the prophet had been rotting in jail for a year or two now) to bring him out and ask him to pray for him so that God would heal him. 'I'll show him; I don't have to ask God to heal me. I'll just go to the doctor and that will take care of it.'

Verse 13 simply says, "So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign." Asa died; that was the end result. Who showed who? He was going to do it his way.

I think we see that Asa had some positive points. He got rid of the sodomites, tore down the idolatrous groves and even removed his grandmother from being queen. He built up the fenced cities of Judah. Judah prospered during his reign. Asa's basic attitude was that he wanted to do what was right. But Asa had a problem. His problem was one that all of us encounter from time to time—and that is a lack of faith. And Asa compounded his problem of a lack of faith. When he was corrected over something that he did, under the temptation and weakness of the moment, instead of really repenting, he got mad. Since he resented being corrected, he compounded his problem. He got further away from God than ever. When he got sick, he didn't call on God and God didn't heal him. He called on the doctor and he died. That's the story of Asa. There are lessons to learn.

In 1 Kings 16, we go back to the main story flow we are following.

1 Kings 16:16, "...So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp."

Verses 23-26, "In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he

built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him. For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols.”

Omri did various things and was responsible for having built the capital city of Samaria, but he continued to disobey God. You can follow down in the chart to keep straight who was king over which group. We have Omri king over Israel, and when Omri died, his son became king.

Verses 28-31, “So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place. In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.”

Ahab came along and had the distinction of making Jeroboam look good. You think you have somebody bad until you have somebody worse come along; then all of a sudden, it makes the predecessor look pretty good. ‘Oh, for the “good old days”—it wasn’t as bad as I thought it was.’

The best thing Ahab ever did was what Jeroboam did, and he went downhill from there. Bad enough, but he married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, one of the Phoenician cities. You remember Jezebel? She’s quite well known. You can read about Jezebel all through the rest of the Bible. She’s become a symbol of everything God hates. If you could take everything God hates in a woman and wrap it up in one person, you would have Jezebel. There are several men that you come across who are described as everything God hates in a man. Jezebel stands out as a really exceptional case.

1 Kings 17:1, “And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.’” About this time, Elijah shows up and comes to Ahab. He says, ‘It’s not going to rain anymore. God is going to shut off the spigot.’ So, Elijah left.

Verses 2-4, “Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ‘Get away from here and turn

eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.’”

Verses 6-7, “The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.”

Verses 9-11, “‘Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, ‘Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.’ And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, ‘Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.’” He said, ‘I am hungry; would you bring me a little piece of bread—bring me something to eat.’ He tested them.

Verse 12, “Then she said, ‘As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.’” She said, ‘I don’t have anything cooked; all I have is a handful of meal in the barrel and a little oil in a cruse. I am gathering up these two sticks and I am going to go and make one little cake (a piece of fried bread, kind of like a piece of hot water bread or something). I am going to make that, and my son and I are going to eat it. Then we are going to die because we don’t have anything else to eat. There’s no food to be found, and we don’t have any way of getting any food.’

Verse 13, “And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son.’” Elijah said, ‘Don’t be afraid. Do what you were planning to do, but before you and your son eat, before you make up what you have for him, pinch off a little bit and make some for me. Bring it to me and then feed your son and yourself.’ Now here’s an example of faith. She didn’t look at him and say, ‘You’re crazy, why should I feed you?’

Verse 14, “‘For thus says the Lord God of Israel: “The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’”” Wonder if she believed him?

Verses 15-16, “So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of

flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.” That barrel just always had meal in it. You couldn’t scrape the last bit out no matter how much you took out. No matter how much oil you poured out, there was still oil in there.

Verse 17, “Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him.” He was sick to the point of death.

Verse 18, “So she said to Elijah, ‘What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?’” ‘Have you come here, and is God going to visit all my sins on me now?’ In her anguish, it looked like her son was dead.

Verse 19, “And he said to her, ‘Give me your son.’ So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.” He carried him up into the loft, a little cubbyhole up on the roof where Elijah slept, laid him on his bed and prayed to God.

Verse 22, “Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.” God restored his life.

Verse 24, “Then the woman said to Elijah, ‘Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is the truth.’” God provided for Elijah and used Elijah in working this miracle, sustaining this woman and using that as an example of faith. There’s an example here; there’s a lesson. You put God first and God will supply your needs. God supplied that woman’s needs because she was willing to put God first, even when all physical evidence said there was no way she was going to come out ahead by giving some of it away. You don’t have enough for yourself; why are you going to give some of it away?

God is the Most High God. He is the Owner of the Universe. He owns heaven and earth. It all belongs to Him. God doesn’t need what we have. It’s for our benefit that God allows us to have a part, and God uses certain things to teach us certain lessons. God could have fed Elijah some other way. It wasn’t that he was dependent on that woman, but He wanted the woman to learn a lesson of faith. She stepped out on faith to trust God, and God provided her needs. God could have provided Elijah’s needs some other way, but He did it for the benefit of the woman and for an example for us that we can learn.

Let’s continue.

1 Kings 18:1-4, “Now it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, ‘Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.’ So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and there was a severe famine in Samaria. And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)” Obadiah had risked his own life. Jezebel had launched an “inquisition” against anybody who was trying to obey God.

Verse 5, “And Ahab had said to Obadiah, ‘Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock.’” Ahab and Obadiah were coming out of the city. They were looking for any water to keep the horses and mules alive. It had gotten down to the point there was just nothing. It was drying up.

Verse 6, “So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.”

Verses 7-9, “Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, ‘Is that you, my lord Elijah?’ And he answered him, ‘It is I. Go, tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’” Then he said, ‘How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?’”

‘What have I done that you are going to get me into this kind of trouble.’

Verse 10, “‘As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, ‘He is not here,’ he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you.’” Notice what he said. Elijah was a man who was known to the rulers of his day. Ahab went around to all of the kingdoms, every nation and kingdom in the known world, anywhere around there. Ahab sent his servants there to find out if Elijah was there, and they came and took an oath from the king.

Now if Elijah had been unknown to all these people and not traveled and met some of these people, they wouldn’t have known who he was. They would have come in there and asked if Elijah was there. They would have said, ‘I don’t know; never heard of him. How should I know if he is here; a lot of people come through here. We got people traveling through every day.’ Elijah was known in all of the surrounding

kingdoms. He was known to all of the surrounding governments.

Obadiah says, 'There is no nation or kingdom anywhere around here within traveling distance that Ahab hasn't sent looking for you. Man, has he ever been looking for you! You told him it wasn't going to rain and you left. And it hasn't rained since. He's mad.'

Verse 12, "'And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the Lord from my youth.'"

'All I need is to go tell him that I've found you. If I come back and the Spirit of the Lord has carried you away and you're not here, do you know what he's going to do? Chop off my head! He's going to think I'm pulling a joke on him and he's not going to think it's very funny. I have feared God from my youth. I have tried to do what was right; please don't get me in trouble.'

Verse 13, "'Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cove, and fed them with bread and water?'" He said, 'Don't you know that I am the guy who hid the prophets when Jezebel tried to kill them all?'

Verses 14-15, "'And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here,'" and he will kill me.' Then Elijah said, 'As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today.'" Elijah said, 'I am not going to get you in trouble. I'm going to wait, and you go tell him.'

Verses 16-17, "'So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, 'Is it you, O troubler of Israel?'" Ahab said, 'Are you the guy that caused all this trouble?' You know what Elijah said?

Verse 18, he looked him in the eye, "And he answered, 'I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals.'" Elijah said, 'I am not the cause of the problem; you are, buddy. You have forsaken the commandments of God and gone to follow Baal. I'll tell you what I want you to do.'

Verse 19, "'Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.'" He said, 'I want you to gather all Israel

to Mount Carmel. Get all the prophets of Baal together, all 450 of them, all these that are Jezebel's "hangers on." Get your crowd together, get all Israel up to Mount Carmel; I have something.'

Verse 21, "And Elijah came to all the people, and said, 'How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.' But the people answered him not a word." 'Why are you vacillating; why are you wobbling back and forth?'

Verses 22-26, "Then Elijah said to the people, 'I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.' So all the people answered and said, 'It is well spoken.' Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.' So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, 'O Baal, hear us!' But there was no voice; no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they had made.'

They really "cut up." They were really "getting down" with it, beating the tambourines, clanging the gongs, jumping up and down, whooping, hollering and shouting. This commotion lasted all morning.

Verse 27, "And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy [KJV, "or he is pursuing"], or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.'" He was making fun of them. He said, 'Cry aloud you guys; better speak up. He's not going to be able to hear you.' They had been shouting their lungs out all morning, really whooping it up. Talk about a "tarry meeting."

They were "tarrying" all morning and weren't getting anything. 'Cry loud; he's god isn't he? He's really up there, isn't he? I know what it is, he's talking to somebody—he's on the telephone, and you are just going to have to wait until he finishes his conversation. Or he is pursuing [the New English Bible gives a more literal translation, maybe he had to go to the bathroom] or maybe he took a trip. I know what it is; he is asleep—he's taking a nap, and you

guys better wake him up.' Well, needless to say, they didn't appreciate Elijah's helpful suggestions.

Verse 28, "So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them." They were really worked up. By this time, they were slashing themselves; they fell over and the blood gushed out.

Verses 29-30, "And it was so, when midday was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down." Elijah told the people, "All right, we have had enough of this foolishness. You guys have provided entertainment all day; come over here."

Verses 31-34, "And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Israel shall be your name.' Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, 'Fill four water pots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.' Then he said, 'Do it a second time,' and they did it a second time; and he said, 'Do it a third time,' and they did it a third time." They just absolutely soaked and saturated everything.

Verses 36-38, "And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.' Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench." When God sent the fire, He didn't light a little match that could hardly light. WHOOSH, it came down out of heaven, this great big burst of fire and absolutely incinerated like a nuclear blast in miniature. Just a blackened crater remained there.

Verse 39, "Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!'" It really "shook them up."

Verse 40, "And Elijah said to them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!' So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there." Elijah had the prophets of Baal taken out and executed.

Verse 41, "Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.'" Elijah told Ahab he'd better get up and get going, get something to eat and leave in a hurry because there is the sound of abundance of rain.

Verse 42, "So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees."

Verses 43-45 give the account of the clouds and the rain that came. We have the end of the drought.

1 Kings 19:1-2, "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.'" Jezebel got upset. All her prophets were killed. She sent out word, 'I am going to get you; I am going to chop off your head before the sun sets.'

Have you ever noticed the extent to which you can find yourself going from a spiritual high to a spiritual low? Ever had some time when you were really on a "high," and, boy, you have faith and you handle something. Then all of a sudden, something else comes up and you get scared. Where did all your faith go?

Here was Elijah having gone through all of this and he gets the word Jezebel is after him. He takes off running and gets out of there; he is all depressed and upset.

Verse 4, he says, 'God, why don't you just let me die. Nothing is going to work out right. I am as good as dead.'

Verse 15-16, God encouraged him and, in fact, sent him down to Damascus to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria and then to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel. God continued to use Elijah. And what is he doing here? He's going to kings and various rulers. He had a very prominent place.

1 Kings 21:1-3, "And it came to pass after these things that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, 'Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard

better than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money.’ And Naboth said to Ahab, ‘The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!’”

Naboth had a vineyard and Ahab wanted it. He said he’d like to buy the vineyard, but Naboth said, ‘No, I don’t want to sell it. It’s been in the family for generations—an old family property—I just don’t want to sell it.’ Ahab said he would give him a better one. ‘I will pay you cash or trade you and give you another one.’ Naboth said, ‘No, I appreciate it, but I don’t want to sell. I want to keep it.’ So, what did Ahab do?

Verse 4, “So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food.” This shows Ahab’s maturity—like a little spoiled child.

Verses 5-13, Jezebel came in and said, ‘What’s wrong?’ He said, ‘Naboth won’t sell me his vineyard.’ She said, ‘Is that all the problem? I’ll take care of that.’ She wrote a letter and said, ‘Let’s kill this Naboth character and get rid of him.’ And she did.

Verses 18-22, God was very displeased.

I’d like to point out something, just as a matter of law in Israel. Israel was different than the Gentile nations around. Israel was never established as an absolute monarchy. Israel was a constitutional monarchy. The king was subject to the law. For instance, the king could not force one of his subjects to sell property; it was their property. The property came down in the family, and the king didn’t have any right to confiscate it, even in payment. If Naboth didn’t want to sell the property, it was legal for him to keep it. The king was under certain requirements of law. He was not absolute in the way that was the custom of the Gentile nations around. Jezebel didn’t worry about the law, one way or another. But God dealt with her. God sent a message by Elijah and told Ahab that he was responsible for killing Naboth because he had let his wife do it.

Verse 19, ““You shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Have you murdered and also taken possession?’” And you shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.’”””

Verse 21, ““Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond

and free.””” He said, ‘I’m going to wipe out your family.’

Verse 22, ““I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam...because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.”””

Verse 27, “So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning [KJV, “went softly”].” – Kind of tiptoed around for a little while.

Verses 28-29, “And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘See how Ahab humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days; but in the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.’” God said, ‘Ahab is kind of a wimp, a jerk and a lot of other things, but it really “shook him up.” I am not going to “land on him” quite as hard as I told him I would, at least not immediately.’ Ahab repented of sorts. It was very apparent, as you read the story, that he was a very weak character, a very weak-willed character. He never had the gall to stand up to do what was right at all.

Verses 23-25, ““And concerning Jezebel the Lord also spoke, saying, “The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.” The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field.’ But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedly in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up.”

Now we pick up the story of Jehoshaphat, who was the king of Judah at this time.

1 Kings 22:2, “Then it came to pass, in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit the king of Israel.” He was coming down to visit with Ahab. Jehoshaphat was a nice guy, a good king.

Verses 41-42, “Now Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem.” His reign overlapped Ahab’s reign and down to the reign of Ahab’s son.

Verse 43, “And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord.”

Verse 44, “Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.” They quit all the fighting.

Verse 46, He sought to get rid of the perverted persons (KJV, “sodomites”).

To pick up a little bit more of the details of Jehoshaphat, turn back to 2 Chronicles 17.

2 Chronicles 17:2-4, “And he placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken. Now the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel”

Verse 6, “And his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.”

Verses 7-10, “Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.”

Verses 12-13, “So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah. He had much property [KJV, “business”] in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valor, were in Jerusalem.”

Jehoshaphat was basically a good king. He followed all the good examples of his father, Asa. He went even further. He got the Levites working to teach the Jews God’s ways and to perform their responsibilities as teachers and judges. God blessed him greatly. But Jehoshaphat also had a problem. His biggest problem seemed to revolve around getting “tangled up” with Ahab.

2 Chronicles 18:1, “Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab.” Jehoshaphat was a nice guy, a peaceable sort of guy. He liked to be friends with everybody. He found it difficult to believe bad things about people. ‘Well, you know old Ahab; maybe if I can just kind of hang around old Ahab, I can be a good influence on him and kind of encourage him.’

A lot of Ahab’s problem was that he was weak. He was not as utterly corrupt in the way that Jezebel was. He was just weak; he would never stand up for what he knew was right. He had a certain respect even for God’s prophet. He certainly had a respect for Elijah, even though he

didn’t follow through on what he should have done. He was a very weak-willed character.

Jehoshaphat seemed to think he could be a good influence on him. That kind of thing never works out that way. All it did was get Jehoshaphat entangled, and Ahab tried to use and manipulate him. You have the story here where Ahab had conned Jehoshaphat into coming down and helping him out in a war.

Verse 4, Jehoshaphat said, ‘Well, I am ready to go out to battle, but I want to talk to God’s prophet first.’

Verse 5, “Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, ‘Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?’ And they said, ‘Go up, for God will deliver it into the king’s hand.’”

Remember Ahab had called in all these others, prophets of the false god, and they whooped and hollered and put on their little show.

Verse 6, “But Jehoshaphat said, ‘Is there not still a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of Him?’” ‘Yeah, but I really want to talk to a prophet of God. Don’t you have one around close by?’

Verse 7, Ahab said, ‘Well, we have one, Micaiah the son of Imla, but I don’t like him because he never says anything good to me. When I call my prophets and tell them I want to do something, they smile and say, “Bless you, my son, go ahead and do it; everything will be okay.” They tell me things I like to hear and make me feel good. It doesn’t matter what I want to do, they are always in favor of it. But this Micaiah, he never has anything good to say. Anything I want to do, he doesn’t like.’ And Jehoshaphat said, ‘Please, don’t say things like that; just go ahead and call him.’

Verse 8, “Then the king of Israel called one of his officers and said, ‘Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly.’”

Verse 12, when the soldier came to get Micaiah he said, ‘Look, he’s already asked everybody else and everybody’s told him what he wanted to hear. Everybody told him to go to battle; now don’t come in here and be a spoilsport like you usually do. Tell him what he wants to hear.’

Verses 13-14, “And Micaiah said, ‘As the Lord lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak.’ Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, ‘Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?’ And he said, ‘Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!’” Micaiah walked in and said, ‘Yeah, king go on down.’

Verse 15, the king couldn’t believe it. Ahab sat back and said, ‘Now, wait a minute; haven’t I

always told you to tell me the truth?’ He had never told him to tell him the truth, but he liked to think that he had. Micaiah looked at him and said, ‘All right, I am going to tell you the truth.’

Verse 16, “Then he said, ‘I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd.’ And the Lord said, ‘These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.’” Micaiah told the king, ‘You are going to go out there to battle all right, but you are going to get killed.’

Verse 17, Ahab turned around to Jehoshaphat and said, ‘Didn’t I tell you; he never has anything good to say.’

Notice what a con man Ahab was and what a gullible sort Jehoshaphat was. He was just a nice guy, the kind of guy that was very easy to get along with. He didn’t like to cause trouble.

Notice what happened.

Verse 29, “And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, ‘I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes.’ So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.” Ahab tells Jehoshaphat he is going to disguise himself, just in the off-chance this guy knows what he is talking about and somebody is aiming for him. ‘I am going to disguise myself and go to battle. You go ahead and put on your robes, put on your crown; you go out there looking like a king. I am just going to “stick on” some old clothes and go out to battle.’

Jehoshaphat should have wised up to that. ‘What does he think? Me, put on my robes and go out there, and he’s going to put on some old clothes and go sneaking out there. Who are they going to be shooting at?’ But he just found it difficult to believe anything bad about anybody; he obliged and went out there.

Verse 31, “So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, ‘It is the king of Israel!’ Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to turn away from him.” Just like old Ahab had figured, they were ready to come down on Jehoshaphat. When he got into trouble, he cried out to God, ‘Oh, God, what have I gotten myself into?’ And God helped him. God had mercy on him. All these guys left.

Verse 33, Sure enough, somebody shoots a bow and what does it do? It hits Ahab. That’s the story.

2 Chronicles 19:1, “Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem.” God told him to “stay put”—don’t go back to Israel and get tangled up in that anymore.

In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat did many positive things, but he kept having problems getting “suckered” into deals with Israel.

2 Chronicles 20:35, “After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly.”

In verse 36, he talked him into a deal. ‘Let’s go into a partnership and build a navy. We will sail it from your port, Ezion Geber.’ Sure enough, Jehoshaphat probably put up most of the money, provided the port, and who knows what all he got conned into. They built this great big navy and were going to send it out.

Verse 37, God sent a storm, sank the whole navy and it wasn’t able to make it to Tarshish.

Here’s a lesson: Get yourself tangled up with people not trying to obey God and you are going to have trouble. Jehoshaphat, in his own personal life and in what he personally had responsibility for, was a very faithful man. But he was a “nice guy,” found it hard to say “no” to anybody and kept getting “suckered in.” He felt sorry for the kings of Israel, thinking he could be a good influence on them, and maybe they would “come along.” But they kept “suckering” him in. They kept using him and setting him up for one thing after another.

This is a story that I think is important for us to grasp because there are lessons of life that we can learn from the interaction of people.

Let’s just briefly summarize here in the first couple chapters of 2 Kings which is the end of the story of Elijah, at least at this point.

2 Kings 2:1-2, “And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel.’ And Elisha said, ‘As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!’ So they went down to Bethel.”

Verse 3, “And the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha,”

Verse 5, “And the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha....”

What you find as you go through here, this refers to three schools or colleges (if you want to use our modern terminology) for the prophets or sons of the prophets that Elijah had established at Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho. They were “sons of the prophets” or students of Elijah. God was getting ready to end Elijah’s ministry. His life didn’t end until a little later.

Verse 9, we find mentioned, “...Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?’ And Elisha said, ‘Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’”

The “double portion” had reference to the birthright portion, an inheritance. A double portion was the birthright portion. In that sense, the sons of the prophets collectively were the heirs of Elijah. They were his spiritual heirs. Elisha was the one who was going to, in that sense, take over and occupy that office. While all the sons of the prophets were the collective heirs of Elijah, Elisha received the double portion, the birthright portion. In other words, God empowered all of them, but Elisha in a very special way, in a way that made him stand “head and shoulders” above all the other prophets, the other students of Elijah.

This didn’t mean that Elisha had twice as much of God’s Holy Spirit as Elijah did because Elijah was singled out as the great prophet. Even John the Baptist is one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah; he didn’t come in the spirit and power of Elisha. Elijah was the great prophet, but Elisha was his heir. And in that sense, he is pictured as getting a double portion, referring to the birthright portion.

Verses 14-15, “Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, ‘Where is the Lord God of Elijah?’ And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, ‘The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.’” God performed a special miracle in intervening. God intervened and made it very obvious to all of his people as to who was taking Elijah’s place. Elisha stood out. God worked through Elisha in a special way, in the same way He had worked through Elijah. In a time of transition, God always makes it plain.

There is one thing to comment on.

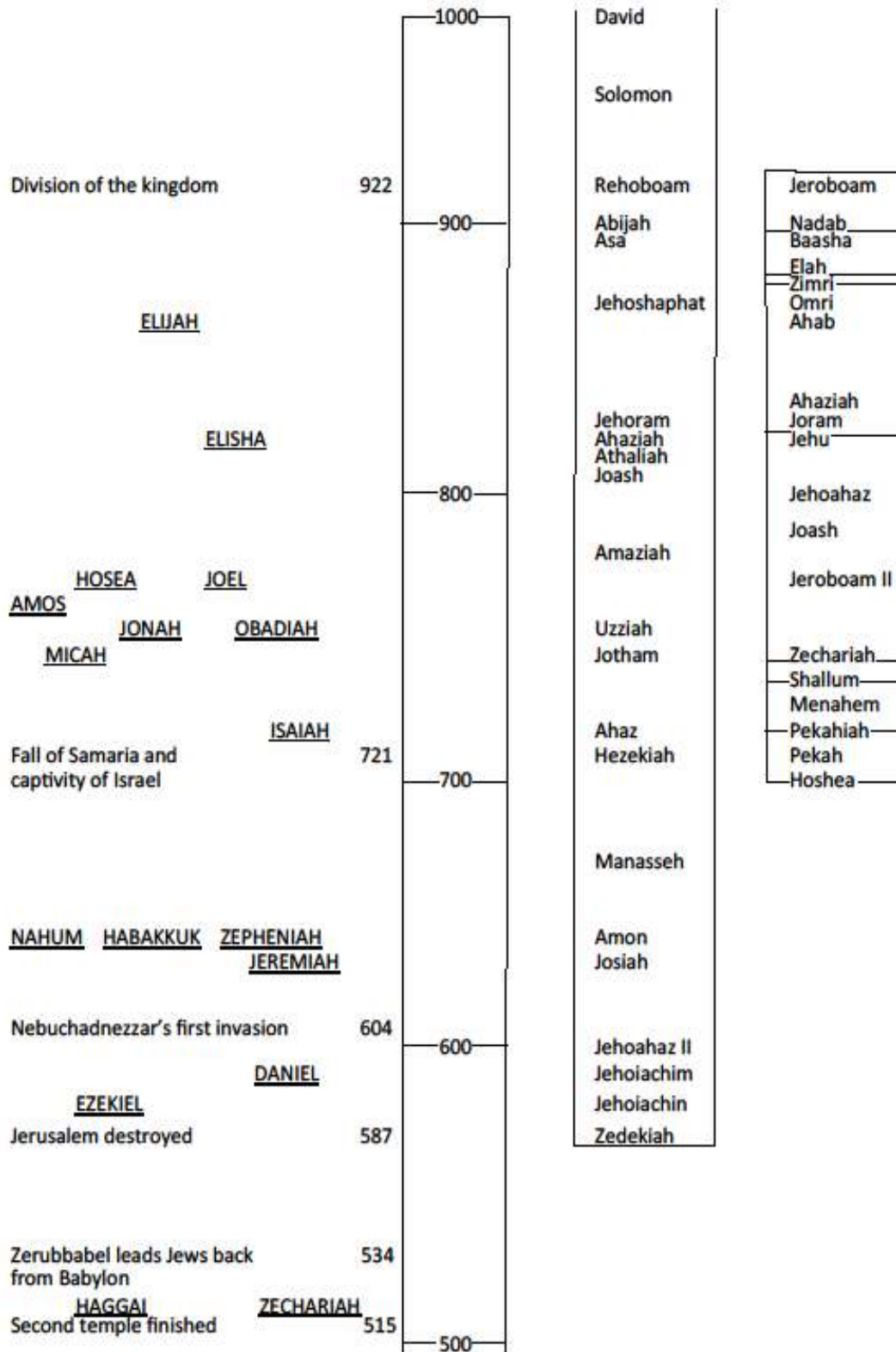
Verse 11, “...And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” There are three heavens mentioned in the Bible. Heaven can refer to the heaven of the earth’s atmosphere where the birds fly and the clouds are. It can refer to outer space where the sun, moon and the stars are. Or it can refer to what is called the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2), the heaven of God’s abode.

The heaven into which Elijah was taken by a whirlwind would have been the heaven of the earth’s atmosphere. A whirlwind is something that exists in the earth’s atmosphere. We will notice in the next Bible study that Elijah simply left. God simply, in a supernatural way, caught up Elijah and removed him to a different place.

We covered a lot of material this evening, but hopefully, in chart form, the historical portion will make it a little easier for you to follow and

keep up with all of these names. We have all these names back and forth, but it kind of gives you an idea as to the time flow. It is one of the things that we want to go through as we go through the material that is in this survey of the Old Testament.

Chronology of Kings & Chronicles



Bible Study # 26
November 8, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—2 Kings 3—25 and 2
Chronicles 21—36
(Chart at end)

This evening we **are covering the final period of the history of Israel and Judah.** It is a time where there are a lot of parallels, a lot of things that certainly parallel to our time today. If you noted last Bible study, we basically came down to the end of the life of Jehoshaphat and Ahab—the time period of eighth century B.C., a time period that witnesses the emergence in Israel and Judah of a commercial civilization and of great material prosperity. The commercial civilization that began to take place in Israel and Judah reached a height as far as material prosperity. There are some interesting comments in the *Soncino Jewish Commentary*, which is a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament. In their commentary on the book of Micah, they bring out the fact that the eighth century did witness the emergence of a commercial civilization of great material prosperity in Israel and Judah. Its foundations were laid in the peace and security in the reign of Jeroboam II.

I am going to refer to these kings if you want to look at your chart and follow along on this; otherwise, you will get lost with the names of all these kings. On the far right hand side of your chart are the kings of Israel. You will notice Jeroboam II that is written towards the bottom. Contemporary with him was Uzziah of Judah.

“The lengthy reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah were for Israel and Judah, respectively, a time of peace and security. They won the extension of the borders of their kingdoms from Damascus to the Red Sea and from the desert to the Mediterranean. This gave the Hebrew states command of all of the major trade routes of ancient days, everything that came across from Mesopotamia across to Egypt. The Hebrew states were sitting astride the major trade routes. It was, however, a civilization that displayed all of the evils of a society making haste to be rich. Extremes of wealth and poverty, which had been impossible in an agricultural society based on the biblical system of land tenure, became evident everywhere. The pursuit of commerce encouraged the development of cities and city life. With the exchange of goods and the exchange of ideas, new religious cults, standards of luxury and splendor and materialistic aims of living, which heretofore had

been foreign to Israel, were introduced from Syria and Egypt.”

I was reading a comment from the *Soncino Commentary's* introduction of the book of Micah. Their description of the eighth century B.C. and what it saw, as far as the historic development of Israel and Judah, could have been said about the 20th-century United States. You see, in the 20th century, this country went from a primarily agricultural nation to an industrial commercialized nation. We went from an agricultural rural nation to an urban nation. We have seen, as a result of that, the change and the transformation in society. We have seen extremes of wealth and poverty, down to many of the things that confront us today that are characteristic of an urban commercialized society, in a way that those extremes do not characterize an agricultural society. I bring out that parallel because when you read the history of eighth-century B.C. Israel and Judah, you are reading what seems like the history of 20th-century America and Britain.

Now understand it's in the eighth century B.C. If you look on your chart, which prophets were during the eighth century? The eighth-century prophets were Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and Isaiah towards the end of it. You are looking at some of the primary prophets who wrote books of prophecy. They were writing during that time. In other words, they had a message for their society that also had implications for our society today. That's why God preserved the message.

Now the reason why the message for that society has parallels and implications for our society today is because our society parallels. There are societies that had the same problems, and as a result, they are going to have the same conclusion.

Events began to develop rapidly about 60 years before the collapse of Israel. It was during this time that God's work of warning the people to repent reached a peak. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and Isaiah all prophesied during this time period, the final 60 years of the history of Northern Israel.

Notice the time leading up to the time of God's intervention, God's punishment—the captivity that God allowed to come on the nation Israel. What led up to that was the greatest period of prophetic activity in the history of Old Testament Israel and Judah. The most concentrated dosage of prophetic activity took place at that time. God had a warning and a witness go out. There is a parallel. What Israel went through at that time certainly parallels what

is happening to the United States during the 20th century.

Now let's take note of the story. We will pick it up in 2 Kings 3. This is right after Elijah's ascension in a whirlwind.

2 Kings 3:1, "Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years." We find that Jehoram, the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria. Ahaziah had succeeded Ahab; then Jehoram very quickly succeeded Ahaziah.

Verse 2-3, God was not pleased with him. God was not pleased with anything that came from Ahab and Jezebel. Jehoram was not quite as bad as his father and his mother. He put away the image of Baal, but he continued to follow the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. There were problems; there was strife; and so there were difficulties.

Verses 5, right after Ahab's death, the Moabites rebelled and Jehoram was again going to "sucker" good old Jehoshaphat. You remember Jehoshaphat was a nice guy always willing to do a favor for somebody. Well, Jehoram said, 'Hey, Jehoshaphat, since Dad died the Moabites have rebelled against me. Why don't you send an army and come help me out?'

Verse 7, Old Jehoshaphat said, "...I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 'Anything I have, you can have. I'll give you the shirt off my back.' Sometimes you meet people this way. They're nice people, but they're just a little bit gullible and easily taken advantage of. They are so obliging that it is very difficult for them to say, "No." They get themselves in some "jams." Jehoshaphat was somewhat that way.

Verse 11, "But Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?' And one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, 'Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah.'" So, again, Jehoshaphat honored and respected God. Before they went out to battle he wanted to know if there was a prophet of God they could inquire of. He was told that Elisha was there and Elisha spoke to the king.

Verse 13, "Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, 'What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.' And the king of Israel said to him, 'No, for the Lord has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab.'" Elisha told Jehoram, 'What have I got to do with you? Why don't you go to your mother's or father's

prophets? I don't have anything to tell you; you might as well go to Jezebel's prophets. I don't have any use for you.'

Verse 14, "And Elisha said, 'As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you.'" He said, 'I would not look toward you. I wouldn't so much as give you the time of day if it weren't that I have respect for Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Out of respect for him, I will answer the question. But if it were just you asking, Jehoram, I wouldn't tell you the time of day.' Anyway, you go through the story.

2 Kings 4 is an account of several miracles that took place, showing what Elisha did. We see in verses 1-7 where Elisha performed a miracle to allow an indebted widow to pay off her creditors. The oil multiplied and she was able to sell it and earn money.

2 Kings 4:1, "...And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves."

Verses 2-7, Elisha asked, 'What do you have?' She said, 'All I have is a little oil.' He told her to borrow pots and pans—borrow everything you can "rake and scrape" that will hold oil. Get everything that the neighbors have. Everything that you can borrow, get and then start pouring oil. She started pouring oil and the oil kept pouring and pouring until she filled up every pot and pan that she had, and everything that any neighbor had—everything around. When she ran out of pots, she ran out of oil. She sold the oil and paid off the debts. God has all kinds of ways of providing things.

Verses 8-37, as we continue here in chapter 4, we read of an elderly woman that befriended Elisha. She and her husband were an elderly couple who had a child as a result of God's special blessing. We read of the child's subsequent death and then the miracle that Elisha performed of restoring the child to life.

In 2 Kings 5:1-3, we have an interesting story of Naaman who was the commander of the army of the king of Syria. Now the Syrians had raided Israel at various times and had taken away a number of various Israelites captive; there was a little servant girl that had been taken away who was a servant in the household of Naaman. The little girl was an Israelite. Naaman was a great favorite of the king of Syria. He was the captain of the host. Naaman came down with a dreaded disease. He came down with leprosy for which there was no known cure. This little girl told Naaman one day, 'I wish you were down in Israel because there is a prophet in Israel that I know could cure you.' Well, Naaman was

willing to try anything, so he went to talk to the king of Syria and the king of Syria gave him a letter that was addressed to the king of Israel.

2 Kings 5:5-6, “So the king of Syria said, ‘Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.’ So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, ‘Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.’” He addressed this letter to the king of Israel and said, ‘I am sending my favorite servant down there, and I understand that you have somebody that can cure him of leprosy. I want you to take care of him as a favor to me.’ Well, needless to say, when the king of Israel got this letter, this scared him to death.

Verse 7, “And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, ‘Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me.’” He said, ‘That guy is trying to pick a fight with me. Here he is sending this general down here; he’s got leprosy and expects me to cure him. What am I going to do with him; I can’t cure him. He’s sending him down here expecting me to do something.’

Verse 8, “So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, ‘Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.’” When Elisha heard about it, he was somewhat irate. Elisha sent word to the king and said, ‘Let him come to me. You may not have any faith, but evidently the Syrians have more faith than you do because they sent this guy here to get cured. You’re standing over there wringing your hands and figuring that it’s impossible. The Syrians, who had no knowledge of the true God, at least had enough faith to give it a try.’ They were told this little servant girl had far more faith and understanding than the king because she said, ‘I know God can heal you, and He has a servant, a prophet, down in Israel.’

Verses 9-10, “Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, ‘Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.’” Naaman came near to Elisha’s house. Elisha didn’t even come out. He sent his messenger out and he instructed Naaman to go and wash in the Jordan seven times.

Verses 11-12, “But Naaman became furious and went away and said, ‘Indeed, I said to myself, he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy. Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?’ So he turned and went away in a rage.” Now Naaman immediately became very upset, very irate. Do you know why he was irate? Because God didn’t do it the way he expected it to be done.

Naaman was furious. Look what he says. He says, “Indeed I said to myself.” He had already figured it out. Have you ever jumped to conclusions in your mind; have you ever figured out how you thought God was going to do it? He thought this man was going to come out here and would call upon the name of his God with a “big hoopla,” making a great sound and going on and on—something impressive—and his leprosy would disappear. But he sent his servant out and told him, ‘Go wash in that old muddy Jordan River seven times.’ Naaman thought, ‘What good is that going to do? I have a whole lot of better rivers than that back where I come from. I don’t need to wash in the Jordan. Boy, I am insulted.’

Verse 13, “And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, ‘My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, “Wash, and be clean?”’” His servant said to him, ‘Look, if the prophet had given you some difficult, terrible task to perform, some great arduous, difficult task and said, “If you will perform this you will be healed,” wouldn’t you have gone and done it? Well, yeah. All he asked you to do was something simple. Why don’t you try it? What can you lose?’

Verse 14, “So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” He went down and washed in the Jordan seven times, and, you guessed it, he was totally healed. Why? It was an act of faith, an act of obedience. What difference does it make whether you wash in the Jordan or whether you go back and wash in a river in Syria? Well, the difference it makes is that God said it made a difference to Him. God said to wash in the Jordan. He didn’t say go back and wash in the Tigris or the Euphrates or anything else. He said, ‘Wash in the Jordan.’ What difference does it make? The difference is whether you are doing what God said or not. That’s the difference.

It's like what difference does it make whether you keep Sunday or Saturday, just as long as you keep a day. What difference does it make? Or any number of things, what difference does it make? The question, brethren, is whether it makes a difference to God. See, that's the question.

People look at it and say, 'I don't see what difference it makes.' Of course, they don't see what difference it makes. Naaman didn't see what difference it made whether he washed in the Jordan. But I'll guarantee no other river would have washed him clean. Not because of any magic quality inherent in the Jordan River, but because he did what God said.

There's an important lesson here. God answers, but He doesn't always do it the way expected. In fact, Naaman was so "tuned in" to looking for an answer coming from a particular direction, that he was all upset and almost didn't recognize the answer when it came because God didn't do it the way he had expected.

Do we put limitations on God sometimes? We get God all figured out, put Him in a box and get it all figured out how God has to do this. If for some reason or another God doesn't do it the way we expect, we think, 'What is this? God "slipped up"; somehow He didn't get it right.' Oh, God got it right. He did it the way He chose to do it.

Verse 15, Naaman came back, and you know what he wanted to do? He wanted to pay Elisha for what he had done. You know what Elisha did? He did the same thing God's servants down through the centuries have done. He said, 'No, we don't charge for what we do.' That's quite a contrast to certain churches some of you have come out of. They charge for everything. They charge you to pray for you; they charge you for all kinds of things. That's not God's way.

Matthew 10:8, Christ said, "...Freely you have received, freely give."

2 Kings 5:16 Elisha would not accept payment.

Verses 20-24, but then, of course, the servant of Elisha, his eyes got big when he saw all that money. He decided that maybe if Elisha didn't want it, he would take it. And that proved to be a very fatal mistake on his part.

Verse 27, "Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever. And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow." That was a very serious matter. It was something that should not be looked at in a light way.

As we continue, we find in chapter 6 the story of another miracle.

2 Kings 6:8, "Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel;"

Verses 14-15, "Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?'" 'What shall we do, we are surrounded!'

Verse 16, "So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'" Elisha said, 'No problem. There are more with us than are with them.' His servant said, 'You haven't looked outside yet; you're sitting here in the house. You haven't looked out the door; what do you mean, 'more with us than are with them'? They have us surrounded.'

Verse 17, "And Elisha prayed, and said, 'Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." Elisha prayed and asked God to perform a miracle—to open this servant's eyes to allow him to actually see the spirit realm. And you know what he saw? He saw all the mountains round about covered with horses and chariots of fire. Now that's a whole lot more impressive than anything the Syrians had. There are times that we would be absolutely shocked and amazed if our eyes could be opened in that way, and for a brief moment, have a glimpse of the spirit realm. Elisha had a reaction and a response of faith because he knew God; he walked with God. He knew God's power; he trusted God. He was not overcome with fear and hand-wringing because he knew that he was the servant of the Most High God.

Verses 24-25, "And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria;"

Verses 28-29, there was a great famine right on down to the point that it came to literal cannibalism.

The king was very quick to want to blame it on Elisha.

Verse 31, "Then he said, 'God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today.'" He said, 'Boy, I am going to chop off Elisha's head. He got us into all of this.'

Verse 32, "But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders,

‘Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master’s feet behind him?’” Elisha referred to this son of Ahab and Jezebel as “the son of a murderer.”

2 Kings 7:6-7, “For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, ‘Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!’ Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact— ...and they fled for their lives.”

Verse 10, “So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, ‘We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound—’”

Verse 16, “Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians.” A miracle was performed; the Syrians fled and all of their provisions fell to Israel.

But notice the attitude: blame the problems on God’s prophet, God’s servant.

I would like to call your attention to something we had discussed last time—the matter of Elijah being carried away into heaven in a whirlwind. This is not the third heaven of God’s abode, nor the second heaven of outer space, but the first heaven of the earth’s atmosphere of the clouds and the birds. The first heaven of the earth’s atmosphere is where a whirlwind would normally go. He was taken up and removed, set down somewhere else and continued to live for a period of time. We are not told how long.

Notice additional proof that Elijah’s life was not ended at that time; he continued to live here on the earth.

2 Kings 3:1, we noted, “Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.” Jehoshaphat was still king of Judah after the time that Elijah was taken up and Elisha had succeeded as God’s chief prophet. We saw a little bit further in 2 Kings 3 that Jehoshaphat was still the king of Judah at the time when Elisha had taken over as God’s chief prophet. Now let’s take note of that and turn to 2 Chronicles.

2 Chronicles 21:1, “And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.” Now this is one of the reasons you need the chart because you will find that at this particular time in history, the kings of Israel and Judah had basically the same name, which serves

to confuse things more than they are already confused. In most people’s minds, they are already confused, and when you have all the kings with the same names, it gets even more confusing. So, you can consult the chart here. If you want to make it even more confusing, they were all kin to one another. Would you like exact family relationships? You would get really confused here. Anyway, Jehoshaphat died and his son Jehoram reigned in his stead.

Verses 5-6, “Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.”

Notice what happened.

Verses 12-13, “And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying [There was a letter to him from Elijah. Not Elisha, but Elijah! Elijah had been taken up in a whirlwind years before. Here comes a letter to Jehoram.], Thus says the Lord God of your father David: Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, ...”

He said, ‘You’ve done all these things, and here’s what is going to happen to you.’ If Elijah was where most people think he was, this was the original airmail. This letter had a long trip to get there—definitely the original airmail, which it was not. Elijah was simply somewhere else. He was taken up, removed. The work that God had for him to do there was completed. What did he do in the remainder of his life? Well, the only insight that is given was God used him to deal with at least this king. Perhaps God used him to go to other kings. We don’t know exactly what God had for him. But I would call your attention to that.

Now we come to the conclusion of the dynasty of Ahab. God doesn’t have a lot of good things to say about Ahab.

2 Kings 9:5-8, “...‘I have a message for you, O commander.’ And Jehu said, ‘For which one of us?’ And he said, ‘For you, commander.’ Then he arose and went into the house, and he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. For

the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel,”

We find a man by the name of Jehu; he has as his dynasty, to wipe out the dynasty of Ahab. Now if you look on the chart under the kings of Israel, you will find that Jehu took over. He ended the dynasty of Ahab. How did God cut off the dynasty?

2 Kings 9:16—10:28, well, we find here the story of how Jehu wiped out Ahab’s dynasty in Israel as well as all the priests of Baal and he became king.

Let me call your attention to something about Jehu. Jehu was famous for something.

2 Kings 9:20, “And the watchman reported, saying, ‘He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi for he drives furiously!’”

Jehu was famous for his style of driving. He drove furiously. The watchman was standing on the city wall and saw some dust. He said, ‘I can’t tell who it is, but it must be Jehu. Nobody around here drives like that, wheeling that chariot around the corner on one wheel with all of the dust turning up.’

Verse 21, “So Joram [Jehoram] said, ‘Make ready.’” Better get out of the way; here comes Jehu. Jehoram was going to go out there to meet him.

Verse 22, “Now it happened, when Joram [Jehoram] saw Jehu, that he said, ‘Is it peace, Jehu?’ So he answered, ‘What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many.’”

Verse 24, “Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Joram [Jehoram] between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot.” He drew a bow and shot Joram (Jehoram); he killed him and came into town.

Verse 30, “And when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window.”

Now Jezebel is one of these outstanding characters; we find a little bit about her in verse 22, “as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many.”

God used Jezebel, Queen Jezebel, as literally the personification of everything God hates in a woman. In fact, He uses her as a type of the great whore of Revelation 17. Remember the great whore is described as committing fornication with the kings of the earth, making all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication. That’s what Jezebel did literally. She wielded power by committing fornication with the kings of all

of the surrounding areas. The whoredoms of Jezebel—she literally practiced whoredom. She committed whoredom with the kings of the earth. God used her as a type; in fact, if you go back to Revelation 2, you will find that God describes the false church under the person of Jezebel.

Revelation 2:20, He tells the Thyatira era, “...I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel [referring to the church in the Middle Ages], who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and beguile [KJV, “seduce”] My servants to commit sexual immorality....” The reference, of course, is to the Catholic Church that is personified as Jezebel. Revelation uses the personification of a woman, a queen who commits fornication with the kings of the earth and who wields power by entering into illicit relationships with various kings. That’s the way she wielded her power. That’s the way Jezebel did it. Jezebel absolutely personified everything God hates in a woman, and He uses her as a type of that throughout the book of Revelation.

“Jezebel”—we have all heard the term, a term that we grew up with. You never took it as a compliment if somebody called you a “Jezebel,” did you? If you knew anything about the Bible, you knew that was not what you wanted to be called. You did not want to be called a “Jezebel.” Well, God does not have a lot of good to say about Jezebel.

2 Kings 9:30-33, Jezebel evidently considered herself a great beauty and must have been considered so by the various kings around because they all wanted to commit fornication with her. She was getting all decked out for Jehu, but Jehu told the servants to throw her down. They picked her up and heaved her out of the window. She fell down and, of course, it killed her. It was a very gruesome thing.

2 Kings 9:34, “And when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Then he said, ‘Go now, see to this accursed woman, and bury her, for she was a king’s daughter.’”

Verses 35-36, when they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull, the feet and the palms of her hands because the dogs had eaten the flesh of Jezebel. Jezebel came to a very gruesome, gory conclusion, a very ugly ending. I think that it serves to show that God singled her out for an especially gruesome conclusion.

Here is a woman who is concerned with outward beauty, and God’s concern was with inward beauty. Jezebel may have looked good on the outside—evidently the kings of the earth thought so, but as far as God was concerned, she was a very ugly person in terms of character and

everything that she represented. She came to a very gruesome and ugly end.

Again, we are given a little bit of insight as we go through these accounts of various ones that are focused on and the influence that different ones had. Now, Jezebel's influence continued because her daughter, Athaliah had married Jehoram, the king of Judah. Jezebel's daughter, who was somewhat a "chip-off-the-old-block," was down in Judah as the queen, even though Jezebel was dead.

2 Kings 10:1, "Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria."

Verse 7, "So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and slaughtered seventy persons," Jehu had Ahab's seventy sons killed, and it was a real bloodletting.

Verses 26-29, "And they brought the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. Then they broke down the sacred pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel. However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan."

Verse 36, "And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years."

In the meantime, in Judah, Jehoram the king of Judah had died and his son Ahaziah had become king. Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram and Athaliah.

Now in 2 Kings 11 Ahaziah died. Ahaziah was the grandson of Jezebel and Ahab. Because of intermarriage, the family of Ahab and Jezebel was ruling in Judah, as well as in Israel. Well, they were wiped out in Israel; all of the 70 sons of Ahab were killed. Now, the grandson Ahaziah died. When he died, Athaliah decided that she would be "king," and she was going to murder all of her grandchildren. —"Nice woman," real "chip-off-the-old-block" of dear mother.

2 Kings 11:1-3, "When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed. So he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land."

Verse 4, in the seventh year, the high priest called in the leaders and said, 'All right, enough is enough. The rightful heir to the throne of

David is now seven years old; we are going to bring him out, coronate him and get rid of this wicked woman.' He placed the guards in strategic places and Jehoiada the priest then brought in little Joash.

Verse 12, "And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the Testimony; they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, 'Long live the king!'"

Verses 13-14, "Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts and the people, she came to the people, into the temple of the Lord. When she looked, there was the king, standing by a pillar according to custom; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, 'Treason! Treason!'"

If you will check it in some other translations, it is, "stood on the pillar, as the manner was." You know what this is describing? You will find this referred to in several occasions where coronations of kings are described. The kings and queens of the house of David are still crowned on the same pillar. Jacob's pillar stone, which was taken through the wilderness, was taken down into Egypt and brought back out by the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. It journeyed with them through the wilderness. It was set up as the pillar of testimony. The kings were crowned—coronated—on that pillar. When Athaliah came in and saw Joash standing on the pillar as the manner was, she knew what had happened. He had been coronated. When she saw this child standing on the pillar, she recognized the pillar; she knew he had been coronated. She rent her clothes and cried, "Treason! Treason!" Well, she was the one guilty of treason.

Verse 16, "So they seized her; and she went by the way of the horses; entrance to the king's house, and there she was killed." She was taken out of the temple and executed.

Of course, Jacob's ancient pillar stone is to this very day the symbol of the throne and upon which the kings are coronated. The present Queen, Queen Elizabeth, was coronated sitting on this pillar stone. If you have ever been to Westminster Abbey, you may have seen that pillar stone there under the throne. There is a sign there identifying it as Jacob's pillar.

Verse 21, "Jehoash was seven years old when he became king."

Now as we come down, we find the story of Elisha's death.

2 Kings 13:14, "Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die...." I'll just call to

your attention—Elisha got sick and died. He was evidently an elderly man. It was not a matter that Elisha lacked faith. God used Elisha to perform some of the most tremendous miracles of the Bible, but God designed this physical life to be temporary. The time came when Elisha got sick and he died.

Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, ...”

In 2 Kings 14, we pick up the story of Azariah. Azariah is the name by which he is referred to in verse 21. He is also known as Uzziah (2 Kings 15:13; 2 Chronicles 26:1).

2 Kings 14:23, “...He reigned forty-one years.”

Verse 25, “He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord God, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hopher.”

He was contemporary with God’s prophet Jonah. This was a time when Israel and Judah reached their height of power. They expanded; they reached their height of commercial prosperity during the time of Uzziah, the king of Judah and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. But economic, material and commercial heights and heights of morality, ethics and righteousness were two totally different things. The nation prospered materially, but the nation degenerated and deteriorated spiritually. We see that within a short time, problems began to come.

Verse 29, Jeroboam died.

After the death of Jeroboam, we find that it was really a matter of about 40 years that saw just complete collapse. Israel went from its height to captivity in a lifespan, a generation, which is not unique, and certainly, even parallels our time.

In 2 Kings 15, we find that there was a rapid succession of kings. There was a lot of political instability. The nation became virtually paralyzed. There was an absence of strong leadership. It was just a turnover, one after the other—a time of instability. Of course, the Assyrians came in and originally put the land under tribute, exacted taxes and eventually came in and laid waste to Samaria. They took Israel into captivity and ultimately put an end to the nation of Northern Israel—the northern ten tribes.

We have the story of the conclusion of the history of the northern ten tribes.

2 Kings 17:6-7, “In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For so it was that the

children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods.”

Verses 10-18, “They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree; and there they burned incense on all the high places, as the nations had done whom the Lord had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger, for they served idols, of which the Lord had said to them, ‘You shall not do this thing.’ Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, namely every seer, saying, ‘Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.’ Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them. So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.”

Verses 21-23, “For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them commit a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.” Right on down to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, when the Old Testament canon was completed, Northern Israel was still carried away. They were settled in the land of Assyria; specifically, they were settled in the cities of the Medes by the river Gozan.

If you want to check a map, you will find that is an area between the Black and the Caspian Sea. The southern shore of the Black Sea is way up at the top away from the Tigris/Euphrates valley. Babylon is down at the bottom right near the Persian Gulf. (The Jews, 150 years later, were taken to Babylon. They were not taken up to the cities of the Medes, which was a totally different empire.) The Israelites were taken, not to Babylon, but were taken by the Assyrians and settled in the cities of the Medes up by the river Gozan—in other words, up there on the southern shore of the Black Sea.

It should not come as a surprise that we read in history of the Celtic people who invaded Europe originated from the southern shore of the Black Sea. Basically, they invaded Europe in two waves, one around 700 B.C., which was the initial wave right after the captivity. The main wave was almost 400 years later. There was a specific prophecy of that.

When Alexander the Great overthrew the empire of the Medes and the Persians in 331 B.C., the Israelites who had been taken captive were freed. That is when the main Celtic invasion of Europe took place. The time around 330 B.C. to 300 B.C. is when they swarmed across the Black Sea and into Europe. Now it was prophesied in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 4:5) that Israel would be in captivity 390 years. Well, from the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. until Alexander conquered the Medes and the Persians in 331 B.C. was exactly 390 years. Exactly 390 years when Alexander conquered the Medes and Persians, the Israelites were freed; they crossed the Black Sea and invaded Europe. If you read your history, that's when the Celts came into Europe, and that's where they came from. It's very easy to trace historically.

Verse 23, “until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.” Notice here that *God* removed them.

Verse 24, “Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.” He brought in these Babylonians and settled them in the areas where the Northern Israelites had been deported from.

Verses 25-26, then these Babylonians decided they needed some instruction in the God of the land because in the intervening time that the land had lain unpopulated, wild animals had multiplied greatly. They came in being

superstitious. They decided that what they needed was some instruction about the God of the land.

Verse 27, the king of Assyria told them to bring back one of the priests whom they had brought from there and he would teach them the manner of the God of the land. Now don't you know that he was going to do a good job teaching them God's truth! What was this priest? He was one of the ones who had been the priest of the high places, one of the lowest, the priest of the golden calf. He was one of the ones that Jeroboam had put into office (1 Kings 12:31)—what was he going to teach them? He was going to teach them the same kind of paganism that Israel had been having. The only difference was that they used God's name. They used the name of the God of Israel when they built this golden calf and did all of these things. They paid lip service to the God of Israel, to YHWH, but they practiced all these pagan things.

Verse 28, “Then one of the priests whom they carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.” Notice what it says. We are told that one of these priests came back, and he taught them how they ought to fear the Lord. And don't you know he did a good job.

Verse 29, “However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt.”

Verse 32, “So they feared the Lord, and from every class [KJV, “of the lowest of the people”] they appointed for themselves priests of the high places who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.” Evidently, the priest showed them where they were supposed to get their priests.

Verses 33-34, “They feared the Lord, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away. To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the Lord, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the Lord had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel.”

Verse 41, “So these nations feared the Lord, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children's children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.” At the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, that's what they had to say about the Samaritans. This is the origin of the Samaritans. When the Northern Israelites were taken into captivity, the Assyrians

moved in Babylonians and settled them in that area. Bringing back one of the Israelite priests, they now had a “hodge-podge” religion. They kept their old pagan Babylonian religion with all of their idols, but now they attached God’s name to it. That was what the Samaritans were doing. They paid lip service to God and the Bible, but they worshiped their same old idols—same old paganism.

Does that ring a familiar bell? Are you familiar with any particular religion that has made quite a practice of preserving whatever pagan tradition the people were already doing and just attaching a new name to it—attaching a good Bible name to it? Take for example, down in Mexico, the great shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which is the great shrine in Mexico. It is quite a famous Catholic shrine. If you study the history of Mexico, you’ll find that shrine has been around a long time; it antedates the coming of the Spaniards. It had been the shrine of the goddess worshiped by the Aztecs. When the Spaniards came into Mexico, the priests decided to sprinkle a little water, and everybody became Catholic. They decided they all liked this shrine; they were all used to coming here worshiping this goddess. That was fine—keep on doing exactly the same thing, at the same place, use the same old stuff, but now it’s not what it used to be—now it’s Our Lady of Guadalupe. We will sprinkle a little water, and all of a sudden, she’s got a new name. But it’s the same old thing.

When you come into the New Testament, you read of the animosity of the Jews and the Samaritans.

John 4:9, “...‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” Here is where it came from. The reason why the Jews didn’t like the Samaritans was because they knew what the Samaritans were. Remember what Christ told the Samaritan woman?

Verse 22, “‘You worship what you do not know, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.’” Christ settled the argument as to where you look for and who preserved the truth.

Romans 3:1-2, “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.” The Samaritans didn’t preserve the truth; the Jews did. They preserved the Old Testament and they preserved the truth.

In Acts 8:9-11, we read of one, Simon, known in history as Simon Magus, Simon the Magician, Simon the Sorcerer, who was the chief religious official of the Samaritans and to whom they all

gave heed. Maybe we will go into a Bible study on it, but in reality, what you find is that as the Jews were dispersed throughout the Mediterranean world; the Jewish community served as the nucleus around which the true Church of God was built. Even in the Gentile cities, it was converted Jews who knew the law, had access to the Scriptures and it served as the nucleus of the Church. The Gentiles were added in around it because this was where there was access to the knowledge of the truth—the Scriptures.

We find that even Paul, who was the apostle of the Gentiles, came to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. By having a stable core of people who were familiar with the law as the first ones in the Church, it was much simpler when others who came out of other backgrounds were added in. There were already people, membership in the Church, who were culturally attuned to the Bible and to the principles of the law, and other new members coming in acclimated themselves to it. That was the logical way to do it and that is the way God is.

But there was another church that had its beginning a couple of years later, one that had its beginnings in Samaria, with one Simon the Sorcerer. Interestingly enough, there had been, as a result of some of the conquests of Alexander the Great, a limited dispersion of the Samaritans. There were major Samaritan colonies in two areas—Rome, Italy and Alexandria, Egypt. These colonies in Rome and Alexandria became the centers of the church that Simon the Magician, the Sorcerer, sought to build with himself as the head. That gets into another story, but the origin of the Samaritans in 2 Kings 17 is a critical chapter. There is very important information that is preserved there.

2 Kings 18:1-4, “Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden images and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.” Hezekiah was a very zealous man.

Now turn back to 2 Chronicles 29 and we’ll get a little insight into something that occurred right

at the time of the fall of Northern Israel after the Assyrians had come in and successfully invaded. 2 Chronicles 29:1, “Hezekiah became king when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem.”

Verses 3-36, this was a time of great reforms, they repaired the temple, and they had the Scriptures being preached.

Now notice what he did.

2 Chronicles 30:1-11, “And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel. For the king and his leaders, and all the congregation in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time, because a sufficient number of priests had not sanctified themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. And the matter pleased the king, and all the congregation. So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner. Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the commandment of the king: ‘Children of Israel, return to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. And do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to astonishment, as you see. Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the Lord; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the Lord our God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. For if you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.’ So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them. Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.”

There were a handful, a few from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun that humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. There were a handful that came down there, but Hezekiah’s

messengers were basically laughed at and scorned. There was the final warning and witness to Israel—repent. It was in the context of coming to observe God’s Festivals. They were told to come up to Jerusalem to observe God’s Festivals, repent and God will be merciful. They did not respond, and the Assyrian army came in and took them all captive.

2 Chronicles 31:1, “Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the sacred pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the high places and the altars—from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh—until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession.”

Verses 4-7, “Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the Lord. As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah; brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the Lord their God they laid in heaps. In the third month they began laying them in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month.”

In other words, at Pentecost they began bringing in their tithes and it was finished by the seventh month—the Feast of Tabernacles—when the final harvest was finished. There was a revival that took place. When a real revival took place, the people started obeying God. They started keeping the Festivals; they started tithing; and they started doing the things that people do when they are repentant.

Verses 20-21, “Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.” God was very pleased with Hezekiah.

We have already commented on where the tribes of Northern Israel were taken into captivity. They were taken to the cities of the Medes, primarily between the areas between the Black and the Caspian Sea. Babylonians were brought in to the former land of Israel. They were known as the Samaritans, taking their name from the

capital city. We are told about the religion of the Samaritans. It was the same old Babylonian Mystery religion that they had been following all along, but now they added a new ingredient—they began to call it all by the name of the true God. One of the Northern Israel priests was brought back to Samaria to teach them the manner of the God of the land. We have seen that Jeroboam's approach to religion was also preserved.

In terms of Hezekiah, let's notice what we are told is God's analysis of Hezekiah.

2 Kings 18:5-6, "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses." Hezekiah was a very faithful and righteous man. He obeyed God and did what God said, and he did with his whole heart. There isn't any king of Judah that excelled him in that. What did he do when the Assyrians invaded? We get an example here of how he handled problems.

The Assyrians were going to come in to deport Judah. They had already deported Israel.

2 Kings 18:31, "'Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern.''" They were promising the Millennium German style. The Assyrians said, 'Look, we'll take you away to a land like your own. We'll take you to a nice place. We are going to deport you to these concentration camps; but they're going to be nice places, and you will like it. Just come on out of the city, open the gate and come on out nicely. We will load you into cattle cars and transport you to these nice places that we have, and everybody will live happily ever after. Now, why don't you nice Jews come on out.' So, this was the story. It doesn't change a whole lot once you've read it. You just repeat the same thing. There is nothing new under the sun.

The solution was that Hezekiah came in to God and he prayed before God.

2 Kings 19:14, "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord." He received a letter from the hand of the messengers that demanded his surrender. He took it to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. He just spread the

letter out and said, 'Look God, You can read; You can see what these Assyrians are saying.'

Verse 19, "Now therefore, O Lord our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone." God said, 'I am going to deliver you.'

Verse 20, "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: that which you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.'"

Verses 34-35, "'For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'" And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people in the morning, there were corpses—all dead." Now the dead corpses didn't rise up and find out they were dead, but whoever was left rose up and found out. One angel, one army—God said it wasn't hard at all.

Hezekiah went to God with the problem. He went to God and he really spread out his problem before God.

Verse 36, "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, and returned home, and remained at Nineveh." KJV, "Sennacherib the king of Assyria departed and went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh." You better believe he departed and went and returned. When he got up the next morning and found 185,000 people dead, he was the only one left alive in his whole army. You better believe he departed and went and returned. I bet he hopped on the first horse and took off as fast as he could go. He didn't stay around to investigate the cause of death. All he did was load it up and move it out as fast as he could get there. I suspect that anybody in a similar circumstance would have also departed and went and returned very quickly.

In 2 Kings 20:1-5, Hezekiah became very critically ill. Again, he went to God and God healed him. God intervened.

Verse 21, Hezekiah died.

2 Kings 21:1-2, "Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord has cast out before the children of Israel."

Verses 3-11, Manasseh was the opposite of his father. He did everything evil that he could. In fact, he was the most wicked king that ever ruled Judah. Manasseh is described and all his sins.

Because of the sins of Manasseh, all of Judah was ultimately to be taken into captivity.

Verses 12-13, “therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.’” That is pretty clean. God says, ‘I am going to clean house; I have put up with this until I am sick and tired of it.’

Verses 18-19, Manasseh died and his son Amon ruled briefly.

2 Kings 22:1-2, then Josiah who was eight years old, began to reign, “Josiah was eight years old when he became king, ... And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”

We find the parallel in 2 Chronicles 34.

2 Chronicles 34:3-4, “For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.”

Verse 7, “When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.” He went “all the way out.” Everything that he could find that smacked of idolatry, he burned it and ground it to powder. Josiah was a young man and had all of the zeal of youth. He was very, very zealous and he was the only thing that stood between Judah and going into captivity. God had respect for Josiah and Josiah’s reforms. He said, ‘All right, I have said what I am going to do, but I am not going to do anything as long as Josiah is alive because he is obeying with his whole heart. His attitude and actions are such that I appreciate, and I will spare and protect the nation throughout his life.’ You better believe that everybody prayed, ‘Long live the king,’ and meant it because the only thing that stood between the nation and destruction was King Josiah. God said, ‘Josiah’s reign is the only thing good about the whole place, and as long as he is king, I will spare the nation. When he is gone, look out.’

2 Chronicles 35:17-18, “And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

Do you realize how long that had been? That had been over 500 years. There hadn’t been anything as “all out” as what Josiah did. Now the difference between Josiah’s Passover and the great Passover of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30) was that Hezekiah’s Passover had to be celebrated at the time of the second Passover rather than the proper date of the first month because of ceremonial uncleanness. So, Josiah’s Passover excelled Hezekiah’s in that sense; it was more totally kept exactly the way God said it ought to be done.

Then Josiah died.

Verse 24, “...So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.”

Verse 25, “Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments.”

You read some of the commentators and some of the commentaries and they say, ‘You know, we wonder what this was.’ Well, if you go back in your Bible, the book that comes right after the book of Jeremiah—a little short book stuck in there between Jeremiah and Ezekiel (one that we don’t go to that often)—is a book called the “Lamentations of Jeremiah.” The book of Lamentations! It’s very obvious that’s where it comes from.

The laments that Jeremiah wrote were added to the Bible and made an ordinance in Israel and continues to be used. It is the book that the Jews read every year on the ninth of Ab, which is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It comes approximately July/August. The ninth day of Ab is a fast day that the Jews observe in commemoration of the destruction of the temple. Interestingly enough, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple on the ninth day of Ab; centuries later when Titus and the Romans burned the temple in 70 A.D., they did it on exactly the same day. Now they had two reasons to lament. On the ninth of Ab they read the book of Lamentations. Lamentations was a lament written at the death of Josiah, a lament that looked forward to the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah that was

going to come. The destruction that came on Judah and Jerusalem was a type of the Great Tribulation that will be the worst time of tribulation that ever comes.

The book of Lamentation that we will go through at a later time in Bible study is a prophecy of the Great Tribulation. It was written by Jeremiah at the occasion of Josiah's death, which signaled the onset of what really amounted to the Tribulation for Judah and Jerusalem—the destruction of the nation and captivity.

The highlight of Josiah's reign was the great Passover recorded in 2 Chronicles 35.

Let's notice what happened after Josiah's death.

2 Kings 23:29, "In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him [Josiah] at Megiddo when he confronted him."

2 Kings 24:1, "In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him."

2 Kings 25:1-3, "Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land."

Verses 6-7, "So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon."

Verse 9, "He burned the house of the Lord and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great men, he burned with fire." Nebuchadnezzar invaded and conquered Judah, burned Jerusalem and the temple and carried the Jews into captivity back to Babylon. We find the destruction that took place. By about 587 B.C., Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were in captivity. We find the result of the nation having departed from God. Hopefully, this has given us somewhat of an overview.

Israel, of course, had been transported around 721 B.C. About 120 years later, 604 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar invaded and Judah was a vassal state. Finally they were destroyed and taken captive with Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

That brings us to the conclusion of Kings and Chronicles. We will pick up the story in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the next Bible study, which will give us the overview of what happened during the Babylonian captivity, the return of the Jews from Babylon back to Jerusalem under Zerubabel, the rebuilding of the temple, the time of restoration that took place and the conclusion of the Old Testament period. The Bible study following, we will have a study that will cover the time between the Testaments. We will go into the story of what happened between the end of the book of Nehemiah and the beginning of the book of Matthew. We will run through that historic sequence.

Hopefully, this series of Bible studies has enabled you to get a little more of an overview of the history of the Old Testament. But again, over and over, I would call your attention to the fact that these things are written down for our admonition. We need to study the history that is recorded in the Bible in order to get a God's-eye-view of life and of everything. The Bible gives us a story of what man did and didn't do from God's perspective.

Any author writes a book from his own vantage point. We are all familiar with that. If you read the history of anything—any event, any war—depending on where you read it, you are going to get the story differently. The story that we study on World War II is a little different than what they study in Japan or Germany. For years the story of the events surrounding the war between the states was taught differently in Louisiana than it was taught in Massachusetts. That's just the way it is. It's just simply a matter that people tell a story from their own perspective. Now every author has his "ax to grind." Sometimes we read a book and know it is not entirely accurate—it's kind of from that author's viewpoint.

The Bible is a book that is entirely accurate because it is written from the only accurate viewpoint there is—God's point of view. We need to study the Bible in order to understand God's point of view. We grow up in a society and are affected by that society's point of view on any number of subjects.

In some ways, God teaches us by direct commands, "thou shalt/thou shalt not," but most of the teachings of the Bible are not direct commands. Most of the teachings are by example, by illustration, by principle that is illustrated throughout the story. We need to study from that standpoint. That's what Paul told us in the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”

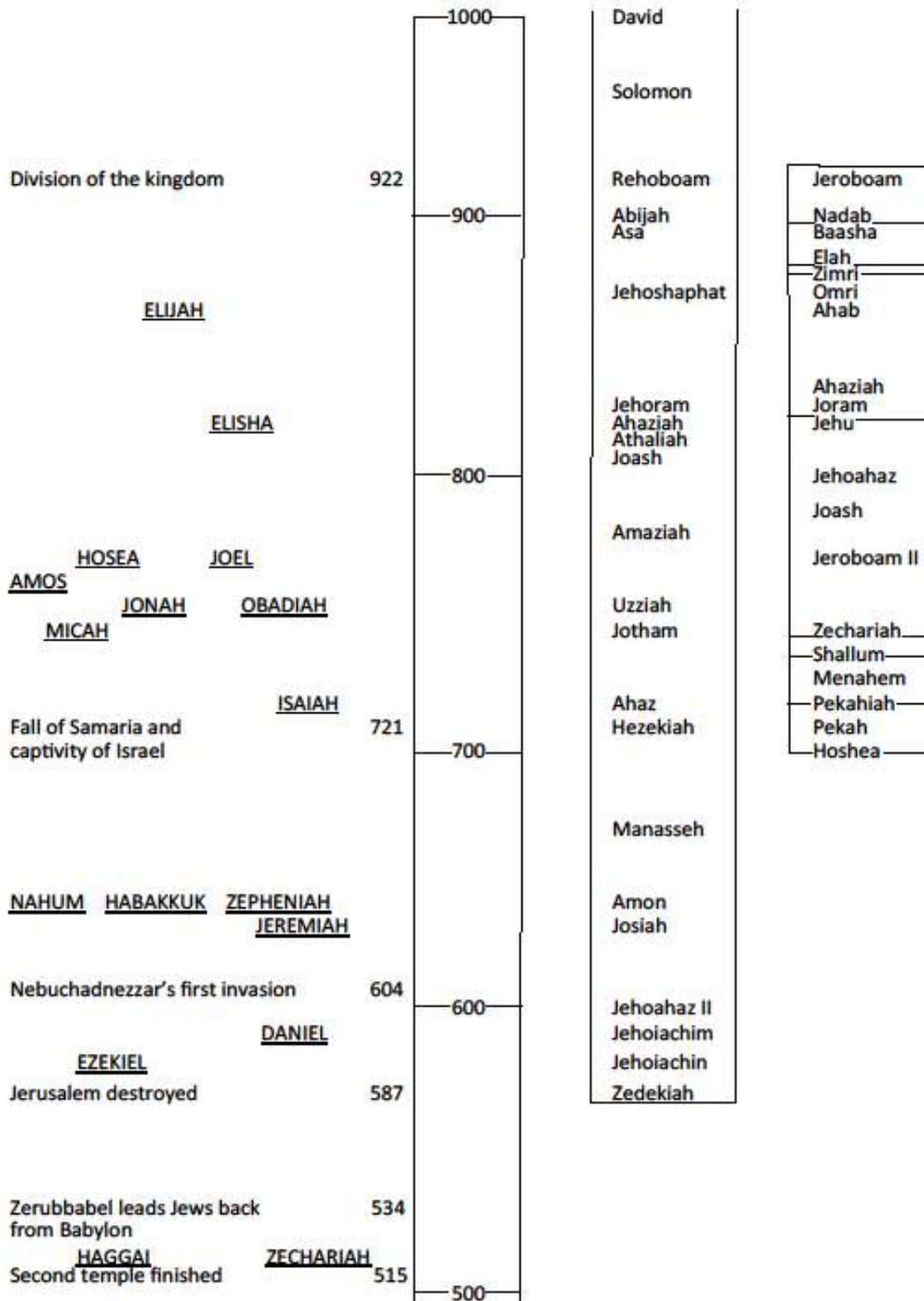
Throughout this study of the Old Testament, the historical characters we study—the story of these individuals, what they did, what they didn’t do—we try to study it from a standpoint of finding out what God is pleased with, what God is displeased with, what certain attributes, what certain actions, what certain attitudes cause, what were the good results, what were the bad results, what were the strengths and weaknesses of all these individuals. As we study it from that standpoint, it’s not a matter of simply dead history. It is a matter of reading of real people who went through real things, and one of the real, crucial reasons it’s recorded for us.

We find as we go through that God’s people, time after time, century after century, have confronted many of the same problems, same troubles and same temptations. Satan has sought to undermine and thwart things the same way over and over again. We are going to find that next time when we go through Ezra and Nehemiah.

If we study the Bible from that perspective, there is nothing new that will ever happen. Any problem, anything that comes up, there is precedence for it. You can find it, and you look to see how God wanted it handled. How should the people have handled it? How did those who were righteous and faithful to God handle it? We study it from that perspective so that if or when we ever find ourselves in a similar situation, we will already know how to react and respond. It is an important way to study the Bible.

Too many times we study it, and it is just kind of a story that people go through—they get bogged down with all the “begats” and all of the kings and all of this—and miss the overview. It is there so that we can learn from the examples of others and not have to make all the same mistakes. The lesson of history is that very few ever learn anything from history. But we have the opportunity. God has given it to us, provided it for us. There are parallels all through the Scriptures of what we are going through and will go through between now and the end of the age. We have to study the Scriptures to find those parallels and apply them in a right way. Hopefully we have found some information of value as we have gone through this survey of the Old Testament. We will conclude the Old Testament with the next couple of studies.

Chronology of Kings & Chronicles



Bible Study # 27
December 13, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Old Testament Series—Ezra and Nehemiah
(Chart at end)

Let's look at some of the chronology of the invasions. The last Bible studies, we have been using this Chronology of Kings and Chronicles. You note that 604 B.C. is the time of Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion, and then there was a subsequent invasion a few years later in 596 B.C. That was the invasion that Daniel and Ezekiel went into captivity. Jeremiah was prophesying during that time. Finally in 587 B.C. the third invasion occurred that completely destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple Solomon built.

As we continue down through the story recorded in Daniel, it gives the story of what was happening in Babylon prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The fall of Babylon was in 539 B.C. It was the Feast of Trumpets in 539 B.C. and it was the "handwriting on the wall" for Babylon (Daniel 5). Within a matter of five years the decree was issued by King Cyrus that allowed the Jews to return to rebuild Jerusalem in 534 B.C. Zerubbabel led the Jews back from Babylon. He was the governor appointed by the Persians. Haggai and Zechariah were prophets who flourished at that time. The book of Ezra starts out with that.

By 515 B.C., the second temple was completed. Only a tiny portion of the population returned. There were a lot of problems involved in building things up. There were external problems. When Northern Israel went into captivity in 721 B.C., the Assyrians deported all the Israelites and put in other people who were practicing the Babylonian Mystery Religion. These people were there when the Jews began to return. They immediately ran into problems.

From 515 B.C., there is a gap of time in terms of the story, and we don't pick up the story again until a generation later when Ezra came in 457 B.C., 58 years after the temple had been finished, basically a generation. From the time the temple was finished to the time Ezra came was like from our time now back to the Great Depression—there were not a whole lot of people around who would have had a first-hand account of it. Ezra does not have control of the civil government. He has religious authority by the Persian king.

In 444 B.C. Nehemiah came back as the civil governor. He and Ezra joined together.

When the curtain rises with Ezra's return, the people are part and parcel with this society. Satan's efforts to destroy the work are evident in Ezra and Nehemiah. Satan had several methods of attacks. There was an attempt at a frontal assault. The Samaritans hired lawyers and put the whole work of God into receivership—a lengthy legal hassle. Zerubbabel won a reversal. When that didn't work, then there was a subtle infiltration to water down, to compromise, to destroy the work of God from the inside. Ezra brought the temple scrolls back from Babylon. Daniel had access to them. As Ezra comes on the scene, he brings these things back.

From the time Haggai and Zechariah preached until the time Ezra returned, that 60-year period was the time during which Esther became queen. This is what set the stage to enable Ezra to return. **Ezra and Nehemiah are responsible for canonizing the Old Testament.** Josephus wrote, "The prophetic spirit ceased among the Jews with the death of Ezra." Jeremiah had prophesied that Jerusalem would lay desolate for 70 years. From Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion to the return of the Jews in 534 B.C. was exactly a 70-year period. God allowed Cyrus to issue a decree that allowed the rebuilding of the temple. It is very apparent that the only ones who ever returned were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and some of the Levites, not the ten tribes.

Let's start with Ezra.

Ezra 1:5, "Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priest and the Levites, with all those whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem." These went back.

Ezra 2:2, "Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel..." Zerubbabel is mentioned in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. He was in the direct ancestry of Jesus Christ and a direct descendant of David. "Those who came with Zerubbabel were Jeshua"; it starts with Jeshua and goes through the various other ones.

Verse 64, "The whole congregation together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty." Just over 42,000 returned out of the original four million.

Ezra 3:1-6, "And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to

Jerusalem. Then Jeshua, the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening burnt offerings. They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day; and afterward they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed Feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the Lord. From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord had not yet been laid.”

To institute daily sacrifices, all that has to be done is to consecrate an altar. I went through a sermon on the Middle East and stated that daily sacrifices would have to be instituted. It doesn't take long to consecrate an altar. A temple doesn't have to be built.

Verse 8, “Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began work and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the Lord.” They told them, ‘Let's get started.’ So, they began the building.

Verse 12, there were a few elderly people who came back who remembered the temple Solomon built and its glory. It was not nearly as impressive.

Those who returned were of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. The leaders of the return were Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua the high priest.

Ezra 4:1-2, “Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, ‘Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.’” They said, ‘We are good Christians just like you. Let us join together.’

Verse 3, “But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, ‘You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.’” The Samaritans suggested, ‘Let us build with you; let us all be in this thing together.’ Did the Samaritans worship God the way He wanted? –No, of course not.

2 Kings 17 shows they used God's name, but they kept worshiping the same old idols. They served their graven images to this day—right on down to our day. Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the heads of the fathers said, ‘You are not with the program. We are not on the same wavelength. We are not compatible.’ They refused to become unequally yoked together.

Ezra 4:4-5, “Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” They hired lawyers.

Verse 6, “Now in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.” They began to make accusations.

Verses 11-13, “This is a copy of the letter that they sent him—To King Artaxerxes from your servants the men of the region beyond the River, and so forth: Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem, and are building the rebellious and evil city, and are finishing its walls and repairing the foundation. Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will not pay tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished.”

They are trying to make it sound bad. They are trying to make it sound terrible. ‘That rebellious city, they are rebuilding it.’ How did he know that they were not going to pay their taxes? He didn't know. He was just accusing.

Verses 16-23, “We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion over the region beyond the River. Then the king sent an answer: To Rehum the commander, to Shimshai the scribe, to the rest of their companions, who dwell in Samaria, and to the rest in the region beyond the River: Peace, and so forth. The letter, which you sent to us, has been clearly read before me. And I gave the command, and a search has been made, and it was found that this city in former times has made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and

sedition have been fostered in it. There have also been mighty kings over Jerusalem, who have ruled over all the provinces beyond the River; and tax, tribute and custom were paid to them. Now give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me. Take heed now that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings? Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease."

Now they had their court order and came charging in with all their troops.

Verse 24, "Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia." They shut down the work. They got a court order.

Ezra 5:1-2, "Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them." Zerubbabel rose up to do the work.

Verses 3-4, "At the same time Tattenai the governor of the region beyond the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: 'Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?' Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building."

Verses 8-10, they went to subpoena the record. It wrangled through court for the next few years. Finally the decree came in. They made all their pronouncements.

Verses 11-13, "And thus they returned us an answer, saying: 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon. However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God.'" They said, 'We had an order from Cyrus.'

Ezra 6:1-3, "Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. And at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record was written thus: In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem: 'Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits.'" Darius makes a search. Finally when the answer came down and was settled, it settled on the side of God's work.

There is an amazing parallel here in Ezra. Those who remember back in 1979, this case here is a very remarkable parallel. One of the things you learn is that what Satan does is not original. He uses the same old tactics again and again. What should we do when we find ourselves in circumstances like this? Like Zerubbabel, court order or no court order, we have to do the work of God.

Verses 14-16, "So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy."

Verse 19, "And the descendant of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month." This was 515 B.C.

Between chapter 6 and chapter 7 there is an almost 60-year gap.

Ezra 7:1, "Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah..." Here, we are looking here at Artaxerxes.

Verse 6, "this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him." Ezra was a priest.

Verses 10-14, "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel. Now this is the copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the

words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes in Israel: Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth. I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which is in your hand.”

Ezra was allowed to carry back the official temple scrolls released from Babylon. Artaxerxes was the son of Ahasuerus who was the husband of Queen Esther. The one who issued the decree was a stepson of Esther, and he had a favorable attitude toward the Jews. He now issued some favorable decrees.

Verse 18, “And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God.” He gave them “carte blanche” to do whatever they had to do.

Verse 21, “And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, do issue a decree to all the treasurers who are in the region beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently.” That is pretty much of a carte blanche. ‘Whatever this guy needs, you give it to him.’

We have the return of Ezra. We notice that Ezra was a priest and his attitude on his return was that he was coming back to teach the law and restore the Scriptures to their central place it should occupy among the people of God.

Ezra 8:21-23, “Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, ‘The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him.’ So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.”

They got ready to leave and were heading across this “no man’s land” with these marauding raiders, and what they really would like was to have a transport of soldiers to protect them. ‘We are sitting ducks. But how can I go back and ask for this help? I have just told him how great and powerful God is. I am embarrassed that I don’t have the faith like I said.’ So he called a fast.

God’s ministers in the past have wrestled with the same emotions and feelings that we do.

Ezra 9:1, “When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, ‘The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.’”

One of the great sins that Ezra discovered was that intermarriage had taken place. The Jews had intermarried with the Samaritans and others of the lands. They were on the verge of losing their identity as a separate, identifiable people. Where did the problem start?

Verse 2, ““For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is intermingled with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass.” People follow their leaders. They all got in line. Not every single person, but throughout history they always followed by and large as a group. People tended to follow their leader, so when the princes and rulers began to mix and mingle, others did, too. Ezra was very concerned with this. This was a major problem.

Literally, the identity of God’s people was at stake—religiously, ethnically and culturally. The Jews would have ceased to exist. If Satan can’t subvert God’s plan one way, he always tries another way. God has always wanted His people to maintain a separate identity from the world. They were a nation-state as well as a church. It was important to God that they preserve their identity. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob placed great emphasis on who their children married so that the identity of the people be preserved.

In Deuteronomy 32:8-9, God separated the people by geographical boundaries: the Himalayan Mountains, Sahara Desert, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, the biggest obstacles you could put in Satan’s path. He has been busily trying to get around it. Satan stirs up people to do the opposite of what God tells them to do. It seems inborn. Whatever God wants you to do, Satan stirs you up to do the opposite.

What he commanded them to do about it: Ezra 10:3, “Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the counsel of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.”

Drastic measures had to be taken. Let me point out here that this is a practice among the Jews that is causing problems today. If your mother is Jewish, then you are considered a Jew, not if your father is a Jew. That is the reason Ezra made them put out the Gentile wives. Even if the father was Jewish, the children were not considered Jewish. That is the basis on down to this day.

Verses 17-19, “By the first day of the first month they finished questioning all the men who had taken pagan wives. And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives the following were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, . . .” They were sent away from Judah.

Ezra had come back in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king (Ezra 7:8).

Nehemiah’s background was that he was a cupbearer to the king (Nehemiah 1:11). **God used Nehemiah to clean house.**

The grandson of the high priest did not put away his pagan wife. As time went by, people resented the fact of what those at the top were getting by with. They complied, but they were not convinced and did not internalize these values. They went along with the rules, but they never got the point.

Understand something. If all you do is go along with the rules and don’t get the point, then sooner or later you will go back. It is the change on the inside—not changing what we are but what we think. If what I am on the inside becomes different, than the actions on the outside are going to be different. It was going to take more than someone coming back to preach and teach.

This was the nation that Jesus was to be born into over 450 years later. The Scriptures had to be preserved. This was going to be the basis of the Church being raised up. Having an identifiable people that are obeying the law would serve as a nucleus when Jesus Christ came. It was an attempt to derail the entire future of the purpose and plan of God, to water down, dilute and destroy the Scriptures of God.

There were different personalities in the rulers. Some were stronger and more disciplined. They all had their strengths and weaknesses. Nehemiah was a very strong-willed man. He was perhaps as strong a ruler—a strong and determined ruler—as ever ruled the people of God. He was a man who meant business. He was very determined. He was a strong-willed man

who was needed for a very difficult time. There was nothing wishy-washy about Nehemiah. He was sent back as their governor.

Nehemiah 5:14, “Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor’s provisions.”

Nehemiah 2:5, “And I said to the king, ‘If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.’” He requested the job from the king and got it. He was given leadership and authority.

Verses 9-10, “Then I went to the governors in the region beyond the River, and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.” Sanballat was the leader of the Samaritans; Tobiah was his assistant.

Verses 15-16, “So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned and the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.” The rulers didn’t know what he was doing.

Verses 17-18, “Then I said to them, ‘You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.’ And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ Then they set their hands to do this good work.”

The city had really never been completely rebuilt. The city was still laying waste. There was debris. The population was sparse; the gates had not been replaced.

Verse 19, “But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us, and said, ‘What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?’” They made fun.

Verse 20, “So I answered them, and said to them, ‘The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in

Jerusalem.” ‘You don’t have anything to do with it. We don’t want you around here.’

Nehemiah 3 describes some of the layout and the details of repairing the city.

Nehemiah 4:1-3, “But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria and said, ‘What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?’ Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, ‘Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall.’” They were making fun; all these ideas were expressed.

Verses 6-8, “So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion.”

Verse 11, “And our adversaries said, ‘They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease.’”

Verses 16-18, “So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all of the house of Judah. Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.” Nehemiah was determined. ‘We are going to build this wall if we have to stand guard.’

Verses 21-23, “So we labored in the work, and half of the men held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared. At the same time I also said to the people, ‘Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day.’ So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone took them off for washing.”

‘We never even got undressed when we went to bed. We were on guard. We kept right there at the wall. We changed clothes in order to wash the ones we had on.’ You see the kind of determination that Nehemiah had. He was going to build this wall and he wasn’t going to give them a chance to tear it down.

Nehemiah 5 is a backdrop for the book of Malachi. Malachi prophesied during this time. Malachi 3:9, “‘You are cursed with a curse because you have robbed Me,’” Notice the background. What was the curse they were cursed with?

Nehemiah 5:1, “And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren.”

Verses 3-4, “There were also some who said, ‘We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine.’ There were also those who said, ‘We have borrowed money for the king’s tax on our lands and vineyards.’” They had to mortgage their land for food. They had to borrow money to eat and pay taxes.

Verse 5, “... ‘and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are brought into slavery already. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards.’” They were selling their children into servitude. When Malachi said they were cursed with a curse, they were.

Verse 7, “After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, ‘Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.’ So I called a great assembly against them.” Some were taking advantage of those who had less.

Verse 14, “Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor’s provisions.” He didn’t even take the salary he was paid and he told the people they had better not be in it for what they could get.

The wall was completed, but the gates were not complete.

Nehemiah 6:1-3, “Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, ‘Come, let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono.’ But they thought to do me harm. So I sent messengers to them, saying, ‘I

am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" They said, 'Let us meet together.' Nehemiah answered, 'I have too many important things to do.'

Verse 5, "Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand." He kept trying to get to Nehemiah, to lure him off.

Verse 6, "In it was written: 'It is reported among the nations, ... that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.'"

Verse 8, "Then I sent to him, saying, 'No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart.'" He said, 'You just made it up.'

Verse 9, "For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.'" 'You are just trying to weaken the work.' They were trying to undermine things.

Verses 15-16, "So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God."

Verses 17-18, "Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah and the letters of Tobiah came to them. For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechia." Intermarriage occurred here among the Jews, even some of the leaders.

Nehemiah 7:1-5, "Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many. And I said to them, 'Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand guard, let them shut the doors and bar them; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house.' Now the city was large and spacious, but the people in it were few, and the houses were not rebuilt. Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be

registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first return, ..." God inspired him to call people in to increase the size of the city.

Nehemiah 8:1-5, "Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation, of men and women and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate, from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; ... And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it all the people stood up."

Verse 6, he opened the Book in the sight of all the people. They all stood up and Ezra blessed God.

Verse 8, "So they read, distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading." That is the way God's ministry preaches.

Verse 9, "And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.' For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law." This was on the Feast of Trumpets; that is what we teach today.

Verses 16-18, "Then the people went out and brought them and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. So the whole congregation of those who had returned from the captivity made booths; and sat under the booths for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the Feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner."

The people kept the Feast of Tabernacles. It was more thoroughly done than since the days of Jeshua.

Nehemiah 10:29, we find a covenant, pledging their faithfulness, “they joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God’s Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes...” God’s law contains both blessings and curses. If you walk in it, you are blessed; if you walk against it, you are cursed.

Verses 30-31, “that we would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; that if the peoples of the land bring wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and that we would forego the seventh year’s produce and the exaction of every debt.” There wasn’t to be intermarriage and or selling of wares on the Sabbath. ‘We will keep the Sabbath; we will not be involved in business.’

Verse 37, “to bring the firstfruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, the new wine and oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to bring the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities.” The covenant involved an agreement to faithfully obey the Law, to not intermarry, to keep the Sabbath faithfully, to tithe and to give offerings.

Nehemiah 13:6, “But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king.”

Nehemiah was gone for 12 years and then he came back. I want you to understand and focus on this a little bit. Here was Nehemiah insisting on all these reforms and then he was gone for a period of time. You know what he found when he came back? He found Eliashib had prepared a room in the temple for Tobiah, the leader of the Samaritans.

Verses 7-8, “and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room.” He came in there and said, ‘What in the world is going on here?’ He started picking up stuff and heaving it out. He thought he had gotten rid of these people. How deep do you think the reform was?

Mr. Herbert Armstrong drew a lot of analogies and emphasis on these things. There was a

seven-year period in 1979 to 1986—seven years in which he emphasized over and over again that God had brought him back to get the Church back on the track. Here God brought Nehemiah back to get things back on the track. Nehemiah was gone, and some of the people obviously had not entirely gotten the point. The leader of the Samaritans had moved in. Nehemiah cleaned house.

Verses 10-12, “I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. So I contended with the rulers, and said, ‘Why is the house of God forsaken?’ And I gathered them together and set them in their place. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse.” Nehemiah began to organize things.

Verse 15, “In those days I saw in Judah some people treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions.” They were harvesting on the Sabbath.

Verses 16-19, “Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, ‘What evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath.’ So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gate, so that no burden would be brought in on the Sabbath day.”

Verse 21, they had set up shop outside the gate. He said, ‘Why are you doing this outside the wall? If you do it again, I will lay hands on you.’ They got the point. ‘No more “Mr. Nice Guy,” I mean business.’

Verses 23-25, “In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made

them swear by God, saying, 'You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves.'"

He jerked up a few of them, knocked them around and explained to them what they were to do. He made it very plain to them.

Verses 27-28, "'Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?' And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me." He "ran him out of town on a rail." He was in line to be high priest. This had been the "fly-in-the-ointment" all along. Nehemiah finally saw it. What happened was that Sanballat built a temple on Mt. Gerizim. He said, 'We will put you in business up here.'

Now when you read the story in John 4, the woman at the well said, 'Our fathers worship in this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' Remember that statement she made? On Mount Gerizim was the false temple that Sanballat had built for this renegade priest. 'You Jews say it ought to be in Jerusalem.'

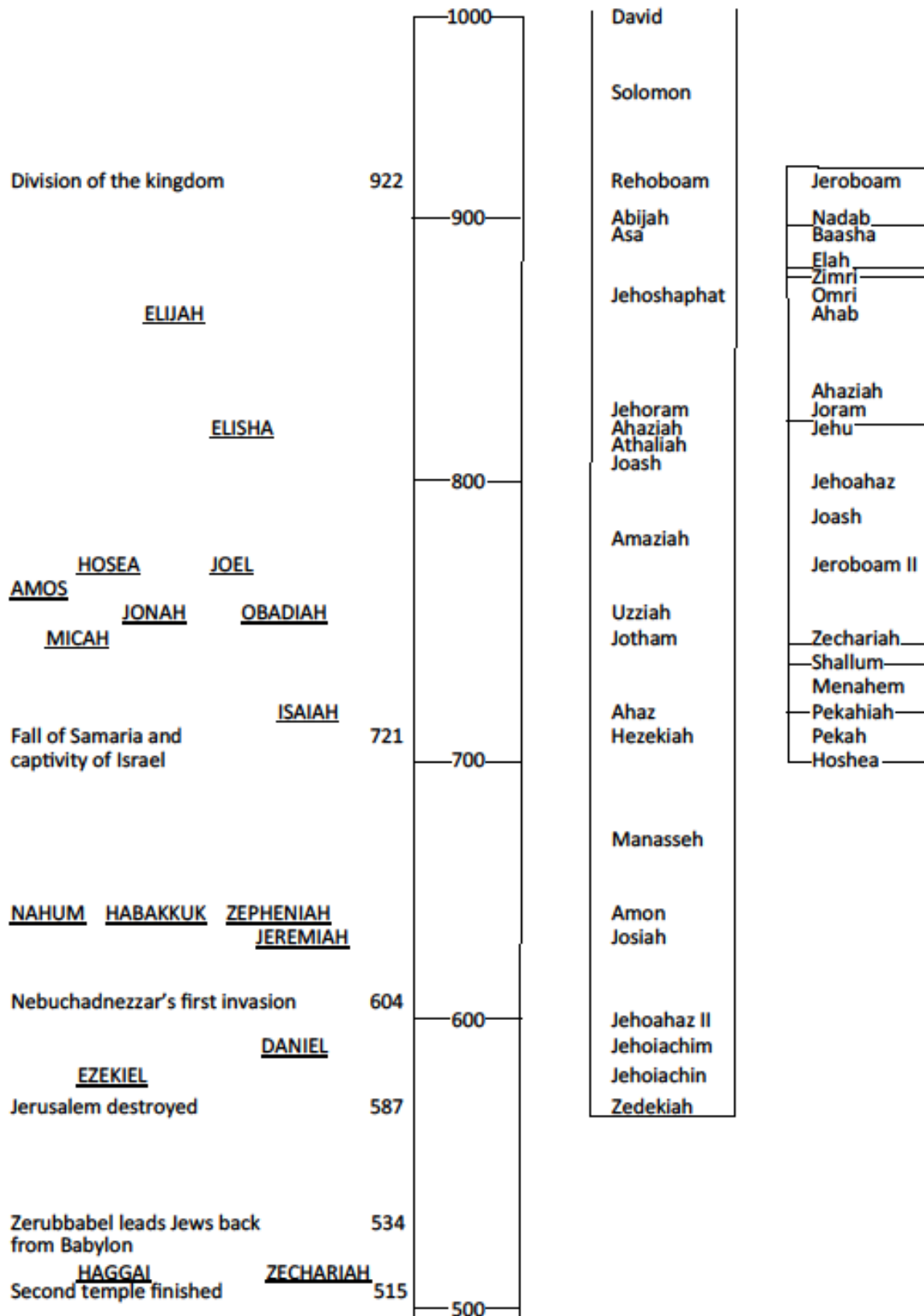
John 4:20-23, "'Our fathers worshiped on this mountain [Mt. Gerizim], and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.'" 'You Samaritans worship what you do not know.' He made it plain to her who had preserved the Scriptures.

Nehemiah 13:29-31, "Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, and to bringing the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times. Remember me, O my God, for good!" Nehemiah was used by God to clean house. It was an important job that took a man of a unique temperament and approach to be able to do

something like that. Nehemiah was the one that did that and stood out in that way.

There aren't any questions to be passed out for next time. I will go over and discuss some things leading up to the New Testament. This has been a historical survey. Hopefully, it has given you a little insight, and it is important for us to learn the lessons for us today.

Chronology of Kings & Chronicles



Bible Study # 28
December 27, 1988
Mr. John Ogwyn

Between the Testaments

We have been going through the Old Testament from the standpoint of an historical survey. In other words, we're not going through everything in every book of the Old Testament, but we're going through the story flow of the history of the Old Testament starting with the book of Genesis, coming down through the five books of Moses, through Joshua and Judges, through the story of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles as has been put together. Then we went through the books of Ezra and Nehemiah which pick up the story from the time of the Babylonian captivity until the conclusion of the story that we have directly recorded in our Bibles.

After the death of Ezra and Nehemiah, the completed Old Testament, as the Jews had preserved it, was delivered into the hands of the Great Synagogue which was presided over by the high priest. The Great Synagogue was the Great Assembly. We are told in the book of Nehemiah that Nehemiah called together a great assembly against the nobles and rulers (5:7) and presided over it.

After his death, it was presided over by the high priest. This was the group that was charged with the responsibility of maintaining the reforms that Ezra and Nehemiah had brought together and accomplished. There is reference in the book of Nehemiah to these things and to the specifics. Some of the genealogies, the lists of names we went into (which we did not focus on in detail) delineate who were involved in the Great Assembly. Ezra, you remember, brought back the copy of the Law (Ezra 7:14), the Scriptures, from Babylon, and as he brought back those Scriptures from Babylon, he was responsible for teaching them to the Jews who had returned. This set the stage. They had all those problems. The Great Assembly was left with the responsibility for maintaining the reforms.

There were other events going on in the world that affected what was happening with the Jews and what was happening in Judea. The Persian Empire under which the Jews had gained independence continued along for a period of time, basically for a generation after the death of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Malachi would be contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah. The book of Malachi was the last

book that was written and added in. By 400 B.C., the canon of the Old Testament was completed.

The Persian Empire continued on over the course of the next 70 years. By the time 70 years has passed, we have a generation that has come into leadership that only know of Ezra and Nehemiah by what they have heard from others. They were as far removed from Ezra and Nehemiah as we are removed from World War I.

The events of World War I certainly affected us; there are a handful of people left who have firsthand memory. There are others who have secondhand memory, who heard stories told by their parents and people who went through it. But you see, after 70 years, even those people are less and less.

The generation that was on the scene in leadership positions when Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian Empire was as far removed from Ezra and Nehemiah as we are removed from World War I. Alexander the Great had a tremendous impact on the ancient world at that time and a major impact on the events that shaped the world into which Jesus Christ came.

What we want to do this evening is **to set the stage for the story that we are going to encounter next Bible study when we go into the New Testament and do a survey of the Gospels and Acts. What we find are the events between the Testaments that shaped the society into which the Messiah came.** One of the events that greatly shaped this was the rule of Alexander the Great.

The events between the Testaments are told in the Bible. They are not directly told in the Bible, but they are told in prophecy in the book of Daniel. We might notice, just very briefly, the events in the book of Daniel.

In Daniel 8:1, Daniel saw in vision. He is writing prior to the time and around the time that Babylon fell in 539 B.C., before the Persian Empire came to power and right around the time that Babylon fell. Daniel saw a vision.

Daniel 8:3-5, "Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no beast could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes." The goat

had one great horn. This was a rather unusual looking goat. The horn protruded out from between his eyes.

Verses 6-8, “Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.”

This was an unusual thing. When you break off a goat’s horn, you don’t see four little sprouts come out, but this is what happened with this particular goat. It goes on into some other things, but let’s notice the interpretation.

Verses 20-22, ““The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.””

What we find here is the story when the empire of the Medes and the Persians is going to come in and conquer Babylon. Then they would be overthrown by an empire from the west—an empire that was going to move with great force and speed—the empire or kingdom of Greece. That was typified in that “large horn”; it is one significant king, the one that was the founder of the Empire, Alexander the Great. He was going to sweep across and absolutely destroy this ram, the empire or kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. But then this great horn, this king, Alexander the Great, was going to be broken off. And rather than his empire being perpetuated by his son and grandson, it would be broken off and would be split into four divisions with each ruled over by one of his generals. And that was the case. Let’s go on a little bit further.

Daniel 11:2, ““And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.”” This refers to Xerxes. Xerxes would be the one to stir up everyone against Greece.

Verses 3-4, ““Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do

according to his will. And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.””

Verse 5, it describes a king of the South.

Verse 13 talks about a king of the North.

What we have, as you go through Daniel 11, is a story that comes down to a fight between a king of the North and a king of the South. Let’s get the picture. Alexander’s empire conquered the known world. It spread across from Greece. He swept across Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), came down through Palestine, conquered the area of Judah, came all the way down into Egypt and conquered Egypt. He spread across to the Euphrates River to ancient Babylon, into Persia, all the way into India. He got all the way to Afghanistan, the area of India and Afghanistan.

Certain of the Afghan tribes trace themselves back and are descendants from some of the soldiers of Alexander the Great. They were a bunch of fighters, and they have been fighting ever since. Nobody has ever been able to do anything with them, as the Russians have learned to their dismay.

You read of the British Empire at its height, and the most that the British were ever able to do with the Afghans was to put soldiers at the Kybur Pass and to keep them from coming into India. They had a very similar escapade in Afghanistan as the Russians did, and they finally decided the simplest thing to do was to get out of Afghanistan, just guard the Pass and not let them get out—keep them there. They are a rough bunch when it comes to that.

Alexander’s Empire spread across all the way to India. He conquered the northern part of India, the part he wanted, and up to the border that is now Afghanistan. He left soldiers and spread across the whole Middle East. He united the whole Middle East, everything from Greece to India.

You see, the Persian Empire had not gone that far east. The Persian Empire had extended up to portions of India. Alexander conquered even more of India than the Persians had. The Persians had a great Empire. Alexander had smashed their empire and he did it in just a few years. Basically, it took ten years for Alexander to conquer the world, from 333 B.C. when he crossed the Dardanelle from Greece into Turkey. And in ten years he was dead. He was 30 years old and he was obviously a remarkable

individual to have been able to “stir up” things to that point.

But when he died, there was no one person to take his empire. Very quickly, within a few years, it split into four divisions and was led by his four generals: Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus. These were the four particular generals that split it. It was prophesied in the book of Daniel that this would happen. Daniel was writing before the fact. In a matter of a few decades, the empire consolidated to where Seleucus in the North ruled the area of what is modern-day Syria across to Babylon. Ptolemy ruled Egypt in the South. This is north and south from the standpoint of Jerusalem, the normal way directions are given in the Bible—from the standpoint of Jerusalem. What’s east and west is different if you are in China, as opposed to if you are in the United States or Europe. Directions are a matter of where you are in relationship to other things.

The portions of Alexander’s Empire that had long-term impact on the Jews were the areas of Seleucus to the north and Ptolemy to the south. These are outlined in Daniel 11. The details of the king of the North and the king of the South pushing at each other back and forth are recorded. We are not going to go through the details of Daniel 11, but we will at a later time. It actually records in advance all of the struggles back and forth.

Now if you look at a map and look at the area to the north where Syria stretches across to Babylon and look at the south to where Egypt is, what’s in the middle? What’s between them? – Jerusalem, the area of the Jews.

Now, what do you think they fought over? It didn’t take them long to start fighting. They wanted to expand their territory. Well, what is in the middle? Jerusalem. So, when they were going to fight, what were they going to fight over? Who was going to rule that? It was a matter that if Ptolemy was going to move north and try to fight against Seleucus, the kingdom of the North, then he had to go through Jerusalem to get there. And if the Seleucuses were going to come to the south to fight and try to conquer Egypt, they had to come through Jerusalem to get there. What it amounted to, the Jews caught it in every direction. Every time they came through, the Jews got caught in the middle.

This set the stage for events that greatly affected them and shaped the world into which Jesus Christ came. There were events that resulted from Alexander’s coming on the scene. One of the major events that resulted from Alexander’s

conquest was that the Greek language and culture were diffused throughout the known world, all the way across to India. Each of these four kingdoms that came up was still a Greek kingdom. The Ptolemys who ruled Egypt were Greek. The last of the Ptolemys was Cleopatra. She’s probably the best known. You’ve heard the story of Anthony and Cleopatra. She committed suicide, and the Romans swallowed up her kingdom. She was the last of the Ptolemys. She was not Egyptian in the ethnic sense. She was Greek. The Ptolemys were Greek. They were descendants of one of Alexander’s generals who conquered that area and ruled it.

The Seleucus ruled from Syria to Babylon. The capital was at Antioch in Syria. They named it after themselves. Antiochus was one of the most popular names that all of these kings up in the north had. We’ll talk about one in a few minutes whose name was Antiochus Epiphanes which means “Antiochus of the glorious appearing.” He obviously had a high opinion of himself. He must have thought he looked pretty good. He plays a role in both Bible history and Bible prophecy.

The stage was set. The Greek language and culture spread across the known world. This set the stage for the New Testament because what language is the New Testament written in? It is written in Greek. That was a common language that most educated people could speak by the time of the New Testament. That’s why the apostles could go into different areas of the world and communicate in the Greek language. Wherever the Apostle Paul would travel, he could communicate in Greek. Not to say that he didn’t speak other languages. The New Testament was written in Greek, and the Christian community (scattered throughout a wide area at that time) could understand it because the Greek language was the language of education. People spoke their native language, but in addition, if they were educated, if they went to school, they learned Greek. It became the language of education, of trade and commerce in much the same way the spread of the British Empire and the English language in the 19th century set the stage for God’s work today.

The diffusion of the English language throughout the world meant that God’s work could go to the world in English and reach educated people throughout the world, whose native tongues would have been languages we wouldn’t have known or wouldn’t have had a way to gain access to. Then, as educated people in those

societies learned the truth and came into the Church, speaking and having knowledge of English, they also spoke the native language of their country. It opened the way for the work to go out in other languages.

The widespread use of English, as well as other colonial languages, set the stage. We could go first in English to a great deal of the world. What we couldn't reach in English could generally be reached in French. Portions of the non-English parts of the Caribbeans and the non-English part of Africa could be reached in that way by the French language, and then the Spanish language, again as a result of colonial empires throughout the areas of Latin America.

In three languages, the vast majority of nations could be impacted. God set the stage for that. God determined the bounds.

Acts 17:26, we are told, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their habitation." So, God has a great time plan.

The Greeks came on the scene and spread across the world. They spread knowledge of the Greek language and culture. Then within a very short time, it came down to a Greek kingdom in the North and a Greek kingdom in the South—and the Jews were caught in the middle.

Now Alexander the Great played a role. I want to read to you a few comments from the Jewish historian, Josephus. He was one who wrote contemporary with the Apostle Paul. Josephus was a priest of the priestly family in Jerusalem. He was a general in the war of the Jews against the Romans. He was taken captive by the Romans, and therefore lived to write an account. He gives a very good historical account of many of these things. There are a number of comments that he makes. We can pick up the story at the time of Alexander.

Let me read to you a comment on Alexander the Great in *Josephus*, *Antiquity of the Jews*, Book 11, Chapter 8, 4-7, "Alexander, when he had taken Gaza in Egypt, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony and under terror, not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased with him." Alexander (this is about 331 B.C., about 70 years after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah) is on his way to Jerusalem. He has conquered Egypt and now is coming to Jerusalem; the high priest is scared because he knows Alexander is mad. He determines what he should do.

They decided the best course was to bring out a copy of the book of Daniel and to show Alexander what was said about him. They figured they needed to do something to get on his "good side." We are told, "When the book of Daniel was shown to him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that he was the person intended and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude. The next day he called them and asked what favors they pleased of him. Whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the Laws of their forefathers and pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all that they desired. When they entreated of him that he should permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws, also he willingly promised to do hereafter, as they desired."

Then we are told, "The Samaritans seeing that Alexander had so greatly honored the Jews determined to profess themselves Jews. For such is the disposition of the Samaritans, as we have already elsewhere declared that when the Jews are in adversity, they deny that they are of kin to them, and then they confess the truth, but when they perceive that some good fortune has befallen them, they immediately pretend to have communion with them, saying that they belong to them and they derive their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph."

That is the illustration that is made in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 3:9, "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—" That is an illustration of the Samaritans and what they have always done, as Josephus records, even back in ancient history, back to the time of Alexander.

I read the portion in Daniel that applies to Alexander the Great. He was coming in and he was mad. They said, "We better show him something; we better show him something to get on his "good side." He's going to fight the Persians. We will bring out and say, "Here are our sacred books and you are mentioned in there. Let us show you what it says."

They showed him in Daniel 8:20-21 that the king of Greece is going to smash the king of Persia; he was rather pleased with that and was sure that he was the king of Greece mentioned there. I am sure they stopped at the right part of the verse and didn't go on down to show him that he was going to be broken and that his empire would be divided (v. 22). It is a matter of knowing where to stop reading. You don't necessarily read the

whole thing. They read to him the good part, and he was so pleased with it that he agreed to let them out of paying taxes every seventh year because if they were keeping the Sabbatical year, they wouldn't have anything to pay taxes with.

The Samaritans thought this was a good idea. They didn't keep the Sabbatical year, but they liked the idea of getting out of paying taxes. They sent word down to Alexander that they were Jews, too. Josephus brings out that whenever something goes well for the Jews, the Samaritans say, 'We are all in this thing together.' But when something goes bad for the Jews, the Samaritans say, 'Hey, we don't have anything to do with these people. We are not kin to them. We don't know them.' So, this is the background. Josephus goes on through many of these events.

The high priest that is mentioned in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah is the one Josephus mentions.

Nehemiah 12:1, "Now these are the priest and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: ..." It goes through and names them. This is in the days of Jeshua.

Verses 10-11, "Jeshua begot Joiakim, Joiakim begot Eliashib, Eliashib begot Joidad. Joidad begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua." Jaddua is the one Josephus mentions that met Alexander the Great. His successor is called Simon the Just because of his kind disposition toward God. Simon the Just was high priest from about 309 B.C. to 280 B.C. This brings us down to within about 280 years of the birth of Christ. The great synagogue founded by Ezra lasted until the time of Simon. Simon the Just was considered by the Jews as one of the last righteous high priests. In the aftermath of his death, there were events that took place.

By this time we are getting quite a ways down from direct contact with the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Simon was a young fellow, a young man at the time of Alexander the Great. The high priest at the time of Alexander the Great was one who had been born about the time of the death of Ezra and Nehemiah. You have a certain amount of continuity, but what happened by this time?

The Greek culture had spread and the tendency of people is to try and be like the world, to try and blend in and be part of the society. The Greek language and culture had begun to have great impact on the Jews. The high priest had gotten involved in a lot of politics back and forth. They were ruled from Egypt by the Ptolemys. Then they got the idea of quitting paying taxes to the Ptolemys. This didn't go over

too well because there was warfare back and forth. By 198 B.C., Syria had moved in and taken Judea from Egypt.

The situation continued to degenerate because of the negative influence that had come in and the fact that much of the priestly families were involved in politics and were looking for worldly power. It got to the point where there was a literal fight between two brothers for the high priesthood. They allied themselves with different factions.

Jason became high priest in 175 B.C.; he was a Hellenist. A Hellenist was one that accepted Greek culture—in other words, pagan culture. He managed to usurp the priesthood from his brother. They fought on it, and then a Benjamite purchased the priesthood from the Syrian ruler. Then Jason got it back around 168 B.C., which is when the Syrians led by Antiochus Epiphanes came down to fight against the Egyptians.

They were going to conquer the Egyptians. They were always fighting back and forth. They got down there to conquer Egypt, and the Roman fleet met Antiochus Epiphanes. The Romans told him to turn around and go back where he came from because they weren't going to let him invade Egypt. He turned around, but he was mad and wanted to take it out on somebody. He decided the simplest thing to do was to go back through Jerusalem and see if he could kill a few Jews, which he did.

He came through and he was mad for several reasons. He was mad at the Jews in general because they stood in the way. Alexander spread the Greek language, but he did something else. He also spread the Babylonian Mystery Religion. He took the priests from the schools in Babylon and scattered them throughout his empire. His idea was to create one world, one language, one religion, one race and one people. That's why his soldiers were left behind in India and near Afghanistan. The idea was to create one world, but it was one world the devil's way.

In the succession of the Babylon system, the succession of world ruling empires that Daniel describes, the devil has his plan for one world. God is going to create one world under Jesus Christ. The devil has always tried to create one world, going back to Nimrod and the Tower of Babel. Coming all the way down, the devil has in mind to create one world, the beast system. The beast power in the future is going to have their attempt to create one world, but one world under the devil's sway and the devil's influence.

Alexander spread the Greek language and culture and the Babylonian religion. These Babylonian

priests were scattered throughout his empire. The Jews who were keeping the law of God stood in the way. They didn't blend in. They didn't worship the same god, and they didn't follow the same customs. Everybody else went along with it, but these guys were the "fly-in-the-ointment." They were the ones that weren't doing what everybody else was doing. They weren't with the "program."

Antiochus Epiphanes didn't like that, so he decided that he was going to come to Jerusalem and teach the Jews a lesson. He was going to take their temple and destroy the Scriptures. He was going to set up an idol of Jupiter Olympus in the Holy Place. He was going to sacrifice a pig on the altar and he was going to put "his man" in as high priest. He was going to make the Jews follow the same religion that everybody else was following. He was going to have one world.

When you go through the succession here in Daniel 11, it talks about the king of the North and the king of the South; it goes back and forth. We pick up the story.

Daniel 11:21, "And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue [KJV, "flatteries"]." –"A vile person," this is Antiochus Epiphanes. Since Seleucus, the previous king, didn't leave an heir, his brother came in and drove out Heliodorus (a tax collector who had murdered Seleucus) and obtained the kingdom. He flattered his way in. This is Antiochus Epiphanes.

Verse 22, "With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant." "Prince of the covenant" would refer to the Jewish high priest.

Verses 23-24, "And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people. He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province [Galilee and lower Egypt];" He's going to do various things.

Verses 28-30, "While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land. At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyrus [KJV, "Chittim"] shall come against him [The ships of Chittim are the Roman fleet. Chittim was the ancient term for southern Italy; Sicily is the modern term.]; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy

covenant, and do damage [The Roman fleet came and kicked him out of Egypt. He was mad and went back. What was he going to do? Take it out on the Jews!]. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."

He comes back and enters into a league with apostate Jews who turn their back on the religion of the Jews.

Verse 31, "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."

He stopped the daily sacrifice and placed there the abomination that made desolate. What he did was set up an abomination that led to desolation or destruction. The abomination was the statue of Jupiter Olympus, and they offered a pig on the altar. This was an abomination that desecrated the temple, and it led to the desolation of Jerusalem.

Verse 32, "Those who do wickedly [the Jews who forsook the truth] against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery [They were going to get in good with him.]; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."

In the New Testament, Jesus spoke of an abomination of desolation that is going to take place in the future (Matthew 24; Luke 21).

Matthew 24:15, he said, "Therefore when you shall see the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet, ..." Daniel spoke of an abomination of desolation. It was one that had taken place in 168 B.C., 168 years before Christ. But Jesus said there would come again prior to His return an abomination that would make desolate that would lead to the destruction of Jerusalem. So, there is an event that is to happen in the future, of which this event that happened in the past was a type. Antiochus Epiphanes, this vile person that had attained the kingdom by flattery, the one who came in and stopped the daily sacrifices and set up the abomination that made desolate, is the type of the final beast of Revelations 17 (and other places). It happened in history, but it is also prophecy.

When you understand about Antiochus and some of the things that he did, you are also getting a picture of the future. His idea was to have one world, one society, one language, one religion, and everybody will be happy if we all get together. Isn't that what is going to be said in the future by the beast and the false prophet? And who are they going to want to persecute? –Those that don't want to fall in line and don't want to

get with the “program.” That’s why they are going to attack physical Israel and they are going to attack the true Church. They are going to persecute God’s people because they will not want to join the “program.”

This is what is shaping up. There is going to come together in Europe a seventh full revival of the empire—that final tenth horn of Daniel 7, the seventh head of Revelation 17—that final revival of the old Roman Empire (Babylon the Great). It is going to come together and, once again, it’s going to attempt to enforce one world and one religion. They are really going to persecute those that don’t go along with the “program,” those that don’t blend in, that don’t fit in.

This is exactly what Antiochus tried to do. He came to Jerusalem, and he was doing these things. I want to read to you a little bit of a historical account of it—a firsthand historical account—the book of Maccabees. This is not part of Scripture and it was never intended to be. It was, rather, a historical book that the Jews preserved, but they never considered it Scripture. They simply considered it part of a historical account similar to Josephus. It provides a firsthand account.

I Maccabees 1:10, “And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king....”

Verse 11, “In those days there went out of Israel wicked men who persuaded many, saying, ‘Let us go and make a covenant with the nation around about us, for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow....’”

Verse 15, “So they built a place of exercise in Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathens [a Greek gymnasium]. They made themselves uncircumcised. [They went to the point that they tried by an operation to actually disguise the fact that they had been circumcised—the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham. They didn’t want to be identified as the people of God.] They forsook the holy covenant and joined themselves to the heathen and were sold to do mischief.”

Verses 20-21, Now after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt...he returned again and he went up against Jerusalem with a great multitude. He entered proudly into the sanctuary and took away the golden altar, the candlestick of light and all the vessels and he made a great massacre and spoke very proudly.

Verses 37-39, “They shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary and defiled it. The inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them.

The city was made a habitation of strangers. The sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness.”

Verses 41-43, “Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, that everyone should leave his laws so all the heathen consented to his religion and sacrificed unto the idols and profaned the Sabbath.” What did you have? You had a falling away.

Verses 44-45, “The king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of the Jews and that they should follow the strange laws of the land and he forbade burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings and said they should profane the Sabbath and the Holy days....”

Verse 50, “...and whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he should die.”

Verse 52, “Many of the people gathered unto them, everyone that forsook the law, and they committed the evils in this land.”

Verse 54, “And in the fifteenth day of the month, Kislev...they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar and built idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side.”

Verse 57-58, “Whosoever was found with any book of the Testament, or if any consented to the law, the king’s commandment was that they should be put to death.”

This is a type of the Great Tribulation. What Antiochus did historically was a type. Daniel prophesied of it.

Daniel 11:31-32, “...they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”

I Maccabees 1:62-63, “Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. Wherefore, they chose rather to die that they might not be defiled with meats and that they should not profane the holy covenant, so they died.”

I Maccabees 2:1-5, “Now in those days there arose Mathias, the priest, the son of John [Hyrcanus], the son of Simeon, a priest....” He left Jerusalem and dwelt in Modine.

Verses 2-4, he had five sons, the last of which was Judah [Aristobulus], called Maccabeus.

Now this decree went out.

Verses 19-23, “And Mathias said, though all the nations that are under the king’s dominion obey him and fall away everyone from the religion of their fathers and give consent to his

commandment, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances. We will not hearken unto the king's word to go from our religion either to the right hand or to the left. When he had left speaking these words there came one of the Jews...."

Now what had happened was they sent in the king's officers to each city to make the people come forward and bow down to an idol and kiss the toe of the idol. The idea was that they were going to make everybody agree. They came into this little village of Modine where Mathias the priest was. He was an elderly man. They called him up first, 'Now, you. All right, you go up first and then everybody else will come in behind you.' Well, when they told him he goes first, he said what I just read—'Everybody else can do it if they want to, but I am not going to depart from the law of God.'

Verse 23, "And when he had left speaking, there came one of the Jews in the sight of all to sacrifice on the altar according to the king's commandment." There's always someone, one of these "chickenhearted," trying to get in good with them.

Verse 24, "Now when Mathias saw this he was inflamed with zeal, his reins trembled, neither could he forebear to show his anger according to judgment, wherefore he ran and slew him upon the altar." This, needless to say, created a little bit of a furor.

Verses 25-28, "And the king's commissioner who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and the altar he pulled down. Thus dealt he zealously for the law of God like as Phinehas did unto Zimri [Numbers 25:6-11]...and Mathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, 'whoever is zealous of the law and maintains the covenant let him follow me,' so he and his sons fled to the mountains and left all that they had ever had in the city." They went out.

Verse 70, Mathias died.

I Maccabees 3:1, "Then his son, called Judas Maccabeus rose up in his stead."

I Maccabees 3 and 4, Judas went forth and finally recaptured the city. He captured Jerusalem from the Syrians and won independence. He cleaned out the temple and rededicated it to the worship of God. He established his brother as high priest. This was the first Maccabees that ruled. They became known as the Maccabees family.

The Jews to this day celebrate this event for eight days. It is called Hanukkah (also Hanukkah or Chanukah). You've heard about it. It generally

takes place in December, beginning the 25th day of the tenth month on the Jewish calendar, the month of Kislev. This is the time when the temple was rededicated. It is called the Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication.

You read of it in John 10:22. Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication. The Hebrew name is "*Chanukah*," which is the term we hear. A lot of Jews in this country kind of observe it as a pseudo-Christmas, but it has no connection with Christmas at all. It goes back to the time that the Maccabees cleansed the temple and rededicated it. It is a Feast of Dedication.

Daniel 11:31-32, this is what was spoken of in Daniel when he says, "...they would defile the sanctuary fortress; then shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." Well, the people that did know their God were strong and did exploits. Those were the Maccabees and they cleansed the temple.

The Jews fought on and finally by 141 B.C., Jewish independence was achieved from Syria. Simon Maccabee was high priest. John Hyrcanus who was of the Maccabee family succeeded him. His son, John Hyrcanus, who was high priest from 134 B.C. to 104 B.C. is considered by the Jews to be the last righteous high priest.

There are events that occurred in the time of John Hyrcanus. It is basically at this time that the Sadducees and the Pharisees arose as sects that came to power. The Pharisees were basically laymen. They were not of the priestly families. They saw the situation that had existed and the extent to which the priests had been corrupt. The Maccabees had kicked out the corrupt priesthood and installed themselves. They were of the priestly line, but it was not a direct father-son succession. They were of the priestly families, but they had to expel the corrupt high priest and establish themselves.

Because of the situation that arose, this group of people had the idea that they wanted to enforce and make sure that things did not get back like it had been. They felt the priests needed somebody to keep an eye on them, so this group of Pharisees began to arise. The Pharisees' theory was to put a hedge about the law. They began to enact all kinds of traditions to enforce a strict separation. They were kind of a reform party that came in. Josephus tells a little bit about them.

The priests were basically identified with the Sadducees. The Sadducees took the Scripture and said, 'Look, we accept the authority of Scripture, but we don't accept the authority of oral tradition.' The Sadducees were never a large popular party. They were more restricted to the priesthood.

When John Hyrcanus died, his son Judah Aristobulus became high priest, and he also proclaimed himself as king. He was both the civil ruler and the religious ruler of the land. This continued down a little bit.

Josephus, *The Antiquity of the Jews*, Book 13, Chapter 11, 1, "Now when their father Hyrcanus was dead, the eldest son, Aristobulus, intending to change the government into a kingdom, for so he was resolved to do, first of all put a diadem on his head, ..." He made himself the king.

Let me read a little bit about John Hyrcanus or about the Pharisees from *Josephus*. John Hyrcanus had been at an earlier time a Pharisee as the Pharisees had first arisen. They had been allied with him, but he left.

Josephus, Book 13, Chapter 10, 6-7, "...he made him leave the party of the Pharisees, and abolished the decrees that they had imposed upon the people, ... the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them.... He [Hyrcanus] was esteemed by God worthy of three privileges, —the government of his nation, the dignity of the high priesthood, and prophecy; for God was with him,"

Hyrcanus is considered to be the last of the righteous high priest. Aristobulus made himself king, and then his son, Alexander, took over and ruled as king in his stead and died in 76 B.C.

Now when Alexander died, his widow Queen Salome was left.

Josephus, Book 13, Chapter 16, 1, I want to read to you a statement, "So Alexandra, when she [Salome, the wife of Alexander] had taken the fortress, acted as her husband had suggested to her, and spoke to the Pharisees and put all things into their power,"

Now in the New Testament, we read where Jesus made the statement:

Matthew 23: 2, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." Have you ever wondered how the scribes and Pharisees came to sit in Moses' seat? This is how: In 76 B.C., Queen Salome delivered the religious authority over the nation to the Pharisees. It really makes a transition.

If you really want a parallel in terms of eras of the Church, the Maccabees makes a parallel with the Philadelphia Church—the context and the description of what the Maccabees did parallel the sixth era. And really, as you go through the eras of the Old Testament Church, they represent the sixth period or era. They were succeeded by the final era, the seventh one, which was the domination of the Pharisees, which lasted from 76 B.C. until the time of the New Testament Church.

It was the Pharisees who were in Moses' seat at the time when Christ came on the scene. They had gotten in Moses' seat, having been placed there by the Maccabees family, but after several generations, had basically gotten away from that zeal. Finally, the widow of the Maccabee king, to perpetuate herself in power, gave the Pharisees religious control over the nation. Within a short period of time (this was in 76 B.C.), by 63 B.C., the Romans came in and established their rule. Less than 30 years later, Herod was set up as king by the Romans. He was king when Jesus Christ was born.

The story that we have is a story of ups and downs. It is a story of the spread of Greek influence, Greek religion (Babylonian religion with a Greek overlay), Greek culture and Greek language that spread throughout the known world at that time. There was a constant bickering back and forth (with the Jews in the middle) between the Greek kingdom of Syria to the North and the Greek kingdom of Egypt to the South. This bickering went back and forth.

As more and more of the Jews had gotten away from God, they entered into an alliance with Antiochus Epiphanes, who came in and launched what was really a type of the Great Tribulation. The result was the Maccabees and the cleansing of the temple, a certain revival that took place that lasted for basically a long generation and began to trickle out. Finally, by 76 B.C., the kingdom was basically turned over to the Pharisees to govern the religious affairs of the nation, and it set the stage for the world into which Jesus Christ came.

The Romans came in, picked up the pieces and governed things from a civil standpoint. The Pharisees governed religiously. They came in with their own ideas and traditions. They were going to solve the problem using human reason.

You have these ups and downs, these revivals, these departures. The tendency has always been for people to begin to compromise with the world, to try to be like the world, to try to blend

in as Satan tries to get in his influence, to water down the law of God, to get people to kind of back off of real zealous obedience to the law.

Time after time, God has raised someone to make sure that the truth was preserved. It was in this context that Jesus the Messiah was born, coming with the good news of the Kingdom of God—not an earthly kingdom that was going to be set up as one of the competing governments of this world, but a government that God was going to establish.

I hope that in going through some of this material, we've gained a little bit of insight into the story flow of the Old Testament and even the time between the Testaments. While it is time between the Testaments, it is also covered in the Bible because Daniel covers it through prophecy in Daniel 8 and 11. We see the ups and downs that culminated in the time of Jesus Christ.

We are going to pick it up next Bible study. We will start a new series. Having completed this Old Testament series, we will start into a new series on the New Testament.