KEEP
Links to Bill Creasy’s Audio Files

Old Testament

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03 Sin Enters the World (Genesis 3: 1-11: 32) 55:13
04 The Plan of Salvation (Genesis 12: 1-21: 34) 31:51
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07 Jacob/Joseph Story, Part 1 (Genesis 37: 1-41: 57) 55:58
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78 A New Heaven and a New Earth (Revelation 20:1-22:21) 29:02
**Study Resources**

- The best commentary on scripture is scripture itself
  - The Bible comments on itself and creates its own set of parameters within which we read

- Bill Creasy
  - Main page
    - http://www.logosbiblestudy.com/
  - Audio
    - http://logosbiblestudy.bandcamp.com/
  - Bible Blasts and study videos
    - https://vimeo.com/album/3280515
  - Download Vimeo
    - http://www.videograber.net/free-vimeo-downloader

- http://biblehub.com/
  - Book summaries

- http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Hebrew_Index.htm
  - Hebrew translations

- Bible illustrations
  - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation#Figures_and_scenes
  - https://www.pinterest.com/pauleklim/the-quick-view-bible/
  - http://st-takla.org/Gallery/Bible/Illustrations/Bible-Slides/OT.html

- Bible PowerPoints
  - http://www.slideshare.net/
  - http://slideplayer.com/
  - https://wwyeshua.wordpress.com/bible-stories/

- Revelation Resources
  - http://www.revelationbibleprophecy.org/revelation1.html
  - https://sites.google.com/site/preteristpost/x1-revelation-and-the-jewish-war
  - https://www.slideshare.net/acyulo/gods-biblical-numbers-20142015

**Logos Bible Study**

Bill Creasy
- UCLA professor – taught the English Bible as Literature – 1 year course through the Bible

The goal for this course is two-fold:
1. To create “educated readers” of Scripture
   - People fully equipped to engage the text in its proper historical, cultural and literary context
   - To reflect accurately the teaching and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church
2. To bring students into a deeper, more intimate relationship with Christ.
As we engage the Bible we must do so it *on its own terms*, not on ours.

- The Bible, like any other work of literature, mirrors the time and culture in which it is written.

Creasy uses a literary approach

- Creasy is not a theologian, he is a literature teacher
- His goal is to bring the Bible characters alive, understand their motivations, who they are and why they do what they do, and what all that means to us
4 Foundational principles

There are 4 foundational principles upon which the Logos Bible Study program is built:

**Bible is rooted in geography**

- The geography of the land is important

- Israel is the land-bridge linking Africa with Europe & Asia – Critical piece of real estate
  - Position of Israel is astoundingly important from a strategic point of view
  - Africa – Food production center of the Ancient World
  - Europe and Asia – The rest of the Ancient World
  - Via Maris and Kings Highway – Controls the trade routes

- Land of Israel is made up of 4 geographical strata
  - Flat coastal plain (North→South)
  - Central Mountain Range
    - 2500’ above sea level
    - Parallels the coastal plain (N→S)
    - Jerusalem
  - Great Rift Valley (Russia → Africa)
    - Mt. Hermon (9000’ above sea level)
    - Sea of Galilee (700’ below sea level)
    - Dead Sea (1200’ below sea level)
      - Lowest place on the face of the earth
      - No exit point
      - Creates a closed-circuit pump
        - Millions of gallons evaporate from the Dead Sea and recycles back up to Mt. Hermon as rain and snow
  - Eastern Mountain Range
    - Protects Israel from the desert

Bible Babble video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7CxPbxItYI

**Bible emerges from history**

Bible babble video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UVITWyOhFk

- These are real stories about real people in real times and in real places – real people who did real things
- God enacts the plan of salvation on the stage of history
• Assyrian empire rose to power in 8th century
  o Northern Iraq of today
  o 722 BC take Northern tribes – survivors are taken captive to Assyria
  o 721 BC attack Jerusalem – Jerusalem miraculously saved by God
• Babylon defeats Assyria – attack Jerusalem 3 times
  o Southern Iraq of today
  o Attack in 605 – wave the white flag – Daniel taken captive
  o 597 – wave the white flag – Ezekiel taken captive
  o 586 – Jeremiah
• Persia – Rebuilds Jerusalem and lives off the tax base
  o Iran of today
• Greece – Alexander the Great
• Rome – 68 BC

The Bible—in its final, finished form—is a unified literary work

• The Bible—in its final, finished form, in the Christian canon—is a unified literary work
• Linear narrative:
  o Genesis – Curtain goes up
  o Main character – God
  o Conflict – Sin
  o Theme – Redemption
  o Revelation – Curtain comes down
• Most of the important characters are from Israel
• Written over 1500 years by many different authors, then goes through the hands of many different scribes, editors and redactors
• We are going to look at the scriptures as a 2000 page novel with 73 chapters as opposed to an loose anthology of 73 books

Bible is the Word of God

• Specific claim to being the Word of God
• Unlike other classical works of literature
• If we believe the claim, it places demands on us as readers like no other book does

4 Cultural Assumptions

Every work of art mirrors the time and culture from which it emerges
In the World of the Bible is:
Patriarchal

- Men control everything, they are the head
  - In the Bible, the women are the neck, and they can turn the head any way that they want
- The patriarchal world of the Old Testament is profoundly different from the patriarchal culture of the New Testament, but they are both patriarchal cultures
- We cannot take our cultural values and impose them on a 2000 year old text
- We have to recognize the reality of the world of the Bible and engage the stories within that world

Monarchy

- Everyone is ruled by a king
- It was unthinkable to have a society without a king

Polytheistic

- Everyone believed in many Gods – There are many many Gods, but ours is the best
- Not until the time of Isaiah (740-686 BC) that the idea of only one god begins to emerge

Slave-holding

- Slavery was a way of life
- Mostly by conquest, but also as a way to repay debt (economics)
- Paul’s letter to Philemon ends slavery among believers – which eventually ends slavery among the Romans

The Bible and Slavery

Rich Herbster - Posted: 09 Apr 2015 11:48 AM PDT

This morning I was asked a question I’ve been asked many times before. Since it’s a common question, I thought I might as well go ahead and share the answer more broadly. Christians are often troubled when they read the Bible to encounter various texts that deal with slavery. These scriptures never out and out condemn slavery, something that we all do (and should do). Slavery is wrong, so why doesn’t the Bible ever say “slavery is wrong”? Or does it? The short answer is: it doesn’t, but it does. Here is a longer (and more informative and less contradictory) answer:


It’s true that in the Old Testament slavery was part of the Law, given by God to Moses. The Law lays out stipulations for owning slaves, how long they may be kept in slavery, how they are to be treated, etc. That seems terrible to us because we believe slavery is absolutely wrong. Why did God not just say “no slavery” then? It is necessary to consider these laws within their broader historical context. These laws may seem cruel or harsh by our standards, but in the context of the surrounding nations and other law codes (like the Babylonian Hammurabi law code) the biblical laws are remarkable for their humanizing impact. In other words, in its historical context the Law of Moses did a great deal to limit and reduce the evils of slavery. It is very common in other Law codes of the Ancient Near East for slaves to lose their hands or ears, for instance. Not so in the more gracious and compassionate Hebrew context.

2) No Racial Dimensions.

One major difference between slavery as we see it in the ancient world and slavery as we think of it in an American context is race. We can’t help but think of slavery in racial terms – white people enslaving black people. That is our
(terribly ugly) history. But in the ancient world there was nothing racial about slavery. You were a slave most likely because your nation had been overrun by your more powerful neighbors. You were forced to serve them. Some of this slavery would have been cruel and bitter (rowing in galleys or digging in mines), some rather mild and (surprising to us) voluntary. There is even provision in the OT law for a servant who decides at the end of his service that he desires to be a servant for life – the “pierce my ear” made famous by the praise chorus: Exodus 21:5-6 5 “But if the servant declares, ‘I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,’ 6 then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.”


In the New Testament context, slavery was incredibly common – as much as 40% of the population of the Roman Empire may have been in slavery. Many aspects of slavery in this context are very different from what we may assume, such as:

- Many people willingly sold themselves into slavery. Why would they do this? It could lead to a long-term improvement of their lot in life – education, improved social context, eventual Roman citizenship in some situations as “freedmen.”

- Slaves could own their own property, and even own their own slaves! This was not uncommon. They could store up wealth and purchase their own freedom. The verb meaning to purchase freedom from slavery was “redeem,” the noun form “redemption.” These become key terms for understanding Christ’s saving work. Our “redemption” is being purchased from slavery and bondage to sin and death in order to live freely in Christ (Paul is huge into freedom in Christ language).

- Some slaves entered slavery through the exposure of infants. There was no birth control such as we know it, abortion was known (and practiced) and condemned from the first century by Christians, but the practice of exposure was the preferred means of disposing of an undesired child. This means what it sounds like: putting a baby out for starvation, food for animals, etc. Anyone finding such a child had the right to claim the child as a slave. Christians would often claim these foundlings – not as slaves but as adoptive children.

- There was no social stigma attached to being a slave. Slaves, freedmen, and those born in freedom interacted and mixed in all strata of society – including the highest strata. Many of the most influential citizens of the Roman Empire were freedmen, including the governor of Judea, Felix, who (in addition to providing a popular cat name) was one of Paul’s judges in the book of Acts.

- It was unusual to live your whole life in slavery. Slaves would generally have been manumitted (set free) by the time they were in their thirties or forties. This was the normal and expected pattern.

- None of this means that slavery was a good, or no big deal, just to point out that it isn’t necessarily the same thing we may assume when we hear the word “slave.”

4) Slavery and the Early Church.

As the earliest Christian church was established the New Testament authors instructed those who found themselves in slavery to be as good a slave as they could be: to serve their masters faithfully, to obtain their freedom if possible, to consider their labor as unto the Lord, etc. The New Testament makes no call for the abolition of slavery as such. This failure to address the larger, systemic issue of slavery was used by slave owners in the American context (and beyond) in modern times to justify slavery (and that by “Christians”). This is a great shame. The slave owners got it wrong, and the abolitionists (also Christians, and better ones) got it right. How so?

- The fact that Paul and Peter failed to address slavery as an institution is hardly surprising. There were a great many societal evils (like the exposure of infants) that they failed to address. The urgent business they were about in that first generation of the church was the preaching of the gospel, the ordering of the first congregations, rooting out controversy and error, etc. (read Acts). It wasn’t about addressing every systemic social evil.
• Even if it had been their purpose to take on slavery, how could they have gone about it? How could the early church have materially affected the institution of slavery throughout the Roman Empire? The church was a small and beleaguered minority, facing frequent persecution for the most rudimentary affirmation of the faith. It was hard enough to stay alive and tell others about Jesus; there was no opportunity to take on the issue of slavery. In this light, the focus was on personal witness – you find yourself in the condition of slavery, what ought you to do? How should you live out your life? Slavery needed to be abolished, but there was also a need for better hospitals, justice for the poor, more humane prison systems, better sewage, more equitable educational opportunities, etc. Does it make sense to expect the biblical authors to have directly addressed these issues? They were all addressed in turn as the faith made headway in the broader culture in the centuries which followed.

• Though the biblical authors do not directly call for anything like the abolition of slavery, the bible sets the moral trajectory which leads to the necessary conclusion that slavery is an evil that must be abolished. You see the logic of this in Paul’s short little letter to Philemon, a slave owner, carried by the runaway slave Onesimus. In this remarkable letter Paul gives the gift of a Trojan horse that ultimately undoes slavery. His argument demonstrates the logical end of the Christian gospel – Onesimus must be treated as what he is: not property but a brother in Christ.

5) Abolition of Slavery
In time the implications of the biblical worldview became increasingly obvious, leading inexorably to the abolition of slavery:

• All humans are created in the image of God and therefore have inherent worth – they can’t be reduced to another man’s property!
• The gospel is the good news of being redeemed, set free from the bondage of sin, death, the Devil.
• As redeemed people we must live out the logic of our redemption in all areas of our lives – how can we still enslave others when God has set us free? There is an absolute incompatibility between the gospel of Jesus Christ and the institution of slavery.

Teaching Sequence
As we progress verse-by-verse through the Bible, I alternate between the Old and New Testaments. I do this for two reasons:
1. Most people are more familiar with the New Testament than they are with the Old, so I need to get to the New Testament quickly,
2. Alternating between the Old and New Testaments allows me to “weave” the fabric of Scripture, highlighting how the Old Testament prefigures the New and how the New Testament fulfills the Old.

Thus, the order in which I teach the books of the Bible is this:

Genesis
Matthew
Exodus/Leviticus
Mark
Numbers
Luke
Deuteronomy
John
[Torah & Gospels completed]

Joshua/Judges/Ruth
Acts
1 & 2 Samuel
Romans
1 & 2 Kings
1 & 2 Corinthians/ Galatians
Ezra/Nehemiah/Tobit/Judith/Esther
1 & 2 Maccabees
[OT historical books completed]

Ephesians/Philippians/Colossians/Philemon
[Paul’s “prison epistles”]

Job/Psalms/Proverbs/Ecclesiastes/Song of Songs
Wisdom/Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
[Poetic books completed]

1 & 2 Thessalonians/1 & 2 Timothy/Titus
[Paul’s epistles & letters completed]

Isaiah/Jeremiah/Lamentations/Baruch (both associated with Jeremiah)/Ezekiel/Daniel
[Major Prophets completed]

Hebrews/James/1 & 2 Peter/1, 2, & 3 John/Jude
[General, or catholic, letters completed]

Hosea/Joel/Amos/Obadiah
Jonah/Micah/Nahum/Habakkuk
Zephaniah/Haggai/Zechariah/Malachi
[Minor Prophets completed]

Revelation
[Bible completed]
Introduction to the Bible

Genesis 1 and 2 set the stage for our story in highly poetic fashion. In these chapters we learn that God created all that is, that his creation is complete and good, and that he maintains an intimate relationship with it. But in chapter 3, conflict enters our story, and all the rest of the Bible, from Genesis 4 through Revelation 22, moves toward the resolution of that conflict.

Literary Techniques

With any work of art, you should start by identifying the structure – how is it built, what is the architecture? Primary characteristic of English poetry is rhyme & meter; the primary characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism.

Parallelism

- A statement made, and the restated in an amplified form, either in like or in contrast
  - A, then A’ either steps it up or contrasts what was stated in A
  - Can be ABBA, ABAB, AABB
- Parallel stories
  - Joseph 20 years in Egypt = Judah 20 years in ____
- Psalms – 150 poems – Basic structure is a 2-line verse in parallel
- See Ge 1

Chiasmus

- A form of parallelism – A statement restated in an amplified form – in the ABBA format.
- The elements of the statements form the Greek letter X (Ksi or Chi)
  \[
  \begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
  A & B \\
  B' & A'
  \end{array}
  \]
- When you have a chiasmus in the very center of a story or poem, it pulls that story together in a very tight form
  - It becomes the nucleus of the story or poem around which the action happens
  - The chiasmus holds the story or poem together
- See Ge 1:27

Inclusio

- Statement at the front (an opening line or 2) and then repeated at the end
- Brackets a literary unit with a repetition of words forward and backward – creates a frame, like bookends
- Ge 1

Recapitulation

- Moving through a linear narrative (straight line), then stopping, turning around, and dropping down into a previous element of the story and examining it from a different perspective
- Book of Ruth

Reading the Gaps

- Reading between the lines – you’re given information in the verses but there’s time between the verses when things happen and we have to discern what those things are to understand what follows.
- Make assumptions that move us from one line to the next – Enables us to move ahead in the story
  - Assumption may be correct or incorrect – Have to test them and revise accordingly as you move on
• Very sophisticated technique
  o Author creates the gap, forcing us to make assumptions that we will have to test and either validate or invalidate as we move through the story
  o Active method of reading – not simply reading the words on the page and here’s the story
  o Actively engaging the text on multiple levels, revising and re-revising as we go and building the narrative interpretation as we read
  o Places demands on us as readers that are considerably above what an ordinary reader of scripture would do

• Examples:
  o Gen 22 - Time between when God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and the next morning
  o 2Sa 11 Uriah’s response to David and Bathsheba

Bible

History of the Bible

Hundreds of books were written in Hebrew—and other languages—on “biblical” themes and topics between 1450 – 250 B.C.

Questions of Canon

Who Gets to Decide What’s in the Bible?

Rich Herbster, Posted: 30 Jul 2015 11:05 AM PDT

In the last few posts we’ve been dealing with text criticism (in general, for the OT, for the NT), the art and science of studying the biblical manuscript tradition to arrive at the most accurate possible text of scripture (from which all of our English translations are derived). This leads to great confidence in the astonishing accuracy of our text (and provides remarkable evidence of the providence of God in preserving such outstanding witnesses throughout history). Today we turn to a different question, really a prior question:

Who gets to decide what books belong in the Bible anyway? Granting the accuracy of the books we do have, how do we know we have the right books? Perhaps there are other books that should have made the cut but didn’t (Gospel of Thomas? 1 Enoch? Etc….), or perhaps there are books that made the cut but shouldn’t have done so (Song of Songs? Esther? James? Revelation? Etc…..). Other religions have other books (the Koran?); some claim new revelation (the Book of Mormon?); should we receive these as scripture? Why or why not?

Who gets to decide? And what are the criteria? These are questions of canon (pronounced just like the really big gun). The English word canon is simply a transliteration of the Greek word kanon, which means “rule.” Rule here means “measure” or “standard” (think of a ruler). The canon reflects those books which “measure up.”
Who gets to determine whether a particular book of the Bible measures up? It has become popular in recent years to pretend that the formation of the canon was a partisan political process. “The Church” arbitrarily decided that some books belong in the canon and some books do not belong in the canon. There were lots of good candidates that should have been included (like *The Gospel of Thomas*) says a Dan Brown or an Elaine Pagels, but these were excluded because they didn’t fit the agenda of the church authorities. This is a gross mischaracterization of the story, as I’ll try to clarify as we unfold the issues of canon in the posts to follow.

For today it is enough to deal with this one question – did “The Church” determine the canon (whether in 325 AD or at some other time)? Here we bump up against one significant difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. This difference can be summed up in the distinction between these two options:

**Option 1: The canon is an authoritative list of books.** This is the Roman Catholic view. The Church decided which books made the cut and which ones didn’t. The authority and tradition of Mother Church is the criterion for settling canonicity. This view comes with some problems. Can the Church change her mind? How do we know she got it right? Doesn’t the Church sometimes make mistakes?

**Option 2: The canon is a list of authoritative books.** This is the Protestant view. Wait…what’s the difference? Notice that the word “authoritative” now modifies not “list,” but “books.” The Protestant view is that the books themselves demonstrate their canonicity. They don’t receive their status as scripture from any church pronouncement. It is the Holy Spirit who gets to decide. The church isn’t *determining* which books are canonical, she is just *recognizing* which books the Holy Spirit is demonstrating to be canonical.

This may seem a minor distinction, but it is one that is fraught with significance as we consider the history of the formation of the Old Testament and New Testament canons.

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**Criteria for Recognition**

August 6, 2015 By Rich Herbster

I once won a wrestling match 0-0. How can you win a match when no one scores any points? In this case, because we were tied at the end of an overtime period, the referee was forced to consult the criteria for a tie break. The first five criteria didn’t apply, so he was forced to consult the sixth (and final) criterion…most aggressive wrestler. In his opinion that was I. My brother, who was watching the match and still mocks me for winning a match 0-0, felt that the ref was confused and had it backwards. Backwards or no, it was certainly a subjective criterion! Was the formation of the canon of scripture similarly subjective? What were the criteria used to determine canonicity?

In our last post, we began to explore the formation of the canon of scripture – that list of the books which make up our Bible.

Did this happen randomly or haphazardly? Were these books just thrown together in a lump? Did they accumulate over the centuries in a pile without any real discernment as to their validity? *No siree.*

Was it instead a politically-driven, manipulative process whereby nefarious Church authorities foisted upon the unwashed masses an authoritative corpus of materials in order to control them? *Uh-uh.*

Though these kinds of theories excite those who enjoy the idea of being liberated from an authoritative word from on high, they are not the way in which the canon came to be. The formation of the canon is a whole lot more amazing (and at the same time, mundane) than this.
The understanding of canon was not based upon the arbitrary assertion of church authorities, but was instead due to the demonstration of these texts as the Word of God by the Holy Spirit. First Jewish believers (for the OT), then Christian believers (for the NT) simply came to recognize the nature of these books as the authoritative Word of God.

How were they able to do so? What criteria were used to recognize this? It wasn’t just a “hunch,” or a warm fuzzy feeling they received when they read these texts. They used criteria such as the following:

**Prophetic/apostolic Origin** – The first and most important criterion was that of having prophetic origin (for an OT book) or apostolic origin (for a NT book). Not just any Tom, Dick, or Harry could write scripture. Only a recognized prophet of God (and there were criteria for being one of those) or an apostle of Jesus Christ (those who were from the first eye witnesses (see Acts 1)) could produce scripture. An apostle need not have been the direct author, but needs to have been associated with the text in order for it to be recognized as valid (as Peter for Mark, or Paul for Luke). Because of this criterion, there can be no new revelation (no more apostles – the canon is complete…sorry Joseph Smith, Muhammad, et al.). Ultimately this is a Holy Spirit criterion, because the Spirit of God spoke through these authoritative witnesses: apostles and prophets.

**Provenance** – A second criterion is that these books had a known pedigree. They could be traced back to the inspired author through a period of continuous use. You couldn’t just “find” a letter of Paul in 300 AD and expect that it would be received as scripture. There could be no Johnny Come Latelies to the canon of scripture. This is a Holy Spirit criterion because it recognizes the providential care of God in preserving these texts over the period of history from their authorship to the time of official canonical status.

**Universal Recognition** – A third criterion is universal recognition. Has this text been received and recognized throughout the broader Christian world, or is it the pet text of a particular narrow stream of the church? If it is only received as scripture in one city or valley, but rejected more broadly, it would not have received recognition as scripture. This is a Holy Spirit criterion, for it recognizes that the Holy Spirit unites all of God’s people, and preserves His Word through the witness of the church universal.

**Consistency with Known Revelation** – If someone claimed a text to be scripture which stood in stark contradiction to a known scripture, it would be rejected as non-canonical. Why? Because God is a God of order, not of disorder. He doesn’t lie and he doesn’t change his mind. His Word must likewise be consistent (if it is truly his Word). This is a Holy Spirit criterion as it recognizes that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17).

**Internal Testimony** – there is one criterion which truly is subjective (in keeping with my powerful illustration, I’ve kept it until last) – the internal testimony of the Spirit. The “truthiness” of the text, the internal witness of the soul that assures the reader that this is not simply the words of men, but is, in fact, the Word of God. This is a Holy Spirit criterion in which the Spirit of God testifies with our spirit that this is indeed God’s Word.

There are other criteria as well, but these are the most important ones. In our next posts we’ll begin to explore the specific application of these criteria to the Old and New Testaments.

**Vulgate**

Jerome Hieroymous

- Translated the Biblia Sacra Vulgata under Pope Damasus – so people could read it in their own language

Jerome was a contemporary of Augustine

Augustine didn’t like the Vulgate – wasn’t translated from the Septuagint
**Old Testament Canon defined (AD 90)**

- At the time of the exile, the Jewish people became a “people of the book” since there was no Temple.

- After the catastrophic Jewish Revolt of A.D. 66-72, with the destruction of the 2nd Temple and the fall of Jerusalem, the Rabbis focused more intently on Scripture and being a “people of the book.”
  - Jewish Revolt – Zealots defeat the Sadducees and put them all to death. They capture the Temple platform in and turn it into the headquarters / staging area for raiding the Romans. Temple burns during the battle with the Romans.

- Council of Jamnia (AD 90) – Jewish scholars & theologians define the Old Testament Canon
  - Until then, the “canon” of Scripture was an open question, subject to much debate.
  - Old Testament Canon – 39 books originally written in Hebrew prior to the Septuagint translation (250 B.C.)
  - With those 39 books, the canon was closed.

- Today the Hebrew Scriptures consist of *TaNaKh*:
  - Torah (Law)
  - Nevi’im (Prophets)
  - Kethuvim (Writings)

- Old Testament Pseudepigrapha – The books that didn’t get into the Old Testament

**New Testament Canon is defined (AD 393)**

- For the Church, the larger Septuagint canon of 46 books making up the “Old Testament” had long since been accepted as inspired Scripture, since that was the “Bible” that Jesus and the Apostles would have known.

- Council of Hippo was called by St. Augustine in AD 393
  - New Testament Canon is defined (27 books of the New Testament)
  - If we are to be people of the Book, and regard Scripture as inspired, we need to determine which books will be considered as part of the canon of the New Testament.
  - St. Augustine drew up a list of 27 books that he thought were inspired scripture and that became the consensus at the Council of Hippo

- AD 397 Council of Carthage, that decision was affirmed
- AD 405 Pope Innocent I validated that decision
- By the 5th century, with the completion of St. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate translation, the full canon of 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New—a total of 73 books—had become the official Christian “canon” of Scripture — The Bible of Christendom for the next 1,000 years.

- The Christian Bible (canon):
  - Consists of 73 individual books, numbering roughly 2,000 pages of text
  - Written over a period of 1,500 years from around 1400 B.C. through 100 A.D.
  - Written by at least 45 different authors, each book passing through the hands of editors and redactors
  - Each book has its own more or less complex textual history

**Books That Didn’t Make the Cut**

Apocrypha – Not written by the prophets – Not inspired scripture
- Eze 13 – False prophets condemned
Gnostic – Not written by the Apostles – Not inspired scripture
**Apocryphal or Deuterocanonical books**

- Books of the Apocrypha were generally written in the roughly 400 years between the composition of the books in the Old and New Testaments, the so-called inter-testamental period.
- Apocrypha means “hidden” and Deuterocanonical means “second-listed.”
- Expanded canon of the Roman catholic, Syrian and Orthodox Bibles
  - The Roman Catholic Church officially added the Apocrypha / Deuterocanonicals to their Bible at the Council of Trent in the mid 1500’s A.D., primarily in response to the Protestant Reformation.
  - The apocryphal books are accepted by the Roman Catholic Church because many of them teach RCC doctrines which are not in agreement with the Bible:
    - Praying for the dead
    - Petitioning Mary to intercede with the Father
    - Worshiping angels
    - Alms-giving as atonement for sins
- Books of the Apocrypha
  - Generally written in the roughly 400 years between the composition of the books in the Old and New Testaments, the so-called inter-testamental period.
- Controversy surrounds the Apocrypha regarding whether these books are from God and divinely-inspired.
  - Many books of the Apocrypha contain historical or geographical inaccuracies and teach false doctrines
    - e.g., the Book of Tobit claims good works lead to salvation
  - Some biblical scholars point out that Jesus never quoted any verses from the Apocrypha, although He quoted with great frequency from many Old Testament books.
    - Jewish Scripture never included any of these documents as sacred writings.
- Deuterocanonical books
  - 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras
  - Tobit
  - Judith
  - Ecclesiasticus
  - Baruch
  - the Letter of Jeremiah
  - Prayer of Manasseh
  - 1 and 2 Maccabees.
- Also includes parts of books that are not represented in the normal Christian canon
  - Ester
    - Ester was written entirely in Hebrew. After 250 BC, additions were made to Ester in Greek.
    - Dead Sea Scrolls – Ester is one of the very few books among the Dead Sea Scrolls that was not represented
  - Daniel
At the end of each summer, every NFL team must winnow its roster to 53 players. The very best make the cut; many hopeful young men see their hopes dashed with news they didn’t make the cut (or, more graphically, they’ve “been cut”). This is true in all walks of life – whether you are a presidential hopeful, a job applicant, or a contest entrant, you either make the cut or you don’t.

This is true for anything that has a standard, a measure, a rule. It is certainly true for the Bible. Only those books which meet the criteria for canonicity make the cut.

Not all books made the cut. Some books were not written by those who had the bona fides of an apostle or prophet and were therefore excluded. Some books were written by authors other than the biblical personages their names may have indicated and were therefore rejected (this practice, known as pseudepigraphy, will be considered in a later post). Some books were rejected because they never enjoyed the kind of universal acceptance considered necessary to evidence the Holy Spirit’s imprimatur.

This is worth exploring, as it is an area where common questions arise. This is especially true for the Apocrypha. Whether you are Roman Catholic or Protestant, you’ll notice that some folks have very different Bibles than you. And we’re not here referring to Bible translations (discussion on that here). Instead, we’re talking about what books are actually included in the Bible.

A Roman Catholic translation (such as, say, The Jerusalem Bible) will include a whole bunch of books between the Old and New Testaments that aren’t found in most Protestant bibles. These books are collectively called the Apocrypha. The Greek term Apocrypha literally means “hidden,” and tells you something about these documents – they are considered to be obscure or questionable in some way – in some instances as regards their authorship, in others simply as regards their validity as scripture.

Among Roman Catholics these books are viewed as being deuterocanonical. This means “secondarily canonical” (“deutero” is Greek for “second” – “Deuteronomy” is the “second” presentation of the Law of Moses).

What does it mean to be deuterocanonical? How can something be “sort of” scripture? Can you rely upon it? Trust it? Derive doctrine from it? Trust the 1st, 3rd, and 5th verses but not the 2nd, 4th, and 6th? For a Protestant the notion of deuterocanonicity is nonsensical. It is like being half pregnant. It either is scripture or it isn’t.

This is not an unimportant matter, as Roman Catholics ground their view of Purgatory with an apocryphal biblical reference (though even the Apocrypha doesn’t really support the doctrine of Purgatory).

The Apocrypha is not scripture. Even the deuterocanonicity of Roman Catholicism makes it less than scripture. The Reformers saw the problem here. They recognized the historic truth that the Jews had never recognized these books as being canonical, nor does the NT ever quote from any Apocryphal work, nor does the NT refer to these books as having any kind of authority.

However, the Reformers did see these books as having some value, as we’ll explore in our next post.

The Value of the Apocrypha

Posted: 19 Nov 2015 02:04 PM PST
We don’t determine the value of something generally based on its lack of value for a particular purpose. If I need a hammer for a particular job for which my screwdriver is not helpful, it doesn’t therefore follow that my screwdriver is worthless and should be thrown away. If I want to play football, I need not cast off balls in all other forms. They serve other purposes.

The Apocrypha is like this. The previous post in this series describes what the Apocrypha is: a collection of books dating from the inter-testamental period that are of dubious nature in some sense. They are considered fully canonical by almost nobody, but Roman Catholics do view them as having deuto-canonical status. In short: they aren’t scripture and aren’t useful for deriving authoritative doctrine. They don’t reveal the character and nature of God, the plan of salvation, or serve as an infallible guide to living a life pleasing to God. They aren’t useful resources as scripture.

Although not useful as scripture, it does not follow that they aren’t useful for anything. This would be to fall into the trap of the old hammer/screwdriver fallacy (also known as the only-useful-ball-is-a-football fallacy) described above.

In fact, while the Protestant Reformers made clear that the books of the Apocrypha were not scripture, they insisted that these books were still quite valuable. They encouraged Christians to read and study these books. Most Protestant Bibles (not just Roman Catholic ones) were printed with the apocryphal books between the Old and New Testaments for quite some time. The reason these books ceased to be included was not due to some de-valuing of these books, but instead reflected a desire on the part of printers to print shorter (and therefore less expensive) bibles. This is the same kind of thinking that led in our day to printing only the New Testament and Psalms.

If not useful as scripture, of what value is the Apocrypha? The Apocrypha is useful to help understand the historical and cultural context of the inter-testamental period and, in turn, of the New Testament. The Apocrypha is also useful to understand the literary genres of the New Testament. In short, the Apocrypha is extremely valuable background material.

The Historical and Cultural Context of the New Testament

When the Old Testament ends in Malachi 4, the Israelites live in a tiny client kingdom of the Persian Empire. The population is centered in Jerusalem and its environs. There is little happening in the Galilee or Trans-Jordan from a Jewish perspective. The Temple is rebuilt, but it is a tiny edifice, a mere shadow of the glory of Solomon’s impressive structure.

When you turn the page of your bible to Matthew chapter 1, you turn forward over 400 years of history. Gone are Persians; Rome is the dominant Empire now. There are also people called Herodians, Sadducees, Pharisees, and folks called Zealots (none of these folks were on the scene in the OT). The Jewish population has exploded and there are Jews living all the way up in the Galilee. The Temple is now Herod’s mammoth Temple Complex – one of the most astonishing structures ever constructed by man. In short: everything is different.

How did we get here? What is going on? Who are these people and why are they doing the stuff they’re doing? Why do the Jews seem to expect a Messiah who will be a military leader and temporal king? What is the context for all of this? One of the best ways to fill in some of the gaps is to go read some of the Apocrypha, especially a book like 1 Maccabees, which will help to fill said gaps.

Understanding the literary Genres of the New Testament

Another reason the Apocrypha has real value for New Testament Bible readers is that it helps give us a glimpse into the kinds of literature that inter-testamental Jews were reading and writing. There are many different types, or genres, of literature. If you go into a book store today you’ll see different sections for different types of books. Right now you could find a whole section devoted to Amish Romance (Why???), another devoted to Sci Fi, another to Humor, etc. Each type of
literature has its own rules. A Murder Mystery novel follows a particular form, with certain rules governing that particular genre.

This is true of the New Testament. The NT includes the book of Revelation. Revelation is categorized as “apocalyptic.” That is the name of the genre. We don’t have that genre in our bookstores. But the Jews did! They had other apocalypses. One important apocalypse is found in the Apocrypha. It is called 2 Esdras. When you want to interpret a book like Revelation, it is important to know the rules that govern interpretation of the genre of books like Revelation. The Apocrypha provides us with a repository of this kind of information, thereby helping shed light on our interpretation of books which are genuinely canonical.

1 Maccabees and Jesus

Posted: 03 Dec 2015 01:50 PM PST

Historical context matters. I can think of many instances when learning the “rest of the story” is of immense help in understanding the current context. A social gathering gets suddenly awkward when Yuri enters the room; Boris, next to you, leans over to whisper, “He and Sasha used to date.”* A particular church’s dynamics seem bizarre until you learn about the split that happened back in ’84 (choose a century). Your historical context matters. You’ve been shaped for better or worse by the people you’ve encountered, the crises you’ve undergone, the adversity you’ve overcome.

The Bible is no different. If you want to understand what’s going on it helps a lot to have an idea about the key historical events that shaped the lives of the people found there. When we study the New Testament, we walk into the middle of a very long and complicated story. This includes the narrative of the Old Testament, but also the narrative of the in-between time: the inter-testamental period, the epoch that gave rise to the Apocrypha.

We’ve been considering the Apocrypha and its value. The Apocrypha is quite useful for providing insight into the historical context of the New Testament. To illustrate: the kingly expectation of Jesus.

The Jews of Jesus’ day were looking for a king to come. This was part of the OT prophetic tradition around Messiah. When the Messiah, or Christ, came, he would be a new David. In fulfillment of the great prophecy of 2 Sam 7, he would be a Son of David who would reign over a never-ending kingdom, a dominion of justice and righteousness that would extend to the nations.

We see lots of this in Jesus’ coming. He is born in Bethlehem (in fulfillment of Micah 5:2); he is adored as a king at his birth (Matt 2:2); he is hailed as a king at his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:9-11, the Jewish crowd quotes from Psalm 118); he is ironically crucified as a king (Matt 27:19); he ascends into heaven to take his seat at the right hand of the Father (a kingly image, Matt 26:64); the central focus of his preaching and teaching is the establishment of his kingdom (“kingdom of God” in Luke alone = 31x). All of this has an OT context and can be understood in light of the OT revelation.

But…one somewhat confusing thing we read in the gospels is the level of misunderstanding concerning Jesus’ kingship. In short: the people (and even the apostles!) seem to expect a very different kind of king than the kind of king Jesus came to be. They are looking for a king who will fight and kill Romans, who will reign in a traditional kingly fashion. For instance:

Matthew 20:20-22 20 Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. 21 “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” 22 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them.

What Jesus says here is literally true. James and John thought they were asking to be temporal leaders, the #2 and #3 in an earthly Jewish kingdom. Their expectations are way off. At some level they expect Jesus to overthrow Roman authority and seize power by might. But he’s come for a different kind of kingship. He takes the opportunity to enlighten them about the upside-down nature of his kingship and kingdom.
25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Why were the Jews, even those closest to Jesus, so way off in their expectation as to the nature of his kingdom? This is where the Apocrypha can be immensely helpful to us, particularly the book of 1 Maccabees.

This book describes events that took place about 170 years before the birth of Christ. Then, too, the Jews had known real suffering and oppression at the hands of a Gentile oppressor every bit as brutal as the Romans. The Macedonian Greek Empire of the Seleucids, one of the successor kingdoms of Alexander the Great’s massive territorial conquest, extended from the Aegean to India. It was militarily mighty and was determined (under the monstrous rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes) to enforce Greek culture upon its citizens – the unfortunate Jews would adopt Greek customs and gods, and would stop teaching their children to follow the ways of their forefathers...or they would die. Consider this text:

1 Maccabees 1:20-38  20 After subduing Egypt, Antiochus...went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. 21 He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. 22 He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. 23 He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures that he found. 24 Taking them all, he went into his own land. He shed much blood, and spoke with great arrogance. 25 Israel mourned deeply in every community, 26 rulers and elders groaned, young women and young men became faint, the beauty of the women faded. 27 Every bridegroom took up the lament; she who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning. 28 Even the land trembled for its inhabitants, and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame.... 32 They took captive the women and children, and seized the livestock.... 37 On every side of the sanctuary they shed innocent blood; they even defiled the sanctuary.

Can you imagine living in such evil times as this? The people were desperate for a deliverer, and one came forth in the form of Mattathias the priest and his sons. The most famous of these was Judas Maccabeus (Maccabeus means “The Hammerer”!). This nickname gives the name to the book as a whole, the book of “Hammerers.”

1 Maccabees 2:1-4 In those days Mattathias son of John son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein. 2 He had five sons, John surnamed Gaddi, 3 Simon called Thassi, 4 Judas called Maccabeus...

1 Maccabees 2:19-27  19 ...Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice: “Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, and have chosen to obey his commandments, everyone of them abandoning the religion of their ancestors, 20 I and my sons and my brothers will continue to live by the covenant of our ancestors. 21 Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances. 22 We will not obey the king’s words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left.”.... 27 Then Mattathias cried out in the town with a loud voice, saying: “Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!”

What the Hammer family did next was extraordinary. Zealous for the Lord, they led a rebellion against the mighty Antiochus...and they won! They hammered the Gentiles into submission. They established against all odds an independent Jewish state under Maccabean priest-kings that would last for the next 100 years (until the arrival of the Romans and Herod the Great).

What does all of this have to do with Jesus? A lot, actually. Why didn’t people seem to get Jesus’ kind of kingship? Because the collective historical experience of the Jews had taught them to expect a very different kind of king-deliverer. They were
looking for another Hammer. They wanted a Roman smasher, not someone who wanted to teach them about loving their enemies. Jesus came as their king, but they didn’t receive him; they crucified him. He came as a hammer against the Devil, a hammer against sin. He came as a priest-king far greater than any Maccabean ruler, but their own experience prevented them from seeing it. Their historical context had blinded them to the coming of their king.

Many in our day (all of us some of the time) have trouble seeing Jesus clearly as well. Our historical context obscures our vision. Perhaps a negative encounter with a poor witness, perhaps an experience of pain and loss, perhaps a personal betrayal. These things can make it difficult to see clearly, but when clearly seen Jesus is the answer to the above and much, much more. He is the king, and in his kingdom alone there is life. And he has succeeded in beating into submission the forces of evil in a manner that the force of arms never could.

*Russian names used here in order to add ethnic variety.

**There are a number of very funny “Hammer” jokes related to the once famous rapper Stanley Kirk Burrell, better known as MC Hammer, later simply as Hammer, that could be made at this point in the argument, but I refrained in order to preserve the flow of argument.

Pseudepigrapha

The Pseudepigrapha

Posted: 10 Dec 2015 02:13 PM PST

Marie Antoinette did not actually say, “Let them eat cake.” Nor did she say Qu’ils mangent de la brioche (that’s “let them eat cake” in French). It makes a great story though. Nor did Julius Caesar actually utter the famous Et tu, Brute? According to Plutarch he died in silence, while Suetonius has him asking kai su, teknon? (“You also, my Son?”). The famous last words are actually Shakespeare’s own (brilliant and memorable) creation. These are example of false attributions to historical personages, and it weighs on the topic of the day, the Pseudepigrapha.

In our discussion of the formation of the canon, we’ve been considering books that didn’t measure up, that didn’t make the cut. We considered the Apocrypha, books considered deuto-canonical by some Christians (Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians), but considered non-canonical by Protestants. The Pseudepigrapha is another category of writings that didn’t make the cut.

Pseudepigrapha is a transliterated Greek word that means “false writings.” These are books that purport to have been written by a significant personage, usually an important Old Testament saint, but they were actually written much later by some imaginative author (most of these books date from about 200 B.C – 200 A.D.). It is highly likely that the authors themselves didn’t intend to actually deceive, they were simply engaged in an act of sanctified imagination – like a Christian writing historical fiction about the life of Jesus (Ben-Hur for example).

These books have some great titles. Here are some:

- The Apocalypse of Abraham
- The Life of Adam and Eve
- The Apocalypse of Elijah
- The Apocryphon of Ezekiel
- The Treatise of Shem
- The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
- The Apocalypse of Zephaniah
The definitive collection of Pseudepigrapha is the 2-volume edition edited by James Charlesworth called *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. These (very large!) books contain over sixty documents. Most of these are written by Jewish authors, though some are of Christian origin. All draw on some Old Testament text in some way. Often they are stories that “fill in the gaps” of a biblical story. For instance, the book of *Jannes and Jambres* tells about the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses when he confronted Pharaoh. These men aren’t named in Exodus 7-9, but the later author fills in some of the backstory including the judgment that befell these men.

No one (with the exception of the Ethiopian church in a few instances) accepts these books as canonical. No one has ever accepted these books as canonical – these books were never entertained for inclusion in the Jewish canon, nor the Christian one.

Why? Because everyone knew they were pseudepigraphal. And the chief criterion for inclusion in the canon was the validity of standing on prophetic (for the OT) or apostolic (for the NT) authority. These are works of creative literature. They are interesting, but scripture they are not.

Some assert (contra me) that pseudepigraphy was not anathema to canonicity, but that it was a widely accepted practice. Some critical scholars claim that the New Testament itself contains pseudepigraphal documents. Scholars often dismiss Peter as the author of *2 Peter*. Likewise Pauline authorship is often denied in the case of these six books: *Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy*, and *Titus*. These books were written later (so the story goes) by disciples of these apostles. They used the name of Peter or Paul to validate their message. A letter from Paul has way more street cred than a letter from Epaphras.

This is hooey. The notion that the church would have accepted as canonical books that only purported to be written by Peter and Paul (but really weren’t) is entirely contrary to the kinds of investigation and discernment that we know historically went in to formation of the canon. There were pretender pseudepigraphal works; these were rejected because their authorship was in question. What’s more, the biblical authors themselves were taking measures to assure that this kind of deception could not happen. For example, in Galatians 6:11 Paul writes, “See what large letters I use when I write with my own hand.” In other words: my personal signature validates the apostolic origin and authority of this letter. Likewise in *1 Corinthians* 16:21. Paul wrote the letters of Paul; Peter wrote the letters of Peter.

Next time: One important pseudepigraphal work...1 Enoch.

**1 Enoch**

Rich Herbster, Posted: 07 Jan 2016 08:57 AM PST

The most important pseudepigraphal book is *1 Enoch*. It is a very long book and purports to have been written by Enoch. However, it was not written by Enoch; it dates from roughly the time of Christ. No one (outside of the Ethiopian church) considers the book to be canonical. Before we can consider the book of *1 Enoch*, we must first consider the biblical Enoch.

Enoch is mentioned in Genesis 5. He’s the guy who enigmatically “walked with God and was not.” Like so many other passages in Genesis, this one is unclear. “Walks with God” seems clear enough for someone who knows God, who enjoys intimacy with him. But what does it meant that Enoch “was not”? It could just mean that he died. The phrase is odd enough, though, that it led many ancient interpreters to conclude that he, in fact, didn’t die. Instead he was snatched away by God sans death (like the later instance of Elijah). This is confirmed in Hebrews 11:5:

*By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*
The narrative of Enoch is followed in Genesis by another bizarre and difficult passage (it is, in my opinion, the most obscure passage in the whole Bible): Genesis 6:1-8. This is sort of a preamble leading up to the Flood Narrative. It describes the great and increasing wickedness of man upon the earth. Seemingly chief among these evils is that:

**Genesis 6:2-4**  
*The sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose....* The Nephilim were on the earth in those days— and also afterward— when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

What does that mean? There are so many interpretations that it would take up more space than is here available just to outline the possibilities. I have a friend who did a Master’s thesis on this passage. At the end of her two-year study I asked her what she concluded. She said chagrined that she was more confused than when she had begun. Here are two of the most important interpretive possibilities (though there are many more):

- **The sons of God represent the faithful line of Seth, while the daughters of men represent the faithless line of Cain.** The Sethites chose to intermarry with the Cainites because they were pretty (though not godly!). It is essentially the sin of moral and cultural compromise giving rise to powerful but idolatrous offspring (the Nephilim). **Full disclosure:** this is my view.

- **The sons of God represent fallen angels, that is, demons, who intermarry and copulate with human women, giving rise to giants (the Nephilim).**

The book of 1 Enoch champions the second of these views. In fact, a bunch of the book is essentially an imaginative expansion of this interpretation. Consider a chunk of 1 Enoch 6:

*In those days, when the children of man had multiplied, it happened that there were born unto them handsome and beautiful daughters. And the angels, the children of heaven, saw them and desired them; and they said to one another, “Come, let us choose wives for ourselves from among the daughters of man and beget us children.” And Semiyaz, being their leader, said unto them, “I fear that perhaps you will consent that this deed should be done, and I alone will become responsible for this great sin.” But they all responded to him, “Let us all swear an oath and bind everyone among us by a curse not to abandon this suggestion but to do the deed.” Then they all swore together and bound one another by the curse. And they were altogether two hundred; and they descended into `Ardos, which is the summit of Hermon....*

Note how the pseudepigraphal story contains way more information than the biblical one: we are given names (more than ten of these angels are named as the story progresses), numbers (200), and a clear and unambiguous understanding of what is a very unclear and ambiguous scripture. This is all typical of the *Pseudepigrapha* in general. The weird story gets weirder in 1 Enoch 7:

*And they took wives unto themselves, and everyone respectively chose one woman for himself, and they began to go unto them. And they taught them magical medicine, incantations, the cutting of roots, and taught them about plants. And the women became pregnant and gave birth to great giants whose heights were three hundred cubits. These giants...turned against the people in order to eat them.... And their flesh was devoured the one by the other, and they drank blood....*

Weird! Vampire sorcerer giants (four hundred fifty feet tall (18 inches to the cubit)) who are eating people! Yikes. Many people expressed puzzlement at Hollywood’s 2014 film *Noah* – there were mysterious rock creatures at the beginning – where is that in the Bible? Well, it’s not; but it is sort of in *1 Enoch*, I guess.

In response to all this evil, God sends the Flood. He makes use of a whole bunch of intermediaries like Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Again, wherever details are sparse in the biblical text they are dramatically spelled out in the text of *1 Enoch.*
Much of the rest of this (very long – 108 chapters!) book is an apocalyptic revelation of the end of the world. God’s care for his elect is seen during a bunch of calamitous judgments that befall the earth. There is loads of symbolic imagery, similar to the kinds of things you find in the book of Revelation.

We could just shrug our shoulders at the book of 1 Enoch with a smile and a shrug and say, “Huh, that’s odd!” But…unlike any other book of the Pseudepigrapha (or the Apocrypha), 1 Enoch is actually quoted within the New Testament canon.

Both Jude (in Jude 6) and Peter (2 Peter 2:4-5) seem to give support to the interpretation that it was, in fact, fallen angels copulating with human women in this confusing Genesis 6 text (thereby agreeing in part with the Enoch understanding spelled out above). However, these NT passages are far from clear in their own right and are both used to illustrate a more important point: watch out for false teachers! An exposition of Genesis 6 is somewhat peripheral to what Peter and Jude are trying to say.

Jude does, however, explicitly quote a little later from 1 Enoch (Jude 14-15):

14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

What do we do with the fact that Jude quotes from 1 Enoch? Does this mean that 1 Enoch takes on the authority and standing of scripture? What are the implications of this for our understanding of the canon? Three points, then done:

• Just because Jude quotes from 1 Enoch doesn’t mean that 1 Enoch is viewed as authoritative or that it is credited as scripture. When you are making an argument you can make use of any source you desire to make your point. Paul quotes a poet of Crete when he writes to Titus (Tit 1:12): “2 Even one of their own prophets has said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.’” Does this mean that Paul views this Cretan poet as an author of scripture? Of course not. If I quote from Billy Joel in Sunday’s sermon does that mean I view the song Piano Man as being divine writ? By no means. If scripture cites scripture, there are many ways this is done including: “God says…,” “As the scripture says…,” etc. Jude says none of these.

• Just because Jude quotes from 1 Enoch does not mean that Jude is endorsing everything that 1 Enoch has to say. This relates to the first point, but needs to be said as well. I don’t suppose I’ve ever read anything in which I wouldn’t have agreed with something, but it doesn’t follow that I must therefore agree with everything.

• Just because Jude quotes from 1 Enoch doesn’t mean that Jude believes that (the real) Enoch is the actual author of this text. In fact, despite the reference to “Enoch the seventh from Adam,” I am quite certain that Jude did, in fact, recognize this work as being pseudepigraphal. His reference is simply to the book as it was known and read. It serves as a touchpoint between him and his audience as a book that was commonly read and known.

To sum up: 1 Enoch is an extremely odd book. It is also an important one for an insight into the interpretation of a difficult text (Gen 6) around the time of Christ. Above all, it is fascinating book from the perspective of considering the place of the Pseudepigrapha alongside the canon of scripture.

The Apostolic Fathers

Rich Herbster, Posted: 30 Mar 2016 09:44 AM PDT

We place a lot of emphasis on the importance of our Founding Fathers (or we did as a culture until quite recently in our history – dead white males of European descent are really passé these days). There are good reasons for this: these
important men (no sexism intended, most of them did happen to be men (and, yes, I’m aware of the significant contribution of Abigail Adams and others)) laid the foundation for our nation, particularly through the foundational documents of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution (and Bill of Rights), as well as works such as The Federalist Papers. George Washington is The Father of Our Country. Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison were among the key framers of American-style democracy. The first generation of anything is usually the most important, for this is where the direction is set for all that follows.

We’ve been considering the nature of the canon of scripture. What books made the cut, and what were the criteria by which these decisions were made? In some recent posts we’ve been considering books that didn’t make the cut for inclusion in the Old Testament: in particular, the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha. We turn today to another group of books that could have been (and sometimes were) considered for candidacy in the New Testament: The Apostolic Fathers.

In church history and in historical theology we often make reference to The Fathers. Now, this term is used in a variety of different ways. My library includes 38 volumes edited by Philip Schaff: The Ante-Nicene Fathers, as well as the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. These are selections from the writings of significant Christian writers from the first millennium such as Augustine, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Eusebius and scores of others. Sometimes these authors are referred to as The Fathers. For understanding the development of Christian history and theology, these books are indispensable. However, no one has ever considered them to be scripture.

A more particular and nuanced use of the word Fathers is intended when I refer to The Apostolic Fathers. This narrower term has in view the generation of church leaders who lived in the time immediately following the days of the apostles (say around 100 AD). They lived during the twilight of the apostolic age, when the church was still in fledgling status. The apostles themselves were dying (almost always by martyrdom!), leaving behind the works that would soon be fully recognized as scripture in the New Testament. The next generation took up the baton. They included wonderful and godly men such as Clement, the bishop of Rome, Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna (and personal friend and disciple of the apostle John), and Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch. This next generation left us the works known as The Apostolic Fathers. These can be found in many one volume editions, such as the classic Lightfoot and Harmer text edited by Michael Holmes.

These books take on a variety of forms. Some are letters, like the letters of Paul. This is true of First and Second Clement (though, in truth, First Clement is more of a sermon than a letter). These books are fascinating in part due to the way in which they treat the books we recognize as the New Testament: quoting from them as scripture with authority. First Clement is also interesting as some thought it a good candidate for inclusion in the canon. It’s non-inclusion was due primarily to its narrow geographical acceptance and to the fact that it clearly wasn’t apostolic (it self-consciously quotes from those books which are!).

The Martyrdom of Polycarp is a historical account describing the death of Polycarp, the aged Bishop of Smyrna. This inspiring account has echoes of the canonical martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7). The Roman proconsul urges Polycarp:

“Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile Christ,” Polycarp replied, “For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?”

He perseveres in faith, and is burned at the stake.

The Letters of Ignatius were written by this godly bishop while traveling in Roman custody across the Empire in order to face his trial and certain death by martyrdom. Along the way he writes seven letters: to the Smyrneans, to Polycarp, to the Ephesians, to the Magnesians, to the Philadelphians, to the Trallians, and to the Romans. Astute students of scripture will recognize the significance of seven letters, especially to these particular churches, some of which are the same churches addressed in the seven letters of Revelation. Ignatius takes the occasion of his impending death to encourage his
correspondents. Like Paul’s epistle to the Philippians, Ignatius gives a picture of joy and confidence in the midst of suffering.

Perhaps most interesting of all of these works from the perspective of the canon is The Shepherd of Hermas. This book is fascinating because it came closest of all of these works to being received into the canon. The book had wide acceptance throughout the church. What likely did it in was its lack of real apostolic bona fides. Reading the book, it is astonishing to consider this widespread acceptance. It is a very strange book! Shepherd is apocalyptic literature, like the book of Revelation. It is full of weird visions, angelic visitations, symbolic imagery – the kind of stuff you see in Revelation. However, (and unlike Revelation) the book has no real coherent Christocentric theological core. It is an interesting book, but it isn’t scripture.

Of what value are these books?

1. **They affirm the traditional Christian Canon.** These books quote those books which are canonical with reverence, respect, and with a view to their authority as the Word of God. In this respect, they confirm the canon as we have received it.

2. **They affirm the apostolic nature of the church.** One consistent theological conviction of the faith concerning the nature of the church is that it is to be apostolic. As early as these documents are, they are by definition post-apostolic. As such they are necessarily lesser lights, with lesser significance and authority. Indeed, these documents demonstrate as much themselves, both internally and externally. They show the church living out the apostolic tradition, holding to the teaching of the apostles, imitating them in their obedience and fidelity to their Lord, even unto death.

3. **They inspire.** These books put on display the continuity of the Christian witness through faithful proclamation, service, and even death. It is difficult to imagine a more convicting and motivational account than that of the martyrdom of Polycarp, or greater zeal for Christ than that of Ignatius. As such, these books provide powerful devotional literature.

4. **They serve as a helpful glimpse into early Christianity.** We can learn a lot about the history, theology, and practice of the early church through these documents. We’ll demonstrate this by focusing in a later post on one important document: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.

5. **They are great for practicing your Greek!** Because these books are written in the same Koine Greek as the New Testament and say bible-ish things that aren’t found in the Bible, the Apostolic Fathers serves as a great place to go for practice in your use in biblical Greek (if you’re privileged to have studied the blessed tongue).

**The Didache**

Posted: 07 Apr 2016 12:38 PM PDT

In our last post we looked at a fascinating collection of books written in the period of time just after the death of the apostles: The Apostolic Fathers. These books were not included in the canon for a variety of reasons, mostly because they were not apostolic in origin. They are still fascinating to consider: they highlight the difference between scripture and the valuable (but not authoritative) writings of church history. These books show remarkable reverence for the words of the canonical scriptures, and so serve as an important witness to the early recognition of the canon as we’ve come to receive it. These books also make some great devotional reading.

One of the most important books of the Apostolic Fathers is a short document known as the Didache (pronounced Dee-Dah-Kay). This is a Greek word meaning “Teaching.” The full name of the Didache would be The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. It wasn’t really the teaching of the apostles per se, instead it is an attempt to summarize the core teaching of the faith in a simple way, along with some practical applications for worship. It is similar in this regard to The Apostles’ Creed. The apostles did not actually write the creed, but it does reflect in a helpful summary form the core teaching of the apostles. Likewise, the Didache survives as an early witness to a summation of the apostolic witness.
The history of the book is fascinating. The one surviving manuscript wasn’t discovered until 1873. But the book dates to early on in church history. The latest the book could have been written is the third century, but there is good reason to date the book between 50-110 AD. A reasonable date would be 70 AD. If true, that makes this book an early witness indeed, dating to a time when some of the apostles were still living. We’ll never know the date for sure.

In terms of content, the book divides neatly into two parts, both of interest. The first half is a summary of the Christian faith contrasted in two “ways.”

*There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and great is the difference between the two!* Now the way of life is this: first, “you shall love God who made you,” second, “your neighbor as yourself,” and “whatever you do not wish to happen to you, do not do to another....”

*But the way of death is this: first of all, it is evil and completely cursed; murders, adulteries, robberies, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, sorceries, robberies, false testimonies,....*  

It is not difficult to recognize this “two way” teaching to be a summary of Jesus’ own teaching:

**Matthew 7:12-14**  
12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. 13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

The parallels are obvious: the Golden Rule paraphrased, the teaching regarding two roads, and the context of which road you’re walking being tied to ethical adherence to the Law of God. This is an excellent picture of the way the Didache (and the Fathers as a whole) treat scripture: with reverence, with respect, and with submission. The Didache offers no new teaching here at all, but rather provides a helpful summary of Christian teaching. Upon which path am I walking? The narrow path or the broad one? Toward life or toward my destruction? And, of course, the narrow path is Jesus himself who is the Way (John 14:6).

The second half of the Didache is very different, but is equally interesting. It is focused on some practical application of the faith in the worship life of the church. More particularly, the book lays out some instruction for worship and even some liturgy: formal prayers and formulae. The verbiage of Lord’s Prayer for worship is provided (using “debts” and “debtors”).

Particularly fascinating is what these texts say about the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

**On Baptism:**

*Now concerning baptism, baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm.” But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times “in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”*

This passage interests me for two reasons: First, there is a quotation from scripture – the words of Jesus in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Second, the passage indicates a real lack of interest in the mode of baptism. The mode, or *how*, of baptism is a matter of indifference – whether immersion or sprinkling, running or standing, warm or cold – doesn’t matter. What matters is that it is a Trinitarian Christian baptism in keeping with the canonical command of Jesus.

**On the Lord’s Supper:**
...let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for the Lord has also spoken concerning this: “Do not give what is holy to dogs.”

Again, there is a quotation, and again the quotation is of Jesus and is from the gospel of Matthew (7:6). Clearly the early church was seeking to ground all of its activities in the clear teaching of scripture. Here too we see the relationship between the two sacramental signs. Baptism is to be received only once and stands as the initiatory sign into the community of faith. Communion (or Eucharist, or the Lord’s Supper, or whatever other name we give it) is a covenant renewal ceremony intended for believers alone. Unbelievers may be welcomed to worship, but The Lord’s Supper is only for the family of faith.

We shouldn’t build any doctrine from a book like the Didache; we should build our doctrine and ground our practice in the witness of scripture. But, the Didache shows us that the first generations of Christians were doing exactly this themselves – seeking to ground all of their worship and activity in the apostolic witness of the canonical scriptures.

*The Gnostic Gospels*

Posted: 08 Sep 2016 01:28 PM PDT

*Jesus didn’t really die on the cross. He married Mary Magdalene, moved to France, and had several children. All that claptrap about his identity as God’s incarnate Son, his sacrificial death and resurrection from the dead? All propaganda foisted upon you by a deceptive church. The real truth is to be found in the writings of other groups of “Christians” you never heard of: they were repressed and silenced…until now!*

The preceding paragraph is idiotic (as well as blasphemous). Fortunately, it doesn’t reflect my own thinking. It does reflect the teaching of a group of ancient heretics: Gnostic Christians. It also reflects the historical assessment of some scholars of our day (folks like Princeton’s Elaine Pagels) that the writings of these heretics deserve at least equal standing with the gospels in your bible.

Gnosticism (the “g” is silent) has been big business in recent years. We need look no further than author Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* – a bestselling book turned Hollywood blockbuster (featuring Tom Hanks!) – to see the popularity of this long ago almost forgotten movement.

Where did Dan Brown and Elaine Pagels find this stuff? Their sources are documents (dating from the second through the fourth centuries) such as *The Gospel of Thomas* and *The Gospel of Judas*. What are these books? Why aren’t they found in our bibles? Is this a conspiracy??!

Let’s rewind and start at the beginning. With Jesus himself. Jesus chose twelve men to be his apostles. In so doing, Jesus announced that he is reconstituting Israel. Just as there were twelve tribes in Israel, now there are twelve apostles – true Israel is centered on and identified with Jesus and his work. These twelve carried on the ministry of Jesus and authoritatively grounded the church and its teaching. The scriptures of the New Testament gained their standing based on the apostolic origin and the authority of those apostles.

The canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written within the first century, as early as the 50’s (for Mark), as late as the 90’s (for John). They had a well established pedigree and identity with their apostolic authors. *The canon itself was formally fixed later*, but the early apostolic *bona fides* of these books are what won the day in recognizing them as scripture. The church was also aware of another group of writings which lacked these credentials: the writings of the Gnostics.

Who were the Gnostics? The Gnostics were a group who had a set of fundamental beliefs very different from those taught in traditional Christianity. There are lots of different types of Gnosticism, but most Gnostics teach some form of the following:
• **Spirit/Matter.** Spirit is good; Matter is bad. Our souls are trapped in these material shells. We want to get rid of our bodies and get back to good spiritual realities. (Christianity doesn’t teach that matter is bad – God declared the Creation “very good.” The problem with the body and the soul is sin.)

• **Two gods.** There are two gods: the bad god, called the Demiurge, is the god of the Old Testament – he created everything, which is bad. The good god is the God of the New Testament – he is spirit and we want to get back to him.

• **Secret Knowledge.** Gnosticism gets its name from the Greek word gnosis, which means “knowledge.” All Gnostics taught that you needed to get some sort of secret knowledge to escape the bad body and get back to the good god. Salvation is essentially learning the secret handshake.

• **Jesus and the Gnosis.** Not all Gnostics claimed to be Christians, but some glommed on to Christianity because it seemed to offer a suitable vehicle for their secret knowledge philosophy. Jesus became the keeper of secret knowledge and you can get “saved” through him, though not in the orthodox sense of faith in his substitutionary atoning death for your sins. Rather, you get access through Jesus to the secret handshake that would open the door to the spiritual world.

• **Weird Ethics.** Because the Gnostics taught that the body was bad, they taught that it was good to punish the body by treating it poorly. Therefore, some Gnostics were very hard on the body, embracing a form of radical asceticism (intense fasting, absolute chastity even in marriage, etc.). Others pursued the opposite course and embraced a form of licentiousness – the body is bad so let’s punish it by doing all sorts of base things with it: drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, etc. Either course led in a direction contrary to orthodox Christian ethics.

To ground their teaching they penned documents that use the form of the canonical gospels, attributing them to the apostles – Thomas, Judas, and so on. But these “gospels” have no connection to the historical person of Jesus. They don’t reflect his teaching or his work. They also have nothing to do with the apostles that they identify with (The real Thomas had nothing to do with the “Gospel of Thomas”!). They instead reflect the beliefs of people with an alien worldview living centuries later.

Unfortunately, this isn’t communicated to modern audiences. Instead people are told, “We’ve discovered these ancient documents that the church doesn’t want you to know about. They reveal a very different Jesus from the one in your bible. And these should be read alongside of, or even instead of, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.” And people believe it. Some folks just love a good conspiracy theory. Some are just too lazy to study the history of the canon. Some are just happy for an excuse not to have to deal with the actual Jesus of the bible.

The Gnostic gospels aren’t reliable documents for learning anything at all about Jesus. They are late documents (though ancient from our perspective) that teach us more about the confused people who wrote them than they do about Jesus. If you really want to know anything about Jesus, you’ll have to open the New Testament.

**Jewish vs Christian Bibles**

• By the 4th century the scroll had been replaced by the codex, individual sheets stacked one atop the other, bound by stitching on the left side and held together between two covers, a major technological advancement.
  o Collecting and organizing 73 books of Scripture into a codex and binding them between two covers creates a fixed text, one that is read in a linear fashion, from page 1 to the end, just as we read a novel.
  o The experience is fundamentally different from reading a collection of scrolls loosely arranged by genre.

• Although the 39 books of the Hebrew Scriptures are identical to the same 39 books in the Christian Old Testament, the Christian canon of Scripture is profoundly different from the Jewish canon of Scripture.

**Jewish**

• From a Jewish perspective, one reads Scripture in categories of genre in a non-linear fashion, much as a flower unfold

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• In the Jewish canon the 39 books of the Tanakh are arranged by genre as:
  o Torah (Law);
  o Nevi’im (Prophets)
  o Kethuvim (Writings)

Christian
• From a Christian perspective, one reads Scripture as a fixed linear narrative consisting of a variety of literary genres, with the curtain rising in Genesis and falling in Revelation.
  o As Harvard Professor and literary critic Northrop Frye wrote in The Great Code (1981):
    [Although the Bible may be a loose collection of “little books” (“ta biblia,” in Greek) this “does not matter”).
    “What matters is that ‘the Bible’ has been read as a unity, and has influenced Western imagination as a unity.”
    ▪ With the publication of his Anatomy of Criticism in 1957, Frye was called “the foremost living student of Western literature.”
  o And as Pope Benedict XVI states in his introduction to Jesus of Nazareth:
    “If you want to understand the Scripture in the spirit in which it is written, you have to attend to the content and to the unity of Scripture as a whole . . . Old texts are appropriated, reinterpreted, and read with new eyes in new contexts. They become Scripture by being read anew, evolving in continuity with their original sense, tacitly corrected and given added depth and breadth of meaning.”

• The Christian canon:
  o Adds 7 books (plus additions to Daniel and Esther) to the Hebrew canon and 27 books to the New Testament canon, for a total of 73 books.
  o These books are then arranged as a linear narrative, employing a variety of genres and structural techniques.
  o It is a narrative that has a beginning, middle and end, a narrative whose main character is God, whose conflict is sin and whose theme is redemption.
  o Reading the Christian Bible is analogous to reading a novel.
Different versions of the Bible

- Christian canon has the books laid out in a linear narrative
  - Jewish canon has the same exact 39 books, same words, but laid out in a different structure
  - Old Testament Canon had been defined in AD 90 by the Rabbis at the Council of Jamnia

Bible translations

Bible Babble video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7nF1wSZZLk
What is the best Bible translation?


This is a common question. If I’ve been asked it once, I’ve been asked it a thousand times. A hundred years ago it wouldn’t have been much of a question. The King James Version was then about three hundred years old and held absolute sway in the English speaking world. That ship has sailed, however. Today we have hundreds of English language translations of the Bible to choose from.

How do you go about selecting a translation? Do you just pick the one you like the best? The one that is in the pews of your local church? The one that your friends use? Based on price? How pretty the cover is? There really should be two concerns that any serious Christian has in selecting a bible translation: accuracy and readability.

Accuracy. The first thing that you want from a translation is accuracy. Translators must work with the Greek (for the New Testament) and Hebrew or Aramaic (for the Old Testament) languages in which the original biblical texts were written. They must understand what these texts meant in the original languages. But they must also know the receptor language well (in this case English) and be able to accurately convey the meaning of the original into the receptor language. Some translations are more accurate than others. For instance, the New American Standard Bible (NASB) is extremely accurate, far more so than, say, The Message. The King James Version (KJV) is very accurate as well, far more so than the Good News Bible (GNB). The English Standard Version (ESV) is more accurate than the New International Version (NIV).

Readability. The second thing you want from your bible translations is readability. You don’t just want accuracy, you want to be able to understand the thing. You need it to be in contemporary language, the way people actually speak today. You need it to be in good English word order, following English language syntax (which is not the same as Greek or Hebrew). In this regard the Message and the New Living Translation (NLT) are far superior to the New American Standard or the King James Version. Likewise the New International Version is better than the English Standard Version.

Some translations are great on Accuracy but crummy on Readability. They will follow the original language closely, going word for word. This doesn’t give us a smooth English translation. Some are great on Readability, but crummy on Accuracy. They will seek to go thought for thought and paraphrase the original idea into contemporary English. Some translations try to thread the needle between the two. The NIV, for instance, is what is called a dynamic equivalent translation – seeking to be as accurate as possible while still demonstrating good English usage. So which Bible translation should you use? Well…it depends. It depends on who you are and what you are using the translation for. For instance:

Reading the Bible for the first time as an adult? A child's first Bible? Teaching the Bible to children? I would recommend a very readable paraphrase like the NLT (New Living Translation) or the GNB (Good News Bible). It is easy to understand, easy to follow – very readable. But…be warned – It’s not always very accurate! A paraphrase like The Message can also be useful for someone who has read the Bible many times, but wants to see the familiar text with fresh eyes. The modern language can be quite striking.

Interested in intense bible study? Determined to get as close as possible to the original author's meaning? Using this Bible to check your Greek translation in seminary class? I would recommend a very literal word for word translation like
the NASB (New American Standard) or the ESV (English Standard Version). These translations are extremely accurate, but they are not the least bit readable. The NASB often doesn’t even make good English sense! But accurate it is.

Looking for a pew Bible? Want to stay as close to the meaning as possible while still having a reasonably understandable flow? I think it is really difficult to beat the NIV (New International Version). I still prefer the 1984 version to the 2011 (probably because this is where I memorized most of my scripture) but it is no longer in print! So which is the best translation? It depends on what you are using the Bible for. Thanks be to God we live in an age when we have so many wonderful resources available to us! We don’t have just one good option, but scores of wonderful options. Choices between good, better, and best lie before us. The only warnings I would issue:

Danger lies in a translation like the NWT (New World Translation). This is the Jehovah’s Witnesses Bible and isn’t a translation at all. It corrupts the text of the Bible in order to promote the erroneous views of this heretical group. Likewise vis à vis the Mormon Bible, the Joseph Smith Translation, etc.

Watch out for the Amplified Bible. I know folks like this Bible, but it is frankly a dangerous thing. The problem is that people see all these potential meanings in a word’s range of meaning and then they think they can just pick whatever meaning strikes them as most interesting or helpful. This isn’t the way words work – this Bible does more harm than good.

*Why it is Wrong for you to be King James Only*

Rich Herbster, Posted: 21 May 2015 02:39 PM PDT

This is an insane article to write. It is almost like I’m trying to pick a fight with many members of my own tribe. But one of the benefits of having three older brothers is that you learn not to fear a fight. I’m going to offend many for whom the King James Version is the one and only English Bible. I’m saying that if you are “King James Only” you are wrong.

First let me begin in good diplomatic fashion by saying lots of nice things about the King James Version of the Bible.

- **It is super accurate.** Going back to my last article comparing bible translations, I would list the KJV on the most accurate end of the spectrum. It isn’t a paraphrase. The translators (who were the brightest lights of their day) did an absolutely masterful job of communicating the meaning of the original languages into good (1611) English.

- **It is beautiful.** I mean that. It really is majestic, brilliant, transcendent language. This is why almost all Christians pray The Lord’s Prayer in King James English. “Hallowed” is not the way we would communicate the same thing in contemporary language, but who’s going to tinker with The Lord’s Prayer? Same as regards Psalm 23. If I’m reading Psalm 23 at a funeral, I promise you that it won’t be from the NIV! By no means! The KJV trumps all contenders in this regard.

- **It is a classic.** For four hundred years this has been a standard work in the English language. For many Americans for a couple of centuries the KJV and the works of William Shakespeare comprised the sum total of tomes likely to be found on a family bookshelf. The influence of the KJV on the literature, language, education, and worldview of our civilization is incalculable.

Okay, now that I’ve boasted in its merits, let me now proceed to demolish the KJV as your bible translation of preference.
• It is not understandable. The King James uses language that no one uses today. Do you know what “bestead” means? No? It means “hard pressed.” But do one uses “bestead” nowadays, so to understand what it means you’d need to have an Elizabethan dictionary ready at hand. Know what “sackbut” is? A stringed instrument. How about “Blains”? Boils. “Carbuncle”? Emerald. The language is archaic and you can’t understand it easily. Why use a translation that you can’t understand when we have so many ready available that you can? I personally love the KJV (and Shakespeare) because of these archaic terms…because I’m a gigantic word geek. But if you are reading the Bible to understand it, this is not helpful.

Now I know that some will say here, “That is why I read the NKJV!” – the New King James Version of the Bible. The NKJV does update the archaic English – changing “thee” to “you” and “sackbut” to “harp.” But the NKJV is no good either and you shouldn’t make it your preferred translation. How’s come? Because of reason #2:

• It is based on inferior manuscripts. The KJV and the NKJV are based on manuscripts of the Old and New Testament that are inferior to the manuscripts used in modern translations. This gets a little bit complicated and I’ll explain how all this works in a future post, but I’ll try to give a little thumbnail here….

The KJV is based on the best manuscripts available at the time. For the New Testament this meant the textus receptus. A brilliant fellow named Erasmus had taken the Greek copies of the New Testament available to him and put together one eclectic Greek text. The problem? He only had four manuscripts, and these weren’t the best four. A few verses of Revelation were missing altogether and Erasmus back-translated them from the Latin Vulgate into Greek. We now have far better and earlier manuscripts than were available to the KJV translators – we have over 5,000 Greek manuscripts, many of which are over a thousand years older than anything Erasmus had. This means we have a more accurate starting point for the translators to work with. The New King James follows the same inferior manuscript family (the 4 rather than the 5,000!).

Why would we prefer to have our translation based on later and fewer manuscripts rather than earlier, more and better ones? I can’t think of a single reason.

“If the King James was good enough for Jesus, it’s good enough for me.” I think this is a joke, but having spoken to some folks in this camp I’m not so sure. I think some folks really do believe that the KJV was lowered directly from heaven. This is akin to the doctrine of Mormons with Joseph Smith and his golden plates. This is similar to the doctrine of Muslims as regards the Koran. It is not the correct view of the way we received the scriptures. God communicated in the language of the people to whom he communicated. The scriptures have always been translated into the language of ordinary people, a tradition carried on today through great organizations such as the Wycliffe Bible Translators. The Bible is a book that is meant to be understood, and therefore meant to be accurately translated.

The KJV was not the first English translation of the Bible. Before 1611 we had the Wycliffe translation, the translation of William Tyndale (which served as the basis of the KJV itself!), and the work of many other fine bible translators. Ironically the KJV was resisted upon its publication by those who preferred older and more familiar translations.

This is human nature – we abhor change; we prefer what we know. Particularly in matters sacred, such as the Bible. But those who prefer the KJV do so primarily because it is what they know, not because it’s better. It’s the same reason I prefer the NIV. But the NIV will be (has been?) replaced in the evangelical heart by newer comers, as is fit and right. The work of Bible translation can and should go on, so that every generation can read and understand God’s Word in their own language and idiom.

The Problem(s) with Red Letter Christianity

Posted: 25 Feb 2016 11:45 AM PST
As a Christian, I go in big for Jesus. Count me in the pro-Jesus camp. Among lots of other wonderful things we can say about Jesus: he’s a great teacher. He said some truly wonderful things. Things that should be believed and embraced. Teachings that should be followed. It would be an odd thing for any Christian to be anything but thumbs-up toward the red letters.

I’m referring here to the now common practice of printing the words of Jesus in red ink. Non Jesus words remain in the more mundane black ink. I probably have a dozen red letter bibles in my bible stash. Great red letter words include (among many others):

- **John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- **John 14:6** “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- **Matthew 5:3-9** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

And, of course, lots of other important red ink stuff. I’m 100% all in for all of it. But, the red ink has created some problems as well. How can the words of Jesus create problems? Well, I don’t blame Jesus for the problems. The problems lie elsewhere, generally with really bad theological presuppositions.

I once stumbled across an interesting website (one can’t be too careful where one stumbles on the internet!). This was a website that caused intense cognitive dissonance for me. It was the website of **Atheists for Jesus**. What in the world is **Atheists for Jesus**? Was this a satirical site? No, these folks were quite serious. The **Atheists for Jesus** had no use for God, or for miracles, or for an afterlife, or for most of what we might expect someone with an interest in Jesus to be interested in. Instead, the **Atheists for Jesus** loved the red letters of Jesus. In their case, not all the red letters, just the ones from the Sermon on the Mount. They felt that the ethical teachings of the Sermon on the Mount were the wisest stuff a human had ever said. They loved a lot of the content there: turning the other cheek, not judging, demonstrating radical forgiveness, etc.

Now, I hope it should be obvious that you really can’t begin to understand Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount without understanding everything else Jesus has to say, and, more than this, everything Jesus did (including miracles), and everything that he demonstrated himself to be. The Red Letters don’t (can’t!) stand on their own. What would it mean to display radical forgiveness without the surrounding context of Jesus’ radical display of forgiveness in action, without the demonstration of God’s forgiveness of human sin through Christ’s atoning work, without...a whole bunch of black ink?

Thomas Jefferson loved the teaching of Jesus, the red letters. Well...some of them. Jefferson famously cut a bible to pieces and kept the bits he liked – you can see this document on display at Monticello. As a true Enlightenment figure, Jefferson loved the ethical teaching of Jesus (though he lived a profoundly ethically challenged life himself), but he didn’t consider references to miracles, the supernatural, a real substitutionary atonement, etc. to be worth the (black) ink they were written in. So, he cut them out.

There are many contemporary Christians who are acting in Jeffersonian fashion by elevating the words of Jesus (red ink) over the rest of the words of the Bible (in black ink). Indeed, there is an organization known as **Red Letter Christians** affirming explicitly that the words of Jesus really are more significant and important than the rest of the words of scripture. After all, these are the words of Jesus himself.
But...this is problematic. This won’t work. For a number of reasons:

- **It won’t fly with Scripture’s view of Scripture.** The most important scripture on scripture:

  **2 Timothy 3:16-17**  
  > All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

  According the Holy-Spirit-inspired author (in this case, Paul), all scripture is God-breathed. This includes not only the red ink portions, but the black ink portions as well. This means that even immensely difficult and challenging texts are, and remain, God’s Word and on equal footing with the red ink words of Jesus: the slaughter of the Canaanites, weird stories about Nephilim, Jonah, Sodom and Gomorrah...all of it. There aren’t levels of authority or truthfulness. It’s all God’s Word or none of it is. We can’t pick and choose. We can’t make a canon within the canon. We can’t (with integrity) assert that it is true insofar as it serves as a witness to Christ. It is, red and black, God’s Word.

- **It won’t fly with Jesus’ view of Scripture.** Jesus didn’t go around telling people – don’t listen to that dusty Old Testament – my words trump those. Granted, he taught with a remarkable degree of authority. He didn’t say “God says...” but said instead “Truly, truly, I say to you....” That level of authority shocked his hearers. Yet, Jesus viewed everything he said to be in line with the OT revelation:

  **Matthew 5:17-20**  
  > “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

  Jesus’ affirmed the lasting significance of every character of scripture – right down to the jots and tittles. This is the highest reverence possible for scripture, including passages that many contemporary evangelicals sneer at: Leviticus, for instance. Further, Jesus’ beef with the Pharisees was not that they were too concerned with the OT Law, but that they really didn’t understand it. They were missing the central point of that law (justice and mercy) in their obsession with upholding their own traditions. In other words, Jesus says, “Your problem is that you don’t get the black letters! If you did, you would believe in me when I speak (with my red letters).”

  Jesus also affirmed many of what (to modern audiences) are among the most difficult to accept and believe OT scriptures. These include the historical narratives of Adam and Eve, Noah, Lot, Sodom and Gomorrah, Job, Jonah, and many others. If we want to pick and choose our favorite portions of the Bible to believe and affirm, we get no support for such an endeavor from the example of our Lord!

- **The whole Bible is red ink.** In a very real sense the whole Bible is written in red ink. There are no black letters. How so? Well, what do we believe about Jesus (if we are orthodox in our belief)? We believe that prior to the incarnation, God the Son existed eternally. This is clearly taught in John 1, in Hebrews 1, and in Colossians 1. Who was it that spoke to Moses at Sinai? It was Yahweh – the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Who was it who manifested himself in glory in the Temple of Solomon? Who was it that inspired Isaiah? Whose words are recorded for us in the pages of the Bible, the OT as well as the New? These are the words of our God – not the Father’s words alone, but the words of his eternally begotten Son, whom we know (this side of the incarnation) as Jesus Christ. All the words are red.
It is time for evangelicals to stop playing games with the Bible. We can’t pick our own canon. We can’t excise ethical teaching which strikes our generation as unpalatable. We can’t go against the teaching of Jesus by exalting the teaching of Jesus. All scripture is God-breathed. That includes the black ink as well as the red.

**The Red Letters: The Words of Jesus or the Voice of Jesus?**

Posted: 03 Mar 2016 12:57 PM PST

In our last post, we took up the issue of Red Letter Bibles. In particular, we sought to demonstrate the problems that necessarily ensue when we seek to elevate the red letters of scripture above the black ones. This doesn’t square with scripture’s view of scripture; nor does it square with Jesus’ view of scripture. What is more, it doesn’t square with an orthodox theology of the Godhead – failing to recognize that the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, inspired the entirety of Bible. All the letters are really red.

(Again, to be clear, my beef isn’t with red letter bibles, but is rather with red letter theology.)

I’d like to explore a different but related issue in this post. It too will illustrate the problem with red letter Christianity. That problem is the words actually spoken by Jesus. When Jesus opened up his mouth to utter, say, the Sermon on the Mount, what sounds actually issued forth? Were those words verbatim what we see in Matthew 5-7? The short answer is: No. Longer answer follows.

What we have in red ink are not the very words of Jesus. (The technical Latin theological phrase to describe this concept is ipsissima verba, which would mean something like “the very words themselves.”) What we do have are the inspired words of the biblical author (in this case Matthew) that authoritatively, reliably, (even inerrantly) convey the message of Jesus. This is what theologians describe as the ipsissima voca – the very voice of Jesus.

Now I know that this distinction will make some people extremely uncomfortable. “Are you saying I can’t trust the words of Jesus?” Nope. I’m not saying that at all. Keep reading; take it easy!

Picture the scene. You are alongside the Sea of Galilee. A great crowd has gathered to hear the teaching of this astonishing rabbi from Nazareth. They say he teaches with utterly unique authority, not like the Pharisees and scribes. They say he has performed amazing miracles: causing the lame to walk, the blind to see, feeding thousands from a few loaves of bread, casting out demons, even raising the dead. He strides to the top of a grassy mound surrounded by an enormous crowd. As the breeze blows gently through the lilies at your feet, you bristle with anticipation. He opens his mouth to begin to speak....

Now consider:

- **There is no stenographer present.**

If you are present for a courtroom trial, there will be a stenographer. The purpose? To record verbatim every word (whether uttered, mumbled, or obstreperously hollered) of every witness, the lawyers, judge, etc. It is vital for the court record to have an exact and complete record of what is said. When Jesus spoke, however, there was no stenographer. No one was seeking to record everything he said verbatim.

The gospel accounts that we have were written down later (at least in their final form), after about 30 years or so. It seems that there wasn’t much need to write these things down as long as there were eye-witness apostles strolling around who served as primary sources for the proclamation of the gospel. However, as the generation of the apostles began to die off, it became necessary to preserve the message of the gospel (which includes more than simply the teaching of Jesus) in an adequate and proper way. Hence, the gospels.
When, say, Mark, wrote his gospel, did he pull up the stenographer’s notes from a particular sunny Galilean afternoon? No. He wrote down the words of Jesus as conveyed to him from those who were actually present on that day, in his case the words of the apostle Peter. Mark’s gospel gives us the words of Jesus via the apostle Peter, who was an eye-witness (or, in this case, an ear-witness) to the teaching of Jesus. Does this diminish the words of Jesus found in Mark’s gospel? No. Peter was a close disciple and friend of Jesus. Peter was there. The words of Jesus were no less important to Peter than they are to anyone else who has ever lived. He was willing to die (and, indeed, did die) for his Lord. What’s more, the Spirit of God lived in Peter, and enabled him to recall and communicate all that was necessary for the sake of the ongoing apostolic witness of the church. So, we can rely on the fact that what we have in Mark is an accurate representation of the teaching of Jesus through the witness of Peter.

I’ll say more than this concerning the reliability of the witness of the gospel writers in what’s to follow. But this serves to demonstrate the point that what we have in the gospels isn’t necessarily a word for word presentation of what Jesus said on every occasion. Instead it is an authoritative presentation of what Jesus said as presented by dependable eye-witnesses. Jesus no doubt said a great deal more than is recorded, he even said things in a different chronological order at times (which a comparison of the gospels will demonstrate), but what we do have is a good and trustworthy representation of what Jesus did, in fact, say.

- Jesus speaks Aramaic.

Another relevant point that we rarely think about as Bible readers: When we read our red letters, we are reading Jesus’ words in English. But Jesus didn’t speak English. The New Testament was written in Greek. Our Bibles are English translations of the Greek words of Jesus. But Jesus didn’t speak Greek either (at least not ordinarily, and certainly not in the context of his public teaching). Jesus spoke Aramaic.

Aramaic is sort of a sister language to Hebrew (think of the relationship of Spanish and Italian, for instance). The average man on the street among the Jews of Palestine spoke Aramaic. But the New Testament was written in Greek. Why Greek? Because from the time of Alexander the Great (4th century BC), the entire eastern half of the Mediterranean came under Greek domination, from Greece to Afghanistan, and Greek became the common language. Even the Romans (whose native language was Latin, of course), would ordinarily have made use of Greek in the eastern half of the Empire. When the New Testament was written, it was written in Greek (not Aramaic) because the church was spread broadly throughout this part of the world. Outside of Palestine, no one would have been able to read things written in Aramaic (even Jews outside of Palestine spoke Greek).

So, when we read the words of Jesus in the Greek New Testament, we are actually reading the voice of Jesus (who actually spoke these things in Aramaic) conveyed to us through the words of the apostles (now communicated via Greek).

Do we ever have the very words of Jesus?

Yes. On a few occasions the gospel writers preserved for us direct verbatim quotations of the words of Jesus in the original Aramaic. When they did so, they would usually provide a translation of the meaning of those words into Greek. For instance, consider these examples:

- **Matthew 27:45-47**  45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

- **Mark 5:41-42**  41 He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

- **Mark 7:33-35**  33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him,
“Ephphatha!” (which means, “Be opened!”). At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Notice that in each of these examples Matthew and Mark give the Aramaic phrase followed by a translation of that phrase into Greek. We can be grateful that they didn’t always provide verbatim Aramaic speech with translation – the gospels would be much longer and less beautiful literarily! Notice, too, that the things that are given verbatim tend to be rather intense moments – Jesus’ words from the cross (which were misunderstood due to the similarity in sound to the name Elijah), the drama of a moment of resurrection, a particularly arresting healing encounter. But...there would have been little sense in preserving everything Jesus said in Aramaic. What benefit would that have served for the use of the early church?

Other examples in Aramaic include individual words that show up in Jesus’ teaching:

- **Matthew 5:21-24** 21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. 23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

- **Mark 7:10-13** 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ 11 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

“Raca” would mean something like “blockhead.” “Corban” was a technical term for a gift devoted to the Lord. So, too, the use of “Abba,” an intimate Aramaic term for one’s father appears in Mark 14:36. These isolated terms reflect a verbatim quotation of Jesus words.

**Conclusion:**

So what? What difference does any of this make? So Jesus didn’t probably teach in Greek, but in Aramaic...does that mean I can’t rely on his words as presented in scripture? My purpose here is not to undermine anyone’s confidence in the words of Jesus in the Bible. In fact, I’ve staked my eternal soul on the trustworthiness of those words.

I believe we can trust the words of Jesus because I believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the gospel writers. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John weren’t just guys writing an interesting story about a significant historical religious figure. They (under the Spirit’s supervision) penned the Word of God – the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. Every jot and tittle of these books was exactly what God intended. They do not reflect the very words of Jesus verbatim (which would have been indecipherable to their audience!), but they do represent the very voice of Jesus. They say exactly what the Triune God (Father, Spirit, and Son) intended for them to say. They are the words of Jesus not because they are the result of a stenographer’s transcription, but because they are the very voice of God, given us by the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus. Another way of saying this is to tie it back in to the last blog post. Scripture as a whole is God’s Word. Because of the certainty of this, we can have confidence in the red letters of scripture.
Interpreting the Bible

- The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, Issued in 1993
  - Discusses interpretive approaches to scripture
  - Bible studies are not competitive, but complimentary

The Importance of Interpretation

Rich Herbster, Posted: 23 Apr 2015 10:03 AM PDT

In 1987 there was a giant flap in the United States Senate over the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. The problem with Bork? He was a self-declared originalist as regards constitutional interpretation. His philosophy of law was that a judge should seek to understand the original intent of the framers of the Constitution rather than legislate from the bench based on their own subjective interpretation – his nomination was defeated 58-42. His name became a verb – to bork is to thwart someone from public office through political obstruction and defamation.

A similar (but different) flap ensued in 1991 over the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. Thomas was accused of years earlier sexual harassment by Anita Hill. After a lengthy tussle, Thomas’s appointment was upheld (52-48) and he still serves. The real problem for Thomas was not vague accusations of inappropriate sexual conversation in the workplace; it was interpretation.

Both Bork and Thomas would be classified as strict constructionists in their interpretation of the US Constitution. What does that mean? It means they believed that the Constitution is to be interpreted and understood in light of what the founding fathers intended when they wrote it.

Well, doesn’t everyone believe that? Nope. Those who blocked Bork, those who teach at the vast majority of law schools throughout this country, and most of those judges who now serve on federal courts throughout the land do not believe that. What do they believe? They believe that we can’t really know what the framers meant, and even if we could it wouldn’t really matter since we no longer live in the 18th century. What matters is how we interpret the Constitution.

This is hardly a matter of small importance for our country. After all, our President, our Congressmen, and our Supreme Court Justices (along with pretty much all government officials) take a vow like this one:

I, __________, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.
What exactly does it mean to support and defend the Constitution if we can't really know what the framers of said Constitution meant? What does it mean to support and defend the Constitution if I view my task as being that of subjective judge over the Constitution?

Now my interest in discussing all of this is not so much to investigate constitutional interpretation in its own right, but rather to illustrate a point that I will expand upon in future posts — the nature of interpretation. This is important if the topic is the governance of our nation. It is far more than important when it comes to the interpretation of the Bible.

Should we interpret the Bible according to the author’s intent, or according to how we choose to understand it for ourselves? Is there any methodology for rightly interpreting the Bible? How you answer these questions will lead to radically different understandings and applications of the Bible in your life and thought.

Are there objective principles of biblical interpretation or is it a subjective free-for-all? Can we know what Paul, or Moses, (or Jesus!) meant, or are we just after what this text means to me?

The Bible, like the Constitution, is not a Rorschach inkblot. You can’t just look at it and get whatever you want to find there. Well…you can, but you shouldn’t. There are right ways and wrong ways to go about interpreting it. In the weeks to come I'll lay out a number of principles of interpretation, as well as exploring related issues like Bible translations, why the books that are in the Bible are in the Bible (the issues of Canon), how to interpret the various types of literature found in the Bible (genre), and so on.

The summary point of the whole thing (spoiler alert!) is that we need not despair of finding meaning in scripture. Everyone can learn to understand the meaning of scripture, which is necessary for us to believe and live rightly. Building our skills for rightly interpreting the scriptures ought to be a high priority for all believers in Christ. The Bible is God’s Word to us. We should all be growing as interpreters of that Word.

Is It Possible to Understand the Bible?
Rich Herbster, Posted: 30 Apr 2015 10:30 AM PDT

In my last post I took up the topic of interpretation. We considered the interpretive philosophy of Supreme Court justices as they interpret the US Constitution. Let's now turn our attention to what is ultimately a more significant task: interpreting the Bible.

The Bible is a big book, made up of 66 smaller books, written by a minimum of 40 different authors, composed in three different languages. Those who wrote it lived halfway around the world, on three different continents, and lived in a dizzying array of cultural contexts. The Bible was written over a minimum of a 1600 year span. It contains an enormous variety of different kinds of literature: poetry, law code, historical narrative, letters, apocalyptic, etc. There are hundreds of different English language translations, each of which differ from one another in a variety of ways.

What hope is there for us to derive meaning from the Bible? How can we begin to get meaning from it? Is it even possible?

Sure it is. In fact, I will argue that many of the challenges outlined above are grossly exaggerated. We need not despair of finding meaning – we humans are remarkably adept at sending and receiving messages through a variety of media. We all do it every day through conversation, through the internet, through TV, radio, etc. What’s more, in the case of the Bible, not only are there the human authors, there is also the divine author – God. And for a believer there is the Holy Spirit of God who lives in us and who (Jesus taught us) will teach and guide us into all truth.

And it is also true that while there are enormous challenges when communicating across cultures, languages, and continents, it is certainly possible. Sometimes this is even true when you don’t speak the same language (it is incredible
how much can be communicated with nods, points, and smiles, as anyone who has ever been abroad on a short-term mission trip can testify. After all, as different as the biblical authors were from us, they were still human — what we share in common is far more significant than those things which divide us.

When we talk about how to derive meaning from a text we are engaging in interpretation. The technical name for this is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation. When applied to the Bible this discipline is called Biblical Hermeneutics.

The Greek verb hermeneuo occurs many times in the New Testament — usually translated as “to translate,” or “to interpret.” The term hermeneutics is just the Greek word transliterated into English. Transliteration means substituting the equivalent letters of one language for another, preserving the term. Other examples of this in English would be words like kimono, blitzkrieg, wigwam, pueblo, etc. We often transliterate words for which there is no real equivalent in the receptor language. Additionally we sometimes transliterate words simply to add variety (we really don’t need the word “hermeneutics” when we have a perfectly good word “interpretation,” but do you really need all of the shoes in your closet?). We all use many hundreds of English words every day that are really transliterations from another language.

When people hear the word hermeneutics, they may assume that we are talking about some difficult and complicated concept. But the art of interpretation is really not that complicated. In reality we are all doing it all the time. You are doing hermeneutics right now — as you read this article you are seeking to understand the meaning of what in the world I’m trying to say (I hope successfully!). We can make it seem complicated, but we really don’t need to. We’ll keep it as simple as possible.

Here’s a for instance (drawn from Robert Stein, A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible). Imagine you hear someone say, “Aren’t oak trees wonderful?” What exactly do they mean when they say this? Well...it depends. It depends an awful lot on who is saying it and in what context. The meaning is very different if it is spoken by an energetic boy, a carpenter preparing to build kitchen cupboards, a civil engineer concerned with flood control, or a sentimental couple enjoying a picnic. For the boy the meaning may be focused on the way the branches spread making the tree good for climbing. This doesn’t relate at all to the civil engineer who is concerned with the fact that oak trees help with water absorption and the prevention of erosion. There are factors (like the context of the author) that dramatically affect the way in which we interpret any message.

Duvall and Hays (Grasping God’s Word) repeatedly use the illustration of a river. On one bank of the interpretive river we stand in our world — with our language, our culture, and so on. On the opposite bank of the river stands the world of the biblical text — with its geography, genre, language, etc. One of the tasks of the interpreter is to assess the width of the river. How far apart are our world and the world of the biblical author at this point? Sometimes the distance will be very short — the river is a puddle easily leaped. We will not have trouble in interpreting the biblical text. In other instances the river will be very wide indeed, and a great deal of effort will be required in order to accurately understand and ultimately apply the message of the biblical author. Whether wide or narrow, hermeneutics is the discipline of crossing the interpretive river.

In the next post we’ll take up the nature of communication. This is of use not only for interpreting the Bible, but for having a conversation with your spouse, for teaching your kids, for interacting with your boss, or for any social interchange of any kind. In other words, a consideration of hermeneutics can enrich your life!

Methods of Interpretation

Bible Babble video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbDoOjjeFZ0
Most bible readers have never given much thought to how the book they (hopefully) read and revere came to be. They think not much about translation or the issues related to it, and they think even less about the texts that came to be translated. The time between the writing of a biblical text at the hand of a David or a Paul and the arrival of an NRSV into the pew holder before them is something of a black hole.

How did the texts get passed down through the ages to be translated in the first place? What were these texts? How were they preserved? These questions fall within the purview of what is technically called lower or textual criticism. While the study of text criticism doesn’t find its way onto the bucket list of many, it is worth learning a little about for a couple of reasons.

**Reason #1** is that people assert all sorts of daft things about the bible. There are numerous occasions when the accuracy of the scriptures are challenged. One I hear often is that the stories of the bible circulated in some sort of loose oral tradition for hundreds of years before they were written down. Another is that Moses (or the disciples, or whoever) were illiterate and couldn’t have written these things down. The Bible is assumed to be a haphazard book thrown together from hearsay and old wives tales long after the events described. This stuff is way off. The more you understand the way we actually received the scriptural documents, the better you’ll be able to answer these sorts of ridiculous challenges.

**Reason #2** is that when you actually understand the way the scriptural documents were passed down, you will be enormously encouraged. Not only need we fear no embarrassment in this regard, we should be immensely enheartened to learn of the meticulous care of the devoted servants who preserved these texts for us. We are likewise filled with greater confidence when we see the providential care of the God who oversaw the transmission of these valuable documents throughout church history. Any believer who studies this will hold the Bible in greater awe and will believe and proclaim its message with increased assurance.

When we talk about a Bible translation like the ESV, we are talking the translation an original language document. The meaning of the Greek or Hebrew has had its meaning brought over into English so we can decipher it. But what about that original language document – the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of New Testament? Is that Hebrew document the very one that Moses or Jeremiah wrote? Is that Greek document the very one that Paul or Matthew wrote?

Nope. What we have are copies of the original documents. Actually, what we have are copies of copies of copies of copies of copies (you get the idea) of the original documents. These original documents (which we don’t have) are often referred to as the autographs. This refers not to the signatures of important people, but to the (for example) actual piece of papyrus upon which Paul or his scribe wrote the epistle to the Philippians. How can we be sure that the Hebrew and Greek that serves as the basis of the translation that we read accurately reflects what the original autographs said?

Well that’s where text criticism comes in. I’ll explain text criticism in the next two blog entries here. One on the Old Testament Hebrew manuscript tradition, and one on the New Testament Greek manuscript tradition.

**Jots and Tittles**

Rich Herbster, Posted: 04 Jun 2015 02:57 PM PDT

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (with a few chapters being written in Aramaic – a cognate language, like Italian to Spanish). But of course we don’t have the scroll upon which Baruch the scribe first wrote down Jeremiah’s words. That document long ago would have crumbled to dust. What we have for all 39 of our OT books are copies of copies of copies of those originals.
Well…how accurate could that be? Copies of copies? Critics might scoff and refer to the childhood game of “telephone” – consider how garbled those messages become by the time they make the rounds from whispered ear to whispered ear. Perhaps the message would begin “Sarah said ‘hi’ to Lance,” but would end up “Sam wears no pants!”

But this isn’t a game of telephone. These aren’t a bunch of giggling whispering kids delighting in seeing how garbled a message they could pass. Instead what we have is an absolutely remarkable group of men who dedicated their lives to preserving and passing on God’s Word as accurately as possible.

The Old Testament Hebrew manuscript tradition behind modern bible translations is known as the Masoretic text. The text receives its name from the dedicated scribes who preserved the Hebrew OT for centuries: the Masoretes. These were Jewish scribes who were so dedicated to the accuracy of the text that they would count words and letters to assure that their manuscripts were absolutely accurate. Could you imagine counting all the letters in Isaiah? All the words in the Psalms? Me either. This was no “telephone” game.

Even with the dedication of the Masoretes, it is simply impossible to copy texts over and over by hand for centuries without ever making mistakes, and, of course, mistakes were made. What kind of mistakes? The kinds anyone would make. If two lines began with the same word a scribe could accidentally skip to the second line thereby deleting a line or two of text.

Also, certain letters were easily confused. For instance, a daleth (“d” equivalent) and resh (“r” equivalent) differ from one another only by a tiny pen stroke (a “tittle”). If a daleth were substituted for a resh or vice versa we have a textual corruption. The good news is: we have an excellent understanding of the kinds of mistakes that ordinarily occur, and by comparing the various manuscripts, text critics are able to decide scientifically which reading reflects the original.

In addition to the Masoretic text, we have the Septuagint (often abbreviated LXX). The LXX is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament that had been made prior to the time of Christ (probably beginning in around 200 BC). Why was the OT translated into Greek? Because many of the Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt could no longer speak Hebrew and needed their scriptures in their own language (Greek was the common language of most of the Eastern Mediterranean around this time). Although it is a translation, the LXX gives us a glimpse into what the scholars who translated it must have seen in the Hebrew manuscripts of their day.

An important confirmation of the accuracy of our Hebrew manuscripts came in 1946 when a Bedouin shepherd boy was lobbing rocks into caves near the Dead Sea. When he heard a crash and investigated, he uncovered one of the most significant archaeological finds in history: The Dead Sea Scrolls. These are Hebrew manuscripts from the time of Christ, a thousand years earlier than the Masoretic text we had come to depend upon. The entire OT is represented in these scrolls, with the exception of Esther. What did they show?

They demonstrated a text remarkably akin to that preserved by the Masoretes. This confirmation should serve to bolster the confidence we have in the accuracy of our Bible. Those who preserved these texts did so with the remarkable care and devotion which the Word of God deserves.

The Text of the New Testament

Rich Herbster, Posted: 09 Jul 2015 11:19 AM PDT


The New Testament was written in Greek rather than Hebrew. Why? Because of the historical context of the first century. The apostles of Christ traveled throughout the eastern Mediterranean world preaching the good news of Christ’s saving
work. The language of that part of the world (the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey, Greece) was the Greek language. The historical reason for this was the conquest of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century BC. While Alexander died before he could even begin to consolidate his extensive conquests, he did manage to bequeath to posterity his Hellenism (Greekness), including his language: Common or “Koine” Greek. Even the Romans (native Latin speakers) were forced to accommodate to the Greekness of the eastern Mediterranean. Koine Greek was the lingua franca of the entire region.

This was true not only of Gentiles, but of many Jews. A great number of Jews didn’t live in Israel proper, but had been scattered far and wide through the long sad history of Jewish defeats in battle and exile, as well as through extensive and industrious commerce. This was known as the Diaspora (just the Greek word for “scattering”). Even the Old Testament Bible had been translated into Greek for these scattered Jews (the Septuagint, or LXX).

As Paul (himself a Hellenistic, or Greek-speaking, Jew) traveled from city to city, he would first visit a synagogue and preach (in Greek) to the Jews there the good news of Jesus. After he was thrown out (which he always was) he would then preach (in Greek) to those Gentiles willing to give an ear. When he eventually moved on he would leave behind a fledgling church made up of Jews and Gentiles (who all spoke Greek). And when he later wrote to that church he would have written in Japanese (just kidding: he would have written (and did write) in Greek).

So the whole NT was written in Greek. But we don’t have the actual letters Paul wrote. Nor the gospel that Matthew wrote. What we do have are copies of copies of copies of copies. North of 5,000 NT manuscripts. In addition to this, there are tens of thousands of liturgies (snippets of scripture used in worship), and loads of other stuff. For instance, it has been said that even if we lacked the entire NT in manuscript form, we could recreate the whole thing from quotations strung together from the writings of the early church fathers. In short: we have loads of NT manuscript evidence.

We are frankly embarrassed by our wealth here. There is nothing like it in the ancient world. New manuscript evidence, such as papyri in Egypt dating to the first quarter of the second century (!) are still being found to this day.

If you were to compare the manuscript evidence of the NT with any other ancient document, you’d be forced to say, “Wow!” Some of the most significant authors of the ancient world (like Caesar, Thucydides, Herodotus, Plato, etc.) are preserved in very few manuscripts (usually less than a score). And the earliest manuscripts generally date to more than a thousand years after they were written. Not so the NT! We have many thousand percent more manuscripts, but even more importantly, we have manuscripts that date much closer to the time the manuscripts were written. Indeed, the gap between the writing of the NT manuscripts and the earliest copies we have keeps shrinking – in some instances to as short as 20-30 years! When one gains an understanding of the nature of these documents, their accuracy, their preservation, and the scientific nature of gathering, comparing, and collating them, one cannot help but be inspired with an ever deeper confidence in these documents as true and trustworthy.

**Historical critical method**

- Understanding the historical context of the time and the place from which the Bible emerges
- Places scripture within the proper context, book by book
- Foundational to any Bible study
- Focuses upon how and when various books of the Bible were written, what their underlying sources were, and who did the writing or editing
- Stands outside the text and examines its formation from an historical perspective, seeking to understand a text’s antecedents, what historical and cultural influences affected its formation, how it developed, and how it achieved its final form.
- Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis – Moses did not write the Pentateuch
In the late nineteenth century, the German biblical scholar, Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), building upon the work of K.H. Graf, suggested that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, as tradition held and the text itself states. Rather, he said, the five books of Moses are a composite consisting of four “sources”:

- A ninth century B.C. Jehovistic source (J)
- An eighth century B.C. Elohistic source (E)
- Parts of Deuteronomy dating from the time of King Josiah (D)
- A fifth century B.C. Priestly source (P).

His book, Die Komposition des Hexateuchs, published in 1877, Wellhausen argues that:

- The Jehovistic author compiled his work from the J and E sources, and then supplemented it with material from the Deuteronomy source.
- Leviticus 17-26 made its way into the Priestly source sometime after Ezekiel, and Ezra later added the rest of the priestly material to P.
- Sometime around 200 B.C., an editor—or editors—revised all of this material to form the Pentateuch, as we know it.

This theory is called the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, and it is foundational to the historical-critical method. In general, the method focuses upon how and when various books of the Bible were written, what their underlying sources were, and who did the writing or editing.

- The historical-critical method became so popular during the late twentieth century that in many circles it became the only approved method of biblical study. It is the dominant approach in most universities and seminaries today. If you hear a teacher refer to Genesis 1 as the “first creation story” and Genesis 2 as the “second creation story,” you know that he or she has been schooled in the historical-critical method, and is teaching from this perspective.

Textual criticism

- A textual critic reconstructs ancient texts based upon the manuscripts that do exist.
- How did we get the texts that we have? How do we know that what we are reading 2000 years later is what the early writers really wrote?
  - There is not a single manuscript contemporary with the writing of the manuscript
  - Codex Sinaiticus – Earliest complete manuscript of the Bible is the Codex Sinaiticus
    - Dates back to the 4th century (late 300s, maybe early 400s)
    - Discovered in 1844
    - Found at St. Catherine’s Monastery at Mt. Sinai – The monastery library preserves the second largest collection of early codices and manuscripts in the world, outnumbered only by the Vatican Library
  - Today, there are 5,366 manuscripts of the New Testament in whole, or in part
- Textual criticism compares those manuscripts character by character and then develop algorithms to work backwards and reconstruct the originals
- Requires a profound knowledge of ancient languages, history, literature and compositional technique, as well as enormously time-consuming, meticulous and detailed work.
- Highly developed science and art

Literary criticism

- Looking at the stories as literary works
- Insists that the reader enter the world of the narrative and experience the story from within the text as it presently exists

Historical criticism

- Focusing in on the historical context and background of each book of the Bible
Source criticism

- Where did the stories come from?
- Oral and written sources that feed into the tradition of those stories

Redaction criticism

- How all the various traditions are edited and come together in the final text
History of Christianity

- During the first 300 years of Christianity the Gospel message was spread primarily through oral teaching & preaching
  - The Church was a persecuted minority within the Roman Empire
  - As we enter the 4th century, however, all that changes.

4th century AD – Hugely important century in Christianity

- Start of the 4th century
  - 10% of the Roman Empire claimed to be Christian (about 6.5 million)
  - Christianity was a hugely persecuted minority religion
- End of the 4th century (100 years later)
  - 90% of the Roman Empire would say that they were Christian (about 58.5 million)
  - Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire

AD 313 – Edict of Milan

- Emperor Constantine signed the Edict of Milan which officially tolerated Christianity in the Roman Empire (whole land mass surrounding the Mediterranean)
  - Later Constantine himself became a Christian
• This was the beginning of the acceptance of Christianity as a global enterprise

**AD 325 – Council of Nicaea**

• All the major church leaders came together to define the foundational beliefs and doctrines of Christianity
  o Consensus began to form
• Nicaea was the first of seven such “Ecumenical Councils” held between 325 and 787
• Nicene Creed came out of that counsel

  Nicene Creed
  I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
  And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds;
  God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
  Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.
  And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.
  And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**AD 380 – Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman Empire**

• February 27, 380 the Emperor Theodosius I declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire.

**AD 393 – New Testament Canon is defined at the Council of Hippo**

See [New Testament Canon is defined](#)

• Council of Hippo was called by St. Augustine

**Major Biblical scholars in the early church**

  o Once defined, the New Testament Canon became a focal point for major Biblical scholarship
  o Marcion of Pontus (AD 58-160)
    ▪ His teaching made a radical distinction between the God of the Old Testament (the Creator) and the Father of Jesus Christ (the God of Love).
  o Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) – Saint Justin
    ▪ Early Christian apologist, and is regarded as the foremost interpreter of the theory of the Logos in the 2nd century
  o Irenaeus of Lyons (2nd century-202) – Saint Irenaeus
    ▪ He was an early Church Father and apologist, and his writings were formative in the early development of Christian theology.
  o Origen of Alexandria (AD 185-253)
    ▪ One of the greatest Christian theologians, famous for composing the seminal work of Christian Neoplatonism, his treatise *On First Principles*.
  o St. Jerome (AD 340-420)
    ▪ Translated the Hebrew Old Testament & the Greek New Testament into Latin
Bible translations begin

- Also in this century, St. Jerome started translating the Hebrew Old Testament & the Greek New Testament into Latin

Dead Sea Scrolls

12th century

Glossa ordinaria

- Patristic (of or relating to the church fathers or their writings) commentary, verse by verse, on the entire Bible
- Standard commentary on the Scriptures in Western Europe

Major Biblical scholars

- Stephen Langton (1150-1228)
  - Archbishop of Canterbury between 1207 and his death in 1228
  - Divided the books of the Bible into chapters
- Thomas Gallus (1200-1246)
  - Divided the chapters into versus
- St. Tomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
  - An Italian Dominican friar and priest
  - An immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism

16th Century – Protestant Reformation

"The Protestant Reformation was a major 16th century European movement aimed initially at reforming the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Its religious aspects were supplemented by ambitious political rulers who wanted to extend their power and control at the expense of the Church. The Reformation ended the unity imposed by medieval Christianity and, in the eyes of many historians, signaled the beginning of the modern era. A weakening of the old order was already under way in Northern Europe, as evidenced by the emergence of thriving new cities and a determined middle class.

"In 1517, in one of the signal events of western history, Martin Luther, a German Augustinian monk, posted 95 theses on a church door in the university town of Wittenberg. That act was common academic practice of the day and served as an invitation to debate. Luther's propositions challenged some portions of Roman Catholic doctrine and a number of specific practices."
"The movement quickly gained adherents in the German states, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Scotland and portions of France. Support came from sincere religious reformers, while others manipulated the movement to gain control of valuable church property.

"The term Protestant was not initially applied to the reformers, but later was used to describe all groups protesting Roman Catholic orthodoxy."

As the hope of reforming the Roman church faded, the "protestants" were forced to separate from Roman Catholicism resulting in Lutheran churches in Germany, Scandinavia and some eastern European countries, the Reformed churches in Switzerland and the Netherlands, Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and the Anglican church in England, and other diverse elements all of which have evolved into the Protestant denominations of today.

**Precursors to the Reformation**

**John Wycliffe**

John Wycliffe (1330–84) attacked what he saw as corruptions within the church, including the sale of indulgences, pilgrimages, the excessive veneration of saints, and the low moral and intellectual standards of ordained priests.

Wycliffe also repudiated the doctrine of transubstantiation, held that the Bible was the sole standard of Christian doctrine, and argued that the authority of the Pope was not grounded in Scripture. Some of Wycliffe's early followers translated the Bible into English, while later followers, known as Lollards, held that the Bible was the sole authority and that Christians were called upon to interpret the Bible for themselves. The Lollards also argued against clerical celibacy, transubstantiation, mandatory oral confession, pilgrimages, and indulgences.

**John Huss**

John Huss (1369–1415) — A Bohemian priest, excommunicated in 1410, and burned at the stake for heresy in 1415. His death lead to the Hussite Wars in Bohemia. Huss followed Wycliffe's teachings closely, translating Wycliffe's *Trialogus* into Czechoslovakian, and modeling the first ten chapters of his own *De Ecclesia* after Wycliffe's writings. He believed in predestination, regarded the Bible as the ultimate religious authority, and argued that Christ, rather than any ecclesiastical official, is the true head of the church.

**Prominent figures in the Reformation**

**Martin Luther**

Martin Luther (1483–1546) — In 1517, nails his 95 Theses onto a Wittenberg Church door. These theses were Latin propositions opposing the manner in which indulgences (release from the temporal penalties for sin through the payment of money) were being sold in order to raise money for the building of Saint Peter's in Rome.

**Huldreich Zwingli**

Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531) — Swiss theologian and leader of early Reformation movements in Switzerland. Vigorously denounces the sale of indulgences in 1518.

**John Calvin**

John Calvin (1509–64) — Calvin was a French theologian and reformer who fled religious persecution in France and settled in Geneva in 1536. He instituted a form of Church government in Geneva which has become known as the Presbyterian church. He insisted on reforms including: the congregational singing of the Psalms as part of church worship, the teaching of a catechism and confession of faith to children, and the enforcement of a strict moral discipline in the community by the pastors and members of the church. Geneva was, under Calvin, essentially a theocracy.
**John Knox**

John Knox (1513–1572) — An ardent disciple of Calvin, Knox established Calvinistic Protestantism as the national religion of Scotland. He left a powerful political legacy within the Calvinist or Reformed branch of Protestantism, a political legacy known as Presbyterianism.

**Henry VIII**

Henry VIII (1491–1547) — In 1533, Henry was excommunicated by the pope for marrying Anne Boleyn and having the archbishop of Canterbury sanction the divorce from his first wife, Catherine. In 1534, Henry had Parliament pass an act appointing the king and his successors supreme head of the Church of England, thus establishing an independent national Anglican church.

**Theological Issues of the Reformation**

The theology of the Reformers departed from the Roman Catholic Church primarily on the basis of three great principles:

- Sole authority of Scripture,
- Justification by faith alone, and
- Priesthood of the believer.

**Sola Scriptura**

*Sola Scriptura* *(by Scripture alone)* was one of the watchwords of the Reformation. This doctrine maintains that Scripture, as contained in the Bible, is the only authority for the Christian in matters of faith, life and conduct. The teachings and traditions of the church are to be completely subordinate to the Scriptures. Roman Catholicism, on the other hand, holds Scripture and Tradition to be of the same inspired Deposit of Faith.

**Sola Fide**

*Sola Fide* *(by faith alone)* was the other watchword of the Reformation. This doctrine maintains that we are justified before God (and thus saved) by faith alone, not by anything we do, not by anything the church does for us, and not by faith plus anything else. It was also recognized by the early Reformers that Sola Fide is not rightly understood until it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of *Sola Gratia*, by grace alone. Hence the Reformers were calling the church back to the basic teaching of Scripture where the apostle Paul states that we are "saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," Eph. 2:8.

**Priesthood of all believers**

The third great principle of the Reformation was the *priesthood of all believers*. The Scriptures teach that believers are a "holy priesthood," 1 Pet. 2:5. All believers are priests before God through our great high priest Jesus Christ. "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. 2:5. As believers, we all have direct access to God through Christ, there is no necessity for an earthly mediator. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox concept of the priesthood was seen as having no warrant in Scripture, viewed as a perversion and mis-application of the Old Testament Aaronic or Levitical priesthood which was clearly fulfilled in Christ and done away with by the New Testament.

As a result of these principles, the Reformers rejected the authority of the Pope, the merit of good works, indulgences, the mediation of Mary and the Saints, all but the two *sacraments* instituted by Christ (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), the doctrine of transubstantiation, the *mass* as a sacrifice, purgatory, prayers for the dead, confessions to a priest, the use of Latin in the services, and all the paraphernalia that expressed these ideas.

Even though the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches fall within Orthodoxy as most would define it, much of their teaching beyond the basic tenets is regarded as erroneous by conservative Protestants. In fact, they would say much of it is clearly to be regarded as false teaching which has perverted the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ. In general, evangelical Protestants see the Reformation as simply a call back to biblical Christianity.
The **Five Solas** are five Latin phrases (or slogans) that emerged from the Protestant Reformation intended to summarize the Reformers' basic theological principles in contrast to certain teachings of the Roman Catholic Church of the day. "Sola" is Latin meaning "alone" or "only" and the corresponding phrases are:

- **Sola Fide**, by faith alone.
- **Sola Scriptura**, by Scripture alone.
- **Solus Christus**, through Christ alone.
- **Sola Gratia**, by grace alone.
- **Soli Deo Gloria**, glory to God alone.

**Faith alone (Sola Fide)**

Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice. Our justification does not rest on any merit to be found in us, nor upon the grounds of an infusion of Christ's righteousness in us, nor that an institution claiming to be a church that denies or condemns sola fide can be recognized as a legitimate church.

**Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura)**

The inerrant Scripture (the Bible) is the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured. It is denied that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.

**Christ alone (Solus Christus)**

Our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father. It is denied that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited.

**Grace alone (Sola Gratia)**

In salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life. It is denied that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.

**Glory to God alone (Soli Deo Gloria)**

It is affirmed that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone. It is denied that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self- fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel.
Modern Times

**Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation**

- Issued by the Post Vatican II in 1965
- Stresses the importance of both scripture and tradition in the life of the Church
- Defines the basis for our modern Bible studies

**The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church**

- Issued in 1993
- Discusses interpretive approaches to scripture
- Bible studies are not competitive, but complimentary
- Types of approaches:
  - Historical critical method
  - Textual criticism
  - Literary criticism
  - Historical criticism
  - Source criticism
  - Redaction criticism

**6 Essential principles of Christianity**

In order of importance:
1. Holy Trinity - God in 3 persons – Father, Son & Holy Spirit
2. Full divinity and humanity of Christ
   - Fully God – as part of that Holy Trinity
   - Fully human – or He could not have taken our place and paid our penalty
3. Vicarious (substitutionary) atonement
   - Christ took our sins on himself and he paid the penalty for our sins in our place
   - He fully died on the cross and spent 3 days in hell paying for our sins
4. Physical bodily resurrection
   - Christ was physically, bodily raised from the dead
   - Paul – If he was not, then your faith, as sincere as it might be, is futile because you are still in your sins
5. Salvation by grace, through faith
   - We appropriate salvation (who Christ is and what He did) by grace through faith
6. The Holy Scripture is authoritative

**God is ... Attributes of God**
The God of the OT is the same as the God of the NT
The only thing that changes is our position in the timeline of the plan of salvation
- From the beginning of sin in Genesis to its resolution in Revelation

1. Ge 21:22 God is with you in everything you do
2. Ge 31:50 God is a witness between you and me
3. Dt 4:24 God is a consuming fire, a jealous God
4. Dt 4:31 God is a merciful God
5. Dt 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.
6. Dt 20:4 For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.
7. Dt 33:27 God is your refuge
Ps 62:8 God is our refuge
8. 2Sa 22:3 God is my rock, in whom I take refuge
    • Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength
9. 2Ch 30:9 the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate
10. Job 36:5 God is mighty
11. Job 36:22 God is exalted in his power
12. Ps 7:11 God is a righteous judge
13. Ps 14:5 God is present in the company of the righteous
14. Ps 18:2 God is my rock, in whom I take refuge
15. Ps 54:4 God is my help
16. Ps 56:9 God is for me
17. Ps 68:20 Our God is a God who saves
18. Ps 73:1 God is good to Israel
19. Ps 73:26 God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever
20. Ps 76:1 God is known
21. Ps 84:11 the LORD God is a sun and shield
22. Ps 89:7 God is greatly feared
23. Ps 99:9 the LORD our God is holy
24. Ps 116:5 our God is full of compassion
25. Pro 30:5 God is flawless
26. Is 8:10 God is with us
27. Is 12:2 God is my salvation
28. Dan 5:21 God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men
29. Dan 9:9 God is merciful and forgiving
30. Dan 9:14 God is righteous in everything he does
31. Jn 3:33 God is truthful
32. Jn 4:24 God is spirit
33. 1Co 1:25 God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength
34. 1Co 10:13 God is faithful
35. 1Co 14:33 God is not a God of disorder but of peace
36. 2Co 9:8 God is able to make all grace abound to you
37. 2Th 1:6 God is just
38. Heb 3:4 God is the builder of everything
39. Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword
40. Heb 12:29 God is a consuming fire
41. 1Jn 1:5 God is light; in him there is no darkness at all
42. 1Jn 4:8 Love
43. 1Jn 4:16 God is love

**Iconography**

Iconography – Study of icons (images). These are pictures depicting people of the Bible:

- **Jesus** - We do not display Jesus on the cross because Jesus is not longer on the cross – He has risen!
  - Jesus with a serpent and a dragon under his feet, stepping on them
- **Peter** – Man holding a big set of keys
- **Paul** – Man holding a sword and a book
- **Elisha** – Man, thin and bald
- **Fish** - The fish became a symbol for Christians because the word for fish in Greek is ICTHUS — an acronym for Jesus Christ, God’s Son and Savior.
**Theophany**

Theophany – the visual / physical manifestation of God - most often as fire and smoke

- Abrahamic covenant – God appeared as a smoking firepot with a blazing torch and passed between the pieces
- God appeared to Moses in the burning bush
- Pillar of fire & smoke that lead them out of Egypt
- On Mt. Sinai during the giving of the Law (10 Commandments)
Old Testament

Abraham 2000 B.C.
Moses 1400 B.C.
David 980 B.C.
Daniel 600 B.C.
Jesus 30 A.D.

SEVEN PERIODS OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY

Abraham to Egypt
- app. 2000 - 1400 B.C.
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph

The Exodus
- app. 1400 B.C.
- Moses, Aaron, and Joshua

Period of the Judges
- app. 1350 - 1050 B.C.
- Gideon, Samson, Deborah, and Ruth

The United Kingdom
- 1050 - 900 B.C.
- Saul, David, and Solomon

The Divided Kingdom
- 900 - 586 B.C.
- Kings: Josiah, Hezekiah, and Judeans
- Prophets: Elijah, Isaiah, and Hosea

The Captivity
- 586 - 538 B.C.
- Daniel, Ezekiel

The Return
- 538 - 520 B.C.
- Nehemiah, Esther, and Zechiah

ANCIENT EMPIRES

EGYPT

ASSYRIA

BABYLON

MEDO-PERSIA

GREECE

ROME

Bible Babble video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciqXwMkGjL4
http://bibletimelinekarmenlau.weebly.com/

The Hebrew Scriptures—or “Old Testament”—spans roughly 2,000 years, 2100 B.C. through the 2nd century B.C.

2,100 - 1786 B.C.  Abraham and the Patriarchs (Egyptian Middle Kingdom period)
1446 B.C.  The Exodus
1355 - 1245 B.C.  Conquest of Canaan
1050 - 586 B.C.  The Kings of Israel (Saul through Zedekiah, 39 kings)
930 B.C.  Civil War (10 northern tribes become Israel; 2 southern tribes become Judah)
722 B.C.  Assyrians conquer northern kingdom of Israel
586 B.C.  Babylonians conquer southern kingdom of Judah
539 B.C.  Persians conquer Babylonians
331 B.C.  Greeks conquer Persians
146 B.C.  Romans conquer Greeks
Linear narrative

God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of God</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>אלוהים</td>
<td>Elchim</td>
<td>God, Mighty Creator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>El Roi</td>
<td>The God Who Sees Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>El Shadday</td>
<td>God Almighty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>El Olam</td>
<td>The Everlasting God, The Eternal God</td>
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<tr>
<td>יהוה יררה</td>
<td>Yahweh Yireh</td>
<td>The Lord will Provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אדシン</td>
<td>Adonai</td>
<td>Lord, Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יהוה ראה</td>
<td>Yahweh Rophe</td>
<td>The Lord Who Heals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יהוה נס</td>
<td>Yahweh Nissi</td>
<td>The Lord My Banner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אשם עקלאה, אל דנה</td>
<td>Esh Okiha, El Kama</td>
<td>Consuming Fire, Jealous God</td>
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<tr>
<td>قدس ישראל</td>
<td>Qadosh Yisrael</td>
<td>Holy One of Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יהוה שלום</td>
<td>Yahweh Shalom</td>
<td>The Lord is Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>יהוה צבאות</td>
<td>Yahweh Tsbaoth</td>
<td>The Lord of Hosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יהוה צורם</td>
<td>Yahweh Tsuri</td>
<td>The Lord is My Rock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priest, Prophet & King – Major figures in the Old Testament:

- Priest – Stands between God and the people and speaks to God on behalf of the people
- Prophet – Stands between God and the people and speaks to the people on behalf of God
- King – Reports to God and is responsible for leading the people through the day-to-day concerns of this life (economics, security, etc)

All prefigure Jesus Christ:

- Jesus is The High Priest
  - Stands between God and the people and speaks to God on behalf of the people
  - Seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us
- Jesus is The Great Prophet
  - Stands between God and the people and speaks to the people on behalf of God
  - Dt 18:15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.
  - John the Baptist Denies Being the Christ – Jn 1:21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered No.”
- Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords
  - Rev 19:16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.
**Jews invented linear history**

- Prior to the Jews, everybody accepted the very nature of reality as cyclical
  - Everything was cyclical – Crops, seasons, moon, sun
  - With a cyclical world view that simply goes round and round and round, there is no reason to apply a meaning to life
- For the very 1st time in Jewish thought, the nature of reality was not cyclical, but linear
  - Has a beginning, middle and end
  - With a linear world view, that creates an imperative to define meaning to that linear progression
  - The curtain comes up in the beginning and goes down at the end, and there has to be a purpose for getting from point A to point B
  - Bible reflects the linear world view
    - Beginning – Genesis
    - Linear narrative in the middle
    - End – Revelation

**Linear narrative of the Bible**

The linear narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) begins with Genesis and ends with Esther

- Genesis → Ester is a chronological linear narrative with several recapitulations
  - Recapitulations – Drops down into the text and look at it from a different point of view
    - Ruth – Takes place at the time of Judges, when the plan of salvation was all but lost
    - Chronicles – Looks at the Kings of Judah from God’s point of view
    - Job – Takes place around the time of Abraham
      - Calls into question what we learned in Genes → Ester
      - Real life – Bad things happen to good people – Why? Job demands an answer
    - Psalms – Look at the heart of David (and others)
    - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, & Song of Songs – Look at the heart of Solomon (very different from David)
    - Prophets – Take place during the time of the kings
  - This arrangement only applies to the Christian canon
    - Jewish canon has the exact same 39 books but in a different order.
    - The order that the books are in will affect the way that you read them

- Gospels – Messiah (Elijah from Malachi) comes
  - Public ministry, death, burial & resurrection – Told from 4 different points of view
- Acts – The message is being taken to the world
  - 1st part – Focus is on Peter
  - 2nd part – Focus is on Paul
- Paul’s letters
  - Romans – We are saved by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ
    - Who Christ was and what He did, and we appropriate that by grace through faith
    - Most important of the letters – Defines that thesis that Paul is presenting

**What is the overriding lesson of the OT?**

- If you do what God says, all will go well. If you don’t, it won’t.
  - ‘We know that in real life, this is not true.
  - In real life, you can do exactly what God wants and your life is a train wreck. Or you can totally turn your back on God and are healthy, wealthy and wise and have a great life.
  - Job does everything that God wants and his life is a train wreck – the question is why. The book of Job calls into question the lesson that we learned from the linear narrative
- Dt 28 – Moses is speaking to the new generation that has grown up in the wilderness after the exodus, on the plains of Jericho:

  Dt:1 1 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God …

  15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you …

  ○ Do the Israelites follow all the Lord’s commands and decrees? No  
    ▪ In fact, they end up worse than the people that were in that land before they overtook it  
    ▪ By 586 BC (Babylon takes Judah), it looks for all the world like the plan of salvation is gone

**Shape of the narrative – U**

Everything is going just fine          God creates everything new again
In the beginning, God created,       New heavens, new earth
and it was very good

Starts to go downhill –              Christ conquers sin
Conflict enter the story             Resurrection
Sin enters the world

Christ is crucified on the cross
The genre of Genesis is a Narrative History, and Genealogies. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. Key personalities include Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Joseph. This book was written to record God’s creation of the world and to demonstrate His love for all that He created.

Genesis is the first book of the Law and also the first book of the entire Bible. The name Genesis literally means “In the Beginning”. It explains the actual events of one of the most debated subjects of our current day...the origin of life. Genesis describes the Lord God, who is infinite and all-powerful, creating everything that exists, by the power of His spoken Word, out of nothing. He essentially creates material matter out of nonmaterial nothing.

- In chapters 1-11:28, Moses explains the creation of all things, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1). He quickly switches to the fall of man in sin and separation from God in chapter 3; then, how God implemented His judgment on the wicked earth. Through a universal flood and by selecting and sparing Noah, a faithful man, and his family, God wipes out humanity and starts again, with one secluded family.

- From chapters 11:28-36, God begins to carry out His plan of redemption in the beginning stages of establishing His own nation of Israel. It is through Abraham, again one faithful man, which God calls and promises to bless with a multitude of people and through them bless the entire world, "...and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (12:3).

- In chapters 37-50 God faithfully raises up and protects the generations from Abraham as He had promised, all the way through unto Joseph while in Egypt. God blesses Abraham’s son and their son’s. Through their
disappointments and failures, He displays His power and sovereignty in their lives; but in at the end of the book of Genesis, God’s people are in a foreign land and wondering about the promise land.

Outline

I. Primeval History
   A. Creation (1:1-2:3)  
      i. Prologue (1:1-2)  
      ii. Day 1 (1:3-5)   
      iii. Day 2 (1:6-8)   
      iv. Day 3 (1:9-13)  
      v. Day 4 (1:14-19)  
      vi. Day 5 (1:20-23) 
      vii. Day 6 (1:24-31) 
      viii. Day 7 (2:1-3) 
   B. Recapitulation (2:4-25)  
      i. Creation of man (2:4-7)  
      ii. Tour of the garden (2:8-14)  
      iii. God’s command to Adam (2:15-17)  
      iv. Creation of woman (2:18-25) 
   C. The Fall (3:1-6:8)  
      i. The action (3:1-13)  
      ii. The consequences (3:14-6:8)  
         1. The serpent (3:14-15)  
         2. The woman (3:16)  
         3. The man (3:17-19)  
         4. The expulsion (3:20-26)  
         5. Cane and Abel (4:1-18)  
         6. Lamech and his wives (4:19-24)  
         7. A walk in the graveyard (4:25-5:32)  
         8. The Nephilim (6:1-8) 
   D. The Flood (6:9-9:17)  
      i. Prologue (6:9-10)  
      ii. Violence in creation (6:11-12)  
      iii. First Divine Speech: “Resolve to Destroy” (6:13-22)  
      iv. Second Divine Speech: “Enter the Ark” (7:1-10)  
      v. Flood begins (7:11-16)  
      vi. Flood rises (7:17-24)  
      vii. Flood recedes (8:1-5)  
      viii. Flood ends (8:6-14)  
      ix. Third Divine Speech: “Leave the Ark” (8:15-19)  
      x. Fourth Divine Speech: “Resolve to Preserve Order” (8:20-22)  
      xi. God’s covenant (9:1-17)  
      xii. Epilogue (9:18-19) 
   E. The Second Chance (9:20-11:32)  
      i. Noah sins (9:20-29)  
      ii. Sinful humanity spreads across the earth (10:1-32)  
      iii. The Tower of Babel (11:1-9)  
      iv. Sinful humanity continues to spread (11:10-32)
II. Patriarchal History

A. The Abraham/Isaac story (12:1-25:18)
   i. God tells Abraham to leave his home (12:1)
   ii. The Abrahamic Covenant (12:2-3)
   iii. Abraham journeys to the promised land (12:40)
   iv. Abraham and Sarah in Egypt (12:10-20)
   v. Abraham and Lot (13:1-14:24)
      1. Abraham and Lot settle in the Negev (13:1-4)
      2. Their herdsmen argue (13:5-7)
      3. Abraham and Lot separate (13:8-18)
      4. Lot in trouble (14:1-12)
      5. Abraham rescues Lot (14:13-17)
      6. Abraham meets Melchizedek (14:18-20)
      7. Abraham will not accept a reward (14:21)
   vi. Abrahamic Covenant detailed: people and property (15:1-21)
   vii. Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar (16:1-16)
   viii. Circumcision as a badge of the covenant (17:1-27)
   ix. Sodom and Gomorrah (18:1-19:38)
   x. Abraham and Abimelech (20:1-18)
   xi. The birth of Isaac (21:1-7)
   xii. Hagar and Ishmael sent away (21:8-21)
   xiii. Treaty with Abimelech (21:22-34)
   xiv. Isaac digs wells (26:12-35)
   xv. Jacob steals Esau’s blessing (27:1-28:5)
      1. Isaac and the intended son of the blessing (27:1-4)
      2. Rebekah sends Jacob on-stage (27:5-17)
      3. Jacob appears before Isaac and receives his blessing (27:18-29)
      4. Esau appears before Isaac and receives his anti-blessing (27:30-40)
      5. Rebekah sends Jacob off-stage (27:41-45)
      6. Isaac and the son of the blessing (27:46-28:5)
      7. Esau angry (28:6-9)
   vi. Jacob on the run (28:10-22)
      1. Jacob’s “ladder” (28:12-17)
   vii. Jacob arrives at Uncle Laban’s (29:1-14)
   viii. Jacob marries Leah and Rachael (29:15-30)
   ix. The battle of the dueling wives (29:31-30:24)
   x. Speckled and spotted goats and lambs (30:25-43)
   xi. Jacob flees from Uncle Laban (31:1-21)
   xii. Uncle Laban catches Jacob: the agreement between two crooks (31:22-55)
   xiii. Esau’s on the way (32:1-21)
   xiv. Jacob wrestles with God (32:22-32)
   xv. Jacob meets Esau (33:1-20)
   xvi. The rape of Dinah (34:1-31)
xvii. Jacob returns to Bethel (35:1-15)
xviii. The deaths of Rachael and Isaac (35:16-29)
xix. Esau’s descendants (36:1-43)

C. The Jacob/Joseph story (37:1-50:26)
i. Joseph’s dreams (37:1-11)
ii. Joseph sold by his brothers (37:12-36)
iii. Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
iv. Joseph and Potiphar’s wife (39:1-23)
v. The cupbearer and the baker (40:1-23)
vi. Pharaoh’s dreams (41:1-40)
vii. Joseph in charge of Egypt (41:41-57)
viii. Joseph’s brothers go to Egypt (42:1-38)
ix. Joseph’s brothers return to Egypt (43:1-34)
x. The silver cup in Benjamin’s sack (44:1-34)
  1. Judah stands in the gap (44:16-34)
xi. Joseph makes himself known (45:1-28)
 xii. Jacob goes to Egypt (46:1-34)
xiii. Jacob appears before Pharaoh (47:1-12)
xiv. Joseph manages through the famine (47:13-31)
xv. Jacob blesses Manasseh and Ephraim (48:1-22)
xvi. Jacob blesses his sons (49:1-28)
xvii. The death of Jacob (49:29-33)
xviii. Joseph mourns (50:1-14)
ix. Joseph reassures his brothers (50:15-21)
xx. The death of Joseph (50:22-26)

Author, Date, Period Covered

Traditional Author: Moses
Traditional Date Written: c. 1446-1406 B.C.
Traditional Period Covered: Creation-1805 B.C.

Literary Structure

In our story’s narrative, the first eleven chapters of Genesis are technically classified as mythopoeic literature, stories that address and illuminate fundamental issues of the human condition: How did creation come about? If God is good, why is there evil in the world? Why do men and women live in such tension? Why are there so many languages in the world? And so on. To read Genesis 1-11 as history, even in the loosest sense of the term, is fundamentally to misread the text.

In our story’s linear narrative, the first eleven chapters of Genesis may be called “primeval history.” They happened a long time ago. Genesis 12-50 brings us from primeval time to historical time; a period spanning roughly 2166 B.C.-1805 B.C. In these chapters, God introduces the plan of redemption—the theme of our story—and he develops his plan through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis Structure
1. Primeval History (1–11)
2. The Abraham/Isaac story (12–25:18)
3. The Isaac/Jacob story (25:19–36)
4. The Jacob/Joseph story (37–50)

Prologue
• Genesis 1-11 is “mythopoeic” literature.
  o It addresses in the form of story the fundamental issues of the human condition:
    ▪ How did we get here?
    ▪ Why are we here?
    ▪ What is our relationship to our creator?
    ▪ Why is there evil in the world?
    ▪ What does God expect of us?
  o Every culture addresses these fundamental issues. Genesis 1-11 has parallels in other world literature
    from the era and location:
    ▪ Egyptian “Pyramid Texts” (c. 2400 B.C.)
    ▪ Babylonian “Enuma Elish” (c. 1700 B.C.)
    ▪ Epic of Gilgamesh (c. 2100 B.C.)
  o Calling Genesis 1-11 — the Prologue — “mythopoeic” literature doesn’t diminish the narrative in any
    way; rather it sinks deep roots into the very substance of the human condition, probing our deepest fears
    and longings.

*Genesis as a whole*

Although deriving from a variety of oral and written sources, in its final, finished form Genesis is an astoundingly unified
literary work, a work of sheer genius.
• Genesis serves as the opening chapter—or Prelude—to the greater narrative of Scripture
• In Genesis the curtain on our story rises; in Revelation it falls
• Genesis tells the story of beginnings: creation, humanity, sin, death and redemption
• Genesis introduces the main characters in our story: God, Adam, Eve, Abraham/Sarah, Isaac/Rebecca, Jacob and his
  wives and sons

Perfectly framed story – The book opens with creation and closes with a coffin in Egypt
In Genesis we find a God of majesty, power and might. But most of all we discover a God of infinite mercy and love.

*In The Beginning…Creation (Ge 1-2)*
• Our overall story of the Bible opens with creation.
  o Not an historical account, but a poetic one
• God creates all that is and pronounces it “very good.”
• Humanity shares an intimate relationship with the Creator, dwelling together in fellowship and harmony.
• At the end of Genesis 2, God’s creation is good, perfect and complete.
• The curtain goes up on our story as we view creation, both from God’s perspective and from man’s.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created …

First Creation Story – God’s perspective (Ge 1)

Very balanced and symmetrical story
ABC Prologue – 7 days – CBA Epilogue (3/7/3):

  o God creates space
    1. Light and dark
    2. Water and sky
    3. Land and vegetation
  o God fills the space that He created
    4. Sun, moon and stars
    5. Animals of the water and the sky
    6. Animals of the land and man
  o Rest
    7. Rest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days of Forming (Creating)</th>
<th>Days of Filling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Light and dark (v3)</td>
<td>4  Lights (v14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Water under the expanse…</td>
<td>5  Every living and moving thing which the water teems …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water above it (v7) [atmosphere]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a Dry ground (v9)</td>
<td>6a Livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals (v24) …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b Vegetation (v11)</td>
<td>6b Every green plant for food (v30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Ceased from creating [REST]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Numerology
  o 7 is an important number in scripture – number of completion
    ▪ Entire Hebrew calendar is based on 7
      • 7 days to a week
      • 7 years to a sabbatical
      • 7 times 7 – Jubilee year
      • Prime number – number of completion
  o 3 is also an important number
    ▪ Important in the literary structure – see inclusio below about creation
    ▪ Holy Trinity
  o 40
    ▪ Period of testing
      • 40 years wondering in the wilderness
      • 40 days and 40 nights of Jesus’ tempting in the desert
• 40 kings in the divided monarchy – the kingship failed
  ▪ Generation
    • Saul reigned 40 years
    • David reigned 40 years
    • Solomon reigned 40 years

• God separates to create order
• If we view the opening chapter of Genesis from a divine perspective: all is symmetry, balance and harmony

• Value judgements
  o It was good – there is a value judgement associated with creation
  o God didn’t create everything because it was fun or interesting
  o His creation was good, which indicates that it has a purpose

• In Hebrew, God’s name is Elohim, is a masculine plural noun, which suggests majesty and power.

**Literary Techniques – Inclusio and Chiasmus**

• Inclusio
  o Statement at the front (an opening line or 2) and then repeated at the end
  o Brackets a literary unit with a repetition of words forward and backward – creates a frame, like bookends

• Chiasmus
  o A form of parallelism – A statement restated in an amplified form – in the ABBA format.
  o The elements of the statements form the Greek letter X (Ksi or Chi)
    \[
    \begin{array}{ll}
    A & B \\
    B' & A'
    \end{array}
    \]
  o When you have a chiasmus in the very center of a story, it pulls that story together in a very tight form
    ▪ It becomes the nucleus of the story or poem around which the action happens
    ▪ The chiasmus holds the story or poem together

**Inclusio – God created the heavens and earth**

• Ge 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
  o Hebrew word order is: In the beginning, **created** God the Heavens and the Earth

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
A & B & C \\
In the beginning, & **created** & God & the Heavens and the Earth
\end{array}
\]

Ge 2:1-3 1 Thus the **heavens and the earth** were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day **God** had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of **creating** that he had done.

• The Hebrew syntax of the scene’s opening and closing phrases emphasize God’s creative force:
  o “In the beginning/ **created**/ God/ the heavens and the earth” (1: 1); and
  o “Thus the **heavens and the earth** . . ./ **God** had finished . . ./creating” (2: 1-3).
  o **Inclusio** – The closing phrase repeats in reverse order the opening phrase
    ▪ Frames the scene, holding the scene together like two bookends.
    ▪ In between, each act of creation moves toward fullness, completion and perfection.
• Literary structure of creation – Inclusio ABC-CBA bookends with a 7 part movement in the middle

**Chiasmus – God created mankind**

• This is the chiasmus of the story of creation – it is the nucleus of the story around which the action happens
  
  o If every act of creation (days 1-6) leads towards completion and perfection, then the final act of creation (humanity) is the jewel in the crown. And it is emphasized in forming the chiasmus to pull it together.

  A  B
  Ge 1:27 So **God created man** in his own image,  
  in the image of God he created him;  
  B  A

**Creation story as a whole**

Inclusio with a chiasmus in the center forming the nucleus – Structure is not accidental

  A  B  C
  In the beginning, **created God** the **Heavens and the Earth**

  A  B
  Ge 1:27 So **God created man** in his own image,  
  in the image of God he created him;  
  B  A

  C  B
  Ge 2:1-3 1 Thus the **heavens and the earth** were completed in all their vast array. 2 By the seventh day **God** had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 And **God** blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of **creating** that he had done.

**Elohim – Majestic, Mighty – Multiplicity of God’s character (the Trinity)**

Ge 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
Ge 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness…”

• The Hebrew word for God is Elohim
  
  o Elohim is a masculine, plural noun grammatically  
  o To make a Hebrew noun plural, you put an ‘im’ at the end of the word (similar to ‘s’ in English)

• Noun of majesty, power, might – the plurality of majesty

• The first suggestion of the multiplicity of God’s character – the trinity

**God created man – In the image and likeness of God**

• Ge 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

• We are created in the image and likeness of God
  
  o Unlike any of the other creatures which he simply spoke into existence  
  o Similar to a mallet with a ‘B’ for Bill, being hammered into a thin piece of soft gold – what’s left after the hammer is removed is the image  
  o Humans are to God what the image is on the stamp
• God has an absolute need to create
  o If we are made in the image and likeness of God, then we too must create
  o Man and woman come together to create life
  o Individuals create music, literature, art, science, technology, political systems, etc

• God gives man dominion over what He created
  o Let man rule over . . .
  o Just as God is to rule over us

**Second creation story – Man’s perspective (Garden perspective) (Ge 2)**

• We turn around in a recapitulation and drop down into Day 6 to view it from man’s perspective
• It is linear, and there is dialogue between God and man

**Literary Techniques – Recapitulation**

• Recapitulation
  o Moving through a linear narrative (straight line), then stopping, turning around, and dropping down into a previous element of the story and examining it from a different perspective
  o In Ge 2:4-25, we double back into scene 1, drop down into day 6 of creation, and view the event from a human perspective – this is often referred to as the ‘second creation story’

• ‘Second creation story’
  o The Historical-critical method
  o Literary method – Recapitulation looking at the story of creation from man’s point of view
    • Ge 1 – Move across days 1-6 from a God’s eye point of view
      • Ge 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness…”
      • How did God do it? The second creation story will tell us
    • Ge 2 – We turn around, drop down into day 6, and view day 6 from man’s point of view
      • In this scene we stand with the **LORD** God in the Garden of Eden & watch as he creates man & woman.

**YHWH Elohim**

• God’s name is **YHWH** (pronounced Yahweh or Jehovah) *Elohim*
  o An intimate covenant name
  o The NIV prints *Elohim* as “God,” and **YHWH Elohim** as “**LORD** God,” to distinguish the two

• God’s relationship with man is extremely intimate
  o Ge 2:7 the **LORD** God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.
    • **LORD** God formed man from dust – with his hands he shapes man
- Hebrew for man is muscular, singular
- Man carries within him the very breath of God
  - Breathing life into someone is about as intimate as one can get
  - Unlike the other creatures that he spoke into existence
  - Makes him unique among all God’s creatures

**Garden of Eden**

- Northern Iraq of today

> Ge 2:8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters

- Ge 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
  - 1st creation story, man was given dominion to rule over God’s creation
  - 2nd creation story, dominion and ruling has become cultivating and caring
  - Lordship over something doesn’t involve forceful power, but nurturing and caring

- Adam names the animals
  - Not because God needed Adam to do it – it was a game
  - God delighted in Adam, and Adam delighted in seeing and naming all the different creatures
  - In the Hebrew scriptures, a name embodies the very essence of who he or she is
    - Names change when the essence of the person changes

- Trees of Life and the Knowledge of good and evil

> Ge 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

**Creation of man**

- Man was formed, not spoken into existence
  - Unlike the other creatures that he spoke into existence, the LORD God “formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (2:7)
    - Shapes the man (masculine, singular) with His own hands – very intimate
  - Here we learn that man carries within him the very breath of God, making him unique among all God’s creatures.

- The LORD God clearly delights in man, and he gives him his new creation “to work it and take care of it” (2:15)
  - Dominion & ruling become cultivating and caring
Creation of woman

- In the midst of paradise, the L ORD God sees that man is incomplete, that he needs a partner in life, so he makes a “helper suitable for him” (2:18).

  Ge 2:18 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” … 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. 25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

- The Hebrew word for “helper” is ayzer, and it carries no pejorative or subordinate connotation
  - Helper now suggests a subsidiary, secondary person, someone beneath the man himself
  - Helper then would be better translated as “partner.”
  - God is referred to as our helper
    - Ex 18:4 and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."
    - Ps 118:7 The LORD is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.
  - Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (1708)
    - “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

- Woman is the crown jewel of the Lord’s creations
  - In a delightful pun, the LORD God creates “woman” (Hebrew, isha) out of the side of “man” (Hebrew, ish)
  - Eve is the most delightful, stunning beautiful and perfect creature than God had ever made
  - When the man sees her, he breaks into poetry
    - Ge 2:23 "This is now bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh;/ she shall be called ‘woman,’/ for she was taken out of man”
    - 1st poetry in the Bible
  - If creating man was the final act of creation, then the creation of woman was the crown jewel
    - If man is dust refined, then woman is man refined

- The scene ends with the man and his wife both naked, neither feeling shame. It is a delightful scene, intimate and playful, a scene that recognizes the tender, loving relationship among the LORD God, the man and the woman.
  - This picture captures the intimate essence of this story
  - Adam face – utter adoration and love
Genesis 1 and 2 set the stage for our story in highly poetic fashion. In these chapters we learn that God created all that is, that his creation is good, perfect and complete, and that God maintains an intimate relationship with what he has created. But all good stories have a conflict, and in chapter 3, conflict enters our story, and the rest of the Bible, from Genesis 4 through Revelation 22, follows a trajectory toward resolving that conflict.

**Adamic Covenant**

The Adamic Covenant can be thought of in two parts:

- **The Edenic Covenant (innocence)**
  - The Edenic Covenant outlined man’s responsibility toward creation and God’s directive regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
  - Ge 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, [b] and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." 29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—all that have the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.
  - Ge 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

- **The Adamic Covenant (grace) (Genesis 3:16-19).**
  - The Adamic Covenant included the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God’s provision for that sin (Genesis 3:15).
  - Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." 16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

**God creates all that is and pronounces it “very good”**

- God creates all that is and pronounces it “very good.”
- Humanity shares an intimate relationship with the Creator, dwelling together in fellowship and harmony.
- At the end of Genesis 2, God’s creation is good, perfect and complete.
**Sin Enters the World (Ge 3)**

Every good story has a conflict, and our conflict enters the story here: sin. When Adam and Eve eat the fruit, sin enters the world, the conflict of our story. Also in chapter 3 we meet our great adversary, Satan, as he tempts Adam and Eve, causing them to fall.

**Sin**

- Sin – A condition of alienation and separation from God that manifests itself in outward, sinful actions
- When Adam and Eve eat the fruit, sin enters the world, the conflict of our story.

The Hebrew word for “sin” is an archery term that suggests “missing the mark,” but in Scripture the word is much more complex.

  - “Sin” is not simply an act of disobedience that one commits, but an ongoing condition that one is in
  - For the purpose of our narrative, we might define sin as “a condition of alienation and separation from God that manifests itself in outward, sinful actions.”

**Characteristics of Sin**

- That condition has four characteristics:

  **1. Sin is subtle**

    - No one wakes up in the morning and thinks ‘I’m going to sin really big today’
    - Did God really say … Satan introduces doubt – he wants you to question the truth of God’s word
    - Example in the fall – Serpent undermined Eve
      - Beloved God becomes God
      - Satan leaned against the tree that couldn’t be touched

  **2. Sin distorts our judgment**

    - Rather than confront sin and deal with it, we rationalize around it
      - it’s not so bad, everybody does it, no harm done
    - Example in the fall – Adam and Eve should have apologized for their mistake, but instead they hid from God and blamed others for the mistake – they did everything but take responsibility for their actions

  **3. Sin escalates**

    - Gets bigger and bigger – one lie leads to another, and another, and another, until your whole soul is infected with sin. It snowballs.

  **4. Sin cascades through generations**

    - It doesn’t stop with you – it affects everyone that you come into contact with
    - It’s like a highly infectious disease – It’s like a cancer of the soul

**Symbols/Emblems of Sin**

- Leprosy – Behaves like sin
  - Subtle – Starts like an insect bite
  - Distorts judgment – Don’t deal with it – Denial about what is happening
  - Escalates – Gets worse and worse until it kills you
  - Cascades – Highly infectious – Affects everyone around them
- Cancer – Behaves like sin
  o Subtle – Starts as a mutation
  o Distorts judgment – Denial about what is happening
  o Escalates – Gets worse and worse until it kills you
  o Cascades through generations – hereditary
The fall of man (How to study the Scripture)

• The narrative we are reading is a closed system
  o The actions, events and characters in the story operate solely within the world of the narrative itself.

• Outside of the story, other actions, events and characters operate, and sometimes they intrude into the story.
  o Satan provides an example.
    ▪ Nowhere in the Bible do we actually see Satan being expelled from heaven
      • We only have references to it, as in Luke 10: 18; Isaiah 14: 12-15; Ezekiel 28: 11-19; and Revelation 12: 7-9.
      • We can only assume that God expels Satan prior to our narrative’s start, before Genesis 1: 1.
      • Yet, he intrudes into the story in Genesis 3, as he will when he tempts Jesus in Matthew 4: 1-11, and when he appears as the great dragon in Revelation.
  o Angels offer another example.
    ▪ The Hebrew word for “angel,” means literally “messenger.”
    ▪ When angels appear in our story, they are sent from outside the world of the narrative to bring information to the characters inside the narrative, and after they deliver their message, they exit the story and return to their place outside the narrative, much like characters entering and exiting the stage in a play.

• Ge 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.
  o serpent
    ▪ A new character enters our story, the serpent. Who is he, and where did he come from?
    ▪ If we stay within the narrative and observe the literary unity of Scripture, we receive an answer in Revelation 20:1-2, the end of our story:
      • Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.
    ▪ In chapter 3 we meet our great adversary, Satan, and he tempts Adam and Eve, causing them to fall.
  o crafty
    ▪ We learn that the serpent, or Satan, is “crafty”
    ▪ A translation of the Hebrew awroum, which itself is from the root, awram, literally, “to be smooth.”
      • Many translations render the word “subtle” or “shrewd.”
      • This is an important textual clue as the story in chapter 3 unfolds.
  o LORD God
    ▪ God continues to be called YHWH Elohim, “LORD God,” as he had been in chapter 2.
  o made
    ▪ We learn that the serpent is a created being – God made him, just like the others
  o All of this is a great deal to glean from one verse, but it is essential information for a close reading of the chapter, for once we meet the serpent, he immediately speaks:

• Ge 3:1 … “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”
  o Notice the tone of incredulity as he speaks: “Did God really say . . . .”
  o Introduces doubt – Satan wants you to question the truth of God’s word
  o YHWH Elohim becomes Elohim – Sin is subtle
    ▪ In line 1, God was referred to as YHWH Elohim (LORD God) – an intimate, covenant term
    ▪ In line 2, The serpent uses Elohim (God) not “LORD God,”
      • Satan is not in an intimate, covenant relationship with God
• In line 3, Eve then replies: “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say . . .”
  • She mirrors the serpent’s use of “God,” rather than the intimate term “LORD God.”
  • This is a subtle distinction, but an important and quite deliberate one.

  o We were warned in verse 1 that the serpent was “more crafty than any of the wild animals that the LORD God had made,” and in this exchange we see his craftiness.

  • As God created by speaking, so the serpent destroys by a subtle twist of language.

• Ge 3:3 … but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.
  o God did not say that (Ge 2:17), but Adam probably did as he was explaining everything to her – God said not to eat it, so you know what, don’t even touch it – don’t go near it
  o The addition of touching it gives an opening to the very crafty snake who, then, leaned against the tree that should not be touched

• Ge 3:4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
  o Satan outright lies and deceives them

• Ge 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
  o The fruit of the tree was 3 things:
    ▪ good for food
    ▪ pleasing to the eye
    ▪ desirable for gaining wisdom
  o Adam was right there with her
  o Adam and Eve are no longer intimate with one another – now they see other, a being separate from themselves, and they are horrified
  o A hairline crack runs through the very foundation of their relationship, not only with one another, but also with God.

• Dialogue with God in the Garden
  o Of course God knows where they are and what they have done
  o It’s like us talking to a 2-year old that has done something really bad and is now hiding.
  o They are afraid, and they hide, and when God confronts them, they blame one another and the serpent for their disobedience.

The blame game

• they blame one another and the serpent for their disobedience
  o Adam
    ▪ Ge 3:12 "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."
      • you put here with me – implies that this is all God’s fault
  o Eve
    ▪ Ge 3:13 … The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
  o Serpent (Satan)
    ▪ Ge 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,
      • God is not asking anymore – He knew where it all started

Consequences of sin

• Consequences for the original sins – As chapter 3 draws to a close, there are consequences for what has happened.
  o Note the reverse order of the blame from above – giving balance to the structure
- God does not care where the blame falls – they are all punished
- If they had repented and asked for forgiveness, the consequences may have been different

- Ge 3:22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.
  - Blessing – An eternal life in a condition of sin (separation from God) is, by definition, hell
  - one of us – notice the plurality again - trinity
  - In the end, the LORD God limits the length of man’s life, which had been eternal, and he ejects Adam and Eve from the garden, beginning the sad, sorry story of sinful humanity in a fallen world.

- This closing scene firmly establishes the serpent as enemy to both God and man, our great adversary.

Serpent (Satan)

- Ge 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.
  - He didn’t crawl on his belly until now
- Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he [the woman’s offspring] will crush your [the serpent’s] head, and you [the serpent] will strike his [the woman’s offspring] heel."
  - Messianic foreshadowing
    - the woman’s offspring – He is muscular, singular in Hebrew – Reference to Jesus
    - Jesus will come to defeat you – and you will wound him in the process
    - Jesus will come who will resolve this issue of sin and defeat death that follows in the wake of sin
    - The rest of the Hebrew Scriptures lead up to this coming
  - 1st prophecy in the Bible
    - Interesting that the gospel (good news) was based on a prophecy
  - From this point forward, Satan has been trying to destroy any chance of Jesus
    - He demonically possessed Cain to kill Abel
    - He demonically possessed Pharoah to kill all the babies under 2 (Moses)
    - He demonically possessed Hamen to convince the king to kill all the Jews (Ester)
    - He demonically possessed Herod to kill all the babies under 2 (Baby Jesus)

Eve

- Ge 3:16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children.
  - Increase the pain, not start pain
  - A woman’s joy in giving life will now involve not just physical pain, but the much greater pain of bringing a child into a fallen world, one filled with violence, death and uncertainty.
- Ge 3:16 … Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."
  - The woman and man are no longer partners, now she will be subject to him
  - The woman will want, more than anything, for her husband to love and cherish her – and he will use that to control her, to rule over her
    - Word for rule here is very different from the one used in the creation story when man is told to rule over the animals
      - Creation – radah – Overseer / creatively manage
      - Eve’s submission to Adam – marshal – Hard word, has a finality and subjugation to it
  - That is not God prescribing what will happen to you, that is God describing what is going to happen now that sin has entered the world
Adam

- Ge 3:17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate … "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.
  o Cursed is the ground – the fall affects all of creation, not just mankind
  o Adam now has to work the ground to eat – and it will be hard
  o Man will now struggle with God’s creation, rather than creatively manage it.
- Ge 3:19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."
  o Death – from dust to dust – You are no longer eternal, you will return to the ground

Death

- Adam and Eve were created to be immortal
  o Death does not enter the world until sin does
  o God’s mercy – not letting us live forever in this condition of sin
- Whole world is affected
  o Ge 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.
  o More death – now the animals have to die to provide clothing and food

William Blake, God Judging Adam (color relief print with pen, ink and water color), c. 1795. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
### Adam as an Anti-type to Jesus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adam</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A living soul (1Co 15:45)</td>
<td>A life-giving spirit (1Co 15:45)</td>
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<td>Of the earth (1Co 15:47)</td>
<td>From heaven (1Co 15:47)</td>
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<td>Rebelled against God (Ge 3:1-7)</td>
<td>Obeyed God perfectly (He 5:8-9)</td>
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<td>Through him, all were made sinners (Ro 5:19)</td>
<td>Through Him, many will be made righteous (Ro 5:19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brought death (Ro 5:14-15; 1Co 15:22)</td>
<td>Brought life (He 2:14-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost dominion (Ge 1:26; Ge 3:17-24)</td>
<td>Won dominion (He 2:5-9)</td>
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### Satan / Nachash

- Hebrew word used is ‘nawchash’ or shining one
  - Referred to as a snake or dragon throughout scripture
    - Revelation 20:2
    - Revelation 12:7-9 (flashback)
    - Isaiah 14:12-15
    - Ezekiel 28:11–19
  - Both people and animals have a natural fear and loathing of snakes
  - In ancient classical literature, the serpent or snake is frequently a symbol of chaos & death from underworld
    - Epic of Gilgamesh
      - 2100 BC – predates Genesis by 1000 years
      - An epic poem from Mesopotamia, is considered the world's first truly great work of literature
      - A serpent steals immortality from the hero, Gilgamesh
      - Antecedent / parallel to the story of the fall

- The serpent was obviously superior to Eve, not inferior, or she would not have had a desire to be like him
  - Satan was an angel – in all other references to angels, the people are in awe
  - Eve was the most glorious creature that God had created, and this nachash was clearly superior to her
  - George Campbell Morgan
    - A British evangelist, preacher and a leading Bible scholar and commentator
    - Pastor of Westminster Chapel in London

Consider the personality as here presented. Our reading opens with the phrase “Now the serpent.” I cannot help saying that it seems to me that this is a somewhat unfortunate translation, because whenever we say serpent, we think of a snake, and that is not the essential meaning of the Hebrew word. It is quite true that the word is used for snake, but it has another signification and is used in other applications. The word *nawchash* literally means a shining one. The personality that approached the mother of us all in the garden was not a snake, evidently inferior to herself, but a shining one, apparently superior. When Paul referred to the matter, he said among other things, “The serpent beguiled Eve,” and later in the same connection he said “Even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light.” Personally I am convinced that it was this guise that he appeared to Eve.  

---from Great Chapters of the Bible

- Identified definitively as Satan in Revelation
  - Rev 20:1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

- Paradise Lost by John Milton (1667/1674)
  - Greatest epic poem ever written in the English language
  - Subject – Figure of Satan (the snake), the great war in heaven, Satan’s fall, and his quest for revenge
**Satan’s Fall from Heaven**

- Rev 12 – We are reading the story of the great climatic battle that will bring the curtain down on the story
  - Flashback to the events that caused all of this in the first place – several scriptural references
    - There had been a great war in heaven
    - Satan and 1/3 of the angels rebelled against God, were defeated and were cast out of heaven

Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

- Isaiah 14 - referring to the King of Babylon
  - morning star – St. Jerome translated this as ‘Lucifer’ in Latin
    - Going back to the early churches, morning star has been identified with Satan
    - When Satan falls, he is transformed from Lucifer to Satan, and his angels are transformed to demons
  - Satan wanted to be greater than God – he wanted to be God

Isa 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." 15 But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

- Eze 28:12-18 - God compares the king of Tyre to Satan
  - Satan was most glorious, most beautiful of all of the angelic beings that God created

  “You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty./ You were in Eden, the garden of God;/ every precious stone adorned you . . ./ Your settings and mountings were made of gold;/ on the day you were created they were prepared./ You were anointed as a guardian cherub,/ for so I ordained you./ You were on the holy mount of God;/ you walked among the fiery stones./ You were blameless in your ways/ from the day you were created/ till wickedness was found in you./ Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence,/ and you sinned./ So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God,/ and I expelled you, O guardian cherub . . .”

- Lk 10:18 He [Jesus] replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”
  - Eluded to throughout scripture, but we don’t see it
  - Happened prior to Genesis, but Jesus was there
    - Reinforces the idea of the triune nature of God referred to in the creation story

- Gap theory
  - Ge 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
  - Ge 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

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- The Adamic Covenant (grace) (Genesis 3:16-19).
  - The Adamic Covenant included the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God’s provision for that sin (Genesis 3:15).
  - Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.
    16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."
    17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Consequences of sin in the world (Ge 4-5)

With sin in the world, inevitable consequences follow. Humanity—indeed, all of creation—begins a downward spiral.

Cain and Abel (Ge 4)

- Cain offered God his left-overs; Abel offered God his best
  - Heb 11:4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.
- God was displeased with Cain, and sin overtook him and he killed Abel

The Trajectory of Sin

- Adam & Eve disobey God and they are ashamed (Genesis 3:1-24)
• Cain murders his brother Able and he is impudent (Genesis 4:9)
• By the 7th generation, Lamech takes 2 wives, murders a stranger for insulting him, & is arrogant (Genesis 4:23-24)
• By the time we reach chapter 6, “The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.” (Ge 6:5-6)

In a few brief chapters, we move from Adam and Eve disobeying God and being ashamed, to brother murdering brother and being impudent, to Lamech viewing his wives as property and killing a stranger for insulting him, to all people being only evil all the time. Sin has indeed begun its terrible course.

• “More tortuous than anything is the human heart, beyond remedy; who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).
• “There is no distinction: all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

**Death**

• If we plot the ages of the early patriarchs, we get a downward sloping graph – Result of sin in the world

![Chart of Declining Longevity](chart.png)

- Enoch did not die
  - Ge 5:21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.
  
  - Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.
And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

- Enoch – Typology representing the church – Taken up (raptured) before the flood

**Sons of God and the daughters of men and Nephilim**

- **Ge 6:1** When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.

  - Who are the sons of God and the daughters of men? 3 possibilities:
    - Angels – The sons of God could be the angels
      - Ge 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness…”
      - Some believe that the ‘us’ is in reference to the angels
      - Fits in with the Gap theory (gap between Ge 1:1 and 1:2)
      - Good precedent for it in the early church fathers
      - In his magnificent translation of The Five Books of Moses (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), Robert Alter observes that “the only obvious meaning of the Hebrew term [Nephilim] is “fallen ones”—perhaps those who have come down from the realm of the gods ….”
    - This Hebrew—or perhaps broader Near Eastern—idea resonates off similar EgypDan, Greek and Roman thinking that the gods mate with mortal men and women, producing the great mythic heroes of old, such as Achilles, in the Iliad and Aeneas in the Aeneid.
    - In Scripture the “fallen ones” may (refer to the rebellious angels who fell with Satan.
    - Royal line – The sons of God could be the royal line
      - This is the line of men that will eventually become the royal line of Israel
      - Introduced in the 2nd century AD
      - Primary Jewish teaching
    - Line of Seth – The sons of God are the Godly line of Seth – the ones that continue after the flood
      - Daughters of men are the daughters of Cain – Ungodly line
      - Most current Christian position
      - Godly line of Seth marries the ungodly line of Cain – intermingle and corrupt everything

- Ge 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.
  - Nephilim means fallen ones – sons of Cain

- **Ge 6:3** Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

  - Started at 900 years old
  - 2348 BC - God says here 120 years
  - 1500 BC – Moses says Ps 90:10 The length of our days is 70 years—or 80, if we have the strength;
  - 70-80 years is what we currently live as well
    - Middle ages – High infant mortality rate and deaths during childbirth – the 0’s and early 20’s bring the average down
      - Thomas Kempis – Dies in the 1400s at 93 years old
      - Shakespeare was in his 60’s when he died
  - 120 years – Many people live to be older than that after the flood
    - Extended probationary period before the flood - repent or be destroyed
    - Noah built the arc for 120 Years while he was preaching. At the end of 120 years, no one had started following God.
• Ge 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them."
  o Why did God make us in this way?
    ▪ He gave us the choice to love Him or not, because without freedom, love has no meaning
    ▪ We are God’s children – and He loves us (even when we reject Him)

Noah and the Flood (Ge 6) – the people’s second chance
• So what is God to do? In chapters 6-9 He gives humanity a second chance. By bringing the flood and destroying all life on earth, except for Noah and his family, God washes the land clean and offers a new beginning.
  o Yet, when Noah gets off the ark, he plants a vineyard, harvests the grapes, gets drunk, and curses his children.

Epic of Gilgamesh
• The Flood story has many parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature, the most important being the Babylonian Epic (of Gilgamesh, Tablet 11 (c. 2700 B.C.)). Among the parallels are these:
  1. God/gods determine to bring a flood
  2. Hero told to make a boat
  3. Make a boat with a roof and cover the boat with tar and pitch
  4. Put the “seed” of all creatures in the boat
  5. Hero & family enter the boat
  6. Rain falls (40 days/nights; 7 days/6 nights)
  7. All creatures outside die
  8. Hero opens a window
  9. Waters recede and boat comes to rest on a mountain (Aarat/Nimus)
  10. Aier 7 days the hero sends out a dove
  11. Hero offers sacrifice to God/gods
  12. God/gods bless hero and his family

Inclusio structure
Mirrored structure – Balanced, harmonious structure – very typical of Hebrew literature

Front half – Flood occurs
Back half – Flood recedes

Transitional Introduction (6:9-10)
A  Corruption (violence) in creation (6:11-12)
B  “Resolve to Destroy” (6:13-22)
C  “Enter the Ark” (7:1-10) – 7 days/7 days
D  Beginning of flood (7:11-16)
E  Rising flood (7:17-24) – 40 days / 150 days
F  God remembered Noah (8:1)
E’ Receding flood (8:1-5) – 150 days
D’ Drying the earth (8:6-14) – 40 days
C’ “Leave the Ark” (8:15-19)
B’ “Resolve to Preserve” (8:20-22)
A’ Covenant (peace) with creation (9:1-17)

Transitional conclusion (9:18-19)

Ge 7:4 Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth
Ge 7:10 And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.
Ge 7:17 For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth
Ge 7:24 The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days
Ge 8:3 At the end of the hundred and fifty days
Ge 8:6 After forty days
Ge 8:10 He waited seven more days
Ge 8:12 He waited seven more days

Ark

- Design is laid out for Noah
  - Roughly the size of a Navy cruiser – big boat
- 500 miles away from any body of water
- 7 of the clean animals and 2 of the unclean animals
  - Need animals to sacrifice later
- Noah was 600 years old when the flood came

Flood

- Flooded from above and below for 150 days
  - Rained down – torrential downpours – for 40 days and 40 nights
  - All the springs were gushing up from underneath the ground
- The water receded until the 10th month
  - Birds were sent out to find dry land

Traditional Location of Noah’s Ark

Ge 8:4 and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.
God blesses Noah

- Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Ge 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." 29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food."

Ge 9:1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. 2 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

- Different from the creation story
  - Noah and his family are still in a condition of sin, they just have a new start
  - Ge 9:2 – Most dangerous creatures on the earth are humans – and all the animals know it
- Ge 9:3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you.
  - An attempt to deal with the violent side of humanity

**God will demand an accounting**

Ge 9:4 "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. 5 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. 6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

- Cannot argue capital punishment from a Biblical perspective
- We will be accountable for the life of our neighbors
Rainbow (Covenant with Noah)

The Noahic Covenant was an unconditional covenant between God and Noah (specifically) and humanity (generally). After the Flood, God promised humanity that He would never again destroy all life on earth with a Flood. God gave the rainbow as the sign of the covenant, a promise that the entire earth would never again flood and a reminder that God can and will judge sin (2 Peter 2:5).

Ge 9:13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ... Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. 16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth." 17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.

2Pe 2:5 he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others

Post Flood to the Tower of Babel (Ge 9-11)

We blow our 2nd chance

Noah’s drunkenness

Ge 9:20 Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. 21 When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. 27 May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave."

• Plain sense of the story
  o In a patriarchal society, it would have been very dishonoring & shameful to see your father naked
  o Ham gazed upon his father naked and broadcast it to everyone

• Echoes of the story of Zeus and Cronus
  o Cronus was Zeus’s father – Zeus castrates Cronus in his sleep and becomes the father God

Cronus and Zeus

The story of Zeus and his father, Cronus, is worthy of some in-depth consideration.

In Greek Mythology, Cronus was considered to be the son of heaven (Uranus) and earth (Gaia). Cronus’ son, Zeus, was known to the ancient Greeks as the King of the Gods, while Cronus was generally considered to be an even more ancient, pre-Hellenic deity, and thus someone seldom worshipped by the ancient Greeks.

Cronus’ father, Uranus, meanwhile, had had many children by his mate, Gaia, but the story goes that Uranus hid them in the Earth. Gaia, as might be expected, mourned for her lost children, but she also sought revenge. [It’s a female thing.] As it turned out, Cronus was the only one of her children willing to risk everything in going up against Uranus. Aided with a harpe, supplied by Gaia, Cronus was able to castrate Uranus -- an act generally interpreted as an event separating heaven from earth.
Cronus then became the Lord of his brothers, and, according to myth, shut up the most dangerous of them in Tartarus. He then took for consort his sister, Rhea. But when he was warned by his parents that his own child would likely overthrow him, he swallowed the first five of Rhea’s offspring — Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. That is to say, he took all their powers and presence and eclipsed them.

With the sixth child, however, Rhea tricked Cronus and gave him a stone to swallow, which he promptly did. [It was not specified as to whether it was a gall or a kidney stone, but Cronus must have been really stoned when he swallowed it, or wouldn’t he have at least noticed?] When the sixth child, Zeus, came of age, he loosed the prisoners of Tartarus, made war on Cronus, and won! In the process, his siblings were freed. Yea.

Because of his dietary inclinations, Cronus was frequently identified with the Semitic baalim and Moloch, to whom human sacrifices, particularly of children, were made. In other words, he was not a nice god. This fact might be considered to be relevant. I.e., a god of wrath and vengeance, perhaps?

The stories of Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus (and the rest of the mythologic gang) are the Greek versions, and thus stem from the time frame of the ancient Greeks. In their frame of reference, therefore, Zeus was the current and ruling head, while Cronus was history (in every sense of the word) and Uranus was ancient history (literally!).

- Echoes of rape
  - Later in the Bible, when someone uncovers a woman’s nakedness, he is having sex with her
    - Leviticus 20:11, "The man who lies with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness..."
  - There is a suggestion of something really off in this story
    - Did Ham rape Noah?
    - Was Canaan (his son) involved? The curse falls on Canaan
    - Did they rape Noah’s wife?
    - Did they castrate Noah?

*Table of Nations (Genealogy)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japheth</th>
<th>Ham</th>
<th>Shem</th>
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- **Noah’s Sons (Genesis 10)**
  - Japheth (Gen 10:2-5) 7 sons
  - Ham (Gen 10:6-20) 4 sons
  - Shem (Gen 10:21-30) 5 sons

- Europe and Asia
- Southwest Asia, Canaan, Africa
- Middle East
- Shemites
The Genealogy of Noah

The Ark came to rest on Mt Arrarat (in Turkey)

Noah

China
Fohi or Yao (Noah)
Shin-Nong
Whang-Ti

Shem
Asia
Arphaxad
Salah
Eber
Peleg
Reu
Serug
Nahor
Terah
Abram
(ABRAHAM)

Japheth
Europe
Gomer
Madai
Magog
Tubal
Javan
Greece
Meshech

Ham
Africa
Cush
Phut
Canaan

Canaan
Mizraim
Egypt
Nimrod
Chaldea (Ur)
Assyria
Babylonia

Genealogical Table of the Descendants of Noah

NOAH

JAPHEH

Gomer
Magog
Madai
Tubal
Meshech
Tiras

SAMH

Cush
Mizraim
Phut
Sidon
Heth
Jebusite
Amorite
Girgasite
Hivite
Arkeite
Shekelite
Arvadite
Tamarite
Hamathite

SHAM

Elam
Asshur
Salah
Lud
Eber

Aram

Hul
Gether
Mash

Ashkenaz
Riphath
Togarmah

Eliahah
Tarshish
Kittim
Dodanim

Nimrod
(Resen)
Seba
Havilah
Saba
Sabtecha
Ramah
Sheba
Dedan

Ludim
Anamim
Lehabim
Naphtuhim
Pathrusim
Caphtorim
Cassinim
Philistim

Peleg
Reu
Serug
Terah
Abram

Joktan
Almodad
Sheleph
Harimaveth
Jorah
Hadoram
Uzal
Diklah
Obal
Abimael
Sheba
Ophir
Jobab
Terah is pagan to the core
- He knows nothing about God whatsoever
- He has done absolutely nothing to merit God’s grace
- Jos 24:2 Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods.

Tower of Babel (Ge 11)

- By chapter 11 we arrive at the Tower of Babel, a grotesque emblem of fallen man’s sin and hubris, and we are back where we started.

- Balanced story
  A  Whole world had one language and a common speech (11:1)
  B  People want to move up – build a tower reaching heaven – so they will not be scattered (11:4)
  B’  God comes down to see the city and the tower (11:5)
  A’  God confused their language and scattered them all over the earth (11:7-8)

- After reading Genesis 1-11 we can arrive at only one conclusion: **Left to our own devices, we cannot resolve the issue of sin** — the core conflict of our story.

- Josephus - Flavius Josephus of the Antiquities of the Jews — Book I, Chapter 4
  Concerning the Tower of Babylon, and the confusion of Tongues.
2. Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grand-son of Ham, the son of Noah: a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it was through his means that they were happy; but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny; seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his own power. He also said, “He would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again: for that he would build a Tower too high for the waters to be able to reach; and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their fore-fathers.”

3. [About An. 2520] Now the multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God: and they built a Tower; neither sparing any pains, nor being in any degree negligent about the work. And, by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high, sooner than any one could expect.

The Plan of Salvation – Abraham (Ge 12)

Left to our own devices, humanity is incapable of resolving the issue of sin. God must do it for us, and here he introduces his plan.

- Genesis 12-50 brings us to historical time, a period spanning c. 2166 B.C.- 1805 B.C. In these chapters, God introduces the plan of salvation—the theme of our story—and he develops his plan through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
  - In chapters 12:1-25:18 we read the story of Abraham/Isaac
  - In chapters 25:19-36:43 we read the story of Isaac/Jacob;
  - In chapters 37:1-50:26 we read the story of Jacob/Joseph.

- As you study, notice the extraordinary unity as the stories progress, each leading into the next, unfolding like a triptych, and notice how the whole narrative is framed.
  - In Genesis 1:1, our story begins with birth: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”; and in Genesis 50:26, it ends: “in a coffin in Egypt.”
  - The LORD God had said to Adam, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (2:16-17). And so he does.

- Genesis begins our great adventure of studying the Bible, beginning to end.
  - It sets the stage for our story; it introduces the conflict; and it provides the theme.
  - Every character we meet is memorable, and every action adds to the development of the whole.
Read as the start of a larger book we call “the Bible,” Genesis offers an opening chapter, remarkable in its depth and breadth, a chapter that whets our appetite for what will come.

- On its own, Genesis is one of the greatest stories in all of world literature.
  - It is complex, many-layered, and enormously sophisticated in its narrative technique.
  - It is clearly the work of a world-class poet.

*Abram is called out of Ur*

- Abram’s family was pagan
  - Jos 24:2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods.
  - Abram lived at the same time as Noah and Shem (who may have told him about YHWH)

- Act 7:2 …The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. 3 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.' 4 "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living.
  - Abram leaves Ur – Travels up the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and down the coast

- God chooses Abram to play a crucial role in the redemption of humanity,
  - It is through him that all the families of the earth will find blessing
  - It is through Abram that God creates a people who will be “a light for the nations” (Isaiah 42: 6)
  - It is through Abram that God will bring the Messiah, who takes away the sin of the world.
  - Abram does nothing to merit being chosen for this role, but he responds to God’s call in faith, and as Paul tells us, his faith is “credited to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:5).
Abrahamic Covenant – Ge 12:2-3

See notes on Abrahamic Covenant (Biblical Topics: Covenants in the Bible: Abrahamic Covenant)


In this covenant, God promised many things to Abraham.

- He would make Abraham’s name great (Genesis 12:2)
- He would bless Abraham (Ge 12:2-3; Ge 15:14; Ge 22:17)
- That Abraham would have numerous physical descendants (Genesis 13:16; Ge 15:5; Ge 17:2; Ge 22:17)
- That Abraham would be the father of a multitude of nations (Genesis Ge 12:2; 17:4-6).
- Families of the world will be blessed through the physical line of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 22:18).
  - This is a reference to the Messiah, who would come from the line of Abraham.
  - Through this covenant, God implements the plan of redemption
    - In the great sweep of our narrative, it forges one hinge on which the door of salvation swings.
- Abraham will inherit a specific designation of land (Ge 12:7; Ge 13:14-15, 17; Ge 15:7, 18-21; Ge 17:8)
  - The geographical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant are laid out on more than one occasion

God also made promises regarding a nation called Israel.


Ge 12:2 “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” …
Through this covenant, “all peoples on earth will be blessed”
  o Through this covenant, God implements the plan of redemption
  o In the great sweep of our narrative, it forges one hinge on which the door of salvation swings.

It is an unconditional covenant, depending solely upon God’s faithfulness, not Abram’s behavior.
  o No ‘If …’ clause
  o Abram did not pass between beside God – there was nothing for him to uphold – unconditional covenant
  o See description of Suzerain-vassal treaty covenant

Ge 15:9 So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other … 12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. … 17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land…

Includes property and people
  o Ge 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."
  o Ge 15: 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10)
The Palestinian Covenant, or Land Covenant, amplifies the land aspect that was detailed in the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the terms of this covenant, if the people disobeyed, God would cause them to be scattered around the world (Deuteronomy 30:3-4), but He would eventually restore the nation (verse 5). When the nation is restored, then they will obey Him perfectly (verse 8), and God will cause them to prosper (verse 9).

D t 30:3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. 4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. 5 He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. 7 The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. 8 You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. 9 Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers,

Abram goes to Egypt

Abram was supposed to stay in the Promised Land? He wasn’t supposed to go to Egypt

Egypt’s food supply was usually plentiful because the Nile’s water supply was normally dependable.

Ge 12:13 Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you.
  o Families are extremely important in Egypt – Marriages are a union of families, not 2 people in love – arranged
  o Husbands are disposable, but brothers are honored

Ge 12:17 But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai.
  o Whatever the disease was, it kept Pharaoh and Sarai from coming together
  o God was not about to let the plan of salvation be ruined because of Abraham
• Abram’s experience in this episode foreshadows Israel’s later experience in Egypt, as the author of Genesis, writing after the exodus, was very much aware. The parallels are striking:
  o A famine in the land (here; 47:4)
  o Affliction at the hands of the Egyptians (vv. 12-15; Ex 1:11-14)
  o God’s plagues on the Egyptians (v. 17; Ex 8-11)
  o The Egyptians sending the people away as a result (vv. 19-20; Ex 12:31-32)
  o The Egyptians letting them take with them all their possessions (v. 20; Ex 12:32)
  o The people obtaining wealth from the Egyptians (v. 16; Ex 12:36)
  o Return to Canaan by stages through the desert (13:1; Exodus; Numbers; Deuteronomy; Joshua)
  o Arrival back in Canaan, where they worship the Lord (13:4; Jos 5:10; 8:30-35; 24:1-27).
  o Abram was truly the “father” of Israel.

• Gal 3:8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
  o What is the gospel?
    ▪ 1Co 15:1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures . . .
  o When did this happen? Started during this trip to Egypt
    ▪ Pyramids – what are they for? Kings are buried there. One day, the king and all the people are going to be resurrected and the king is going to lead the people into the presences of the gods

**Abram and Lot (Ge 13-14)**

**Abram and Lot separate (Ge 13)**

• Abram and Lot go to back to Canaan
  o Between Bethel and Al in the Central Mountain Range
  o Lot was absorbed with the things of this world
  o Abram was looking forward to the things of God.

• The land could not support the large herds of Abram and Lot
  o The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the same area
  o Abram gave Lot his choice of where to go – Lot chose the much nicer area

• Lot goes to live near Sodom and Gomorrah in the Eastern Mountain Range
  o Jordon Valley – near bottom of the Dead Sea
  o City dweller
  o Along the King’s Highway

• Abram goes to the Western side of the Central Mountain Range
  o On the coastal plain
  o Along the Via Maris

**Abram calls on the Name of the Lord (Ge 13)**

• Bethel
  o Bethel = Beth (House) of El (God) = House of God
  o Abram was there 2 times – On his way to Egypt and on his return (Ge 12,13)
Jacob’s ladder (Ge 28)
Jacob’s name change to Israel (Ge 35)
Ark of the Covenant lives there (Jdg 20)

- Abram built an altar at Bethel
  - Alters are mentioned 400 times in the Bible – 1st one was built by Noah
  - Everywhere that Abram pitched his tent, he built an altar
  - Abram built 4 alters that we are told of
    - Ge 12:7 at Shechem when he arrived in Canaan
    - Ge 12:8 at Bethel on the way to Egypt
    - Ge 13:18 at Hebron when he went to live there
    - Ge 22:9 at Moriah when he took Isaac to be sacrificed
  - Why did Abram build alters?
    - They were places of worship
    - They were sacrifices to God
    - They were places of communicating with God
    - They were a testimony to the people living there
  - Where is our alters today?
    - We don’t need to build alters – as Christians, our alters are our hearts, the presence of God is there
      - Today, our bodies are where the Holy of Holies resides
      - Acts 17:24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.
      - 1Co 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.
    - What is the purpose of our alters (bodies) today?
      - A place to take our sin, faults, failings, and sorrows to God
      - It’s a sanctuary for Christ
      - It’s a place of sacrifice
        - Ro 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.
      - It’s the place where you can call on the Name of the Lord

- What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord?
  - It involves seeking after God
  - It means trusting in the nature and character of God
    - The names in the Bible define the character of the people
      - Ex: Jacob = deceiver, Israel = to struggle with God
  - It means acting on your faith
  - It means to appeal to the authority of the Lord for salvation
    - Ro 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
  - It is a way of expressing dependency on the Lord

- God speaks to Abram
  - Ge 13:14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

**Lot made bad decisions - Bad decisions have consequences**

Lot made 3 bad decisions
- Lot was selfish – Lot’s eyes saw what was good
Lot lacked respect for Abram
- He chose his land without any regard for Abram

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom
- He started by pitching his tent toward Sodom
- By Ge 14:12, Lot was living in Sodom
- Heb ?? – Lot was righteous – You can be saved, but still have your life messed up
- Things look good, but they are deadly

Examples
- Listen to sermon
- You pitch your tent toward Sodom:
  - When you want your children to serve the Lord after
  - When you get assignments from God
- Every one of us has weaknesses – you need to know what they are so you can avoid it

Be careful where you pitch your tent
- Temptation isn’t sin, it’s an invitation to sin
- Every one of us has
- If you place yourself in temptation

Lot wasn’t just choosing where to build his house, he was deciding the direction that his family would take

Sin affects us 7 ways:
1. Sin produces insensitivity
2. Sin is deceitful
3. Sin becomes a habit
4. Sin is progressive – domino effect
5. Sin hardens the heart
6. Sin separates us from God
7. Sin invites death

- Sinning often seems simple and harmless
- Sin is difficult to get rid of once it has taken hold of you
- When left unchecked, sin will cause other issues in your life and may kill you

What happened to Lot?
Pitching your tent near Sodom didn’t seem so bad, but all this happened as a consequence
- He ended losing all his valuables
- His wife was turned into a pillar of salt
- His 2 daughters did unspeakable things – had sex with their father
- Enemies of Israel were born through his family – Moabites and Ammonites

How to overcome temptation
- Know your weaknesses
- Resist the devil – James 4:7
- Pray “Lead me not into temptation”
- Quote Scripture
• Remember that there will be consequences
• Don’t pitch your tent toward Sodom
• Be kind to yourself – when you mess up, go to God and ask for forgiveness
• Live by principles, not feelings

**Abram rescues Lot (Ge 14)**

• 1st mention of Abram as a Hebrew

• The Mesopotamian kings from the Tigris-Euphrates Valley attacked 14 years before and took control
  o The cities from the Valley of Siddim rebelled, and the Mesopotamian kings attacked again
  o They came down & returned via the King’s Highway

• Abram was living among the Amorites
  o Has his own local tribal chieftain in a coalition as well

• Abram heard and did a forced march with 318 mercenaries from his household up the Via Maris
  o Via Maris is a faster road than the King’s Highway because it’s flat
  o Caught them north of Damascus – where the 2 roads intersect
Melchizedek

- Name means “king of righteousness,”
- King of Salem (Jerusalem)
  - Salem is from the root word shalom – peace
  - King of peace
  - Jerusalem means ‘New Salem’
- Priest of the Most High God
  - Genesis 14:18–20
  - Psalm 110:4
  - Hebrews 5:6–11; 6:20—7:28
- Without genealogy – beginning or end
- Ge 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
  - The greater blesses the lesser
    - As great as Abram was, Melchizedek was clearly greater
  - The lesser pays tribute to the greater
    - Basis of the 10% tithe

Melchizedek’s sudden appearance and disappearance in the book of Genesis is somewhat mysterious. Melchizedek and Abraham first met after Abraham’s defeat of Chedorlaomer and his three allies. Melchizedek presented bread and wine to Abraham and his weary men, demonstrating friendship. He bestowed a blessing on Abraham in the name of El Elyon (“God Most High”) and praised God for giving Abraham a victory in battle (Genesis 14:18–20).

Abraham presented Melchizedek with a tithe (a tenth) of all the items he had gathered. By this act Abraham indicated that he recognized Melchizedek as a priest who ranked higher spiritually than he.

In Psalm 110, a messianic psalm written by David (Matthew 22:43), Melchizedek is presented as a type of Christ. This theme is repeated in the book of Hebrews, where both Melchizedek and Christ are considered kings of righteousness and peace. By citing Melchizedek and his unique priesthood as a type, the writer shows that Christ’s new priesthood is superior to the old levitical order and the priesthood of Aaron (Hebrews 7:1–10).

Some propose that Melchizedek was actually a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, or a Christophany. This is a possible theory, given that Abraham had received such a visit before. Consider Genesis 17 where Abraham saw and spoke with the Lord (El Shaddai) in the form of a man.

Hebrews 6:20 says, “[Jesus] has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” This term order would ordinarily indicate a succession of priests holding the office. None are ever mentioned, however, in the long interval from Melchizedek to Christ, an anomaly that can be solved by assuming that Melchizedek and Christ are really the same person. Thus the “order” is eternally vested in Him and Him alone.
Hebrews 7:3 says that Melchizedek was “without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.” The question is whether the author of Hebrews means this actually or figuratively.

If the description in Hebrews is literal, then it is indeed difficult to see how it could be properly applied to anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ. No mere earthly king “remains a priest forever,” and no mere human is “without father or mother.” If Genesis 14 describes a theophany, then God the Son came to give Abraham His blessing (Genesis 14:17–19), appearing as the King of Righteousness (Revelation 19:11,16), the King of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and the Mediator between God and Man (1 Timothy 2:5).

If the description of Melchizedek is figurative, then the details of having no genealogy, no beginning or ending, and a ceaseless ministry are simply statements accentuating the mysterious nature of the person who met Abraham. In this case, the silence in the Genesis account concerning these details is purposeful and better serves to link Melchizedek with Christ.

Are Melchizedek and Jesus the same person? A case can be made either way. At the very least, Melchizedek is a type of Christ, prefiguring the Lord’s ministry. But it is also possible that Abraham, after his weary battle, met and gave honor to the Lord Jesus Himself.

**Of Covenants and Concubines (Ge 15-17)**

Returning from Egypt with great wealth, Abraham also brings with him the beautiful and exotic Hagar, servant girl to Sarah—and concubine to Abraham. Life becomes very complicated in Abraham’s tent! In these episodes we see both the darkness and the light of the human condition, the brokenness against which we all struggle.

**God reaffirms His covenant with Abram**

- Abram
  - Sarai is 10 years younger than Abram
  - 75 years old – Ge 12: God made the covenant with him
    - Told him to leave Haran and go to a place that He would show him
    - God promised people and land
  - 85 years old – Ge 15: Abram is doubting/questioning the covenant
    - 10 years have passed, and there has been nothing to the promise of people or land
- 10 years have passed, and Abram is questioning/doubting the covenant that God made with him
  - God promised people and land – neither of those has come to pass
  - Abram is anxious – not about worldly things (health, wealth, happiness) – but about the promises of God
- God appears to Abram in a vision
  - Do not fear – God would not have had to say that unless Abram was having fears/concerns
  - First mention of Sovereign Lord – El Shaddai
  - God reaffirms the promises of the covenant
    - People – Ge 15:4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."
    - Property – Ge 15:8 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" 9 So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." … 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-..."
Ge 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
  o Why does Abram believe him? It’s been 10 years and there’s been nothing . . . Faith
  o Abram’s faith began when he left Ur. It is stated here because it is foundational for the Covenant.

Faith
  o Not a blind leap in the dark
  o Reasoned response to God’s self-revelation based upon knowledge, belief and trust
  o Just like faith in another person
    ▪ You can’t place your trust in someone until you know them
    ▪ You get to know them by spending time with them

Reminders
  o Ge 15:7 He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."
  o He needed a reminder:
    ▪ Of who God is: YHWH (Yahweh) - God of promise and covenant
    ▪ from where he was called
    ▪ to what he has been promised
  o Without constant reminders we fall into doubt.

Covenant – Cut a deal
  o God makes his Words binding in a Covenant (legal contract) with Abram
    ▪ God’s end of the deal – I will give you people (including the Messiah) and property
    ▪ Abram’s end of the deal – You and your descendants must walk before Me and be perfect
  o Jer 34:18 The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. 19 The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the
pieces of the calf, 20 I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

- **Ceremony** that seals the covenant
  - Birds of prey come down – Evil omen – Symbol of those opposing God’s covenant
  - May what be done to these animals be done to me if I do not keep my part of the covenant
  - Greater party walks through first, then the lesser party walks through
  - God stops Abram from walking through and instead He walks both directions
    - Indicating that if Abram and his descendants do not remain perfect, then God will pay the penalty in death
    - God sentences Himself to die if Abram or his descendants ever sin
    - Jesus on the cross

- **Theophany** – the visual / physical manifestation of God - most often as fire and smoke
  - God as smoke
    - When God came down onto Mt. Sinai during the exodus
    - Each time God came to the Tabernacle, it filled with smoke
    - God lead His people through the wilderness by a cloud of smoke
    - Isaiah says that the Lord comes in dense clouds of smoke
    - Joel and Peter both speak of the Lord coming with billows of smoke
    - In Revelation, the temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God and His power
  - God as fire
    - Ex 19
    - Baal’s prophets vs Elijah (1Ki 18)
      - Baptism by fire – Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-30; Act 2:1-4)
      - God appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3)
      - Initiation of the priests (Lev 9:23-24)
      - Pillar of fire & smoke that lead them out of Egypt and through the desert
      - Elijah was carried away to God by a chariot of fire lead by horses of fire
      - In Exodus, the glory of the Lord looks like a consuming fire
      - On Mt. Sinai during the giving of the Law (10 Commandments) (Ex 20)
      - The prophets write that God’s tongue is a fire and the word of God is like a fire
      - Heb 12:29 God is a consuming fire
  - Fire of God in your life – Presence of God in our lives, doing God’s work
    - Forgiving each other (2Co 2:5-6)
    - Love each other, just as God loved us (Eph 5:1-2)
    - Eph 4:28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
    - Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
    - James: 1:19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,
    - Don’t show favoritism (James 2:1-4)
    - James 3:3-6
    - James 3:17-18

- **The sevenfold prophecy** for the nation of Israel. Abram Sees the future and it’s not pretty.
  1. You will be strangers in another country.
  2. You will be slaves in Egypt.
  3. You will be oppressed for 400 years.
  4. God will judge Egypt.
5. Israel will come out with many possessions.
6. Abram will not live through this period of slavery.
7. The nation will return to the land after the fourth generation.

**Barren women in the Bible**

- Sarai starts a theme of barrenness which lasts throughout the whole Bible
  - Miraculous births – God had to open their wombs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Circumstances</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Sarah / Abraham</td>
<td>90 when Isaac was born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob &amp; Esau</td>
<td>Rebekah / Isaac</td>
<td>Married for 20 years before she became pregnant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Rachel / Jacob</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sampson</td>
<td>?? / Manoah</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Hannah / ??</td>
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<tr>
<td>John the Baptist</td>
<td>Elizabeth / Zechariah</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>Mary</td>
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- Sarai is also doubting the covenant
  - Maybe there’s a Plan B that doesn’t involve Sarai
  - Hagar is a young (18ish) Egyptian servant girl that Abram acquired while he was in Egypt

- Regarding Sarai
  - This was a culturally acceptable practice. But cultural acceptability doesn’t make right.
  - Sarai may have been more concern with the cultural shame than fulfilling God’s promise.

- Regarding Abram
  - He is being a passive participant

- While in Egypt, untrusting Abram gave Sarai over to Pharaoh (12:10-20). Now, untrusting Sarai gives Abram over to her Egyptian servant.
  - Abram agonized while she was in Pharaoh’s palace.
  - Sarai must ponder as Abram is in Hagar’s tent.

- Parallels between Abram and Sarai and Adam and Eve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abram and Sarai</th>
<th>Adam and Eve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarai spoke to her husband, Abram (16:2a)</td>
<td>Eve spoke to her husband, Adam (3:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abram listened to the voice of his wife</td>
<td>Adam listened to the voice of his wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarai took Hagar to Abram (16:3a)</td>
<td>Eve took the fruit to Adam (3:6a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarai gave Hagar to her husband (16:3b)</td>
<td>Eve gave the fruit to her husband (3:6b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Abram Made at Least Four Mistakes
  1. He had reservations, or doubts in the promise of God.
  2. He listened to his wife’s ungodly advice.
Was it based on her emotions?
Was she overly concerned for him?
3. He failed to test his wife’s advice against God’s Word.
4. He failed to pray for wisdom or guidance.

- Once Hagar became pregnant, she began to despise Sarai, and Sarai blamed Abram for it
  - Abram said ‘whatever – do what you want’, and Sarai mistreated Hagar
  - Pro 30:21 "Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: 22 a servant who becomes king, a fool who is full of food, 23 an unloved woman who is married, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress.

- Hagar ran away – she was heading for the Via Maris to return to Egypt when the Angel of the Lord appeared to her
  - Although she was not to be part of the covenant, she got a really raw deal
  - The Lord heard her afflictions and blessed her as well
  - The Angel of the Lord told her to call her son Ishmael
    - Christology – Note the similarities with the woman at the well.
      - Neither are Jews
      - Sexual relations are at heart in both.

**Angel of the Lord**

- An angel is a messenger from God

- The Bible takes place in a closed narrative world
  - Other things are happening in the world, but we are only interested in what is happening to the important characters of our story
  - Sometimes (rarely) we get information about the outside world from the angels and prophets
    - Gabriel – Always brings news about the birth of the Messiah (Daniel, Gospels)

- The Angel of the Lord
  - Specific character throughout the Old Testament – not in the New Testament
  - Appears 50 times in the OT, Angel of God appears 9 times

- Appears to:
  - Hagar (Ge 16:7-14)
  - Abraham
  - Jacob (Ge 31)
  - Moses
  - Balaam
  - Israel
  - Gideon
  - Manoah
  - David
  - Elijah
  - Zechariah

- Serves to
  - Lead
  - Defend
  - Commune
- Speak
- Sympathize
- Anticipate
- Reveal

- 6 proofs
  - He claims divine authority
  - He is a distinct divine person
  - He exhibits divine attributes
  - He performs divine actions
  - He receives divine homage
  - He is identified as God

- Who is it? Jesus Christ
  - Christophany – Appearances of Christ in the Old Testament
  - Jud 13 – Samson

Jud 13: 16 The angel of the LORD replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD." (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.) 17 Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"

18 He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is wonderful." 19 Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: 20 As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. 21 When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.

22 "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"

- Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**Circumcision – Sign of the covenant**

- Abram is now 99 years old
  - It has been 13 years since Ishmael was born
  - He has been in a relationship with God for 24 years

- God appears to Abram again
  - I am God Almighty – El Shaddai
  - Used first here but was the name known by the patriarchs.
  - Ex 6:3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

- God reinforces the covenant – across the movements, the covenant has become more specific and more detailed
  - God makes the covenant (Ge 12)
  - God reaffirms the covenant (Ge 15)
  - God gives a sign of the covenant (Ge 17) – Circumcision
• Terms of the Covenant
   o God’s responsibilities (Ge 17:6-8)
     1. I will make you very fruitful;
     2. I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you.
     3. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants
        after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.
     4. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you
        and your descendants after you;
     5. I will be their God.
   o Abram’s responsibilities (Ge 17:10)
     1. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every
        male among you shall be circumcised.

• Circumcision - the sign of the covenant
   o Incorporates a person into the covenant community
     • Just as baptism does in Christianity
   o Not invented by God in Genesis
     • Abraham lives around 2000 BC
     • Egyptian statue 2400 BC (600 years before Abram)
   o Blood
     • The life of a creature is in its blood (Lev 17)
       • Blood is the vehicle that carries life
       • Blood is sacred
     • Women – Blood flow in menstrual cycle
       • Unclean – ceremonially set apart because of the flow of blood – which is a symbol of life
       • Menstrual cycle – Outward sign of a woman’s ability to create life
       • The symbolism of blood flow is sacred and she is to be set apart to God during that time
     • Men – Blood flow to penis needed to create life
       • Circumcision draws blood from the male reproductive organ
       • A sign of his ability to create life
       • Judaism today – If someone wants to convert to Judaism, but they are already circumcised,
         the Rabbi will slightly cut the penis to draw a drop of blood – the blood is the sign of his ability to create life.
## Comparison Between Circumcision and Baptism

### Circumcision (Old Covenant)
- **Has God’s Command:** Genesis 17:11
  - Linked to faith: Deuteronomy 4:2
- **Physical Aspect:** Genesis 17:11
  - Removal of foreskin
  - Shedding of blood – reached forward to sacrifice for sin
- **God’s Promise:** Brought one into God’s Old Covenant of salvation
  - Genesis 17:9-14
- **How Often:** Once
  - Can’t have 2nd circumcision
- **Normative Age:** Infant (on 8th day)
  - Leviticus 12:3
- **Exception to Norm:** Adult Converts

### Baptism (New Covenant)
- **Has God’s Command:** Matthew 28:19-20
  - Linked to faith: Mark 16:16; John 3:3-18
- **Physical Aspect:** 1 Peter 3:20-21, Titus 3:5
  - Washing of water
  - Cleansing – Reaches back to sacrifice for sin: 1 Peter 3:20-21, Titus 3:5
- **God’s Promise:** Brings one into God’s New Covenant of salvation
  - John 3:3-7, 1 Peter 3:20-21, Titus 3:5
- **How Often:** Once
  - Ephesians 4:5: “one baptism”
- **Normative Age:** Infant
  - Matthew 28:19-20 (“all” includes infants)
- **Exception to Norm:** Adult Converts

## Names

- A name in the Bible describes or captures the very essence of who they are
  - Names change when the essence of the person changes
  - New names reflect the essence of who they are in God’s plan

- Abram and Sarai
  - The number 5 symbolizes God’s grace, goodness and favor toward humans
  - God changes Abram’s and Sarai’s name, and in so doing He changes their nature – God takes the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Heh ה) and puts it in the fifth place in the name of Abram, and then of Sarai.
    - Abram (Noble Father) becomes Abraham (Father of many)
    - Sarai (Princess) becomes Sarah (Mother of Nations)
  - The name changes emphasize God’s grace.

- Name changes further reinforce the covenant
  - Abram (“exalted father”) changed to Abraham (“father of multitudes”)
    - Abram = BRM = B + RM = Exalted father
      - B is a human father
      - RM is probably from the verb RWM, meaning “to exalt”.
    - Abraham = BRHM = B + R + HM
      - B is a human father
      - HM means “multitude”

- Isaac (“laughter”)
  - When God told Abraham that Sarah would be the mother of nations, Abraham fell to the ground laughing
**Ishmael**

- Abram was 86 when Ishmael was born (Ge 16:16)

- Ishmael –
  - Ge 16:12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.”
  - Restless wanderer over the earth

- Abraham loves his son Ishmael
  - God affirms that the covenant is through Isaac, but he will bless Ishmael as well
  - Ishmael becomes the father of the Arab nations

- Ge 17:20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation.

- Ge 25:13 These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. 16 These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers according to their settlements and camps. 17 Altogether, Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people. 18 His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the border of Egypt, as you go toward Asshur. And they lived in hostility toward all their brothers.

**Hittites**

The Bible lists the Hittites as one of the nations living in the region of Canaan during the time of Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21) and says that they purchased horses from King Solomon (1 Kings 10:29), but critics of the Bible doubted that a people called Hittites ever existed. Not one shred of historical evidence of Hittites had ever been found.

In 1906 German explorers began to search the ruins of an ancient city in Turkey called Bogazkoy. After uncovering five temples, magnificent sculptures, and over 10,000 clay tablets, they announced to the world that the Hittites had been found! Not only was the historical reliability of the Bible confirmed again, but also scholars were able to fill in the political and cultural landscape of the Old Testament much more accurately with the art, history, and military exploits of Israel's neighbor to the north.

**Lessons on Fatherhood from Abraham**

- Desire Fatherhood
- Put it above the location of your home
- Put it above occupation
- Put their future above your present security
- Consider Fatherhood a blessing from God
- Trust God for children
- Trust God for keeping your children
- Intercede for all your Children – Abram prayed for Lot, Ishmael and Isaac.
- Don’t force the blessings – Trust God to give the blessing
- Trust God to provide the blessing for your Children
- Be obedient to God and assure the blessing
- Don’t underestimate the influence of a Father.
- Let the very mention of your name Exalt Fatherhood.
**What part of the Abrahamic Covenant has not been fully fulfilled yet?**

These may/can/will be fulfilled during the 2nd coming and Messianic Reign of Christ on earth
- Israel as a nation will possess the totality of the land in the future (Eze 20:33-37, 40-42, 36:1-27)
- Israel as a nation will be converted, forgiven, and restored (Ro 11:25-27)
- Israel will repent and receive the forgiveness of God in the future (Zech 12:10-14)

**Fire and Brimstone (Ge 18-19)**

Today three visitors come to Abraham and Sarah under the great tree of Mamre and one of the visitors informs Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah have sunk to such depths of depravity that God is about to destroy the cities and everyone in them. Abraham negotiates with God for his nephew Lot and his family who live in Sodom: if there are five righteous men in Sodom, God agrees not to destroy it. But Sodom is toast. Lot and his two daughters escape, but in the end the family sinks into seduction, sex and incest. I’ll bet you didn’t know all *that* was in the Bible!

**Hospitality**

- Abraham shows great hospitality when the 3 approach – this is how it was supposed to be done
- Xenia – Hospitality in Ancient Greece
  - The host has great respect for the guest
    - Be hospitable
    - Provide guest with food, drink & shelter
    - Don’t ask any questions until the guest has satiated their hunger and thirst
  - The guest respects the host
    - Be courteous and thankful
    - Avoid being a burden
    - Share their story with the host
  - Parting gift from the host to the guest
    - Demonstrates the host’s honor at receiving the guest
Promise of a baby

- God promises that when he returns at this time next year, they will have a baby
  - This is when Abraham realizes that this is God
  - Sarah laughs in the tent – huge Bedouin home
    - She was not eaves-dropping, she was preparing the meal and overheard the men talking
    - God is not mad
      - I did not laugh! (Sarah) – Yes you did! (God)
      - Underlying theme of laughter every time the topic of Sarah and Abraham having a baby comes up – delightful fun exchange

Sodom and Gomorrah

- The 2 angels leave, but God stays behind and decides to tell Abraham what he is about to do to Sodom & Gomorrah
  - Why would God tell Abraham?
    - Intimate relationship between the 2 – they have been ‘together’ for 24 years
  - Abraham steps toward God
    - Instead of on his knees or prostrate, he steps closer and confronts God – God has become a friend
  - Abraham intercedes for the righteous
    - All must do what is right and just
      - God: Ge 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. 19 For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”
      - Abraham: Ge 18:23 Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the
righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! **Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?**

- Does not drop from 10 to 5 because there are 6 people in Lot’s family and if God destroys it, then Abraham knows that his family is lost

- **Sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (and the other cities of the plains)**
  - Very similar to the American way of life
  - Eze 16:49 "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.
  - Homosexuality
  - Adultery
  - Fornication
  - LGBT Agenda
  - Rebellion
  - Pride
  - Greed
  - Gluttony
  - Hatred for one’s neighbors

- **Lot, his wife and daughters were forced out of the city by the angels**
  - Fled to Zoar, then left Zoar to live in a cave in the Eastern Mountain Range
  - Lot’s wife could not bear to leave the sinful life that they were leading, and when she looked back longingly, she was turned into a pillar of salt.
  - Lk 17:24 For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. 25 But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. 32 Remember Lot’s wife! 33 Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

- **Sodom & Gomorrah destroyed**
  - Volcanic eruption similar to Mt. Vesuvius in Italy
    - Dead Sea is along the Great Rift Valley – very geologically active area
    - God’s wrath against the town
  - Parallels Noah and the Flood
    - In the “Flood” story of Genesis 6-9:
      1. Humanity had become totally corrupt - All the thoughts of all people were only evil all the time (Genesis 6:5)
      2. God destroys all life on earth, sparing only Noah and his sons
      3. Humanity gains a second chance through Noah’s sons
      4. The narrative ends with the “Tower of Babel”
    - In the “ Destruction of Sodom” story of Genesis 18-19:
      1. The people of the plain had become totally corrupt
      2. God destroys all life in the cities on the plain, sparing only Lot and his daughters
      3. The people of the plain gain a second chance through Lot’s daughters
      4. The narrative ends with the Moabites and Ammonites.

- **Mt. Vesuvius**
  - 79 AD – 9 years, almost to the day, after Roman legionaries destroyed God’s house in Jerusalem, God destroyed the luxurious watering holes of the Roman elite.
    - The Romans destroyed the Second Temple (Herod’s Temple) on the same date that the Babylonians had destroyed the First Temple (Solomon’s Temple) in 586 B.C.E. – late August
• Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., it occurred on August 29 or 30.1 Others place it earlier in the month.
• The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabia and other nearby sites occurred, according to most commentators, on August 24 or 25 in 79 C.E.
  o God’s wrath against the town

- Lot’s daughters had sex with him and became pregnant
  o Creasy – The daughters believed that the entire world had been destroyed
    • BUT – Zoar was not destroyed. They knew that the town existed
    • Future references to Zoar: Jer 48:34, Is 15:5, Dt 34:3
  • Why did the daughter’s do it?

  o Sons of this incestuous act
  • Moab – Means - Become the Moabites
    • Ruth was a Moabite
  • Ben-Ammi – Means – Become the Ammonites
  • Traditional enemies of Israel
    • Both were unwilling to give the Israelites passage during the exodus from Egypt
    • Both confide in Baal and lead Israel away from the Lord
  o Nu 25:1 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, 2 who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. 3 So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD’s anger burned against them.

  o Poetic justice
    • Lot offered his daughter’s virginity to the mob in Sodom
    • Lot takes his daughter’s virginity in his drunkenness

*Covenant Fulfilled (Ge 20-21)*

God has taken his good old time about fulfilling his covenant with Abraham, the promise that Abraham’s descendants will be numbered like “the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.” Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 90, and still they are childless. But lo and behold, Sarah becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son, Isaac, through whom the covenant will be fulfilled. With the introduction of a legitimate heir in the family, tensions rise between Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and her son, Ishmael.

- The “Birth of Isaac” story (progeny) is framed by the acquisition of property

  A Prelude to Property (20:1-18)
  B The Birth of Isaac (21:1-21)
  A Acquisition of Property (21:22-34)

*Prelude to Property (20:1-18)*

- Abraham makes his opening move in acquiring property in the land of Canaan when he relocates to the Canaanite royal city of Gerar where he uses the old ploy “say you are my sister” with king Abimelech.

- Abimelech
- King of Gerar
- Philistine – Gerar becomes one of the 5 fortified Philistine cities

- Philistine origin
  - Philistim is a root from which we have the names Philistia, Palestina, and the Philistones.
    - The word means “the land of sojourners.”
  - Amos 7 "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?” declares the LORD. "Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?
  - Ge 10:1 This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood. …6 The sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. …13 Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, 14 Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.

- Abraham does the ‘She is my sister’ gig again
  - Sarah is the daughter of the same father but not the same mother

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Family of Abraham
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Terah

Haran

Lot

Daughter 1

Daughter 2

Haran

Milcah

Bithuel

Laah

Leah (+Zilpah)

Leah (+Zilpah)

Rachel (+Bilhah)

Rachel (+Bilhah)

Nahor

Bethuel

Rebekah

Rebekah

Sarai

ABRAM

Hagar

ABRAM

Hagar

Ishmael (1)

Ishmaelites
(12 tribes / Arabs)

Jacob (2)

Esau (1)

Edomites

ISRAELITES
(12 tribes / Jews)

Key: blue = men; red = women; dashes = spouses; arrows = children

- God comes to Abimelech in a dream and tells him that he and his people are in trouble because of this
  - God has closed the wombs of everyone
- Abimelech makes public restitution because his unintentional actions have brought shame on everyone
  - Abimelech talks the high road and does what is right
  - Abraham prays for him and he and his people are able to procreate again

*The Birth of Isaac (Ge 21:1-21)*

- Theme of baroness – God had to open their wombs
o Sarah was 90
o Rebekah was married for 20 years
o Rachel

• Isaac is born
  o Abraham is 100, Sarah is 90, Ishmael is 15-17
  o Isaac means laughter

• Ishmael and Hagar are told to leave
  o When Isaac is weaned, Sarah sees them playing together (in a mocking way) and tells Abraham that they have to go
    • God affirms that Abraham should listen to Sarah
  o Abraham is troubled by this
    • He loves Ishmael (and probably Hagar too) – But the Lord tells Abraham to do whatever his wife tells him to do
    • God reaffirms His promise that He will take care of Ishmael
    • He believes that what Sarah is asking is ethically wrong
  o Abraham obeys
    • Rises early in the morning to send Ishmael away
    • Later rises early in the morning to obey God and sacrifice Isaac

• Hagar and Ishmael wander in the desert
  o Not because they don’t know the way – she had run away before
  o Because they were just suddenly put out of the family and they have no idea why – they are heart-broken
  o The Angel of the Lord appears to them and encourages them
    • Ishmael means ‘God hears’

Acquisition of Property (Ge 21:22-34)
• Abimelech recognizes Abraham’s God – and Abraham’s power and authority in their land
  o He proposes that they form an alliance – a covenant – mutual agreement with responsibilities on both ends
  o Abraham wants some concessions

• Abraham tells Abimelech that his men have seized his well
  o 7 Ewe lambs – addendum to the convent – Witness that the well belongs to Abraham
    • Abimelech recognizes that Abraham owns the land
    • Beersheba – Means “well of the oath, or well of seven”

Isaac on the Altar (Ge 22)
Abraham’s son, Isaac, plays a key role in God’s plan of salvation. But in Genesis 22, God says to Abraham: “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering . . . !”
  • Summit point of scripture
  • Literary technique – reading between the lines and accurately determining what happened (not guessing)
    o 1Co 15:3 – What is the Gospel
    o Ga 3:8 – Announces the gospels in advance to Abraham
    o He 11:17 - When tested, Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead

Why would God do this?
• Abrahams willingness demonstrates his obedience and willingness to do whatever God asks
• Birth of Judaism – when God stops him from sacrificing Isaac

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God radically differentiates himself from every other God in a polytheistic culture by NOT allowing human sacrifice.

God provides a ram – a new beginning.

Rash Hashanah – Jewish New Year – Celebrates this moment with the blowing of the ram’s horn.

**How does Abraham come to terms with this?**

- All other gods in this culture did demand child sacrifice.
- Between Ge 22: 2-3 – not an easy night for Abraham.
- Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son. 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

**Story foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ**

- 1Co 15:1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

  - What is the Gospel? 1Co 15:3
    - Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures
      - He was the virgin-born, sinless son of God, took our sin upon himself and took that sin to the cross and paid the penalty for our sins before a holy and righteous God and enabled our salvation.
      - He died and was buried in a tomb.
      - He was raised on the 3rd day.
    - The Gospel is the person of Christ – who He is and what He did
      - Emphasis is on resurrection – everyone dies and everyone is buried – only Jesus was resurrected.
      - 1Co 15:17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

- Gal 3:6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."

  - God only appears to Abraham 7 times – Only 1 refers to death, burial or resurrection.
    1. Ge 12:1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. (tour itinerary)
    2. Ge 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said "To your offspring I will give this land." (property)
    3. Ge 13:14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (property)
    4. Ge 15:4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (progeny)
    5. Ge 17:4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. (progeny)
    6. Ge 18:13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, … I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." (progeny)
    7. **Ge 22:2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."
• He 11:17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

**Similarities between Isaac and Jesus**

The offering of Isaac points to the crucifixion of Jesus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament (Isaac)</th>
<th>New Testament (Jesus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promised son</td>
<td>Promised son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 17:19, Is 9:6</td>
<td>o Lk 24:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miraculously conceived</td>
<td>Miraculously conceived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 18:9-10, Ge 21:2-4, Ge 24:36</td>
<td>o Lk 1:30-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The father sacrifices the son</td>
<td>The father sacrifices the son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 22:2, Ge 22:7</td>
<td>o Jn 3:16, Ro 8:32,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abraham offered his “only son” as a sacrifice</td>
<td>God offered his “only begotten son” as a sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Only son of the promise</td>
<td>o Jn 3:16, Ro 8:32, Ro 5:10, 1Jn 4:9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Emphasized 3 times in Genesis 22 (2, 12 &amp; 16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sacrificed in the region of Moriah</td>
<td>Sacrificed in the region of Moriah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 22:2</td>
<td>o 2Ch 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Isaac carries the wood of the fire for his own sacrifice</td>
<td>o Jn 19:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 22:6</td>
<td>Christ carries the wood of the cross for His own sacrifice (Jn 19:16-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntarily sacrificed self</td>
<td>Voluntarily sacrificed self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Isaac could have fought back, but didn’t</td>
<td>o Act 8:32, Act 8:35, Mt 26:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac is told, “God will provide the lamb” for the sacrificial offering</td>
<td>God provides Christ, the “lamb of God,” for the sacrificial offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 22:7-8, Isa 53:7</td>
<td>o Jn 1:29, Jn 1:36, Rev 5:5+, Rev 7:17+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac is about 33 years old when Abraham offers him as a sacrifice</td>
<td>Christ is about 33 years old when God offers him as a sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Isaac was born when Sarah was 90. When Sarah died at 127, Isaac was 37. Chapter 22 happened a few years before that.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ram’s head caught in the thicket</td>
<td>Lamb’s head with a crown of thorns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 22:13</td>
<td>o Jn 19:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac escaped death after 3 days</td>
<td>Jesus rose from the dead on the 3rd day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Ge 22:4</td>
<td>o Mt 16:21, Mk 16:2-4, Lk 9:22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sarah Dies (Ge 23)**

**Family broken**

• After Abraham and Isaac return from the ‘sacrifice’, something happens to the family
  o No mention of any communication between Abraham and either Sarah or Isaac after
  o Abraham is living in Beersheba
    • Ge 22:19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.
  o Sarah dies a few years later in Hebron
- Ge 23:2 She died at Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.
- Close to where they used to live before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
  - Amorites used to be living in the area – Trees of Mamre
  - Isaac is living in the Negev
- Ge 24:62 Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev.
- Abraham remarries
  - Before or after Sarah dies?? Don’t know
  - Ge 25:1 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah…5 Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. 6 But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

**Abraham purchases land in the Promised Land**

- Sarah dies in Hebron and Abraham goes to mourn her
- He negotiates with the Hittites for a cave that was near where he used to live (Trees of Mamre)
  - He is an alien and does not have any rights to buy property – He lives in Beersheba
  - The negotiation starts as a gift and ends in an exorbitant price
    - It would be like saying a piece of land is worth $50K, but the ending deal is $500K
- Cave of the Patriarchs – Many of Abraham’s family are buried there
  - Abraham and Sarah
  - Isaac and Rebekah
  - Jacob and Leah
- Ge 23:17 So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre—both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field—was deeded 18 to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city.
  - Very legal wording
  - Ge 15 - God reaffirms the covenant by sacrifice and the boundaries of the land are defined
    - This is the 2nd acquisition of land (1st was the well in Beersheba)
- Covenant promise (Ge 12)
  - Covenant reaffirmed 3 times (Ge 13 and 15)
    - Sacrifice – ‘Cut’ a covenant
    - Circumcision – Sign of the covenant
  - At each step
    - The ownership has deepened and spread
    - The understanding of Isaac and his role in the plan of salvation has also deepened and spread
Isaac and Rebekah (Ge 24)

If God’s plan of redemption and his covenant with Abraham is to be fulfilled, Isaac needs a wife and children. But at 40 years old he is still single, living at home, a failure to launch. We need a plan, a matchmaker. And we need one quickly.

- Isaac is almost 40 years old and is still unmarried
  - Very abnormal – Most men marry in their 20’s
  - Needs to marry and have children in order for God’s promises to come true
  - Very passive all through scripture – all he really does is dig wells (urban planning)

- Abraham sends his chief servant to Harran to find a wife for Isaac
  Ge 24:2 He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. 3 I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, 4 but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

  - Chief servant is Eliezer of Damascus (assuming that he is still alive)
    - Ge 15:2 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"
  - NEVER allow Isaac to go to Harran
    - God promised this land to Abraham’s descendants
    - Later, Isaac tells Jacob to go to Harran and he gets into heaps of trouble

- Eliezer goes to a well to find the wife
  - Ge 24:11 … it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water
    - Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman at the well in the morning – not welcome with the other women
      - Jn 4:5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water
  - He prays that the girl that God has chosen will give him a drink and offer to water his camels as well
  - Before he is finished praying, Rebekah comes out and offers him water and offers to give him water
    - Camels drink 50 gal of water in 3 minutes – there are 10 camels – that’s a LOT of water
    - Makes noises from the front and back as they do – very funny
    - Very funny scene – her running back & forth to water the donkeys – comic relief after Ge 22

- Eliezer patiently waits to see if this is the girl that God has chosen
  - From the house of Nahor, Abraham’s brother-in-law
  - Meet Uncle Laban – aka Dr. Deceiver
  - Happy to take Abraham’s gifts in exchange for his sister
  - Rebekah agrees and goes to the Negev where Isaac is
  - Isaac loves Rebekah and gives her his mother’s tent

- The story of Isaac and Rebekah is the first occurrence of a “betrothal” type-scene in the Bible.
  1. Travel to a foreign land.
  2. Encounter the future bride at a well.
  3. Drawing water.
  4. “Hurrying” or “running” to bring news of the stranger’s arrival.
5. A feast at which the betrothal agreement is concluded.

Isaac and the Terrible Twins (Ge 25-27)

With the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, the plan of redemption moves forward and Rebekah gives birth to twins, Esau and Jacob. And terrible twins they are, struggling with each other, even in the womb. The promise will move through the younger son Jacob, but not until after a great deal of deceit and mischief wreak havoc.

Abraham marries Keturah

- Abraham remarries
  - Before or after Sarah dies?? Don’t know.
  - Ge 25:1 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah...5 Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. 6 But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

Rebekah’s pregnancy

- Theme of barrenness – God had to open their wombs – Miraculous births

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Sarah / Abraham</td>
<td>90 when Isaac was born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob &amp; Esau</td>
<td>Rebekah / Isaac</td>
<td>Married for 20 years before she became pregnant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Rachel / Jacob</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampson</td>
<td>?? / Manoah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Hannah / ??</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John the Baptist</td>
<td>Elizabeth / Zechariah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Struggling even in Rebekah’s womb, Esau and Jacob are polar opposites:
Esau is born first
Esau is a skillful hunter, a man of the open country
Esau is a “hairy” man
Esau is straight-forward and rather naïve
Isaac loves Esau more than Jacob

| Jacob follows, grasping Esau’s heel, trying to pull him back in and get ahead of him |
| Jacob stays among the tents with the women |
| Jacob is smooth-skinned |
| Jacob is shrewd and conniving—his name means “the deceiver.” |
| Rebekah loves Jacob more than Esau |

- Ambiguity in the Hebrew
  
  Ge 25:23 And the LORD said to her [Rebekah], “Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.”

  - The problem with such a translation is that the Hebrew text does not use the terms usually employed for the “older” and the “younger” but literally speaks of the “greater” and the “lesser/smaller.” While the first term is never used as a designation for the “older” in the entire Hebrew Bible, the second term often occurs in connection with the term “firstborn” (in particular in Genesis) and in those instances clearly designates the younger child. However, the fact that Gen 25:23 does not have “firstborn” but “greater” complicates matters. Should the second term be understood as “younger” or as “lesser/smaller”? The juxtaposition with “greater” would suggest the latter, yet this would be the only instance in Genesis where the term would be used this way. The fact that everywhere else in Genesis it denotes the “younger” could, on the other hand, lead one to interpret “greater” as “older.” Thus it seems that the final statement in Gen 25:23 could be interpreted either as “…and the older shall serve the younger” or as “…and the greater shall serve the lesser” or as a combination of the two (“…the greater shall serve the younger”).

  - Though one might be tempted to favor the first option as many translations have (and as Rebekah herself may very well have done), it is not entirely clear whether this is indeed the intended meaning. Instead of unambiguously predicting that Esau (the “older”) will serve Jacob (the “younger”), the statement, when translated literally, leaves the reader (and most likely the protagonists themselves) wondering what the meaning of the oracle really is. Is it about age or status or both? It almost seems that in a cycle of stories where the key protagonists are constantly playing tricks on each other in order to get ahead in the game, God is the master trickster who opens the cycle with a very ambiguous statement that keeps the protagonists (and the reader) guessing throughout and at the same time cleverly sets up a trap for them. For while they are constantly trying to get ahead of each other, the divine oracle implies that as soon as they have achieved their goal they are actually in the position of the “lesser.”

  - Jacob

    - Name means ‘deceiver’ because he pulled Esau back into the womb and tried to be the 1st born

  - Another balanced story
Esau sells Jacob his birthright

Ge 25:29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) 31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." 32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" 33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

- What is the birthright?
  - Normally the oldest son would get a double portion of the inheritance

- 34. Lentils
  - The pottage here described is made of a small reddish kind of bean much in use for food in Palestine, Arab. 'adas. Cf. 2 Samuel 17:28; 2 Samuel 23:11; Ezekiel 4:9. It makes the reddish pottage now called in Palestine mujedderah, a very popular dish.

- so Esau despised his birthright
  - These words summarize the narrative.
  - Esau's character is portrayed as that of a careless, shallow man, living from hand to mouth, and paying no regard to things of higher or spiritual significance. It is this trait which is referred to in Hebrews 12:16, "or profane person as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright." The advantage of the birthright may have been indefinite. But, as we may judge not only from the story in ch. 27, but also from that of Genesis 38:28-30 and Genesis 48:13-19 (cf. Deuteronomy 21:15-17), the privilege of the birthright was accounted sacred in the social life of the early Israelite. The Lat. paraphrases the sense of the last clause, parvi pendens quod primogenita vendidisset.

    The birthright was Esau’s by God’s gift, not by his own merit. Hence it symbolized eternal blessing. Esau’s repudiation of the unseen and intangible, for the sake of immediate self-gratification, is the symbol of a large proportion of human sin and thoughtlessness.

- He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way
  - These words graphically describe Esau’s complete indifference to the spiritual privileges of which he had denuded himself. There is no regret, no sad feeling that he had prolonged his life at too high a cost.
  - And if Jacob is cunning, and mean in the advantage he took of his brother, still he valued these privileges, and in the sequel he had his reward and his punishment. He was confirmed in the possession of the birthright, and became the progenitor of the chosen race, and of the Messiah; but henceforward his life was full of danger and difficulty. He had to flee from his brother’s enmity, and was perpetually the victim of fraud and the most cruel deceit. But gradually his character ripened for good. He ceased to be a scheming, worldly-minded Jacob, and became an Israel, and in his pious old age we see a man full of trust and faith in God, unworldly and unselfish, and animated by tender and loving feeling. Purified from
his early infirmities, and with all his better nature strengthened and sanctified by sorrow, he shows himself worthy of his second name, and becomes “a prince with God.”

- Another balanced story

"A Jacob was boiling pottage (29a).
B Esau came in from the field; he was tired (29b).
C wayy'omer 'esaw: Let me eat some of that red pottage . . . , I am so tired!
D wayy'omer ya'aqob: First sell me your bkrh (31).
E wayy'omer 'esaw: I depart; I die! Of what use is a bkrh to me? (32).
D' wayy'omer ya'aqob: Swear to me first. So he swore to him and sold his bkrh to Jacob (33).
C' Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; he ate and he drank (34aa).
B' He rose and went his way (34ab).
A' Thus Esau despised his birthright (34b)."

God’s blessing to Isaac

Ge 26:1 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar. 2 The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. 3 Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws." 6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Isaac settles in Gerar and digs wells (urban planning)

- Ge 26:12 Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. 13 The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. 14 He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.
  o God blessed Isaac 100-fold, even during the famine, when he obeyed and did not go to Egypt

- Tells Abimelech that Rebekah was his sister – Did the same thing that his dad did to the same person!
  o Abimelech catches them in a clearly sexual act and reprimands them

- God tells Isaac that the land is his, now Isaac is taking hold of the land by digging wells and claiming the land

Jacob steals Isaac’s blessing of Esau

- Everything was arranged by Rebekah, but Jacob had no problem going along with it
- Dresses in Esau’s clothes and covers his skin in goatskin so Isaac could not identify him

Isaac

Short but important
**Isaac as a picture of Jesus**

J.D Farag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISAAC</th>
<th>JESUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A miracle child, born out of an old barren womb</td>
<td>A miracle child, born out of a young virgin’s womb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Abraham gives his only begotten son whom he loves</td>
<td>Father God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac is to be offered up, translated lifted up.</td>
<td>Jesus said, “I will be lifted up from the earth”. (John 12:32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were two men taken up with Isaac.</td>
<td>There were two men crucified with Jesus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac was 33 years old at that time.</td>
<td>Jesus was 33 years old when He was crucified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They went to “the place” which is an idiom meaning the exact spot.</td>
<td>“They were come to the place which is called Calvary”. (Luke 23:33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac walked with his father Abraham three days.</td>
<td>Jesus walked with the Father three years in His ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was said to the followers, believing in a resurrection; “we go, but come again.”</td>
<td>It is said to all believers in the resurrection, who follow Jesus, He will come again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Abraham put upon Isaac the wood to carry, for the sacrifice.</td>
<td>The Father put upon Jesus the curse of sin, and He carried is own wooden cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham took the fire (wrath) in his hand to burn his son as a sacrifice.</td>
<td>God took the wrath in His own hands and put it upon His Son, the sacrifice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A knife (sword) was taken to stab him to his death.</td>
<td>Jesus was stabbed by a sword to make sure He was dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Abraham says “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering”.</td>
<td>Father God provides Himself, as a lamb, Jesus who is God as the offering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac was obedient and willingly bound, for his own death.</td>
<td>Jesus was obedient, and willingly bound, and led to His own death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Angel of the Lord calls from heaven.</td>
<td>This Angel of the Lord is Jesus Who calls from heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All nations are blessed because of the obedience to sacrifice.</td>
<td>All are saved because of Jesus, obedience is better than sacrifice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac is not there when Abraham came back.</td>
<td>Jesus is not there in the tomb, when they came back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After these things Abraham seeks a bride (Rebekah) for the son Isaac.</td>
<td>After the crucifixion we see a bride (The Church) for His Son Jesus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Jacob on the Run (Ge 28-30)**

When Esau threatens to kill his brother Jacob, Rebekah tricks Isaac into sending Jacob to her home in Haran—for a short time, until the heat of Esau’s anger cools. The short time turns to long as Jacob settles into uncle Laban’s home and into the arms of Rachael, Laban’s beautiful younger daughter.

**Jacob is sent to Haran to find a wife**

- Jacob is sent with Isaac’s blessing to Uncle Laban in Haran to find a wife
- Uncle Laban is Rebekah’s brother
- He is not sent with any bride-price
  - Eliezer of Damascus was sent with 10 loaded camels as the bride-price
  - Jacob offers to work for 7 years for Rachel


**Esau marries Ishmael’s daughter**

- Esau learns that his dad does not like his wives, the 2 Hittite women
- He marries Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael
  - Mean move? You didn’t like those 2, wait till you see the next local girl that I bring home
  - Naive move? OK, sorry, I’ll marry someone from the family

---

**Jacob’s Dream at Bethel (Ge 28)**

**Jacob’s Ladder**

Ge 28: 11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
Jacob's Dream painting circa 1691 by Michael Willmann
God reaffirms the promise

13... "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abraham</th>
<th>Isaac</th>
<th>Jacob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am God Almighty (17:1).</td>
<td>I am the God of your father Abraham (26:24).</td>
<td>I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac (28:13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever (13:15).</td>
<td>For to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands (26:3).</td>
<td>The land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants (28:13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth (13:16).</td>
<td>And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven (26:4).</td>
<td>Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth (28:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (12:3).</td>
<td>And by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (26:4).</td>
<td>And in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed (28:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you (Gen 15:1).</td>
<td>Do not fear, for I am with you (Gen 26:24).</td>
<td>And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go (28:15).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Testament Connection**

John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." … 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

- This discussion does not make any sense unless Nathaniel was reading this very story and wondering why God would make such a promise to the deceiver Jacob

**Jacob’s Vow (Conditional)**

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear \(^{21}\) so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God \(^{22}\) and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

- Jacob’s commitment to God is conditional
  - IF God protects him
  - IF God feeds him
  - IF God clothes him
  - IF God returns him to his father’s home
  - THEN Jacob will allow Him to be his God

- Jacob renames the place to Bethel, which means House of God
- Jacob will provide a tithe (10%)
Conflict and Strife Abound (Ge 30-31)

Jacob wants desperately to marry Rachael and he works for uncle Laban seven years to get her, but the morning after the wedding night, Jacob finds Rachael’s older sister, Leah, between the sheets! “You’ve deceived me!” Jacob shouts to Laban. Jacob ends up working another seven years to marry Rachael, and the “battle of the dueling wives” begins, each wife enlisting her servant girls in an effort to bear more children for Jacob and become the most beloved wife. All the while, Laban has changed Jacob’s wages over and over, driving him into poverty and dependence. Jacob, the boy who was such a clever little deceiver at home, gets a Ph.D. in deception when he moves in with uncle Laban!

Jacob is deceived and given Leah

- Agrees to work 7 more years for Rachel
- Does not love Leah at all
  - He never considered his wife

Ge 49:29 Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."
Contrast between Rachel (left) and Leah (right)

**Barren women in the Bible**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Circumstance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Isaac</td>
<td>Sarah was 90 when Isaac was born</td>
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<td>Rebekah / Isaac</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Battle of the Dueling Wives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Circumstance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reuben</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>“Behold! A son!” Also sounds like “He has seen my misery”</td>
<td>&quot;It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribe</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simeon</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>&quot;Favorable hearing&quot;</td>
<td>(good news?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>&quot;A joining&quot; or &quot;attach&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>&quot;Praise&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Bilhah</td>
<td>&quot;He has vindicated&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naphtali</td>
<td>Bilhah</td>
<td>&quot;Struggle&quot; or &quot;wrestling&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
<td>&quot;Good fortune&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asher</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
<td>&quot;Blessed&quot; or &quot;Happy&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issachar</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>&quot;Reward&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zebulun</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>&quot;Gift&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>&quot;May he add&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Oni /</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>&quot;Son of sorrow&quot; /</td>
<td>Difficult childbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Son of my right hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sons of Jacob / Tribes of Israel

![Family Tree Diagram](image-url)
**Jacob works to gain wealth**

- After the 14 years working his wives were over, Jacob proposed that he continue to work in exchange for the least valuable animals

  Ge 31:31 … "But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them: 32 Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.

- Laban agrees but then steals them all – master deceiver

  Ge 31:34 "Agreed," said Laban. "Let it be as you have said." 35 That same day he removed all the male goats that were streaked or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (all that had white on them) and all the dark-colored lambs, and he placed them in the care of his sons. 36 Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the rest of Laban's flocks.

- God tells Jacob how to gain his wages in a dream

  Ge 32:10 "In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted.

  Ge 31:37 Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches. 38 Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink, 39 they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted.

- In this way, Jacob transferred all of Laban’s wealth to himself

  Ge 32:1 Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father

**Jacob’s flight from Haran (Ge 31)**

- After 20 years in Haran, God tells Jacob to leave
  - Ge 31:38 "I have been with you for twenty years now.
  - Ge 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land." 

- Jacob consults with his wives and they decide to leave

  Ge 31:14 Then Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate? 15 Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. 16 Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you."

  - The wives were not happy with their father either
    - They had no inheritance
    - Laban treated them like foreigners
    - Laban sold them to Jacob
    - Jacob worked off the bride price – which should have been theirs – but they never saw a dime
• Jacob’s wealth was theirs

• Ge 31:19 When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods.
  o Rachel did not trust in Jacob’s God
  o It was still a polytheistic culture – and just because Jacob believed in the 1 true God did not mean that Rachel had to
  o The gods would not only provide protection for her but would also take away her father’s protection
  o To have the teraphim may have meant the right to the inheritance (the Nuzi tablets, 15th century)

• Laban pursued them with the intent to kill
  o Ge 31:29 I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.'
  o Jacob is moving very slowly with women, children & herds – Laban easily catches up

• He rebukes Jacob
  o He claims that it is for leaving without telling him
    • Ge 31:26 Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You've deceived me, and you've carried off my daughters like captives in war. 27 Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps? 28 You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-bye.
  o He doesn’t care about his daughters and grandchildren – he cares that they took his gods
    • He didn’t care about them when they were still with him - Does he not regard us as foreigners? (Ge 31:15)
    • He doesn’t go to his daughters and grandchildren and give them kisses – he ransacks the place looking for his gods

• Rachel hid the gods in a saddlebag and sat on them
  o Ge 31:35 Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I'm having my period." So he searched but could not find the household gods.
  o In this patriarchal society, Rachel should have stood when her father entered the room
  o The menstrual cycle represents a woman’s ability to produce life, and during the time, the women is considered ‘set apart’ and sacred. Laban would never reach under her.
  o What better way to insult these gods

• Jacob rebukes Laban
Ge 31:38 "I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. 39 I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. 40 This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. 41 It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times. 42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you."

• Covenant between Laban and Jacob
  o Ge 31:44 Come now, let's make a covenant, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us."
  o Stone pillar
    • Jacob called it Galeed – "This heap is a witness between you and me today."
    • Mizpah – "May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other."
      • Often used as the blessing at the end of mass
      • Agreement between 2 crooks
      • Can be a watchtower for military defense, or a high hill that serves the same function
  o Contract of fear, not unity
    • Coming to terms – they do not trust each other, and they aren’t going to be able to come to terms
    • Let’s agree to stay away from each other
  o God is a witness
    • Ge 31:50 “God is a witness between you and me.”
    • Laban’s polytheistic - Includes Abraham’s God and Nahor’s gods and the gods of their fathers
      • 53 May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us."
    • Jacob’s monotheistic – Ge 31: So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac.

• Parallels with Israel’s later flight from Egypt – Jacob’s flight from Laban has a number of parallels with Israel’s later flight from Egypt:
  1. God’s blessing of Jacob aroused the hostility of Laban and his sons, just as God’s blessing of Israel aroused the hostility of Egypt’s pharaoh;
  2. Jacob took with him the wealth he had obtained at Laban’s expense, just as Israel took with them the wealth they had obtained at the expense of the Egyptians;
  3. in his flight Jacob crossed the great Euphrates River, just as Israel in their flight crossed the Red Sea;
  4. Laban went in force to pursue Jacob, just as Egypt’s pharaoh pursued Israel in force;
  5. God intervened to secure Jacob’s household under his control, just as God intervened to secure Israel against the pharaoh’s design to keep the Israelites under his control.
The Chickens Come Home to Roost (Ge 31-36)

In frustration and anger, Jacob takes his two wives, two concubines and twelve children and he flees from Laban, stealing the household valuables as he goes. Heading south from Haran, Jacob’s goal is to settle in Bethel. But wait! Twenty years earlier Jacob’s older brother Esau, whom Jacob had deceived, had sworn to kill Jacob. Now, as Jacob travels south with his family toward Bethel, Esau—accompanied by four hundred armed men—is heading north to intercept his brother!

God is with Jacob

- Ge 32:1 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, ”This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.
  - Mahanaim means “the two camps” – Jacob’s camp and God’s camp
  - 20 years ago, Jacob had seen the angels at Bethel and learned that God was with him
  - Now God’s angel’s were there to protect him and fight for him
  - Ro 8: 31 … If God is for us, who can be against us?
- Jacob sent word to his brother that they were coming home
  - Esau came to intercept with 400 men
  - Were they armed or was Jacob just expecting the worst?
    - A guilty conscience often makes us see the darkest possible picture

- Jacob was distressed
  - Ge 32:7 In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well. 8 He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape."
  - When faith is crowded out by fear, we usually start scheming and trusting in our own resources
    - Jacob turned to his old, known ways of scheming
    - He did not remember God’s angels
  - Believers walking by faith should not fear the enemy
    - Ps 112: 7 He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

- Faith
  - Acting on God’s commands and believing that everything will be OK
  - Living without scheming
  - Ro 14:23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.
  - Jacob should have just believed that God would protect him

God reaffirms the promise (Ge 35)

11 And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. 12 The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abraham</th>
<th>Isaac</th>
<th>Jacob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am God Almighty (17:1).</td>
<td>I am the God of your father Abraham (26:24).</td>
<td>I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac (28:13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever (13:15).</td>
<td>For to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands (26:3).</td>
<td>The land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants (28:13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth (13:16).</td>
<td>And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven (26:4).</td>
<td>Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth (28:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (12:3).</td>
<td>And by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (26:4).</td>
<td>And in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed (28:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you. (35:12)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be fruitful and increase in number (35:11)</td>
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<td>A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. (35:11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you (Gen 15:1).

Do not fear, for I am with you (Gen 26:24).

And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go (28:15).

**Jacob’s Prayer**

Ge 32:9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. 11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. 12 But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.' "

- One of the greatest prayers recorded in Scripture (yet his faith was very weak)
- The prayer suggests that
  - Jacob had a profound knowledge of God’s ways and God’s character
  - Yet he was praying in desperation and not in confidence
- Give God a reason why He should answer your prayers – show faith

**Jacob’s Model 5 Part Prayer**

**God’s covenant**

- Ge 32:9a Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac
  - God in His grace had called Abram and made a covenant with him (Ge 12:1-3), and that covenant was confirmed to both Isaac and Jacob
  - Today we approach the throne of grace through Jesus Christ on the basis of the New Covenant that He made through His own blood

Heb 8:6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. 7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8 But God found fault with the people and said:

"The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.
9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.
10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
11 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.
12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."[c]
13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.
He 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

God's command
- Ge 32:9b O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,'
  - It was God’s idea that he leave Padan Aram and return to his own land
    - Ge 31:13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.’ ”
  - God’s commandments always involve God’s enablement
  - The will of God will never lead us where the power of God can’t protect us and provide for us

God’s care
- Ge 32:10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups.
  - Jacob reviewed the last 20 years and reminded God of the wonderful way that He had cared for him
  - God had been faithful in every trial that came to Jacob
  - Why would God care for him for 20 years and then leave him with no help?

God’s purposes
- Ge 32:11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.
  - Jacob wasn’t thinking only of himself, but he had his family and God’s plan in mind as well
    - Through Jacob’s sons, God would bring blessings to all people
    - The Savior would come from the tribe of Judah and die for the sins of the world
    - Paul would come from the tribe of Benjamin and carry the Gospel to the Gentiles
  - God will not allow His eternal purpose to fail!

God’s promise
- 32:12 But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'
  - Jacob reminded the Lord of the promises that He had made to him at Bethel

Ge 28: 12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. 14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. 15 I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
  - I am with you
  - I will keep you
  - I will bring you back
  - I will not leave you
Jacob’s lack of faith

- A prayer with that kind of theological content should have brought God’s peace to Jacob’s heart, but it didn’t
  - He had no faith, so he fell to his old habits of scheming
- Pray the way that Jacob prayed, but don’t imitate his fear, unbelief, and scheming
- Rest completely on God’s character and covenant
  - We can trust God to be faithful to His character and His Word – “I will trust and not be afraid”

Jacob wrestles with God

- Jacob was moving south back to Beersheba
- He crossed the Jabbok River and put his wives and children between him and Esau
- He went back North of the Jabbok alone

Name change – Jacob to Israel

Ge 32:28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

- A name in the Bible describes or captures the very essence of who they are
  - Reflects the essence of who they are in God’s plan
- Jacob (deceiver) changed to Israel (he who struggles with God)
  - Jacob is known as the deceiver until God wrestles him to the ground
  - Both names are used depending on whether Jacob/Israel is within God’s will or not

God’s principles of change

- God wants to change us
  - Get alone with God and get real and the next thing that will happen is change
  - Jacob wrestled all night long with the angel of God
    - He would not let go of God’s presence until he established without a doubt whom God was going to be in his life
    - Nothing else mattered! It changed his whole life!

Get alone with God

Ge 32:22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

- Jacob moved his family across the river then went back to the north to what he hoped was a safe place
  - Now Jacob was alone
- God often wants to do something personal in us and He needs to get us alone with Him to do it
- 20 years before, Jacob had met the Lord when he was alone at Bethel; and now God graciously same to him again in his hour of need
- Jacob discovered that he had spent his life fighting God and resisting His will
Get real with God

Ge 32:27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." 29 Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." 31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

- More than anything else, Jacob wanted the blessing of the Lord on his life
  - Before we can be want God wants us to be, we have to get realistic and admit what we are in ourselves
- "What is your name?"
  - The last time Jacob was asked that question, he told a lie!
    - Ge 27:18 He went to his father and said, "My father."
      "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?"
    - 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn.
- That question meant more than simply what people called him
  - Jacob had always lived up to his name – a schemer and a deceiver
  - Are you going to continue living up to your name, or will you admit what you are and let Me change you?

Get changed by God

- In the Bible, receiving a new name signifies making a new beginning, and this was Jacob’s opportunity to make a fresh start in life
- "Israel" is from the Hebrew word that means “to struggle”
  - “One who wrestles with God” or “God strives”
  - The explanation in verse 28 is that Jacob has gained power because he prevailed
    - Ge 32:28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."
  - He lost the battle but won the victory!
  - Like Paul, Jacob became strong only when he became weak
    - 2Co 12:1 I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. 3 And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— 4 was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. 5 I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.

7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Peniel – “The Face of God”

- Once again Jacob gave a special name to a significant place
- He thought that seeing God’s face would bring death, but instead it brought him new life
  - It was the dawning of a new day for Jacob/Israel
- He had a new name
- He had a new walk (he was limping)
- He had a new relationship with God that would help him face and solve any problem, if he just exercises some faith

- Just in time! Here comes Esau

**Jacob meets Esau**

- Esau came to meet Jacob with 400 men – had he intended to kill him?
- After the waves of gifts, Esau’s anger was tamed
- Esau offered to escort Jacob back, but Jacob insisted that he not
- Instead of continuing south, Jacob breaks off to the west and settles in Succoth

**Rape of Dinah**

**Benjamin is born**

Ge 35:16 Then they moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. 17 And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have another son." 18 As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin.

- Ben-Oni – Son of sorrow
- Benjamin – Son of my right hand
  - Can also be translated as son of the south – he was the only one of the 12 that was born in the south

**Foreshadows the Messiah**

Ben-Oni – Son of sorrow – 1st coming
Benjamin – Son of my right hand – 2nd coming

**Reuben slept with Bilhah**

- Bilhah was one of Reuben’s mothers – and Rachel’s servant. They all would have been sad at the loss of Rachel.
  - Perhaps Reuben was trying to comfort her and one thing lead to another

- Blessing of Jacob’s sons

Ge 49:3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. 4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.

  - By natural birth, Reuben was the firstborn and rightful heir
    - My firstborn
    - My might
    - The beginning of my strength
      - Dt 21:17 He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.
      - Ps 78:51 He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.
    - The excellency of honor
The excellency of power

Reuben would never excel

1Ch 5:1 The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, 2 and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph)

- No leader ever came from his tribe – no prophet, no judge and no king
- The tribe of Reuben did not go into the promised land but settled for less on the wilderness side of the Jordan
- The tribe of Reuben’s numbers decreased between the 2 censuses in the book of numbers
  - Nu 1:21 The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500
  - Nu 26:7 These were the clans of Reuben; those numbered were 43,730
- The tribe of Reuben stood on the Mt. Ebal side or cursing side
  - Dt 27:12 When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. 13 And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.
- The tribe of Reuben participated in the erection of an unauthorized place of worship
  - Jos 22:10 When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. ...15 When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: 16 "The whole assembly of the LORD says: 'How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the LORD and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now?"
- The tribe of Reuben failed to answer the call to arms under Deborah’s judgeship
  - Jug 5:15 …In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of heart.
- The tribe of Reuben could not be trusted to rule themselves
  - 1Ch 26: 32 Jeriah had twenty-seven hundred relatives, who were able men and heads of families, and King David put them in charge of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh for every matter pertaining to God and for the affairs of the king.
- The tribe of Reuben was always the 1st to receive judgement and suffer attack because of the dwelling place that they chose
  - 2Ki 10: 32 In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Israelites throughout their territory 33 east of the Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aroer by the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.

Esau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of the Descendants of Esau in the Old Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esau and Adah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliphaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zepho</td>
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<td>Gatam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A  Naming of Jacob
B  Esau despises and casts off his birthright
C  Abimelech, Isaac’s conflict w/ the Philistines, wells violated, peaceful resolution
D  Jacob is blessed and incites Esau to murder
E  Vision of God at Bethel
F  Jacob vs. Laban
G  Leah vs. Rachel
H  God opens Rachel’s womb – birth of Joseph
G’  Speckled vs. white goats
F’  Jacob vs. Laban
E’  Vision of God at Peniel
D’  Esau turns from his anger and Jacob blesses Esau
C’  Dinah, Jacob’s conflict w/ the Shechem, daughter violated, violent resolution
B’  Jacob despises and casts off the idols
A’  Renaming of Jacob
Oracle sought; Rebekah struggles in childbirth; bekorah (birth-right); birth; Themes of strife, deception and fertility (25)

Interlude; strife; deception; berakhah (blessing); covenant with foreigner (26)

Deception; berakhah stolen; fear of Easu; flight from land (27-28)

Evening encounter with divine beings at sacred site; near border; berakhah (28)

Internal cycle opens; arrival; kisses; Laban at border; wages; deception (29)

Rachel barren, Leah fertile (30)

Rachel fertile; Jacob breeds the herds (30)

Internal cycle closes; departure; kisses; Laban at border; wages; deception (31)

Evening encounter with divine beings at sacred sites; near border; berakhah (32)

Deception planned; fear of Easu; berakhah (gift) returned; return to land (33)

Interlude; strife; deception; covenant with foreigner (34)

Oracle fulfilled; Rachel struggles in childbirth; berakhah; death; resolution (35)
A Tale of Woe (Ge 37-38)

As we look back at the stories we’ve studied so far a serious problem has taken root between husband and wife, parents and children: 1) Abraham loved Ishmael, but Sarah loved Isaac more; 2) Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob more; now Jacob loves Joseph, son of Rachael, more than all his other sons. Trouble is brewing in the tent and the pot is about to boil over! Jacob sends Joseph out to the fields to spy on his brothers who are tending the sheep. The brothers see him coming (how could they miss him, strutting like a little peacock in his “coat of many colors”); they beat him; strip him naked; drop him in a cistern; and he’s sold into slavery in Egypt. Although a simple story of sibling rivalry, it is far more complex than it seems, filled with hidden twists and turns, shame, guilt, regret and simmering vengeance.

Jacob and his wives produce twelve sons, the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. Jacob’s eleventh son, Joseph, is his favorite, yet none of the twelve tribes is named after him! This is Joseph’s story.

- Theme of dysfunctionality in families – loving one son more than another
  - Sarah loved Isaac more than Ishmael
  - Rebekah loved Jacob and Isaac loved Esau
  - Jacob loved Joseph more than any of the others
3 Dream Sequences
   1. Joseph has 2 dreams in which his family bows down to him
   2. In the prison in Egypt, the cup-bearer and the baker each have a dream that Joseph correctly interprets
   3. Pharaoh has 2 dream predicting a famine in the land

3 Ways to get water in Israel in Biblical times
   1. Sea of Galilee (freshwater lake)
   2. Digging wells (urban planning)
   3. Capture rainwater (cistern)

The Fortunate Son (Ge 39-41)

Although a slave in Egypt, young Joseph is handsome, smart . . . and he always lands on his feet. In the course of three chapters, 17-year old Joseph rises from a field slave to become manager of Potiphar's household; in a stunning reversal, he is fired and ends up in prison, accused of assaulting Potiphar's wife; within a few years Joseph becomes head trustee of the prison; and in twenty years, by the time he is 37 years old, Joseph rises to the position of “Prime Minister” of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. Twenty years pass in our story and Joseph has done quite well for himself.

But what about his brothers?
**Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? (Ge 42-43)**

Joseph is “Prime Minister” of Egypt; he is married to Asenath, the High Priest of On’s daughter; he has two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim; and Pharaoh treats Joseph as one of his own family: by any measure, Joseph is wildly successful. He has long since forgotten the betrayal that brought him to Egypt, and he has long since forgotten the father who never came looking for him.

Until his brothers show up at the front door.

**The Truth Will Out (Ge 44-45)**

When Joseph sees his brothers standing before him, a storm of emotions surges in his heart: anger, vengeance, self-righteousness, longing, love, hate . . .. **These** are the brothers who betrayed him. **These** are the brothers who hated him. **These** are the brothers who now need his help in a time of famine. The anger and heartbreak, love and loss that Joseph buried deep inside for twenty years erupt. Nowhere else in Scripture do we have such a kaleidoscope of emotions on full display.

**Family Reunion (Ge 46-47)**

Jacob has not seen his son Joseph in twenty-two years. At seventeen Joseph went missing, and all the evidence suggested that he had been killed; his brothers inferred as much when they presented Jacob with Joseph’s bloody “coat of many colors.” Jacob mourned the loss of his son deeply; he never truly recovered from the loss. And now, as an old man, Jacob learns that Joseph is alive; and not just alive, but “Prime Minister” of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh!

The family reunion that follows in Egypt is poignant, tear-stained . . . and very funny.

**In a Far Country (Ge 46-50)**

In a brilliant conclusion, Genesis brings Jacob’s entire family together in Egypt, seventy-three people in all, where Jacob blesses his sons, blessings that foreshadow future events. Recall that God said to Adam, “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2: 17). Adam did eat of the tree, and he did, indeed, die. As the story of Genesis begins with birth, so it ends with death: in Genesis 50: 26 we read, “So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.” Our story comes full circle, but instead of enjoying eternal life in the Garden of Eden, the Israelites are in Egypt, poised on the brink of slavery, far from where they belong.

In a very important sense, Genesis is the opening chapter in the sprawling narrative of Scripture; it launches a story whose trajectory will span 2,000 years, involving unforgettable heroes and villains, rascals and rogues, and ending with the redemption not just of Israel but also of the entire human family.
Tribes of Israel

- 12 brothers – 12 tribes are not the same as the 12 brothers
  - Joseph, as the heir, has 2 sons (Ephraim and Naphtali) that have their own tribes (but Joseph does not)
  - Levi has no tribe – The Levites are not given a share in the land inheritance – their inheritance is God

Blessing of Jacob’s sons (Ge 49)

Reuben

3 “Reuben, you are my firstborn,  
   my might, the first sign of my strength,  
excelling in honor, excelling in power.

4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel,  
   for you went up onto your father's bed,  
   onto my couch and defiled it.

- Because he is unstable as water, he will no longer excel because of his affair with Jacob's wife, Bilhah
- Displaced for his sexual indiscretion with his father’s wife, Bilhah (35:22).
By natural birth, Reuben was the firstborn and rightful heir
  o My firstborn
  o My might
  o The beginning of my strength
    ▪ Dt 21:17 He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.
    ▪ Ps 78:51 He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.
  o The excellency of honor
  o The excellency of power

Reuben would never excel

1Ch 5:1 The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, 2 and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph)

  o No leader ever came from his tribe – no prophet, no judge and no king
  o The tribe of Reuben did not go into the promised land but settled for less on the wilderness side of the Jordan
  o The tribe of Reuben’s numbers decreased between the 2 censuses in the book of numbers
    ▪ Nu 1:21 The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500
    ▪ Nu 26:7 These were the clans of Reuben; those numbered were 43,730
  o The tribe of Reuben stood on the Mt. Ebal side or cursing side
    ▪ Dt 27:12 When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. 13 And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.
  o The tribe of Reuben participated in the erection of an unauthorized place of worship
    ▪ Jos 22:10 When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. ...15 When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: 16 “The whole assembly of the LORD says: ‘How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the LORD and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now?"
  o The tribe of Reuben failed to answer the call to arms under Deborah’s judgeship
    ▪ Jug 5:15 …In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of heart.
  o The tribe of Reuben could not be trusted to rule themselves
    ▪ 1Ch 26: 32 Jeriah had twenty-seven hundred relatives, who were able men and heads of families, and King David put them in charge of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh for every matter pertaining to God and for the affairs of the king.
  o The tribe of Reuben was always the 1st to receive judgement and suffer attack because of the dwelling place that they chose
    ▪ 2Ki 10: 32 In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Israelites throughout their territory 33 east of the Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aroer by the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.

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Simeon and Levi

5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence.
6 Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstrung oxen as they pleased.

7 Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.

- Displaced for their violence after the “rape” of Dinah in slaughtering the people of Shechem (34:1G31)
- Brothers of weapons and violence.
- Their anger is cursed because their wrath is cruel.
- They will be divided and scattered in Israel.

Judah

8 “Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.

9 You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

11 He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

- Judah moves to position #1, due in large part to his protecting Benjamin, placing him as the progenitor of the House of David and, ultimately of the Messiah, Christ.
- His brothers will praise him.
- His father's son will bow down before him.
- The scepter shall not depart from Judah.
- He washes his clothes in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes.
- His eyes are darker than wine and teeth whiter than milk.


**Zebulon**

13 "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon.

- Zebulun will live on the coastal plain
- He will settle by-the-sea and he shall be a port for ships.
- His borders will be at Sidon
- Sea of Galilee – Where Jesus will preach

**Issachar**

14 "Issachar is a rawboned donkey lying down between two saddlebags.

15 When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor.

- Issachar will be saddled in the Jezreel Valley
- He will give in to the burden and become a slave a forced labor.

**Dan**

16 "Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse’s heels so that its rider tumbles backward.

18 "I look for your deliverance, O LORD.

- Dan will become a divided, violent people.
- He will judge his people.
- He will be a snake by the roadside that bites horse’s heels so that the rider falls.

**Gad**

19 "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels.

- He will be raided by raiders, but will raid at their heels
Asher

20 "Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king.

- He will have rich food and will provide royal delicacies.

Naphtali

21 "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns.

- He is a doe let loose that gives beautiful words
- Sea of Galilee – Where Jesus will preach

Joseph

22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall.

23 With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility.

24 But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,

25 because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb.

26 Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

- He is a fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall.
- May God bless Joseph who was set apart from his brothers.

Joseph foreshadows Jesus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARALLEL</th>
<th>JOSEPH</th>
<th>JESUS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BELOVED OF HIS FATHER</td>
<td>Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children (Gen. 37:3a).</td>
<td>This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Scripture References</td>
<td>Narrative Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Envied and Hated Without a Cause</td>
<td>(Gen 37:4)</td>
<td>And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more they...hated him...</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>...the chief priests had delivered him for envy (Mark 15:10). They hated me without a cause (John 15:25b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Root Out of Dry Ground</td>
<td>(Gen 37:3b)</td>
<td>...he was the son of his [Jacob’s] old age (Gen. 37:3b).</td>
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<td>...he [Messiah] shall grow up before him...like a root out of a dry ground (Isa. 53:2a).</td>
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<tr>
<td>He Foretold That One Day He Would Rule</td>
<td>(Gen 37:7)</td>
<td>... your sheaves stood...and made obeisance to my sheaf (Gen. 37:7).</td>
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<td>...ye [shall] see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26:64b).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accused of Being a Dreamer (Beside Himself, Deluded)</td>
<td>(Gen 37:19)</td>
<td>And they said to one another, Behold, this dreamer cometh (Gen. 37:19).</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>...they said, He is beside himself (Mark 3:21b).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sent by the Father to Seek the Brothers’ Welfare</td>
<td>(Luke 20:13b)</td>
<td>Go...see whether it be well with thy brethren (Gen. 37:14a).</td>
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<td>I will send my beloved son...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Went Willingly and Sought Till He Found Them</td>
<td>(Gen 37:17b)</td>
<td>And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them...</td>
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<td>...Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God (Heb. 10:9b).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rejected and Condemned to Die</td>
<td>(Gen 37:18b)</td>
<td>they conspired against him to slay him (Gen. 37:18b).</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>We will not have this man to reign over us (Luke 19:14b). But they cried, saying, Crucify him! Crucify him! (Luke 23:21).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stripped of His Clothing</td>
<td>(Gen 37:23b)</td>
<td>...they stripped Joseph out of his coat...that was on him (Gen 37:23b).</td>
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<td>And they stripped him (Matt. 27:28a).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrown into a Pit (Alone, Forsaken)</td>
<td>(Gen 37:24a)</td>
<td>And they took him, and cast him into a pit (Gen. 37:24a).</td>
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<td>so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40b).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sold for Silver into the Hands of Gentiles</td>
<td>(Gen 37:28b)</td>
<td>...they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt (Gen. 37:28b).</td>
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<td>and they bargained with him [Judas] for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15b).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raised from the Pit</td>
<td>(Gen 37:28a)</td>
<td>...and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit (Gen. 37:28a).</td>
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<td>...he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became a Servant</td>
<td>(Gen 39:1-2)</td>
<td>And Joseph was brought down to Egypt...and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian (Gen. 39:1-2).</td>
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<td>I am among you as he that serveth (Luke 22:27b).</td>
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<td>...took upon him the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything He Did Prospered</td>
<td>(Gen 39:3b)</td>
<td>And...the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand (Gen. 39:3b).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand (Isaiah 53:10b).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resisted Temptation</td>
<td>(Gen 39:7-12)</td>
<td>The temptation by Potiphar’s wife (Read Gen. 39:7-12).</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>For such an high priest was fitting...who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners...(Heb. 7:26).[he] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALSELY ACCUSED</td>
<td>The Hebrew servant, whom thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me (Gen. 39:17-18).</td>
<td>At the last came two false witnesses, And said… (Matt. 26:60b, 61a).</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUMBERED WITH TRANSgressors</td>
<td>And Joseph’s master…put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were bound (Gen. 39:20a).</td>
<td>…there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (Luke 23:33).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROMISED DELIVERYANCE TO A CONDEMNED MAN</td>
<td>Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee… (Gen. 40:13).</td>
<td>Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORETOLD THE FUTURE ACCURATELY</td>
<td>And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us (Gen. 41:13a).</td>
<td>Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he (John 13:19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVED TO BE A GREAT COUNSELLOR</td>
<td>…Forasmuch as God hath shown thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art (Gen. 41:39).</td>
<td>and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor… (Isa. 9:6b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROMOTED TO HONOR AND GLORY AND GIVEN A NEW NAME</td>
<td>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt (Gen. 41:41). (See also Gen. 41:45a.)</td>
<td>…God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a new name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL PEOPLE COMMANDED TO BOW TO HIM</td>
<td>and they cried before him, Bow the knee (Gen. 41:43b).</td>
<td>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Phil. 2:10a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVIDED FOR ALL IN NEED</td>
<td>And all the countries came…to Joseph to buy grain (Gen. 41:57a).</td>
<td>…I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger (John 6:35a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS PEOPLE DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM</td>
<td>And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him (Gen. 42:8).</td>
<td>…Have I been such a long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me…? (John 14:9a).&lt; But their minds were blinded (2 Cor. 3:14a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIS BROTHERS WERE TROUBLED WHEN THEY MET HIM</td>
<td>…be not grieved nor angry with yourselves (Gen. 45:5a).v</td>
<td>They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn…and shall be in bitterness… (Zech. 12:10b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLOWED HIS BROTHERS TO SUFFER A PERIOD OF TRIBULATION</td>
<td>Read Gen. 42:6-44:34.</td>
<td>it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer. 30:7b).&lt; For then shall be great tribulation (Matt. 24:21a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENTILE BRIDE</td>
<td>Joseph took a Gentile bride just before the 7-year drought (Gen. 41)</td>
<td>Jesus will take His Gentile bride just before the 7-year tribulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVELATION AND RECONCILIATION</td>
<td>I am Joseph…whom ye sold…God hath made me lord of all…come…unto me… (Gen. 45:3b-9).</td>
<td>And so all Israel shall be saved;…as it is written…and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benjamin

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder."

- He is a ravenous wolf, devouring his prey in the morning, and dividing the spoil in the evening.

Joseph

Joseph as a type of Jesus (Typology) – J.D. Farag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOSEPH</th>
<th>JESUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was loved by his father (Genesis 37:3)</td>
<td>Was the beloved son of the Father (Matthew 3:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffered as a servant (Genesis 37:2)</td>
<td>Was called the suffering servant. (Zechariah 3:8, Isaiah 42:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loved and exalted above his brethren (Genesis 37:3)</td>
<td>Loved and exalted above the brethren (Hebrews 1:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hated because of his dream of ruling over them (Genesis 37:4,8)</td>
<td>Hated for one day ruling and reigning over all (John 7:3, Luke 19:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was rejected by his brothers (Genesis 37:4)</td>
<td>His own rejected Him, “they received Him not” (John 1:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was likened to a sheaf of wheat (Genesis 37:7)</td>
<td>Was the wave sheaf. (Leviticus 23:11, 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred for him grew worse (Genesis 37:4,5,8)</td>
<td>Hatred for Him grew progressively worse through the Gospels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuked by his natural father (Genesis 37:10)</td>
<td>Rebuked by his mother and father at the temple. (Luke 2:48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel would bow down to him (Genesis 37:10)</td>
<td>All Israel will eventually bow down to Him (Romans 11:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His father “observed the saying” (Genesis 37:11)</td>
<td>His mother “pondered His saying.” (Luke 2:19, 51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent on a mission to His brethren (Genesis 37:13-14)</td>
<td>Was sent to earth for His brethren (Galatians 4:4-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent to Shechem a worldly and wicked place (Genesis 37:14)</td>
<td>Sent to the world a wicked place (John 3:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent because his brothers may be lost (Genesis 37:14-15)</td>
<td>Sent to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A plot to kill him when they saw him from afar (Genesis 37:18)</td>
<td>They plotted how they might kill him (Matthew 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to kill him for his prophetic dreams (Genesis 37:20)</td>
<td>Crucified Him for His words spoke from God. (John 12:48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben tries to appease his brothers (Genesis 37:21-22)</td>
<td>Pilate tries to appease the Jews (John 19:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben tried to save him at the last minute (Genesis 37:21)</td>
<td>Pilate tried to stop Christ’s death (John 19:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was cast into an empty pit (Genesis 37:24)</td>
<td>Was placed into an empty tomb (Mark 15:46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was stripped of his coat (Genesis 37:23)</td>
<td>Was stripped of His robe (Matthew 27:28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They sat down after leaving him for dead (Genesis 37:25)</td>
<td>Sat down after He was crucified (Matthew 27:36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was betrayed and sold for pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28)</td>
<td>Was betrayed and sold for pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They said; “He’s our brother and our flesh” (Genesis 37:27)</td>
<td>“We’re members of His body, flesh and bones” (Ephesians 5:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had his coat dipped in blood (Genesis 37:31)</strong></td>
<td>“Dressed in a robe dipped in blood” (Revelation 19:13, Isaiah 63:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>They lied about his death because he was alive (Genesis 37:32)</strong></td>
<td>They were paid to lie about Him, He was alive (Matthew 28:13-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All things committed to him by his master (Genesis 39:8)</strong></td>
<td>All things committed to Jesus by His Father (Luke 10:22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Had his garments taken off (Genesis 39:13)</strong></td>
<td>Had his garments taken off (John 19:23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was falsely accused (Genesis 39:14)</strong></td>
<td>Was falsely accused (Luke 23:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did not defend himself against the charges (Genesis 39:20)</strong></td>
<td>Did not defend himself against the charges (Matthew 27:12-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was given favor in the sight of God and man (Genesis 39:21)</strong></td>
<td>Was in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was in prison next to two criminals (Genesis 40:3)</strong></td>
<td>Was on the cross with two criminals (Luke 23:39-43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One prisoner perishes, one is saved (Genesis 40:13)</strong></td>
<td>One thief perishes, the other is saved (Luke 23:43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foretells the raising up after three days (Genesis 40:13)</strong></td>
<td>Foretells His raising to life after three days (Matthew 16:21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tells him he’s done nothing to be put in the dungeon (Genesis 40:15)</strong></td>
<td>Pilate tells them He’s done nothing to be put on the cross (Luke 23:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two dreams with two elements; the cup (cup-bearer) and the bread (baker) (Genesis 40:16,17)</strong></td>
<td>Two elements at the last supper; the cup and the bread (Luke 22:17-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tells the cupbearer to remember him after he’s raised up (Genesis 40:14)</strong></td>
<td>Tells them to remember Him with the cup after He’s raised (Luke 22:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was clothed in the right garments and brought to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:14)</strong></td>
<td>Clothes us in His righteousness when brought to Him (Galatians 3:27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Points to God as the only one with the interpretation (Genesis 41:16)</strong></td>
<td>Jesus always pointed to the Father for the glory (Matthew 5:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was “a man in whom is the Spirit of God” (Genesis 41:37)</strong></td>
<td>Was given the Spirit of God without limitation (John 3:34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Went from the dungeon to the throne (Genesis 41:40)</strong></td>
<td>Went from the tomb to the throne (Revelation 5:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rode in the “second chariot” as they paid homage (Genesis 41:43)</strong></td>
<td>The “second Person” of the trinity, and we pay homage (Matthew 3:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>They were to bow their knee before him (Genesis 41:43)</strong></td>
<td>Every knee will bow to Him (Philippians 2:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is given authority over all people in the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:43)</strong></td>
<td>Was granted authority over all people (John 17:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No one could do anything without his permission (Genesis 41:44)</strong></td>
<td>Without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Given a new name when he was raised up (Genesis 41:45)</strong></td>
<td>Given a new name at His ascension (Philippians 2:6-9, Revelation 3:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was 30 years of age when he began his work (Genesis 41:46)</strong></td>
<td>Was 30 years of age when he began his ministry (Luke 3:23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firstborn son named “forget” (Genesis 41:51)</strong></td>
<td>First born sinners but our sins are remembered no more (Psalm 103:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second born son named “fruitful” (Genesis 41:52)</strong></td>
<td>The second birth is fruit of righteousness through Him (Philippians 1:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pharaoh told them to do whatever he says to do (Genesis 41:55)</strong></td>
<td>Jesus’ mother told them to do whatever he says to do (John 2:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the only bread of life source for the world physically (Genesis 41:57)</td>
<td>Is the only source for the bread of life for the world spiritually (John 6:33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was clothed in the right garments and brought to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is given authority over all people in the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:43)</td>
<td>Was granted authority over all people (John 17:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All who come to Joseph will live &amp; not die (Genesis 42:2)</td>
<td>All who call upon Jesus will be saved (Romans 10:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 brothers are brought to him for provision (Genesis 42:3)</td>
<td>10 Commandments bring us to Him for justification (Galatians 3:24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin had no part in denying or betraying him (Genesis 42:4)</td>
<td>The Apostle Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His brothers bow down to him (Genesis 42:6)</td>
<td>Israel, His brothers, will be saved and bow to Him (Romans 11:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His brothers don’t recognize him (Genesis 42:8)</td>
<td>His own didn’t recognize or receive Him (John 1:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers keep lying about his death (Genesis 42:13)</td>
<td>Jews keep lying about his death and resurrection (Matthew 28:12-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers are released from prison on the third day (Genesis 42:17)</td>
<td>Jews will be restored on the third day (after 2,000 years) (Hosea 6:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuben says: “his blood is now required of us” (Genesis 42:22)</td>
<td>They said; “Let His blood be upon us” (Matthew 27:25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wept over his brothers (Genesis 42:24)</td>
<td>Wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judah becomes surety for Benjamin (Genesis 43:8)</td>
<td>He becomes surety of the New Covenant (Hebrews 7:22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers delay in coming to him (Genesis 43:10)</td>
<td>Israel delays coming to their true Messiah (Romans 11:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was offered gifts, of spices and myrrh (Genesis 43:11)</td>
<td>Was offered, gold, spices and myrrh (Matthew 2:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was said that God Almighty would show mercy before him (Genesis 43:14)</td>
<td>Because of His mercy we are righteous before Him (Titus 3:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They stood before him (Genesis 43:15)</td>
<td>They will “stand before Him” (Daniel 11:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desires to break bread with his brothers in his home (Genesis 43:16)</td>
<td>Desires to break bread with us in His kingdom (Luke 22:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has an animal slain to make ready for a feast (Genesis 43:16)</td>
<td>Taught prodigal son parable; an animal is slain for a feast (Luke 15:20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His steward tells them; “Peace be with you, be not afraid” (Genesis 43:23)</td>
<td>After His ascension said; “Peace be with you.” (John 20:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophecies about him are fulfilled (Genesis 43:28)</td>
<td>The spirit of Prophecy is Him (Revelation 19:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is gracious and kind to his brothers in spite of their sin (Genesis 43:29)</td>
<td>While we were sinners He died for us for His love for us (Romans 5:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Says, at the supper; “serve the bread” (Genesis 43:31)</td>
<td>Says, at the last supper, “take this bread.” (Luke 22:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They looked in astonishment at each other because of him (Genesis 43:33)</td>
<td>They were astonished with Him and marveled (Matthew 8:27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>His cup was silver and would lead to their redemption</strong> (Genesis 44:2)</td>
<td><strong>His cup was for redemption, of which silver is a picture</strong> (Ex.35:25-28)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drunk from a cup used for discerning the will of the gods</strong> (Genesis 44:5)</td>
<td><strong>Drunk from a cup of suffering as the will of Father God</strong> (Matt.26:39,42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11 of them are innocent of betraying him at his table</strong> (Genesis 44:8)</td>
<td><strong>11 of them were innocent of betraying Him at His table</strong> (Mark 14:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judah becomes their advocate</strong> (Genesis 44:18)</td>
<td><strong>From the Lion of the Tribe of Judah comes our advocate</strong> (1 John 2:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judah offered himself as a substitutionary sacrifice</strong> (Genesis 44:33)</td>
<td><strong>From Judah, offers Himself as the substitutionary sacrifice</strong> (Eph.5:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Couldn’t refrain himself longer and cut the process short</strong> (Genesis 45:1)</td>
<td><strong>For the sake of the elect, the days are cut short</strong> (Matthew 24:22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stops hiding himself when there’s confession</strong> (Genesis 45:2)</td>
<td><strong>Stops hiding His face when there’s confession</strong> (Hosea 5:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the end he is revealed to his brothers</strong> (Genesis 45:3)</td>
<td><strong>In the end He will reveal Himself to Israel</strong> (1 Peter 1:20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We’re dismayed when they looked at him</strong> (Genesis 45:3)</td>
<td><strong>Will mourn when they look at him</strong> (Zechariah 12:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Said; “come near to me”</strong> (Genesis 45:4)</td>
<td><strong>Said; “come unto me”</strong> (Matthew 11:28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was sent to Egypt to save</strong> (Genesis 45:5)</td>
<td><strong>Was sent to the world to save the lost</strong> (Luke 19:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Israel believed and said of Joseph; “it is enough”</strong> (Genesis 45:28)</td>
<td><strong>To all who believe, He says; “it is finished”</strong> (John 19:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Israel said; “my son is yet alive”</strong> (Genesis 45:28)</td>
<td><strong>They said; “Jesus, the Son is alive”</strong> (Luke 24:23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Joseph as a picture of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Prophetically reveals a seven year famine</strong> (Genesis 41:27)</th>
<th><strong>Is prophetically revealed in the seven year tribulation</strong> (Revelation 5:5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was given an Egyptian bride before the 7 year famine – and she was not mentioned again</strong> (Genesis 41:45)</td>
<td><strong>Will be given a gentile bride [before the 7 year tribulation]</strong> (John 3:29, Revelation 5:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Born sons come to him before the “7” year famine</strong> (Genesis 41:50)</td>
<td><strong>Born again sons of God will come to Him [before the 7 year tribulation]</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brothers as a picture of the Jewish nation during the Tribulation**

| **Brothers come to Joseph in the midst of the famine** (Genesis 42:2) | **Israel comes to Jesus in the midst of the tribulation** (Daniel 9:27) |

Highlighted as the most important by JD

**Joseph’s Gentile Bride (Ge 41)**

Ge 41:50 Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On.

**Intro:** The life of Joseph is an amazing story of the providence and power of Almighty God. The Bible tells us of the favorite son of Jacob as he is betrayed by his own brothers and sold into slavery. As a slave, Joseph demonstrates a godly testimony in the face of tragedy and temptation. Then Joseph is falsely accused of a crime and thrown into prison. Even in that Egyptian prison, Joseph displays a clear, consistent testimony of faith.

As Joseph languishes in that prison, up in the palace, Pharaoh has a dream he could not interpret. Joseph is remembered and released from the prison. He interprets Pharaoh’s dream and Pharaoh elevates Joseph. He removes him from the prison and makes him Prime Minister of Egypt. When we arrive at our text, Joseph has just been exalted to a position of great power and authority. He has been given Pharaoh’s ring. He has been dressed in the finest cloths in the land. He has been given an expensive gold chain. Everywhere he goes; the Egyptian people bow before Joseph and
honor him for his position and his power. The slave has become a sovereign ruler, and all this took place in his life because of the Unseen Hand of divine providence.

Our text tells us that immediately after Joseph was exalted to his new position he was given a bride. Soon after that a family was born to Joseph there in Egypt.

I want to take our time today to consider Joseph’s Gentile Bride. In the woman that was given to Joseph I see a wonderful picture of the Bride of Christ.

As you study the book of Genesis, there are three brides that stand out as types of the Bride of Christ.

• **Eve** – She is a picture of the Creation of the Church.
  
  o Adam was placed in a deep sleep and God removed a rib from his side. Eve was formed from this rib.
  o The church was formed when Jesus died on the cross and His side was opened for us. We are a product of His sacrificial love.

• **Rebekah** – She is a picture of the Calling of the church.
  
  o Abraham’s servant found her in a pagan land and called her come be the bride of Isaac. They asked her, “Will you go with this man?” And, she answered, “I will go!”
  o She left her old life behind and set out with the servant. It was a long journey, through a harsh land, but the servant was with her to encourage her along the way. Eventually he brought her to Isaac and they were married in his home.
  o The church was also brought out of a pagan land. The Holy Spirit came to us and called to come to Jesus. We accepted His invitation by faith and set out a journey to meet the Bridegroom. The way is hard and rough, but the Comforter is ever with us to guide us, encourage us and bless us. One day, we will reach the end of the journey and we will meet our Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ in His home in Heaven.

• **Asenath** – She is a picture of the Coronation of the church.
  
  o She became the bride of a man who was brought out a time of humiliation.
  o Her husband was exalted and she was exalted along with Him.
  o She was brought out of obscurity and made to live in a fine palace.

I will try to flesh all this out in the message, but the Bride of Christ was called out of obscurity to share the glory of the Heavenly Bridegroom. One day, we will join Him in His heavenly home.

Let’s take some time today to consider the woman who became the bride of Joseph. We do not have a lot of information regarding her life, but the few details we do have speak volumes to us today. In this woman we are allowed to see a few characteristics of the Bride of Christ. I want to point those characteristics out today as I preach on the subject: Joseph’s Gentile Bride. Let’s see if we can spot ourselves and all that the Lord has done for us in these verses.

I. **HER SINFUL PAST**

The woman Joseph received as his bride was named Asenath. This name means “Belonging to the goddess Neith.” Neith was known as “The mother earth of the Delta”. She was worshiped as the mother of the Egyptian gods Isis, Horus, and Osiris. This goddess was known as the source of all wisdom. The Egyptians believed that all the other gods would go to Neith for counsel when they had a dispute among themselves. Asenath was raised to worship false, pagan gods.

Asenath was the daughter of Potiperah, the priest of On. His name means “Given by the sun god”. On, also known as Heliopolis, was one of the most important religious cities in Egypt. The great temple to Ra, the sun god, was there.
Ra was depicted as a great falcon wearing a gold disk as a crown. This temple also housed a sacred bull that was worshiped by the Egyptians. Pharaoh was believed to be the incarnation of Ra, and was worshiped as a god. Asenath would have been raised in deep paganism and deep spiritual darkness.

Asenath was oblivious to the God of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. She wasn’t aware of God, and even if she had been, she would have cared nothing for Him!

God knew her! Even in her lost condition, God was working to bring her to a place of salvation. When she married Joseph, her pagan past was blotted out. I have no doubt that Joseph told her all about His God, the true God, and the God of all the earth! Surely Joseph introduces Asenath to Jehovah! I have no proof, but I think this woman probably got saved!

Asenath is a picture of lost humanity. Like her, every human being is born in the depths of spiritual darkness. We did not know God and we deserved nothing from God but judgment and Hell. Our condition is clearly revealed in Eph. 2:1-3; 12. This is just a reminder of what we were before we met the Lord Jesus. By the way, it does us good to look back! It deals a death blow to self-righteousness and spiritual snobbery! We need to be reminded of where we came from, Isa. 51:1.

If you are saved today it is because God delivered you from your sins by His amazing grace! Like Mephibosheth, you and I were wasting away in our Lodebar, when the King of Glory came and “fetched” us unto Himself, 2 Sam. 9:1-13.

Like Asenath, when we came to Jesus and were saved by grace, our sinful past was forever blotted out, III. Psalm 103:12; Isa. 38:17; Isa. 43:25; Jer. 50:20; Micah 7:19; Col. 2:13-14; 1 John 1:7. In God’s eyes, the Bride of Jesus has been justified and glorified, Rom. 8:30. In His eyes, we are spotless and pure today, Eph. 5:27.

II. HER SPECIAL PLACE

When Joseph came out of prison, he was elevated to a position of great power and great majesty. He was made to sit at Pharaoh’s right hand. When Joseph was elevated, his bride was elevated with him!

Asenath was from a prominent pagan family. She was the daughter of a well known priest. But, when she became the wife of Joseph, she finds herself the bride of the most powerful man in the land.

Asenath did not achieve this honor on her own. In fact, she had nothing to do with the matter. She was picked out by Pharaoh and she was given to Joseph. In other words, there was no special merit in Asenath; she was merely the object of sovereign choice.

Nothing is said about Asenath regarding her looks, her talents, or anything else. It seems that her husband and not Asenath is the center of attention.

It is also worthy of noting that Joseph did not succumb to the polygamous tendencies of the Egyptians. He only took one bride!

Again, in all these things, Asenath is a picture of the Bride of Christ. Like Asenath, the Bride is the Father’s gift to His Son, John 6:37.

Every person who is saved by the grace of God was chosen by Him, handpicked for the honor of being in the Bride, John 15:16; Eph. 1:4; John 10:16. There is no other explanation for His choice but His grace and His love for the lost, Eph. 2:4-5.
God chose us in Jesus in eternity past, Eph. 1:4, and He called us to come to Jesus for salvation, John 6:44. When we came by faith, we were saved out of our sins and our lost past was done away with forever.

*Not only did He save us from our sins, He elevated us!* He did this in two precious ways.

Ø First, He elevated us by changing our lives. He gave us a “new birth” and made us into a “new creature”, John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17.

Ø He lifted us out of the muck and mire of our sins, and set us on a new pathway of holiness for the glory of God, Psa. 40:1-3.

Ø He changed our lives and made us alive to the things of God, Eph. 2:5. He gave us a new nature, 2 Pet. 1:4.

Ø He lifted us out of the mess Adam left us in and made it possible for us to live lives that are pleasing to God. Praise His name!

Ø Secondly, when we were saved, God put us in Jesus, 1 Cor. 12:13.

§ According to Eph. 2:6, He lifted us up and made us to sit with Him in His throne. You see, our Savior, like Joseph, suffered a time of humiliation and rejection. He died and descended into the grave. But, He rose again and ascended to Heaven and took up His place at the right hand of His heavenly Father. When we came to Him by faith, He lifted us out of our sins and caused us to sit with Him.

§ I was a wretched, dirty, rotten sinner, but today I sit in Heavenly places in Jesus Christ! If you are saved, you are as good for Heaven as if you were already there.

§ If you are saved, your past is gone and you enjoy the blessings, the power and the presence of the Lord God of glory!

Ø Our Heavenly Bridegroom only has one Bride! He redeemed her when He died for her sins on the cross. He secured her eternity when He rose again from the dead. He has gone ahead to prepare a place for her, John 14:1-3. One day soon, He will return and claim her unto Himself and take her home to the place she already is! The only way to be a part of His Bride is for a lost sinner to hear His call to come, and for them to trust Jesus by faith, Eph. 2:8-9. When they do, they are eternally saved!

By the way, the focus in this family should be on Him! It does not matter who I am and it does not matter who you are. All that matters is the Lord Jesus and God His Father! Are you in the Bride?

**III. HER SOVEREIGN PART**

We are told that Asenath bore Joseph two children. These two boys were a special gift to Joseph from the Lord. In choosing their names, Joseph acknowledged God’s hand at work in his life.

Joseph named the first boy Manasseh. This name means “Forgetting”. Joseph tells us that the Lord had allowed him to forget the trials he went through. Joseph named his second son Ephraim. This name means “Twice Fruitful”. It shows us that Joseph’s faith in the Lord had not wavered at all. In spite of all he had endured, Joseph was still walking by faith.

These two boys would grow up and become the heads of two of the tribes of Israel. They would replace the Joseph and Levi as part of the twelve.
The grace of God had lifted Asenath out of obscurity and made her a part of God’s sovereign plan. She was given a big part in the formation of the nation of Israel.

Again, this is a picture of the Bride of Christ! The redeemed saints of God have been made a part of God’s plan to bring the world to Himself.

He saved us and called us into His service, Eph. 2:10 (IIl. Emphasize!). Imagine that! He would take things like us and use us for His glory. He had placed His hand on these vessels and He has placed His Spirit within these vessels and He can use these vessels in ways we never imagined if we would only yield ourselves to Him, 2 Cor. 4:7. What an honor it is to serve the true and living God!

He has given us the Gospel of grace to take to a lost and dying world and He has commissioned us to take it to the ends of the earth, Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8.

We are His Bride! We are His masterpiece, Eph. 2:10. We are His love letter to the world, 2 Cor. 3:2-3. We are the living, breathing, moving proof that God loves sinners. We are commissioned and commanded to tell this lost world that what the Lord did for us, He can do for them too. That is our mandate!

Conc: Life changed for Asenath forever when she was presented to Joseph. I am sure she never imagined that she would be the wife of the Prime Minister of Egypt! She was given an honor above all others!

I praise the Lord that I am part of the Bride of Christ! I praise His name for loving me, for dying for me, for saving me and for letting me a part of His work in the world today. What a blessing! But, I must confess, I do wonder, why me? Why would He choose me?

Do you know Him? If you don’t and would like too, you can. If He is calling you to come to Him, now would be a good time to do just that!

Are you serving Him like you should? The hour is growing late and the time to do something for Jesus is now! Now is the hour to preach His Gospel; to tell others about Him, and to serve Him without reservation.
**Exodus Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bondage</th>
<th>Deliverance</th>
<th>Journey</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Tabernacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israelites became numerous</td>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Cloud and fire</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Outer court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Pharaoh</td>
<td>Frogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>150 feet x 75 feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan to destroy Israelites</td>
<td>Gnats</td>
<td>Hail</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inner court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses</td>
<td>Flies</td>
<td>Locusts</td>
<td>Red Sea</td>
<td>45 feet x 15 feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Darkness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passover</td>
<td></td>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Grumbling</td>
<td></td>
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**Chapters 1–2**
- Egypt
- 430 years
- Suffering and liberation of people of God
- 6:6; 12:40–42; 19:5–6
- Passover lamb (chapter 12); sacrificial offering, tabernacle, articles of worship (chapters 25–40);
- His leadership and deliverance are pictured in Moses;
- His purity and intercession are pictured in the high priest.

**Chapters 3–12**
- En route
- 3 months
- Guidance of God

**Chapters 13–18**
- Mount Sinai
- 1 year
- Worship of God

**Chapters 19–24**

**Chapters 25–40**

The book of Exodus consists mainly of two genres, Narrative History and Laws. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. The key personalities include Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh, Pharaoh’s daughter, Aaron, and Joshua. It was written to record the events of Israel’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It describes the events to the reader in chronological order and also lists the Laws that God has given to the Israelites, in order to guide them in their relationship with Him.

- **Chapters 1-7** of Exodus, introduce Moses and the Israelites in bondage in Egypt. This setting is approximately 400 years after Joseph and his families were living in Goshen at the end of Genesis. God protects baby Moses and spares his life, as Moses is adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter and is raised as an Egyptian. God calls Moses with a special revelation, through a burning bush to release His people from slavery in Egypt. Moses obeys and with his brother Aaron, confronts Pharaoh to let God’s people go free, but Pharaoh ignores the warning.

- **In Chapters 7-13** Moses through the power of God releases 10 plagues of different sorts on the land of Egypt which included, turning all the water to blood, plagues of insects, boils, and hail. Finally, the death of every first-born son, this included the death of Pharaoh’s eldest who would someday inherit the kingdom of Egypt. However, the Israelites obeyed God and followed the ordinance of the Passover and God spared them.

- **Chapters 14-18** describe the Exodus or “Exit” from Egypt. Pharaoh can no longer endure the plagues that God poured on Egypt and himself and allows them to leave. Moses and the Israelites escape making it to the Red Sea. Shortly after, Pharaoh changes his mind and pursues them, but God destroys his army with the sea.

- **Chapters 19-24**, Moses presents all of the Laws to all the people at Mt. Sinai as God has commanded.

- **From chapters 25-40**, Moses gives the Israelites the tabernacle, priest and worship instructions.
Outline

I. The Exodus (1:1-19:8)
   A. Prologue (1:1-22)
   B. Introduction to Moses
      i. Birth (2:1-10)
      ii. Moses kills the Egyptian slave master (2:11-15)
      iii. Moses flees Egypt and settles in Midian (2:16-25)
      iv. Moses called by God (3:1-4:17)
         1. The burning bush (3:1-10)
            a. Moses’ call (3:10)
      v. Moses gives five reasons why he can’t answer the call (3:11-4:17)
         1. “Who am I . . .?” (3:11-12)
         2. “Suppose I go . . .?” (3:13-22)
         3. “What if they do not believe me . . .?” (4:1-9)
         4. “I have never been eloquent . . .” (4:10-12)
         5. “Please send someone else . . .” (4:13-17)
      vi. Moses returns to Egypt (4:18-7:13)
         1. Moses sets out on the journey (4:18-23)
         2. Moses and his wife, Zipporah, argue (4:24-26)
         3. Aaron meets Moses (4:27-28)
         4. Moses and Aaron deliver God’s message to the Israelites (4:29-31)
   C. Moses vs. Pharaoh (5:1-15:21)
      i. First encounter with Pharaoh (5:1-21)
         1. Moses’ demand (5:1)
         2. Pharaoh’s response (5:2-18)
         3. Israelite’s response (19-21)
         4. Moses complains to God (5:22-23)
            a. God’s response (6:1-8)
            b. Moses’ response (6:9-12)
            c. God reiterates his call (6:13; 28)
               1) Genealogy of Moses and Aaron (6:14-27)
            d. Moses declines (6:30)
            e. God appoints Aaron as Moses’ spokesman (7:1-6)
      ii. Second encounter with Pharaoh (7:8-13)
      iii. Plague #1: Blood (7:14-24)
      iv. Plague #2: Frogs (7:25-8:15)
      v. Plague #3: Gnats (8:16-19)
      vi. Plague #4: Flies (8:20-32)
      vii. Plague #5: Diseased Livestock (9:1-7)
      viii. Plague #6: Boils (9:8-12)
      ix. Plague #7: Hail (9:13-35)
      x. Plague #8: Locusts (10:1-20)
      xi. Plague #9: Darkness (10:21-29)
      xii. Plague #10: Death of Firstborn (11:1-12:30)
         1. Passover (12:1-30)
   D. The Israelites leave Egypt (12:31-19:8)
      i. Pharaoh’s order (12:31-32)
      ii. Israelites pack and leave (12:33-13:16)
         1. Passover regulations (12:43-51)
         2. Consecration of firstborn (13:1-16)
      iii. Crossing the Red Sea (13:17-15:21)
         1. Moses and Miriam’s song of thanksgiving (15:1-21)
   E. From the Red Sea to Mount Sinai (15:22-18:27)
i. Trouble with water (15:22-27)
   1. God sweetens the water of Marah (5:25)
ii. Trouble with food (16:1-36)
   1. God provides quail (16:13)
   2. God provides manna (16:14-36)
iii. Trouble with water—again (17:1-7)
   1. God provides water from the rock at Horeb (17:6)
iv. Trouble with enemies (17:8-16)
   1. Moses and Joshua defeat the Amalekites (17:10-13)
v. Trouble with leadership (18:1-27)
   1. Jethro suggests delegating authority (18:14-23)
F. At Mount Sinai (19:1-8)
   i. The covenant reaffirmed (19:3-8)
      1. God speaks (19:4-6)
      2. The people reply (19:8)

II. The Law (19:9-24:18)
A. Prologue (19:9-25)
B. The Ten Commandments (20:1-17)
   i. Commandment #1: No other Gods (20:2-3)
   ii. Commandment #2: No idols (20:4-6)
   iii. Commandment #3: No misuse of God’s name (20:7)
   iv. Commandment #4: Keep the Sabbath (20:8-11)
   v. Commandment #5: Honor father and mother (20:12)
   vi. Commandment #6: No murder (20:13)
   vii. Commandment #7: No adultery (20:14)
   viii. Commandment #8: No theft (20:15)
   ix. Commandment #9: No false testimony (20:16)
   x. Commandment #10: No coveting (20:17)
C. Epilogue (20:18-21)
D. Applications of the Ten Commandments (20:22-24:18)
   i. Prologue (20:22-26)
   ii. Regarding Hebrew servants (21:1-11)
   iii. Regarding personal injuries (21:12-36)
   iv. Regarding personal property (22:1-15)
   v. Regarding social responsibilities (22:16-31)
   vi. Regarding justice and mercy (23:1-9)
   vii. Regarding religious obligations (23:10-19)

III. The Tabernacle (25:1-40:38)
A. Blueprint for the Tabernacle (25:1-31:18)
   i. Prologue (25:1-9)
   ii. The Ark of the Covenant (25:10-22)
   iii. The table of showbread (25:23-30)
   iv. The golden lamp stand (25:31-40)
   v. The tent (26:1-37)
      1. Coverings (26:1-14)
      2. Framing (26:15-30)
      3. Curtains (26:31-37)
   vi. The courtyard (27:1-19)
      1. The altar of burnt offerings (27:1-8)
      2. The perimeter (27:9-19)
   vii. The oil for the lamp stand (27:20-21)
viii. The priests (28:1-29:46)
   1. The High Priest’s vestments (28:1-43)
      a. Prologue (28:1-5)
      b. The ephod (28:6-14)
      c. The breast piece (28:15-30)
      d. The robe (28:31-35)
      e. The turban’s golden plate (28:36-38)
      f. The tunic, turban and sash (28:39-41)
      g. The linen undergarments (28:42-43a)
      h. Epilogue (28:43b)
   2. Consecrating the priests (29:1-37)
      a. Prologue (29:1-9)
      b. The sin offering (29:10-14)
      c. The burnt offering (29:15-18)
      d. The wave offering (29:19-26)
      e. The fellowship offering (29:27-34)
      f. Epilogue (29:35-37)
ix. The offerings (29:38-46)
  x. The altar of incense (30:1-10)
 xi. Atonement money (30:11-16)
 xii. The wash basin (30:17-21)
 xiii. The anointing oil (30:22-33)
 xiv. The incense (30:34-38)
 xv. Epilogue (31:1-18)
     1. The craftsmen (31:1-11)
     2. The Sabbath (31:12-19)
     3. Final statement (31:18)
B. Interlude (32:1-34:35)
   i. The golden calf (32:1-33:6)
   ii. The tent of meeting (33:7-11)
   iii. Moses confers with God (33:12-34:35)
      1. God reveals his Glory (33:12-23)
      2. God reiterates his commandments (34:1-28)
      3. Moses’ face is radiant (34:29-35)
C. Building the Tabernacle (35:1-40:38)
   i. Prologue (35:1-3)
   ii. The material assembled (35:4-29)
   iii. The craftsmen chosen (35:30-36:7)
   iv. The tent assembled (36:8-38)
   v. The Ark of the Covenant assembled (37:1-9)
   vi. The table of showbread assembled (37:10-16)
   vii. The lamp stand assembled (37:17-24)
   viii. The altar of incense assembled (37:25-29)
   ix. The altar of burnt offerings assembled (38:1-7)
   x. The wash basin assembled (38:8)
   xi. The courtyard assembled (38:9-20)
   xii. The materials used during construction (38:21-31)
   xiii. The priestly vestments assembled (39:1-31)
   xiv. Moses inspects the components (39:32-43)
   xv. The Tabernacle set up (40:1-33)
   xvi. Epilogue (40:34-38)

Traditional Author: Moses
Traditional Date Written: 1446-1406 B.C.
Period Covered: 1446 B.C.

*Map of Egypt at the Time of the Exodus*

- Egypt consists of 390,000 sq. mi.
  - 15,000 sq. mi. are arable land, that area along the banks of the Nile River & the fertile Nile delta in the north
  - Large regions of the Sahara Desert constitute the rest of Egypt’s land area.

- Egyptians thought in terms of south/north; upper/lower, rather than west/east
  - Because the Nile River flows from South to North
  - Around 3000 B.C. Pharaoh Menes unified Upper Egypt (in the south) and Lower Egypt (in the north), establishing trade with Asia Minor, exporting minerals, ivory, paper and finished chariots, while importing wood, dyed wool, fashionable clothing and other luxury items.
**Historical Background**

As with all the books of the Bible, it is important to view Exodus in its full historical, cultural and literary context.

**Geography of Egypt**

"The gift of the Nile"

- In the 5th century B.C., the Greek historian Herodotus called Egypt “the gift of the Nile.”
- Thus, the Nile River is the very life blood of Egypt.
  - Originating in the high mountains of Kenya, the Nile River flows north over 4,000 miles, emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.
  - Annual inundation of the Nile brought high-nutrient silt, making the banks of the Nile—up to 6 miles on either side—extremely fertile.
- The rhythm of the river divided the year into two parts
  - Growing season – when people worked the land
  - Waiting season – when the Nile inundated, making the land fertile once again
    - A time when people had leisure to enjoy life and to express their creativity in art, architecture and learning.

**Egypt prospered**

- Ancient Egypt was truly dazzling, one of the most advanced, and prosperous civilizations on the planet.
- In this harsh and seemingly hospitable land, Egypt prospered
  - One of the greatest of ancient civilizations for 2,500 years
  - 3000 B.C. through 500 B.C.
- Egypt did not depend upon rainfall for its survival
  - Instead, the Nile River provided lean aquatic protein (fish)
  - The annual inundation of the Nile assured abundant crops
  - Rarely did Egypt experience drought or famine
- For much of its history Egypt enjoyed peace and prosperity
Bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north and vast stretches of desert to the west, east and south, Egypt rarely feared invasion by foreign peoples.

**Who was “Pharaoh”?**

This question, of course, depends upon our dating of the Exodus.

- Holding to 1446 B.C., the events recorded in the Bible take place during Egypt’s 18th Dynasty:
  - Moses must have been born 1526 B.C., 80 years before the Exodus (see Ex 7:7)
  - Thutmose I (1526-1508) was the Pharaoh who ordered the drowning of the Hebrew babies.
  - Queen Hatshepsut (1504-1482 B.C.) would have been the princess who fished Moses out of the Nile (Ex 2:5-10)
  - Thutmose III (1482-1450 B.C.) was the Pharaoh of the persecution
  - His son Amunhotep II (1450-1425 B.C.) was the target of the ten plagues and the Pharaoh of the Exodus

If our 1446 B.C. date is valid, then it places the events of the book of Exodus squarely in Egypt’s New Kingdom period, and specifically within the Eighteenth Dynasty.

- A fascinating story supports this identification. During the 19th century in Egypt, archaeologists unearthed a large slab of red granite buried between the paws of the Sphinx. It recounts “A Divine Oracle through a Dream” to Tutmose IV, son of Amunhotep II, before he became Pharaoh (Tutmose IV reigned from 1425-1412). Here is part of the story:

  One of these days it happened that the King’s Son Thut-mose came on an excursion at noon time. Then he rested in the shadow of this great god. Sleep took hold of him, slumbering at the time when the sun was at its peak. He found the majesty of this august god speaking with his own mouth, as a father speaks to his son, saying: “See me, look at me, my son, Thutmose! I am thy father, Harmakhis-Khepri-Re-Atum. I shall give thee my kingdom upon earth at the head of the living. Thou shalt wear the southern crown and the northern crown on the throne of Geb, the crown prince of the gods. Thine is the land in its length and its breadth, that which the Eye of the All-Lord illumines. Provisions are thine from the midst of the Two Lands and the great tribute of every foreign country.


We know from Exodus 12:29 that “the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh [Amunhotep II, according to our 1446 dating] sitting on his throne to the first born of the prisoner in the dungeon, as well as the firstborn of the animals.” If Tutmose IV were Amunhotep’s eldest son, and hence heir to the throne, it seems strange that a prophecy would predict that he would become Pharaoh (since he would in any case), and even stranger that the prophecy would be preserved between the paws of the Sphinx, not unlike an offering. Perhaps Tutmose was not Amunhotep’s eldest son and heir to the throne, but his older brother was. And perhaps his older brother died during the tenth plague recorded in Exodus 12:29-30, allowing Tutmose IV to inherit the kingdom. This would certainly call for preserving a record of the fortuitous event as an offering of thanks to the gods.

- Note: The ancient Egyptians dated events to the particular year in the reign of a king or pharaoh (regnal dating). The Ptolemaic scholar, Manetho, sorted the kings into dynasties, a system still used today, along with ancient king lists, astronomical records and modern archaeological dating methods. The following chronology is, thus, approximate and is subject to revision.
**Important Events – General Egyptian History**

In order to put all of this into perspective, here is how it fits in Egyptian history. Egyptian history is traditionally divided into three major periods (with intermediate periods in between) and since the 3rd century B.C., thirty dynasties. The dates are approximate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Period</th>
<th>Important Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-dynastic Period (5th-4th millennium B.C.)</td>
<td><strong>Neolithic and Late Neolithic Periods</strong>&lt;br&gt;Religion focuses on local gods in plant and animal form, along with various types of totemism (the worship of sacred objects).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaic Period 3100-2686 B.C.</td>
<td><strong>I-II Dynasty</strong>&lt;br&gt;The forces of nature become personified; local deities become anthropomorphized; Pharaoh becomes the incarnation of the god, Horus, giving legitimacy and absolute authority to Pharaoh’s rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Kingdom 2686-2181 B.C. (Major Period #1)</td>
<td><strong>III-VI Dynasty</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Theological system of <em>heliopolis</em> (sun worship) develops, as does the worship of the sun god, Ra. Pharaoh evolves into the son of Ra.&lt;br&gt;- Construction of the great pyramids begins: the Step Pyramid of Zoser, the Great Pyramid of Khufu, and the Sphinx. Technology is highly developed: the Great Pyramid towers 481 feet; it contains over two million blocks of stone, many weighing over fifty tons; and its volume can contain the cathedrals of Florence, Milan, St. Peter’s in Rome, and St. Paul’s and Westminster Abbey in London—all at the same time. Yet, the joins between its blocks are nearly invisible, true to 1/50th of an inch, and the four corners of the structure are so perfectly aligned North, East, South and West, that errors on modern compasses can be corrected against them, even today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Intermediate Period 2181-2133 B.C.</td>
<td><strong>VII-X Dynasty</strong>&lt;br&gt;Concept of the <em>ba</em> (soul or psyche) develops, and along with it judgment after death. The worship of Osiris as god of the underworld emerges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Kingdom 2133-1786 B.C. (Major Period #2)</td>
<td><strong>XI –XII Dynasty</strong>&lt;br&gt;The son god, <em>Ra</em>, merges with a minor Theban god, Amun.&lt;br&gt;The cult of Amun-ra develops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Intermediate Period 1786-1567</td>
<td><strong>XIII-XVII Dynasty</strong>&lt;br&gt;The XIII-XVII Dynasties saw over seventy kings in rapid succession, with an accompanying bloated bureaucracy. The weakening of a strong central government allows a group of Asiatic people from West Asia called the Hyksos (“rulers of foreign lands”) to invade Egypt and control it for nearly 100 years. The Hyksos introduced bronze working, horse and chariot, and advanced weapons of war.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Joseph comes to power as “Prime Minister” during the Hyksos period, explaining in part why a young Hebrew would move easily within the upper echelons of Egyptian power, which was controlled by foreigners from the north.

### Important Events – Period of the Exodus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XVIII-XX Dynasty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amose I, first king of the 18th dynasty, with his son Amonhotep I as coregent late in his reign, drives out the Hyksos, unifies the state and vastly improves the economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutmose I (1526-1508) embarks on a strong expansionist strategy, reaching the 3rd cataract in the south and the Euphrates River in the north. Following our biblical system of dating, it would be Tutmose I, a native Egyptian, who orders the drowning of the Hebrew babies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Hatshepsut (1504-1482), following the brief reign of Tutmose II (1508-1504) becomes co-regent with Tutmose III, who is still a child. She reverses the expansionist policy. In our dating, Hatshepsut would be the princess who fishes Moses out of the Nile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Tutmose III (1482-1450) comes of age, he becomes very aggressive, expanding Egyptian territory to the 4th cataract. He also embarks on an aggressive building plan, erecting many impressive buildings, including Karnak Temple, as part of his imperialistic policy. In our dating, Tutmose III would be the Pharaoh of the persecution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amunhotep II (1450-1425) continues his father’s policies. In our biblical dating, Amunhotep II would be the target of the ten plagues. He is not killed at the Red Sea: Exodus 14:28 says that “The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea.” Interestingly, Amunhotep II’s mummy was discovered in 1898 in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His son, Thutmose IV (1425-1412), is the one referred to in “A Divine Oracle through a Dream”- his first-born son who dies prematurely at 13 years of age.</td>
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</tbody>
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| XXI-XXX Dynasty |
### Egyptian History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Late Period</strong></td>
<td>Animals, once regarded as manifestations or symbols of the gods, become objects of</td>
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<tr>
<td>1085-332 B.C.</td>
<td>veneration—especially the crocodile and the cat. (Perhaps this explains why the only</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>mention of cats is in Baruch 6:21, and it is negative.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hellenistic Period</strong></td>
<td>The cult of Isis spreads outside of Egypt. Cleopatra commits suicide. Egypt becomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332-20 B.C.</td>
<td>part of the Roman Empire under Caesar Augustus, as we approach New Testament times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This brief overview of Egyptian history suggests several things about the events recorded in the book of Exodus.

- First, the Israelites spent nearly half a millennium living in a very advanced and sophisticated society. We often have the impression that ancient societies were primitive and crude. The Egyptians built the pyramids one thousand years before the Exodus, and the pyramids are still architectural wonders today.
- They had a thriving economy, banking system and international trade; they had highly developed sciences of mathematics, medicine, astronomy and art.
- Ancient Egypt ruled its world for a thousand years before Moses came along, and it continued to rule its world for another thousand years after Moses and the Israelites left. At the time of Moses, Egypt was the most advanced civilization on the planet, with a very long and very impressive history.
Religion played a major role in ancient Egypt throughout its history. At the time of Moses, Egypt had a fully developed, polytheistic religious system that included a pantheon of over eighty major and minor gods. Although difficult to generalize, the major gods were related something like this:

As we shall see, Ra, Shu, Geb, Osiris, Isis and Horus—the left side of the family tree—play an important role in the Exodus story. At the time of Moses, this Egyptian pantheon of gods had a history and theology as fully developed in its day as Christianity is today.
**Transition from Genesis to Exodus**

In Genesis 12: 2-3, God chooses Abram, an anonymous and obscure man from Ur of the Chaldeans (modern-day southern Iraq), and he makes a promise to him:

> I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you;
> I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.
> I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you;
> All the families of the earth will find blessing in you.

God chooses Abram to play a crucial role in the redemption of humanity, for it is through him that all the families of the earth will find blessing; it is through Abram that God creates a people who will be “a light for the nations” (Isaiah 42: 6) and through whom he will bring the Messiah, who takes away the sin of the world. Abram does nothing to merit being chosen for this role, but he responds to God’s call in faith, and as Paul tells us, his faith is “credited to him as righteousness” (Romans 4: 5). In Genesis, God makes good on his promise: Abraham and his wife Sarah give birth to Isaac; Isaac and his wife Rebekah give birth to Jacob; and Jacob and his wives give birth to twelve sons, who become the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. When we leave Genesis, the twelve sons and their families—seventy people in all—have immigrated to Egypt to be with their brother Joseph, who has become a national leader, second only to Pharaoh. Genesis ends with the death of Joseph: “Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. He was embalmed and laid to rest in a coffin in Egypt” (Genesis 50: 26).

**Exodus 1:1-7**

Ex 1:1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. 5 The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. 6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7 but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.

- Exodus begins in the Hebrew language with, “[And] these are the names of the sons of Israel . . . .”
  - Two things are important about this beginning:
    1. “[And] these are the names . . . .”
      - Suggests that Exodus continues Genesis. It is the next chapter in an on-going story; it is not—from a literary perspective—a separate, independent book.
        - The first word in the Hebrew text is “And” (the particle waw), suggesting a direct, unbroken continuation of the Genesis narrative.
      - The first words—“[And] these are the names”—is the Hebrew title of the book;
        - “Exodus” is the title used by St. Jerome in his fifth-century A.D. Latin translation
        - “Exodus” is derived from the Greek words ek, meaning “out” and hodos, meaning “road.”
          - In Genesis, Jacob’s family of seventy goes into Egypt, and in Exodus, a people of two million come out.
    2. The Hebrew phrase benay Israel means literally “the sons of Israel.”
      - Many modern translations render this phrase “the Israelites,” missing the subtle distinction that the people who come out of Egypt are God’s “sons” who must be taught by their father and who must grow in their relationship with him.
      - Throughout the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy), God’s covenant people are consistently called “the sons of Israel.”
      - As Robert Alter points out in The Five Books of Moses (p. 307), the masculine plural form of the Hebrew ben (the word used here) also means “children,” but it is clear here and in Genesis 46 that only the male offspring make up the seventy who emigrate to Egypt; hence the correct translation “sons.” Nevertheless, the connotation of “children” suggests that the Israelites are in the early stage of their relationship with God and that they have much to learn as they “grow up.”  
  - Ex 1:1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family:
2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; [4]
3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; [3]
4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. [4]

- Notice how the eleven sons are listed in two sets of four, with a set of three in the middle, giving a formal symmetry to the list. Nicely done!

- Ex 1:5 The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all
  - Literally, “And all these persons springing from the loins of Jacob were seventy persons . . .”
  - “Springing from the loins” is, as Robert Alter points out, a euphemistic metonymy for “testicles.”
  - The imagery is extremely vivid and very earthy, ending with the symbolic number 70, a number suggesting Jacob’s prodigious fertility, resulting in fulfillment and completion.

- Ex 1:5 … Joseph was already in Egypt.
  - “Joseph was already in Egypt” takes us back to the Jacob/Joseph story in Genesis (the concluding panel of the Genesis triptych) which reinforces the continuity of the narrative introduced with the opening “[And] these are the names of the sons of Israel . . .” in verse 1.

- Ex 1:7 but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.
  - We have already alluded to Jacob’s prodigious fertility in verse 3.
  - Here, we might translate more literally:
    “And the sons of Israel were fruitful and swarmed and multiplied and grew very vast, and the land [same Hebrew word as “the earth” in Genesis 1] was filled with them.”
  - Exodus 1:7 echoes Genesis 1, the creation story
    - Just as God created all that is in Genesis 1, so he creates the Israeliite nation in Exodus 1.
  - As Jacob was prodigiously fertile, so are “the sons of Israel” prodigiously fertile.

In one deft and carefully designed movement, Exodus 1:1-7 reaches back into Genesis 1, ripples all the way through Genesis 50:26 (the last phrase in the last verse of Genesis) and produces an extraordinarily tight narrative continuity between the two books. This is exquisite craftsmanship on the part of our author!

**Specific to General**

- If we look back on Genesis 12-50 (the main body triptych: the Abraham/Isaac; Isaac/Jacob; and Jacob/Joseph stories) we find that our narrative draws uniquely human portraits of each character, very specific in detail, tone and texture. The chapters read in many ways like a riveting, melodramatic novel.

- In Exodus these precisely drawn characters expand into a generic people numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

- Once again, as Robert Alter observes:
  “In keeping with this new wide-angle lens through which the characters and the events are seen, the narrative moves from the domestic, moral, and psychological realism of the Patriarchal Tales to a more stylized, sometimes deliberately schematic, mode of storytelling that in a number of respects, especially in the early chapters of the book, has the feel of a folktale.” (The Five Books of Moses, p. 300)

- Examples
  - Pharaoh morphs from a unique individual in the Joseph story to the generic “king of Egypt” in Exodus, the archetypical evil king who kills babies.
  - Two virtuous midwives tend to legions of childbearing Hebrew women who are described as “animals” who quickly squat down and give birth, even before the midwives arrive.
Moses, the future hero, is threatened with death by the evil king and is saved by being hidden and then rescued and reared by a virtuous woman (recall the same motif in Matthew when the evil king Herod orders the killing of all the babies in Bethlehem. Jesus is taken to Egypt where he is hidden, then rescued after Herod’s death and raised by a virtuous woman, Mary).

We see such folkloric parallels to the Exodus story in literature as early as 2300 B.C., in the legend about the great Sargon, king of Akkad:

Sargon the Mighty, king of Akkad am I.
My mother was a high priestess, my father I knew not . . .
My mother, the high priestess, conceived me, in secret she bore me.
She set me in a basket of rushes, with bitumen she sealed my lid.
She cast me into the river which rose not [over] me.
The river bore me up and carried me to Akki, the drawer of water.
Akki, the drawer of water, [took me] as his son [and] reared me.
While I was a gardener, Ishtar granted me [her] love.
And for [many] years I exercised kingship. (ANET, p. 119)

In Exodus, even God himself morphs from the anthropomorphic figure in Genesis, who walks in the Garden with Adam and Eve and has dinner and a debate with Abraham, into the mysterious figure of “I am” who speaks from within a burning bush and is wreathed in smoke and fire atop a thunderous and incandescent Mt. Sinai. Unlike in Genesis where God walks among his people, in Exodus God is remote, mysterious and enormously powerful, wreaking havoc on Egypt, slaying all the firstborn of the Egyptians and warning the Israelites not to approach his mountain or “else he will break out against them” (19: 24) and they will all perish instantly.

3-Part Structure

- The main body of Genesis is built on the tripartite structure:
  - Abraham/Isaac
  - Isaac/Jacob
  - Jacob/Joseph

- Exodus is built on three thematically defined spaces:
  - Egypt as a place of bondage
    - Its space is associated with water:
      - the central waterway of the Nile, where Moses is saved and the ten plagues begin;
      - Red Sea, through which the Israelites must pass and in which the Egyptian army is drowned
  - The Wilderness
    - Its space is associated with parched dryness and fire:
      - sand & jagged rock formations make up its landscape, where the people desperately thirst for water
      - Mt. Sinai, spewing divine fire
      - the pillar of fire that protects and guides the Israelites through their wilderness wanderings
  - The Promised Land
    - Its space is associated with milk and honey:
      - Situated beyond well-watered Egypt and the burning, fiery desert, it is a Land that remains just over the horizon, a Utopia that is not fully realized until Revelation 21-22, the conclusion of our Scriptural narrative

Servitude & Slavery (Ex 1-6)

At the end of Genesis Jacob and his family moved to Egypt to be with Joseph, who had become “Prime Minister” of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. The family sealed in the land of Goshen, the most fertile area of the northeastern Nile delta, and there they flourished. When we turn the page from Genesis to Exodus, 400 years flash by and Jacob’s family of
70 has become a people of nearly 2 million. As security threats to Egypt, the Israelites have become oppressed and enslaved.

- Moses and Joseph are exact opposites
  - Moses grows up as a prince, then becomes a shepherd
  - Joseph grows up as a shepherd, then becomes a prince

- Moving from Genesis to Exodus:
  - 400 years flash by
  - The family of 70 has grown into a people of 2 million
  - They have moved from freedom into slavery.
    - The turn of events is no historical fluke. In Genesis 15: 13, God tells Abram: “Know for certain that your descendants will reside as aliens in a land not their own, where they shall be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years.”

- Purposes for God’s decision to place his people into slavery
  1. It protects them from assimilating into the highly advanced Egyptian culture, allowing them to grow into a people with their own identity and reach critical mass as an incipient nation;
  2. It creates the slate on which God will inscribe profound moral and ethical lessons that are crucial to the plan of redemption.

- They were not enslaved by the Egyptians
  - Egypt was invaded by the Hixos – the new king was a Hixos king.
  - But the Egyptians regain power after about 100 years and they retain the policy of slavery of the Israelites.

- New Pharaoh enforces extreme oppression:
  - Assigns task master
  - Make the servants work with great rigor
  - Assigns the midwives to kill every male Israeli child
  - All Egyptians told to kill the Israeli babies - 1st holocaust

**Moses**

Beginning of his life - Moses is a man of action, not of talk (a man without words)
- Has a temper
- Has an absolute intolerance for injustice
  - Kills Egyptian
  - Chases off the thugs at the well in Midian
  - Kills 3000 men at Mt. Sinai because of the golden calf

At the end of his life, he has grown into a man of words (Song of Moses Dt 32)

**Born a Levite**

- Mother was Jochebed and father was Amram
  - Ex 2:1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son.
  - Nu 26:59 the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, who was born to the Levites in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam.

**Saved from infanticide**

The Birth of Moses
Ex 2:1 … When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6 She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" 8 "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 10 When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

- Heb 11:23 By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.
- Moses' mother (Jochebed) knew exactly where the baby would float to
  - Her daughter (Miriam) was there to get his mother once he was taken from the water
  - Moses' mother was his wet-nurse
- Ex 2:6 Pharaoh's daughter opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him.
  - Hebrew – “He was” was not there – it reads “She opened it and saw the baby crying”
  - Subtle distinction – she didn’t hear him crying – baby was crying silently
  - God brings together a baby’s tears and a woman’s heart

**Prince of Egypt**
- Moses was brought up as a prince in Pharaoh’s household
- He had been groomed and positioned for leadership in Egypt, perhaps as a great statesman, politician or general.
- Act 7:22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.
  - speech and action – Greek literally means word and deed

**Kills an Egyptian**
- 40 years old
- In a moment of righteous indignation and anger – and astoundingly poor judgment – Moses kills an Egyptian who was abusing a Hebrew slave
- His crime discovered, Moses flees Egypt, a wanted criminal

**Flees to Midian**
- Runs all the way east to the backside of the desert in the land of Midian.
- There he goes “off the grid” for the next 40 years, working as a shepherd, the lowliest of occupations.
  - Ps 90 is ascribed to Moses, and in it he writes Ps 90:10 The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength – To any objective reader, Moses has reached the end of his life a total failure.
- Marries a Midianite girl – Zipporah
  - Has 2 sons –Circumcision caused a lot of tension between Moses and Zipporah
    - Ex 4:24 At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met Moses and was about to kill him. 25 But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it. “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me,” she said. 26 So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said “bridegroom of blood,” referring to circumcision.)
**Alien vs Stranger**

- Alien – Has a permanent residence in an area, but is not a native
- Stranger – Does not have a residence – traveler

**Burning Bush**

On the remote backside of the desert, in the rugged landscape of the Sinai wilderness amidst snakes, scorpions and jackals, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob speaks to Moses from within a burning bush, telling him to return to Egypt and redeem his people.

- Theophany – the visual / physical manifestation of God - most often as fire and smoke
  - Abrahamic covenant – God appeared as a smoking firepot with a blazing torch and passed between the pieces
  - God appeared to Moses in the burning bush
  - Pillar of fire & smoke that lead them out of Egypt
  - On Mt.Sinai during the giving of the Law (10 Commandments)

- Moses was grazing the sheep at Mt. Hermon (Mt. Sinai) when he saw the burning bush
  - He was 80 years old
  - Who should I say is sending me? I am who I am
    - A name in the Bible describes or captures the very essence of who they are

**Excuses that keep us from experiencing God to the fullest**

1. Who am I?
   - Ex 3:11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"
   - Who am I that I should go? I am a loser on the backside of the desert – a murderer, a fugitive
   - God wants to use us (future) no matter what our story was (past)
     - Noah was a drunk
     - Abraham was too old
     - Jacob was a liar/deceiver
     - Leah was ugly
     - Joseph was abused
     - Moses was a murderer
     - Gideon was afraid
     - Rahab was a whore
     - Timothy was too young
     - David was an adulterer and murderer
     - Elijah was suicidal
     - Jonah ran from God
     - Naomi was a widow
     - Job was bankrupt
     - Peter denied Christ
     - Martha worried about everything
     - The Samaritan woman was divorced multiple times
     - Zaccheus was too small
     - Paul and too religious
     - Lazarus was dead!
     - Now, what is your excuse?

2. Who are you?
   - Ex 3:13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"
   - Moses has no idea who this God is – Nobody has heard of this God in over 400 years
If the Israelites knew anything about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it was little more than the faint echo of a folktale from a long time ago (~400 years ago). During the 400 years since God spoke to the Israelites, the Israelites have lived in Egypt:

- One of the most dazzling and sophisticated cultures on the face of the earth
- A culture that spawned a pantheon of gods and a fully developed, deeply mystical theology
- At Thebes, the religious capital of ancient Egypt, massive temples bore witness to powerful gods who were served by an army of priests, men consecrated to divine service and the religious life.
- If the Israelites knew anything about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it was little more than the faint echo of a folktale from a long time ago.

- Is your God the size of your wisdom? Or is your God the size of His power?
  - Unlimit your God! We ask God for so little, but He can give us SO much if we would just believe in His unlimited power
  - Alexander the Great - “Compassionate Day” – While known for conquering the entire “known world,” of his time, what’s not so well known is that he was compassionate towards his people. As the story goes, he set aside one day a year and called it, “Compassionate Day,” in which he would randomly select people across his kingdom and allow them to ask the king for a special request that he would grant – whatever it was! What’s so interesting is that most people would only ask for such things as food, clothes, money for medicine and the like. That is until one particular year, when a peasant requested that he be given a large palace, with a large banquet hall so he could host large meals for all his friends. To the astonishment of all present that day, Alexander granted his request. When the king’s men asked him why he would grant this man’s extravagant request, Alexander the Great told them that all the people are asking for mundane things could ask just anyone to give them. They don’t need a king to give them such things. Anyone with extra goods could do that. “But a king…for the first time, this man has made me feel like the king I am. For only a king could grant such a request!”

3. What if they …?
   - Ex 4:1 Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you’?”
   - Fear of what others will think about you will keep you from doing what God wants you to do
     - Ex. Raising your hands to honor God in church – what will others think? Fear of … building an ark in the desert … leaving your family to go ?? … going to Egypt to save your people
   - God showed Moses miracles (staff to snake) – All miracles come from God

4. Excuse – I have never … Please send someone else!
   - 4:10 Moses said to the LORD, “O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.” … 13 But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."
     - I am slow of speech and tongue – Literally it said “I am a man without words”
     - However, Stephen tell us: Ac 7:22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action
   - You have to be willing to leave your comfort zone to serve God
     - Moses was afraid, but like Moses, and Abraham and Noah, we have to step out in faith

**Comparison of Moses and Jesus**

Moses - Most important character the Old Testament - Foreshadows Jesus

Moses – Mediator of the Old Testament
Jesus – Mediator of the New Testament

**Similarities**
- Mediators of the Old and New Covenants
Both deliver their people from bondage (Moses from Egypt, Jesus from sin)
  o Both were the answer to the promise of deliverance
Both escaped the slaughter of the innocents (Moses from Pharaoh, Jesus from Herod)
Both flee Egypt (Moses from Egypt, Jesus to Egypt)
Wilderness testing (40 years / 40 days)
Both adopted (Pharaohs daughter / Joseph)
Law (Moses given the Law, Jesus fulfilled the Law)
Both shepherds
Intimacy with God
  o Both performed miracles as a ratification of God's authority
  o Both reflect Gods glory
  o Humble and obedient servants
Suffered persecution (Pharaoh / Pharisees)
Tabernacle (Moses built it, Jesus is it)
  o Moses offered sacrifices, Jesus was the sacrifice

Incarnation – Gods’ enfleshment (carn = flesh)

Why would God allow the enslavement of the Israelites?

1. To create His people/nation
   • Slavery keeps the Israelites from assimilating into the highly advanced Egyptian culture
     o Happens within 3 generations
   • Allows them to grow into a people with their own identity
     o Need to reach a critical mass to become an incipient nation
     o Do that by putting a fence around them

2. Creates a slate on which God inscribes profound moral & ethical lessons that are crucial to the plan of redemption
   • He teaches the Israelites how NOT to treat others
   • They are to be a shining example of what people are to be, which is NOT what the world is

The Exodus (Ex 7-15)

Commanded by God, Moses journeys back to Egypt to confront Pharaoh and demand that Pharaoh “let my people go!” Accompanied by his older brother Aaron (Moses is 80; Aaron is 83), Moses confronts Pharaoh . . . meeting with utter failure and humiliation. Indeed, Pharaoh responds as a modern-day corporate oligarch might to two elderly, feeble and has-been union organizers: Pharaoh ejects them from his office and doubles the workload of his laborers.

What’s more, the Israelites turn on Moses and Aaron, saying: “The Lord look upon you and judge! You have made us [a stench] to Pharaoh and his servants, putting a sword into their hands to kill us” (Exodus 5: 21).

After an epic battle with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt and into what he later calls “that vast and dreadful wilderness” (Deuteronomy 1: 19). Are the Israelites moving from slavery into freedom or from slavery into death? We shall see . . .

• Exodus – Clash of the titans (God vs Pharaoh)
  o Let my people go, so they may go and serve me
    ▪ Will they serve the master of the universe?
    ▪ Or will they serve the master of this world?
  o Exodus – Most miracles in the Old Testament
Lessons I can learn from Exodus chapter seven

- Like with Moses, the Lord doesn’t pay us as our doubts deserve. He’s always rich in mercy and patient with us as He encourages us.
- Like with the Lord speaking to Moses, sometimes He will give us a heads up of sorts by letting us know that our calling won’t be easy.
- Like with Moses and Aaron speaking for the Lord to Pharaoh, we should never speak or do anything in His name without His direction.
- Like with Pharaoh, the whole world will know Who the Lord is, and they will bow down before Him confessing Him as Lord of Lord’s.
- Like with the rod turning into a serpent, sometimes the Lord may want to do miracles for the Pharaoh’s of this world as well as us.
- Like with the magician’s counterfeiting the rods becoming serpents, just because it’s supernatural doesn’t mean that it’s true.
- Like with Aaron’s rod swallowing the magician’s rods, we shouldn’t fear. Greater is He that is within us than he that is in the world.
- Like with Pharaoh sinning against Israel and thus sinning against God, so too, we sin against God when we sin against other people.
- Like with the first plague turning the Nile into blood, there is no deity, or god greater than Jehovah God. Who is like unto Him?
- Like with Egypt and Israel, God may delay our liberation, for many reasons, not the least of which is His revelation to the world.

10 Plagues

The Ten Plagues of Egypt

Each plague becomes more severe, each targets an Egyptian god, and each carries a moral lesson
Reasons for the 10 plagues

1. Show the Egyptians who I am (Ex 7:3-5)
   - Demonstrate to the Egyptians that the Lord is God, not the gods of the Egyptian pantheon. In doing so, God accomplishes the release of his people from Egyptian slavery

2. Show the Israelites who I am (Exodus 10:2)
   - “[I have done these things that] you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the Lord”
   - The Israelites have been enslaved for nearly half a millennium, living as an oppressed minority in the greatest and most sophisticated polytheistic culture of their day. If anyone even remembered the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it must have been as the faint echo from a folk tale, long forgotten. Even Moses knows little about God for he says to God: “But . . . if I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you, and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what do I tell them?” (Exodus 3: 13).

   - In the ten plagues, God specifically targets the major gods in the Egyptian pantheon, and he says: “I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn — both men and animals — and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt”
   - In the first commandment God gives his people he says, “You shall not have other gods beside me” (Exodus 20: 3). The second commandment compliments the first, “You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth” (Exodus 20: 4). The temptation to make gods of the desires within us and of the objects around us poses a constant threat to genuine worship.
   - The Egyptians vast pantheon of gods with their various symbols and iconography reflect a complex and highly developed theology. Nonetheless, God judges it in Exodus. In the ten plagues, God specifically targets major gods in the Egyptian pantheon, and he says: “I will go through Egypt striking down every firstborn in the land, human being and beast alike, and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt” (Exodus 12:12). The ten plagues have such a stunning effect that not only does Pharaoh free the Israelites, but all the surrounding nations come to know that the Lord is God.

   • It was in order to make Himself known by giving an answer to Pharaoh who said; “Who is the Lord?” (Exodus 5:2).
   • It was so that He could show Himself greater than any one of the many powerless and false gods of Egyptians.
   • It was to show His power and majesty in and through Moses as well as for and to Moses (Exodus 9:16).
   • It was to give a testimony to the children of Israel so they would pass it on to the future generations (Exodus 10:2).
   • It was to judge Egypt’s false gods, who were really demons in the Satanic realm (Exodus 12:12, Numbers 33:4).
   • It was to warn other nations many years later, that this is the Lord God of Israel who plagued the Egyptians (1 Samuel 4:8).
   • It was for all generations a great and grand testimony of the goodness of God to Israel (Exodus 15:11, Deuteronomy 4:34).

Did the Plagues Really Happen?
The ten plagues are first and foremost a major element in the plot structure of our Exodus narrative, the catalyst for Pharaoh freeing the Israelites. The historicity of the plagues is an issue independent of our narrative.

There are three positions one can take concerning the historicity of the plagues, however.

1. One can view the plagues as simply a literary device in the story, miracles wrought by God to drive the narrative forward in a dramatic fashion. Most academic biblical scholars hold this position.
2. One can argue that the plagues did indeed happen, but they were mere natural occurrences, albeit intensified, that were given a theological interpretation by later Israelite generations. Much Jewish and Christian scholarship takes this position, outlining the events as follows:

- June: The Nile becomes stagnant and red with microscopic organisms.
- July: Frogs abound after the inundation of the Nile.
- Hot summer and damp autumn months: Lice, flies, murrain and boils.
- January: Hail and rain. (This date is suggested by the crops mentioned.)
- February: Appearance of locusts over green crops in early spring.
- March: Darkness from great sandstorms.
- April: Death of the firstborn, dated by the Passover celebration.

(Flinders Petrie. Egypt and Israel. New York: E.S. Gorham, 1911. pp. 35-36.)

3. One can view each of the plagues as literal historical events, separate and distinct acts of God, miracles used accomplish God’s purpose. Although similar plagues did occur in Egypt at numerous times in history, the plagues recounted in Exodus far exceed natural events. Joseph P. Free lists five unique aspects of the plagues that set them apart as miraculous:

- They are greatly intensified;
- Moses predicts the beginning and ending of each plague precisely;
- Some of the plagues affect only the Egyptians and not the Israelites;
- There is a gradual severity to the plagues, culminating in the death of the first born; and
- Each plague carries with it a moral purpose

(Archaeology and Bible History. Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1950, p. 95.)

Regardless of the position one takes on the historicity of the plagues, the Exodus story clearly treats them as miraculous events wrought by God to accomplish his divine purpose. Since we are approaching Exodus as a literary work and not as an historical document, we will take the ten plagues at face value and examine their nature and purpose within the context of our story.

**How long did the plagues last?**

Moses was 80 years old when he first appeared before Pharaoh after God had called him to lead Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 7:7). Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness before entering Canaan (Numbers 14:33-34). Moses was 120 years old when he died (Deuteronomy 34:7). Therefore, the combined plagues must have consumed less than a year.

Scholars have estimated that it took several months, perhaps as many as nine. This was based on various things, the flood stages of the Nile and it’s growing season, etc. We do Know that the 10th and final plague was memorialized by the "Passover", which takes place in March/April on our Gregorian calendars. Working backward from this final time period an estimated starting date using these factors as a guide was done.

Still other rough calculations end up somewhere in the vicinity of 2 weeks to a month. But this does not account for the larger unmentioned time spans that could have occurred between other plagues.

The Jewish view: The Mishnah in Eduyt 2:10 records that "The judgement of the Egyptians lasted 12 months". Midrash Rabbah 9:12, however, records that there was a month's time between each plague: 3 weeks of Moshe [Moses] warning Pharaoh and one week of the plague itself.

**Each plague individually targets an Egyptian God**

Religion played a major role in ancient Egypt. At the time of Moses, Egypt had a fully developed, polytheistic religious system that included a pantheon of over eighty gods. Although difficult to generalize, the primary gods were related something like this:
As we shall see, Ra, Shu, Geb, Osiris, Isis and Horus—the left side of the family tree—play an important role in the Exodus story. At the time of Moses, this Egyptian pantheon had a history and theology as fully developed as Christianity is today.

1. Blood (7:14-24) – Turns the Nile (life) into blood (death)

- The Nile River begins in the 16,000 foot mountains in the heart of Africa, and it flows north toward the Mediterranean Sea. Its 4,000-mile course makes it the longest river in the world. Each year during spring and early summer the melting snow and heavy rain in the southern mountains bring a vast torrent downstream, laden with tons of fine silt that is deposited on the banks of the Nile in Egypt. This annual inundation creates one of the most fertile regions in the world. Without the Nile, Egypt would be as barren and dry as the great deserts that lie on either side of it.

- The Nile is the source of life for Egypt, and it was considered sacred by the ancient Egyptians. Not only did the economy of Egypt depend upon the Nile, so did the happiness and well-being of its people. By turning the Nile to blood, it became a source of death instead of life.

- Several gods were associated with the Nile and life:
  - God Khnum was the guardian of the source of the Nile, as well as being the creator of man
  - Hapi was the spirit of the Nile, and its divine essence
  - God Osiris, the god of the underworld, had the Nile as his very bloodstream.
    - He embodied the power of chthonic fertility, the force that is active in the earth and that causes corn and trees to grow from it.

- In turning the Nile to blood, God eloquently proves Khnum, Hapi and Osiris impotent
- In a stunning reversal he brings death from the very source of life
  - Ex 7:21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

2. Frogs (8:1-15) – Frogs are everywhere, and then they die and are everywhere!

- Frogs were common in the marshlands of Egypt.
  - The inundation of the Nile continued through mid-September, and by mid-December it returned to its normal channel, leaving behind numerous pools and ponds, the breeding ground for frogs.
One can imagine the chorus of croaks on a balmy Egyptian evening. To farmers, this was sweet music, for the gods of the Nile had finished their work, making the land fertile and new.

**Goddess Heket** – Such associations caused the Egyptians to deify the frog

- Had the body of a woman and the head of a frog.
- Heket was the wife of Khnum, the guardian of the source of the Nile and the creator of man.
- As an adjunct to her husband she served as a divine midwife, helping women in childbirth.

When God initiates the second plague, frogs are everywhere! Imagine waking up in the morning and having hundreds of frogs in your bedroom, on your bed and in your dresser drawers. Since frogs were sacred, the people could do nothing but bear their presence.

- Ex 8:12 After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. 13 And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. 14 They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

Once again, the sacred Nile becomes the source of death, not life, and the goddess Heket is humbled.

**3. Gnats/Lice (8:16-19) – Throughout Egypt, the dust became gnats**

- The plague of gnats comes without warning, and it is the direct result of Moses and Aaron’s actions:
  - Ex 8:16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,' and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats."

- The Hebrew word for “gnats” only occurs in Exodus 8:12-15 and in the retelling of this event in Psalm 105:31. It is difficult, therefore, to tell exactly what the insects were (lice or gnats).
  - However one translates the Hebrew word, after Aaron strikes the ground, we can be sure that thick clouds of the nasty creatures infest the land, crawling into the eyes, noses and mouths of men and beasts alike: as the dust covers the ground, so do the insects swarm the air.

- **God Geb** – This plague targets the Egyptian god Geb, the god of the earth, and the father of Osiris and Isis.
  - Geb was credited with the health and plenty of Egypt’s annual crops.
  - In the plague of gnats, rather than lush crops emerging from the earth, thick swarms of disease-bearing insects rise from the dust to torment the people.

**4. Flies (8:20-32) – Swarms (of scarabs) gnaw at the clothes, furniture, plants, man and beasts of Egypt**

- Moses confronts Pharaoh at the Nile and says, “This is what the Lord says: Ex 8:20 … Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 21 If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground where they are.
  - Comes with a warning
  - This plague affects only the Egyptians; the Israelites are spared the infestation.

- The Hebrew literally means “swarms,” without reference to what is swarming.
  - Most translations add a preposition and the object of the preposition, such as “swarms of flies” or “swarms of beetles.”
    - In Egypt, the beetle blatta orientalis, which gnaws clothes, furniture, plants, man and beasts, arrives in late November — the approximate time of this plague — and the Egyptian word bears a close resemblance to the Hebrew.
  - **Scarab**
    - Since each plague becomes more severe, and each targets an Egyptian god, and each carries a moral lesson, one can make a strong argument for “swarm of beetles,” or, more specifically, scarabs. The scarab was sacred to the Egyptians, and the tombs of the pharaohs are littered with them.
• **Sun god Ra** – The scarab was identified with the sun god Ra, and it embodied the principle of eternal life.
  o Scarab typically laid eggs in dung and rotting filth, and as the heat of the day warmed the putrid mass, scarabs would emerge — a symbol, as it were, of life emerging from death.

• This plague is so severe that it causes Pharaoh to strike a compromise with Moses, promising him that if the plague ends the Israelites may worship their God (a promise he later breaks).

5. **Livestock diseased (9:1-7) – All the livestock of the Egyptians died**

• God says:
  o Ex 9:1 ... "Let my people go, so that they may worship me." 2 If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, 3 the hand of the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field—on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats. 4 But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die."

• Like the fourth plague:
  o Moses specifically predicts the fifth
  o it only affects diseased the Egyptians

• The Hebrew word for “plague” is variously translated “pestilence,” “murrain” or “anthrax.”
  o Whatever the nature of the plague, it was highly contagious and deadly, affecting all of the Egyptian livestock

• Livestock, of course, was very important to the Egyptians, providing food, labor and transportation.
  o The economic devastation caused by the fifth plague must have been enormous.

• **Apis** – In addition, the Egyptians considered cattle sacred, especially the bull, Apis.
  o On November 13, 1856 a spectacular discovery was made in the ruins of Memphis. At the end of a 1,120-foot tunnel, archaeologists discovered 64 large burial chambers, each with a huge red or black sarcophagus approximately 12 feet long, 9 feet high and 6 feet wide, weighing nearly 60 tons apiece. In each sarcophagus a sacred Apis bull had been mummified and buried, illustrating the importance of Apis in the Egyptian pantheon of gods.

• The fifth plague exposes the utter absurdity of worshipping beasts, birds and bugs, as the God of Israel easily destroys the greatest of them with pestilence.

6. **Boils (9:8-12) – Festering boils break out on men and animals**

• In the sixth plague, the LORD says to Moses and Aaron,
  o Ex 9:8 ..."Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. 9 It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land."

• “Festering boils” will break out on men and animals.
  o The Hebrew word for “boils” is used only thirteen times in the Old Testament.
  o The severity of the plague is reflected in verse 9, where it is said that “festering boils” will break out on “men and animals” alike.
  o The word “festering” refers to puss-filled, running sores. The sixth plague produces a vile, leprous-like skin condition that is both painful and repulsive.

• While it did not produce death, it did incapacitate the priests of the Egyptian pantheon.
  o An Egyptian priest had to be without physical defect, circumcised, shaved clean of all body hair, bathed and dressed in white, fine-twinned Egyptian linen.
  o A priest covered with repulsive running sores could not serve the gods.
• The goddess Sekhmet, who was believed to have the power of both creating epidemics and ending them, was proven impotent as the plague raged on, affecting even her own group of priests called the Sunu.

7. Hail (9:13–35) – Hail devastates what remains of the Egyptian economy

• In the seventh plague, God says to Pharaoh,

Ex 9:17 You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. 18 Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. … 22 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.” … 25 Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. 26 The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

• The plague of hail devastates what remains of the Egyptian economy, breaking down the crops and burning the fields as lightning races along the ground.

• Nut is the goddess of the sky who brings the blessings of the sun to the crops.
  o One can imagine the anguish and desperation as thousands of people lift their voices to Nut in prayer, and the prayers go unheard. The gods are once again impotent.

8. Locusts (10:1-20) – Locusts cover the ground and devour what little is left, fill the houses

• Locusts were the scourge of the ancient world.
  o In the 9th century B.C., the prophet Joel says (Joel 1:2-4)

  An Invasion of Locusts
  2 Hear this, you elders;
  listen, all who live in the land.
  Has anything like this ever happened in your days
  or in the days of your forefathers?
  3 Tell it to your children,
  and let your children tell it to their children,
  and their children to the next generation.
  4 What the locust swarm has left
  the great locusts have eaten;
  what the great locusts have left
  the young locusts have eaten;
  what the young locusts have left
  other locusts [⁵] have eaten.

  o In 1881, official documents from the island of Cyprus report that the government destroyed 1,300 tons of locust eggs
  o In 1889 the government reported a swarm of locusts crossing the Red Sea that blanketed 2,000 square miles
  o In more recent times, African migratory locusts were spotted in 1926 and 1927 covering an area of 50 x 150 miles on the plains of the Niger River near Timbuktu. By 1930, they covered the whole of West Africa, and by 1932 they had reached Khartoum, more than 2,000 miles to the east of Timbuktu. By the time the plague sputtered out fourteen years later, it had affected 5,000,000 square miles of Africa, an area nearly double the size of the United States.

• The devastation brought by locusts is hard to imagine.
  o One square mile of a swarm contains from 100,000,000 to 200,000,000 locusts, and swarms typically cover as much as 400 square miles.
  o Each locust eats its own body weight daily, and they strip a country bare, leaving millions of people in famine for years.
Pharaoh must have been seized with terror when God says:

- Ex 10:3 … 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 4 If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow. 5 They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields. 6 They will fill your houses and those of all your officials and all the Egyptians—something neither your fathers nor your forefathers have ever seen from the day they settled in this land till now.'

The cumulative force of the plagues has had a devastating effect on Egypt, its people and its economy:
- The land lies buried beneath a putrid mass of decaying fish and frogs
- The livestock have been felled by anthrax
- The crops have been destroyed by hail
- Disease and infections have ravaged the people
- And now Egypt faces an onslaught of locusts.

Pharaoh’s officials hardly exaggerate when they cry out to him, Ex 10:7 “… Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?”

- Nevertheless, Pharaoh refuses to let the Israelites go, and when God brings the locusts, they accomplish their task: Ex 10:15 … They devoured all that was left after the hail—everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.

The Egyptian gods are once again powerless against the hand of the Lord.

9. Darkness (10:21-29) – Strikes at the very heart of Egyptian worship and humbles the greatest Egyptian god, Ra

- When Moses stretches his hand toward heaven, a darkness so thick it can be felt descends upon Egypt
  - It remains for three days.
  - Like the third and the sixth, the ninth plague comes without warning.
  - At the same time, the places where the Israelites live are not affected by the darkness.

- Sun god Ra
  - The sun god Ra was considered one of Egypt’s greatest blessings, bringing light and warmth to the land, regulating the days and the seasons, his faithfulness never-failing.
  - The plague of darkness strikes at the very heart of Egyptian worship, and it humbles the greatest of the Egyptian gods, Ra.

- Still, Pharaoh refuses to bend.
  - As the severity of each plague intensifies, Pharaoh’s heart grows harder, his will more stubborn.
  - His disbelief turns to fear and loathing, and his true character emerges.
  - Instead of unlocking the shackles of slavery forged over 400 years, Pharaoh summons Moses and commands:

    Ex 10:28 Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.” 29 “Just as you say,” Moses replied, "I will never appear before you again."

10. Death of Firstborn (12:29-51) – Death angel passes through the night and slays the firstborn of men and beasts

Ex 12:29 At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. 30 Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.
31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. 32 Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."

- The tenth plague strikes horror into the heart of every reader of Scripture:
  - One can only imagine the confusion and chaos that reigned throughout Egypt that night. The sound of wailing spread from house to house, and bitter tears dampened the floors of palace and hovel alike.
  - In the home of Pharaoh, the prince, the heir to the throne, the god-child, lay on his bed cold, lifeless and limp.

- The death of the firstborn breaks Pharaoh’s will, wins Israel’s freedom, and vanquishes the gods of Egypt.
  - When the death angel passes through the night, slaying the firstborn of men and beasts, no question remains concerning who the Lord God is: as he says in Isaiah 44:6—“I am the first and the last; apart from me there is no God.”

- In the face of death, Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron and pleads for them to leave
  - The Israelites move quickly.
  - The dough they had formed had not yet been leavened, so they carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in cloth.
  - On the way out of town they plunder the Egyptians and leave Egypt
  - 600,000 men on foot, besides women, children and the elderly (Ex 12:37).

- God’s sovereign will prevails.
  - In Genesis, God tells Abraham, half a millennium before it occurs:

    Ge 15:13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.

- On the night of Passover, 1446 B.C., God keeps his word.

*Psalm 105*

26 He sent Moses His servant, And Aaron whom He had chosen.
27 They performed His signs among them, And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word.
29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.
30 Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings.
31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.
32 He gave them hail for rain, And flaming fire in their land.
33 He struck their vines also, and their fig trees, And splintered the trees of their territory.
34 He spoke, and locusts came, Young locusts without number,
35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land, And devoured the fruit of their ground.
36 He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land, The first of all their strength.

*Exodus and Revelation*
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<td>#4 Flies</td>
<td>Exodus 8:20-24</td>
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<td>Exodus 9:2-6</td>
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<td>#6 Boils</td>
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<td>#7 Hail</td>
<td>Exodus 9:22-26, Psalm 105:32</td>
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Plague #1 – Water becomes blood

Ex 7:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.’ ” 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the Lord commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

Ps 105:29 He turned their waters into blood, And killed their fish.

Rev 8:8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Rev 11:6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

Plague #2 – Frogs

Ex 8:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.’ ” 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Ps 105:30 Their land abounded with frogs, Even in the chambers of their kings.

Rev 16:12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

(Though not an infestation of frogs, this is undoubtedly a plague like the frogs in Egypt)

Plague #3 – Lice

Ex 8:16 So the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.’ ” 17 And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

Rev 11:3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no
Ps 105:31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, And lice in all their territory.

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<td>(Though lice are not mentioned specifically, they could be among the plagues brought by the two witnesses.)</td>
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**Plague #4 – Flies**

Ex 8:20 And the Lord said to Moses, “Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21 Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. 22 And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the land. 23 I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.” ’ ” 24 And the Lord did so. Thick swarms of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants’ houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies.

Ex 9:2 For if you refuse to let them go, and still hold them, 3 behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. 4 And the Lord will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all that belongs to the children of Israel.” ’ ” 5 Then the Lord appointed a set time, saying, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.” 6 So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died.

Rev 8:9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

(Though not a direct correlation, there is a similarity in that the food source of God’s enemies is destroyed.)

**Plague #5 – Food source (livestock) destroyed**

Ex 9:8 So the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” 10 Then

Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” 2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.
they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast.

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<th>Plague #7 – Hail</th>
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<td><strong>Ex 9:22</strong> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.” 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there was no hail.</td>
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<th><strong>Plague #8 – Locusts</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Ex 10:12</strong> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.</td>
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<th><strong>Plague #9 – Darkness</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Rev 9:1</strong> Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.</td>
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Ex 10:21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

Ps 105:28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; And they did not rebel against His word.

Ps 105:28

Rev 8:12 Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

Ps 105:28

Rev 9:1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth.

Ps 105:28

Rev 16:10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Harden Pharaoh’s Heart

Ex 7:3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. 5 And the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it.

- The word “harden” is an agricultural term denoting how an overly heavy yoke brings out the rebellious nature of the ox on which it is placed.

- The word does not mean that God will take the soft heart of Pharaoh and make it hard; rather, it suggests that God will apply pressure on Pharaoh to bring out of his heart what is already in it. Each plague increases the pressure, showing Pharaoh for who he is. In the end, Pharaoh capitulates to God, acknowledging him and freeing God’s people.
  o Think of it as a water-logged boat knot that is constantly being pulled tighter and the water drips out of it

- In Exodus chapters 4–14, there are twenty references to Pharaoh’s resistance to Moses’ message.
  o The cause attributed to the king’s hardness of heart is evenly split:
    ▪ ten times, the Bible says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart,
    ▪ ten times the Bible says that God hardened his heart.
  o The balance suggests that Pharaoh was responsible for his own actions, and, at the same time, God was using Pharaoh’s rebellion to bring greater glory to Himself.

- Paul uses this account to emphasize the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men: “Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden” (Romans 9:17–18, quoting Exodus 9:16).

Passover

Ex 12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family… 5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them
from the sheep or the goats. 6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. 7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. 8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. 9 Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts. 10 Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. 11 This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

Everything in the Old Testament pointed to and was fulfilled by the person of Jesus Christ.

**Passover – the Feast fulfilled**

Jesus Christ died at the Jewish feast of Passover. Jesus was a Jew. Jesus observed the Passover meal with His disciples before He was crucified. Jesus death was a fulfillment of the types and shadows in the Passover meal. God had been pointing to the sacrifice for sin that would be made by the Messiah. Jesus was that Messiah.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden they, and their descendants, became separated from God.

God’s plan of redemption came through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the children of Israel. The Bible tells how God rescued the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Although they saw miracles they complained, and showed their unbelief, as they journeyed through the wilderness to the Promised Land. So God imposed the Law, through Moses. Israel accepted the new conditions of blessings for obedience and curses for failure.

The story is instructive because it shows that they, and all people, are unable to measure up in their own strength.

The Law, which was added [*Galatians* 3:19] to God’s unconditional promises because of their transgressions, and which was a curse on Israel [*Galatians* 3:10], included moral and ceremonial requirements.

God knew that Israel would not be able to keep the Law. Nevertheless, He gave the Law for these reasons:

- To show His standard of righteousness [*Psalms* 19:7]
- To show that nobody measures up – He gave the Law to make sin obvious [*Romans* 3:20]
- To show that we are unable to achieve righteousness by our own efforts – We need a Savior [*Hebrews* 8:7-8]
- To point to that Savior – The Law pointed to Jesus, the Messiah [*Romans* 10:4]

The Bible says that the Law was ‘only a shadow of the good things that were to come’ (*Hebrews* 10:1). The Old Testament has many types and shadows that pointed to the Messiah. The Feast of Passover was one of the ceremonial requirements of the Law.

**Passover events foreshadowing the Messiah and fulfilled in Christ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israel had to take a lamb</th>
<th>Jesus is the Lamb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Tell the whole community of Israel that each man is to take a lamb ...” [<em>Exodus</em> 12:3]</td>
<td>John saw Jesus coming toward him and said: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” [<em>John</em> 1:29]</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lamb is to be dedicated to God</th>
<th>Jesus was fully dedicated to God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not used for anything else</td>
<td>Fresh and absolutely for God and His purpose, not having been used by any matter, person, or thing but being fully for God and His purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect.” [<em>Exodus</em> 12:5]</td>
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<tr>
<th>Inspect the lamb for 4 days</th>
<th>Jesus was found spotless after 4 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The authority of Jesus was questioned [<em>Luke</em> 20 and 22]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb” [Exodus 12:3]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jesus was sinlessly perfect</strong></td>
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<td><strong>“Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month” [Exodus 12:6]</strong></td>
<td><strong>He committed no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth. [1 Peter 2:22 and Isaiah 53:9]</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Lamb is to be slaughtered by everyone</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jesus was sinlessly perfect</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them” [Exodus 12:6]</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Lamb is slaughtered at twilight on the Day of Preparation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jesus was sinlessly perfect</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.” [Exodus 12:6]</strong></td>
<td><strong>He committed no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth. [1 Peter 2:22 and Isaiah 53:9]</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Israel had to put blood on the doorframes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jesus shed His blood to cover our sins</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>“They are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.” [Exodus 12:7]</strong></td>
<td><strong>God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. [Romans 3:25]</strong></td>
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<th><strong>The Israelites would be spared from death while under the blood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jesus shed His blood to cover our sins</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you ...” [Exodus 12:13]</strong></td>
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<th><strong>The Israelites had to stay in the house until morning</strong></th>
<th><strong>Jesus shed His blood to cover our sins</strong></th>
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<td><strong>“Not one of you shall go out of his house until morning.” [Exodus 12:22]</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Jesus gives spiritual deliverance from slavery to sin and the fear of death</strong></th>
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<td><strong>On that very day the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt. [Exodus 12:51]</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jesus gives spiritual deliverance from slavery to sin and the fear of death</strong></td>
</tr>
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Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the Lord brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast. *[Exodus 13:3]*

... He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. *[Hebrews 2:14-15]*

We were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. *[Galatians 4:3]*

Passover was linked to the Feast of Unleavened Bread

*The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.* [Leviticus 23:5-6]

Leaven is yeast. It causes bread to rise; to get puffed up. It is a picture of sin through pride and selfishness. Israel had to eat bread without yeast.

**CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO HUMILITY ...**

*Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.* [1 Corinthians 5:6-8]

We can also see pointers to Jesus, and the community of believers that He would birth, in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Jesus said: “I am the Bread of Life.” [John 6:48]
The Bible says that believers are one with Jesus – one body [Colossians 1:18].

*Passover has been fulfilled. Jesus has accomplished redemption for all who believe in Him.*

To Jews each day starts at sunset. The Sabbath is the last day of the week – a Saturday. It starts on Friday evening and ends on Saturday evening. Sunday follows the Sabbath. It is the first day of the week. It was the day that Jesus rose from the grave.

When Jesus rose from the dead, the church was born. The disciples became the firstfruits of the harvest – the first grain unto God. They saw the resurrected Lord on Sunday – the first day of the week by Jewish reckoning.

**ISRAEL HAD TO BRING A GRAIN OFFERING ON THE DAY AFTER THE SABBATH**

*The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins ... [Leviticus 23:5-6]*

“When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. [Leviticus 23:9-11]

*Passover has been fulfilled. Jesus has accomplished redemption for all who believe in Him.*

**The Exodus**

**Exit route**

- In an attempt to confuse the Egyptians, the Israelites avoid the Via Maris, the main northbound international trade route that parallels the Mediterranean Sea and instead head southeast toward the Red Sea
• Arriving near the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez, the Israelites look up and see the Egyptians in hot pursuit.
• With their backs to the sea and the Egyptians bearing down upon them, the Israelites cry out to Moses: Ex 14:11 "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?"

**Parting of the Red Sea**

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. (Ex 14:21-22) At daybreak, when the last Israelite reaches the far shore, the towering walls of water collapse, drowning the entire Egyptian army. The Israelites celebrate with a chest-bumping, high-fiving victory song: *I will sing to the Lord for he is gloriously triumphant; Horse and chariot he has cast into the sea . . .!*

Ex 14:15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "… Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. 17 I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them…. 19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 24 During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt." 26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

**Did the Exodus really happen?**

**What are the facts?**

• There is no historical or archaeological evidence to suggest that the Israelites lived in Egypt in large numbers between 2,000–1,400 B.C., the period of the Patriarchs through the Exodus, certainly nothing approaching the epic story reported in Scripture.

• There is no historical or archaeological evidence whatsoever to suggest that two million people left Egypt and wandered through the Sinai wilderness for forty years.
  o Indeed, if two million people left Egypt and headed toward the land of Canaan walking ten abreast, they would form a line stretching 150 miles!
  o Although archaeologists have found ample evidence of other people living in the Sinai who predated the Israelites, it is highly improbable that two million people could dwell in the Sinai for an entire generation without leaving a single pottery shard, Hebrew carving or trash heap.
• Doubts about the Exodus are not based primarily on the lack of historical or archaeological evidence in Egypt or in the Sinai; rather, they are based upon the study of settlement patterns in Israel itself, a field that has been probed much more deeply than the Exodus.
  o Extensive surveys of ancient settlements in Israel make it clear that no great influx of people occurred between 1,500-1,000 B.C.
  o It is not the lack of evidence for the Exodus, but the arrival in the land of Canaan that suggests that the Exodus was not a literal historical event, at least not on the scale of the biblical story.
    ▪ If two million people who lived in Egypt for 400 years suddenly flooded into Canaan, one would expect to find massive evidence to support the event (their dishes, pottery and tools, for example, would look very different from similar Canaanite items, as would their art work, architecture and building methods). In fact, there is not a shred of evidence to suggest a sudden population increase in Israel during this period.

So what do we make of all this?

• Given Jewish oral tradition, it seems probable that there were some enslaved Israelites in Egypt who escaped and made their way into the land of Canaan, planting the seed of a growing tradition which developed over time as the Jewish people shaped their own national identity and story. Indeed, the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) did not reach its final form until post-exilic times (after the Babylonian captivity, 586-539 B.C., 1,000 years after the Exodus story).

• Questioning the historicity of the Exodus in no way undermines Scripture or diminishes its message
  o Rather, such questioning highlights the literary nature of the text, viewing the Exodus as a story of redemption, writ on a grand scale.
  o Scripture encompasses a variety of literary genres: it is not simply a historical account, although historical events may rest at its foundation.
  o Scripture is the story of God’s interaction with humanity as viewed through the lens of a living faith tradition.

Date of the Exodus

There has been an enormous amount written on the date of the Exodus as it is described in our biblical narrative, but most writers sit in one of two camps: 1446 B.C. or c. 1290 B.C.

1446 B.C.

• 1446 B.C. – The argument for 1446 B.C. is internally consistent with the Bible and rests primarily on this text:

  1Ki 6:1 In the four hundred and eightyeth year after the Israelites went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel in the month of Ziv (the second month), he began to build the house of the Lord.

• Solomon’s reign began at the death of his father, David, in 970 B.C.
  o The fourth year of Solomon’s reign, then, was 966 B.C.
  o Both of these dates are firmly fixed by internal dating in 1 & 2 Kings and by Assyrian chronological records independent of the Bible.
  o If Solomon began building the temple “in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites went forth from the land of Egypt,” the Exodus took place in 1446 B.C.

• If the Exodus occurred in 1446 B.C., then the Israelites, after spending forty years in the wilderness, began their conquest of Canaan in 1406 B.C.
  o The Amarna Letters, over 300 14th-century B.C. clay tablets in the Akkadian language, refer to such an invasion by a people called the “Habiru.”
• It also fits well with Judges, which says:

Jdg 11:26 For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon.

• Adopting this time-frame places the:
  o Exodus in 1446 B.C.
  o Conquest of Canaan between 1406 and 1380 B.C.
  o Period of the Judges between 1380 and 1050 B.C.
  o Saul’s reign between 1050 and 1010 B.C.
  o David’s reign between 1010 and 970 B.C.
  o Solomon’s reign between 970 and 930 B.C.
  o We can be confident of Solomon’s dates, so working backward we arrive at the others. All of this is internally consistent with events in the Bible, and it is also the traditional date of the Exodus in both Jewish and Christian writings.

• Summary
  o 970 BC – Solomon began his reign
  o 966 BC – 4th year of Solomon’s reign
  o 966 BC – 480 years = 1446 BC as the date of the Exodus
  o Internally consistent with our narrative in scripture
  o This is the anchor-point for all the dating both backward and forward

• From a literary perspective, 1446 B.C. is internally consistent with our narrative, so we shall use it as we study Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth and 1 & 2 Samuel. Once we hit 1 Kings, the disagreements vanish, for all the dates fall into line.

1290 B.C.

• 1290 B.C. – The c. 1290 B.C. alternative is an archeological date which has some biblical evidence in Exodus:

Ex 1:11 Accordingly, they set supervisors over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. Thus they had to build for Pharaoh the garrison cities of Pithom and Rameses.

  o Rameses was rebuilt over the ancient city of Zoan-Tanis under the Pharaoh Rameses II, who reigned from c. 1290 to 1224 B.C.
  o In addition, there is much archaeological evidence for the destruction of numerous Canaanite cities in the thirteenth century, evidence that many scholars suggest reflects Joshua’s campaigns.
  o Accepting the 1290 B.C. date, however, means curtailing the period of the Judges by 150 to 200 years, for Solomon’s dates (970-930 B.C.) are reasonably secure. It also means reading the 480 years of 1 Kings 6: 1 as a “round” number (12 generations of 40 years). This is highly unusual in 1 & 2 Kings, both of which give exact numbers for all the kings’ reigns (e.g., Jeroboam “reigned for twenty-two years” (1 Kings 134:20), Abijah “reigned in Jerusalem three years” (1 Kings 15:2), Asa “reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years” (1 Kings 15:10), and so on for thirty-nine kings.
  o One could easily argue that the city of Rameses mentioned in Exodus 1: 11 is an updating by a scribe living centuries later, giving current names to places his audience otherwise would not know. This seems to happen in Genesis 47: 11—“Joseph settled his father and brothers and gave then a holding in Egypt on the pick of the land, in the region of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.” Clearly, Joseph lived long before 1290-1224 B.C., the period of Rameses.
Although we shall adopt the 1446 B.C. date for our study of Scripture, I do not wish to oppose the c. 1290 B.C. option too vigorously, for much modern scholarship supports it, including the work of William F. Albright, perhaps the greatest biblical archaeologist of the twentieth century.

**God Redeems His People**

**Pillar of Cloud and Fire**

Ex 13:21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

Theophany – the visual / physical manifestation of God - most often as fire and smoke
- Abrahamic covenant – God appeared as a smoking firepot with a blazing torch and passed between the pieces
- God appeared to Moses in the burning bush
- Pillar of fire & smoke that lead them out of Egypt
- On Mt.Sinai during the giving of the Law (10 Commandments)

- Parting of the Red Sea is the 1st time that the pillar of cloud and fire appears
  - Leads the Israelites to the Red Sea
  - Blocked the Egyptian Army from getting them as the Red Sea

**Liberation vs Redemption**

God brought the people out of Egypt, not Moses
- God redeemed His people from Egypt, Moses did not liberate them
- If Moses did it, it would have been liberation
  - Liberation – Liberated from slavery – free to do whatever they want
  - Liberation creates freedom
- God redeemed His people
  - God brought them back into the place where they belonged – into a covenant relationship with Him
  - Move from where you are to where you are supposed to be – in a covenant relationship with God that has obligations and responsibilities, both on God’s part and the people’s part

**On the road to Mt. Sanai**

- It is one thing to escape from Egypt; it is quite another to survive the aftermath. Moses and the Israelites now confront the stark reality of finding enough food and water in the wilderness to survive.
  - Ex 12:37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. 38 Many other people went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.
  - In the opening chapters of Numbers the Israelites take a census by tribe, clan and family totaling 603,550 men, plus women and children—roughly 2 million people.
- It is impossible to support 2 million people in the Sinai wilderness: period.
  - Survival calls for a miracle, and God provides it
  - God makes bitter water sweet, brings water from the rocks and provides daily manna to eat
  - God nurtures and sustains his people through their wilderness journey
- After a three-month journey through the wilderness, the Israelites arrive at Mt. Sinai
  - The Israelites camp in front of the mountain
  - There, God reaffirms the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
4 Logistical Problems

4 Logistical problems of dealing with 2 million people in the wilderness that need to be resolved
1. Food – Manna (Literally "what is this?") and quail (Ex 16)
2. Water - Oasis – Moses knew where the oasis were from living there as a shepherd for so long (Ex 17)
3. Vulnerable to attack – mob of slaves that have left Egypt (Ex 17)
   a. Joshua defeats Amalekites
   b. As long as Moses held the staff overhead, the Israelites were winning, so Aaron and Hur helped him hold his arms overhead all day
4. Leadership – How do you give instructions and lead 2 million people in the desert?
   a. Jethro’s advice (Ex 18)
      i. Jethro is Moses’ father-in-law – Zipporah’s father
      ii. Zipporah and Moses have an argument and Zipporah is sent home w/ the boys to Jethro
      iii. Jethro and Zipporah and the boys go back to Moses
      iv. Jethro teaches Moses to delegate – forms a judicial system

Manna

Manna is Hebrew for "what is it?" The Hebrews had never seen anything like it. Manna covered the ground with thin flakes that looked like frost and tasted like honey. It arrived each morning—enough for two quarts per person. The exception was the Sabbath, when nothing came. But a double portion fell the morning before (see Exodus 16:11-24).

These mystery flakes—according to the most popular theory—were insect droppings. In May through June, parasitic insects bore sap from tamarisk trees, and excrete what they can't digest. The desert sun evaporates the liquid carbohydrate balls that are as large as peas. Flakes remain. Nomadic Arabs still call this manna, and use it as a sweetener.

The Great Gifts of God – The Law (19-24) and Tabernacle (25-40)

Reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant
Given in the people in the context of redemption
10 Commandments (Law) – Teaches us how to worship, how to come before a holy God

The Covenant Reaffirmed

Abrahamic covenant – Ge 12:2-3
2 "I will make you into a great nation
   and I will bless you;
   I will make your name great,
   and you will be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
   and whoever curses you I will curse;
   and all peoples on earth
   will be blessed through you."

Implicit in this covenant is property and progeny.

Ge 13:14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. 15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

When God moves his people out of Egypt and into the Sinai wilderness, he reaffirms the covenant he made with Abram over half a millennium earlier. In Exodus 19: 4-6, God gathers his people at Mt. Sinai and he says:
Ex 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

- And the people reply

Ex 19:8 The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said."

- With this reaffirmation, God gives his people two great gifts: 1) the Law and 2) the Tabernacle.

Preparing the people for their encounter/worship of a holy God

Ex 19: 3 Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ …

10 And the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes 11 and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12 Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, ‘Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. …

16 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently,

- Theophany – the visual / physical manifestation of God - most often as fire and smoke
  - Abrahamic covenant – God appeared as a smoking firepot with a blazing torch and passed between the pieces
  - God appeared to Moses in the burning bush
  - Pillar of fire & smoke that lead them out of Egypt
  - On Mt. Sinai during the giving of the Law (10 Commandments)
The Law / Torah / 10 Commandments (Ex 19-24)

- In Exodus, at Mt. Sinai, God gives his covenant people their greatest gift: the Law
- The Ten Commandments are not unique, but have antecedents in both Hittite and Mesopotamian laws and treaties: they are foundational to the functioning of any organized social structure.
- Torah (the Law) – The basis for the moral and ethical development of the entire human family
  - Torah is not simply a theoretical set of laws to ensure a just society: many other cultures had such laws
  - Rather, it is God’s comprehensive teaching, written in letters of light on the dark background of oppression and suffering.
    - In Leviticus 19: 34, for example, God says: “You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the native born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.” The Israelites know what it is to be enslaved and mistreated, and they must never treat others in that way.
  - The Law is far more than Ten Commandments; it is God’s comprehensive teaching on all aspects of life

Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant that either brought God's direct blessing for obedience or God's direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel.
- Part of the Mosaic Covenant was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the rest of the Law, which contained over 600 commands—roughly 300 positive and 300 negative.
- Deuteronomy 11:26-28 details the blessing/cursing motif
  - Dt 11:26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse- 27 the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; 28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.
  - Lev 26 and Dt 28 detail the blessings and curses
- The history books of the Old Testament (Joshua–Esther) detail how Israel succeeded at obeying the Law or how Israel failed miserably at obeying the Law.

10 Commandments

- Why does God give the 10 Commandments?
  - Ten principles by which a covenant people is to live with God and one another
    - For the good/benefit of God’s people
  - Now that God has saved you, this is the way that you live a life pleasing to Him
    - 10 Commandments were given after they were delivered (not do this so God will save you)
  - Glimpse into the very character and nature of God
    - God is a God of truth and justice – he could not have said ‘Thou shall murder’
    - Ps 119 – What a blessing it is to have God’s law
      - Longest chapter in the Bible
      - Acrostic – 8 versus per letter – very repetitive

Command laws (Ex 20)

- Apodictic laws (Command laws) – Thou shall or shalt not
  - They never change
- Addresses all of life

- The first 4 commandments have to do with the peoples’ relationship with God:
  1) You shall have no other gods before me (20:3)
2) You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them (20:4-5)
3) You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God (20:7)
4) Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy (20:8)

• The last six commandments have to do with the peoples’ relationship with each other:
  5) Honor you father and mother (20:12) – Only commandment with a promise
  6) You shall not murder (20:13) – Premeditated unlawful taking of life
  7) You shall not commit adultery (20:14)
  8) You shall not steal (20:15)
  9) You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (20:16)
 10) You shall not covet (20:17)

• Fear of the Lord
  o Ex 20:20 Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”
  o The people’s initial and proper response to encountering God should be fear
  o Proverbs – Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
  o Jesus said that you are to fear God

• 5 Imperatives about worship - Application of 1st commandment – Ex 20:23-24
  o Blood sacrifices are needed to atone for our sin – Christ’s blood on the cross is our atonement
  o Come to God as you are
    ▪ No dressed stones – bring the stones as they are, just as we come as we are
    ▪ Nakedness of Adam & Eve – not a physical nakedness as much as their awareness of their sin before a holy God
  o Do not consult anyone except God
    ▪ Sorcery is a capital offense - Ex 22: 18 “Do not allow a sorceress to live.
    ▪ We are to worship and consult the one true God – no one else
    ▪ If you are consulting anyone/anything but God, you are opening yourself up to demonic influences
  o Ex 22: 31 “You are to be my holy people.
    ▪ Ex 23:19 ….“Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.
      • Pagan fertility worship – idolatry – from the nations around them
      • Don’t be like them, be like me
  o Trust the Lord
    ▪ Ex 23:10 “For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, 11 but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused.
    ▪ If you live off the land, you have to trust that God will take care of you when you follow His commands

Case laws / Casuistic laws / Application (Ex 21-24)
• In Ex 21-23, God shows his people how to apply these principles in everyday life.
  o These principles—and their applications—provide the moral and ethical underpinnings for the rest of the narrative that follows, not only in Exodus, but throughout Scripture.

• Conditional – Characterized by an “if … then” condition where an action and its consequences are stipulated, and mitigating circumstances or considerations are specified

• Example: Murder
  o Ex 20: 13 “You shall not murder.”
Ex 21: 12 "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.

The Hebrew word for “murder” is ratsah, which refers specifically to the premeditated, unlawful taking of a human life—it does not refer to killing in war or to judicial killing, which God clearly permits—indeed, commands—in Scripture.

God carefully defines his prohibition against murder

Ex 21:12 "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate. 14 But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from my altar and put him to death.

▪ If it is an accident, then flee to a city of refuge, described later in Numbers 35:6-34
▪ But if it was the premeditated, unlawful taking of a human life, then put him to death.

Jesus addresses the issue of murder in the Sermon on the Mount

Mt 5:21"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

▪ Obviously, Jesus is not equating anger with murder and commanding his followers not to be angry: he himself was angry on many occasions, notably when he entered the temple with a whip and drove the money changers out and when he exorcised the religious leaders at the temple in Matthew 23.
▪ Rather, Jesus recognizes that murder is the final step in a sequence of actions that begins with anger and ends with the premeditated murder of another human being.
▪ When one feels the type of anger that congeals into hatred and manifests itself in a plot to take another’s life, address the problem at the start: such anger must be nipped in the bud.

Example: Stealing – If you are guilty of any wrong, you are responsible before God to make it right

▪ You have a responsibility to remove foreseeable dangers to your neighbors
  - Ex 21:28-35 – Owner is responsible if they knew that the animal was as danger to the neighbors
▪ 1Co 9 – the rights of the Apostles to have their needs met as they are ministering to the people
▪ Ex 22 – Restitution – whether you intended to destroy or not, you are responsible for restitution
  - If the crime was intentional, they owe double as restitution – personal injury to the soul of the person you have wronged
▪ Lk 6:32-36 Be kind to the ungrateful and wicked
▪ Lk 19:8 Zacchaeus seeks forgiveness and offers restitution for his wrong-doing – demonstrates his repentance by making restitution to hid neighbors.

As we study Scripture systematically from Genesis through Revelation, we will find this commandment—and the other nine—clarified and applied in like manner in a variety of circumstances.

The application of the Ten Commandments became the subject of profound rabbinical thought

▪ By the twelfth-century A.D. the great rabbi, Maimonides, had written Sepher Mitzveth, which identified 613 specific laws that emerged from the Commandments which would aid in their application.
▪ John H. Sailhamer’s appendix in The Pentateuch as Narrative (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992) lists the 613 laws, and he notes where Jesus and the New Testament writers take up or assume the same principles.
**Jewish vs Christian application of the Law**

- **Jewish** – the Law is God’s greatest gift to his people
- **Christian** – the Law is God’s standard of behavior – the gold standard – that no one can meet.
  - In Paul’s thinking, the Law is the straight line against which we measure our crookedness, and in doing so the Law demonstrates our desperate need for a savior.
    - Ro 3:21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
  - The author of Hebrews concurs:
    - Heb 10:1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

**Covenant Renewal Ceremony (Ex 24)**

- **Sacrifice**
  - Blood sprinkled on the people – Blood is unpleasant but necessary
  - Expiation – taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of an atonement
    - *ex* means “out of” or “from” – Removing something or taking something away
  - Propitiation – Satisfying God’s wrath against sin
    - *propitiation* has to do with the object of the expiation
    - *pro* means “for” – Propitiation brings about a change in God’s attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us.
    - Through the process of propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favor with God
- **Reading of scripture**
- **Response of the people (Ex 24:3, 7)** – We will do everything that the Lord has said, we will obey
  - You should want to do what God wants you to do
  - Jesus – Take up your cross every day and follow me
  - 40 days later, they are worshipping the golden calf
  - They needed to be reminded of their commitment – we are prone to wander
- **Moses foreshadows Jesus**
  - Moses going into the cloud on the mountain compared to Jesus at the Transfiguration
  - 40 days and 40 nights on a mountain
- **Communion – Covenant renewal ceremony**
  - God having a meal with His people – in His presence and for His glory
  - Renewing our commitment to our service and devotion to God

**Covenant – Suzerain/Vassal treaty covenant**

The Giving of the Law follows the format of a Suzerain/Vassal treaty covenant

Why does He use this format? Is was familiar to the Israelites

- Consistent with the literary structure of covenants in the 2nd millennium BC – Moses writing Exodus
- Not consistent with the literary structure of covenants in the 1st millennium BC – Exodus written after the exile

In the Ancient Near East, treaties between kings were common. These treaties are preserved in the Mari Tablets and in the Amarna texts. Preserved in these collections are treaties drafted between a superior and his inferior.

- If the relationship was familial or friendly, the parties are referred to as "father" and "son."
- If the relationship is bereft of kindness and intimacy, the parties are referred to as "lord" and "servant," or "king" and "vassal," or "greater king" and "lesser king."

**General Suzerain/Vassal treaty covenant**

- Suzerain – The greater king (Egypt, Mesopotamia (Babylon, Assyria, Persia))
• Vassal – The lesser king – a prince, or a lesser lord in the service of the greater king. The lesser lord is a representative of all the common people who are under the protection of the greater king. He enforces the treaty among the masses.

• Suzerain/Vassal treaty covenant literary structure
  o Historical Preamble:
    ▪ The identification of the Suzerain by his name and titles
    ▪ The historical survey of the Suzerain's dealings with the vassal
    ▪ The purpose is to illustrate to the vassal how much the Suzerain has done to protect and establish the vassal who therefore owes submission and allegiance to the Suzerain.
  o Stipulations
    ▪ What the vassal is required to do is spelled out in principal and detail.
    ▪ This section is often concluded with the requirement that the vassal deposit his copy of the treaty in his temple, where he is to occasionally read and study it to refresh his memory concerning his duties.
  o Blessings / Curses of the Suzerain
    ▪ If the stipulations are met by the vassal, he will receive the Suzerain's blessings, which are listed.
    ▪ If the vassal fails to meet the stipulations, he will receive the Suzerain's curses, which are also listed.

• The covenant was ‘cut’
  o The Suzerain would keep one copy of the treaty and the vassal would keep one copy of the treaty.
  o A number of ratifying ceremonies were used depending upon the era and culture. But the most widely used rite was that of cutting the bodies of animals in halves and placing them in two rows with enough space between for the two parties of the treaty to walk side by side. As they walked between the pieces, they were vowing to each other, ”May what has happened to these animals, happen to me if I break this covenant with you.”
  o We’ve seen this before in Genesis 15 - God’s Covenant With Abram
    ▪ Ge 15:9 So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon. ” 10 Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other … 12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. … 17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land…
    ▪ Abram did not pass between beside God – there was nothing for him to uphold – unconditional covenant

Torah – Suzerain/Vassal treaty covenant

Suzerain – God
Vassal – Moses – Representative of all the common people. He enforces the treaty among the masses.

• Historical Preamble: Ex 20:2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
  o The identification of the Suzerain by his name and titles
  o The historical survey of the Suzerain's dealings with the vassal
  o The purpose is to illustrate to the vassal how much the Suzerain has done to protect and establish the vassal who therefore owes submission and allegiance to the Suzerain.

• Stipulations: 10 Commandments
  o What the vassal is required to do is spelled out in principal and detail.
  o This section is often concluded with the requirement that the vassal deposit his copy of the treaty in his temple, where he is to occasionally read and study it to refresh his memory concerning his duties.

• Blessings / Curses of the Suzerain: Ultimately Heaven / Hell
  o If the stipulations are met by the vassal, he will receive the Suzerain's blessings, which are listed.
  o If the vassal fails to meet the stipulations, he will receive the Suzerain's curses, which are also listed.
  o Examples:
• Ex 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

• Ex 20:7 “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

• Ex 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

• Covenant is cut
  o 2 Stone tablets – each tablet is a complete copy of the 10 Commandments
  o Moses breaks one
  o Both are stored in the Arc of the Covenant
The Tabernacle (Ex 25-40)

After giving the Ten Commandments & demonstrating how to apply them, God offers his second great gift, Tabernacle.

- The Tabernacle is a physical portable structure that provides a means by which sinful humanity can gain access to an infinitely holy God.

In Exodus 25:31 Moses received the “blueprints” for constructing the Tabernacle, the place on earth where God will dwell among his covenant people. As Hebrews 8 points out, this earthly Tabernacle is a “copy and shadow” of the genuine Tabernacle, which is in heaven; hence, Moses was warned to “make everything according to the pattern shown [him] on the mountain” (Hebrews 8: 5).

- The parallel structure of command in chapters 25:31 and implementation in chapters 35:40 is heightened by the use of mirroring language between the two sections (often word for word, phrase for phrase). Such repetition may seem redundant to modern readers, but it is common practice in ancient Near Eastern literature, a practice that highlights the completion and fulfillment of a divinely ordered task.

With the episode of the “golden calf rebellion” and Moses smashing the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the Israelites traumatically violated this divinely mandated “sacred space.”

After Moses dealt with the rebellion he went back up Mt. Sinai and spent an additional 40 days/40 nights in intimate communion with God, descending the mountain visibly luminous from basking in God’s divine presence.

In sharp contrast to the “golden calf rebellion,” characterized by division and discord, work on building the Tabernacle begins by Moses “assembling the whole Israelite community” (Ex 35:1) and charging them with working together as one people to accomplish great task—constructing a sacred space where God will dwell among them.

Design and building of the Tabernacle (Ex 25-40)

- As we read through Exodus we might wonder why Scripture presents the Tabernacle in such detail
  - It takes up 15 of 40 chapters, nearly 1/3 of the text
  - It is described in intricate detail, from the measurements of the walls, to the design of the fabrics, to the tiny golden bells and pomegranates on the hem of the high priest’s robe.

- In Hebrews we find our answer. It is an exact replica of the genuine article that is in Heaven

Heb 8:1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. …5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Heb 10:10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

- Teaches the holiness of God
  - Unapproachable - walls and barriers
    - Holy of Holies – Priests go in 1 time per year – Day of Atonement
      - Each priest probably only does that once in their lives
    - Outer courtyard – only the head of the family
      - Most people don’t make it into the outer curtains at all
    - For us to approach God at all, there has to be sacrifice for our sins on the alter
• Atoning sacrifice is necessary for us to stand before God
  
• God is beautiful, glorious and good
  o Everything made of better substances the further in you go
  
• Matthew – Wedding banquet
  o Many are invited but few are chosen
  o No wedding clothes – Poser – Acting as though they belong, but they do not (sheep & goats)
  o Not everybody has access to the Glory of God – Only through repentance and acceptance of the atoning sacrifice
  
• We learn what one does with the Tabernacle when we study Leviticus.

**Materials**

Ex 25:1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. 3 These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; 4 blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; 5 ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; 6 olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 7 and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece. 8 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. 9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

• Amount of metal used (Ex 38:21-31)

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<th>Amount</th>
<th>Converted to oz.</th>
<th>Total Value</th>
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<td>Gold</td>
<td>(1 talent = 75 lbs; 1 shekel = 1/3 oz.)</td>
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<td>29 talents, 730 shekels</td>
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**Gold – Wave offering**

Ex 35:22 All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD.

• Wave offering – symbolic act indicating that the offering was for the Lord. Portions of the things offered were literally waved in the air before the Lord.

**Silver – Redemption offering**

Ex 38:25 The silver obtained from those of the community who were counted in the census was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel – 26 one beka per person, that is, half a shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, from everyone who had crossed over to those counted, twenty years old or more, a total of 603,550 men. 27 The 100 talents of silver were used to cast the bases for the sanctuary and for the curtain—100 bases from the 100 talents, one talent for each base. 28 They used the 1,775 shekels [m] to make the hooks for the posts, to overlay the tops of the posts, and to make their bands.

• Each person that came out of Egypt (over the age of 20) was to give ½ shekel of silver
  o Each person gave the same offering – whether they were rich, poor, important, anonymous
  o Redemption offering – this is the redemption price for each person that is brought out of Egypt by God
  o Each person, in the eyes of God, is of equal value
• Used to make silver sockets in which the walls are anchored
  o The whole Tabernacle literally rests on the redemption price of each person

*Bronze*

*Enough*

Ex 36:6 Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, 7 because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.
The courtyard

- Faces east
- Measures one hundred cubits by fifty cubits (150 x 75 feet)
- It is constructed of pure white, fine-twinned Egyptian linen hung on sixty posts with bronze bases and silver hooks and bands.
- The east side of the courtyard has a fifteen cubit-long (22 ½ feet) white curtain hung on three posts to the left, and another curtain of the same size on three posts to the right.
- The entrance at the center has a twenty cubit-long (30 feet) white curtain, embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, hung on posts with bronze bases and silver hooks and bands.
- Bronze tent pegs anchor the posts.
- Purpose of the courtyard:
  - It prevents unlawful approach to the Tabernacle itself
  - It keeps out wild animals
  - It is a demarcation between an infinitely holy God and sinful man
  - With its single gate, it offers only one approach to God.
**Bronze altar**
- On entering the courtyard, one first encounters a bronze altar.
- It is made of acacia wood, and it is three cubits high (4 ½ feet) and five cubits square (7 ½ feet), with horns on top of the four corners.
- The whole structure is overlaid with bronze.
- The altar contains a bronze grate, and both the grate and the altar have bronze rings attached at the corners, supporting acacia-wood poles, overlaid with bronze, for carrying.

**Wash basin / laver**
- Next is a wash basin, or laver.
- It is made of bronze with a bronze stand
- It is used by the priests for washing
**Tabernacle**
- At the western end of the courtyard sits the Tabernacle itself
- A structure measuring thirty cubits (45 feet) by ten cubits (15 feet).

An aerial view shows the courtyard and the placement of the objects within it:

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**Tabernacle**
- Gold – When you step inside the Tabernacle, everything is solid gold, Everything close to God is solid gold.
  - As you move outwards, it becomes bronze and silver
  - Gold is the most precious metal of the day
  - It speaks of divinity

- The Tabernacle itself is divided into two chambers
  - Outer chamber measuring twenty cubits (30 feet) by ten cubits (15 feet)
  - Inner chamber measuring ten cubits square (15 feet square)

- Construction
  - Frames
    - The outer and inner chambers are constructed of upright frames of acacia wood measuring ten cubits long (15 feet) and a cubit and a half wide (2 ¼ feet),
    - Each one is overlaid with pure gold and each is inserted into two silver sockets.
    - There are twenty frames on the north side and twenty on the south.
    - There are six frames on the west end, with double frames on the corners, eight in all, each resting on two silver sockets.
  - Five acacia-wood crossbars overlaid with pure gold slip through five sets of golden rings on each upright holding the walls firmly in place.
  - Another linen curtain embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn covers the entrance to the Tabernacle. It hangs on golden hooks from five acacia-wood posts, each overlaid with gold, and each inserted into bronze sockets.
The outer chamber contains three items.
  - Menorah (lamp stand)
  - Table of showbread (bread and wine)
  - Golden altar of incense

**Menorah (lamp stand)**
- To the left is a lamp stand, or menorah, made of pure gold with three branches extending from either of its sides.
- On top of the 7 lamps are flower-like cups, buds and blossoms are of pure gold, and a golden cup, shaped like an almond flower
- The wick trimmers and trays used to service the lamp stand are also made of pure gold.
- In total, the lamp stand and its accessories weigh one talent (75 pounds).
- The lamp provides light for the outer chamber.
  - To be kept burning night and day
- Symbolism
  - Jesus - I am the light of the world
  - We are the ones in darkness and fear – symbolizes for us that God is the one that brings light into the world
    - Our darkness - Sin, temptations, brokenness, guilt, uncertainty, discouragement, despair
**Table of Showbread (with bread and wine)**

- To the right stands a table with bread and wine placed upon it.
- The table consists of acacia wood, two cubits long (3 feet), a cubit wide (1 ½ feet), and a cubit and a half high (2 ¼ feet).
  - It is overlaid with pure gold, and a gold molding frames the top, measuring a handbreadth wide (3 inches).
  - Two acacia-wood poles overlaid with pure gold slip through four golden rings attached to the legs of the table for carrying.
  - The plates, pitchers and bowls that accompany the table are also of pure gold.
- Twelve loaves of unleavened bread and wine rest on the table, with the bread changed weekly.
  - Bread is for the priests- they eat the bread on behalf of the people
    - We need the bread, God provides it → Jesus Christ
    - John 6: 35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. … 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

**Golden altar of incense**

- In front of the curtain sits a golden altar of incense.
- Like the table, the altar of incense consists of acacia wood a cubit long (1 ½ feet), a cubit wide (1 ½ feet) and two cubits high (3 feet).
  - The horns on the four corners of the altar are one piece with the altar itself.
  - The whole is overlaid with pure gold, and a gold molding a handbreadth wide surrounds the top.
  - Four gold rings support two acacia-wood poles, overlaid with gold, for carrying.
- Incense – Pleasing aroma to the Lord
  - Represents the prayer of God’s people – the prayers are the pleasing aroma
  - Lk 1 – Zachariah’s offering the prayers of the people
  - Revelation – Incense = prayers
Curtain/Veil
- Separates the outer from the inner chamber.
- Made of fine-twined Egyptian linen embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn with cherubim worked into it.
- It hangs on four golden hooks suspended on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, inserted into four silver sockets.
- Symbolism
  - We, as sinful human beings, cannot just walk up to God. We cannot even enter the courtyard without a priest.
  - God is distant and can only be approached by a process that leads to holiness.
  - Pure dazzling white, woven with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn with 3 cherubim.
  - 3 angels suggest the trinity – God (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) are on the other side of the curtain.
Ark of the Covenant (Testimony)

- ‘Ark’ means box (same for Noah’s Ark)
  - Purpose is to hold the Testimony of the Covenant – God’s promises to His people
  - Rests in the inner chamber
    - Always at the center of their camp
- Chest of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold and has a solid gold top
  - Measures two and a half cubits long (3 ⅓ feet), a cubit and a half wide (2 ¼ feet), and a cubit and a half high (2 ¼ feet).
  - It is overlaid with pure gold, inside and out, with a solid gold molding around it.
- Four golden rings support two acacia-wood poles, overlaid with gold, for carrying.
- Lid / Atonement cover
  - The lid of the chest consists of one piece of solid gold
  - Measures two and a half cubits long (3 ⅓ feet) and a cubit and a half wide (2 ¼ feet)
  - Two cherubim of hammered gold at the ends of the cover with their wings spread out toward each other.
  - Atonement cover – represents Christ
    - Blood is sprinkled on the atonement cover
    - Ro 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.
  - The place where God meets with His people
  - Called the Mercy Seat
    - Once a year, the High Priest sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of Israel
    - Points to the fact that, through Jesus, the mercy of God would cover the Law
    - The blood foreshadows the fact that Jesus would have to shed His own blood to atone for our sins
- Symbolism
  - Ark of the Covenant symbolizes Christ
  - Acacia wood = humanity
  - Gold = divinity
  - Lid – Atonement cover
    - Cherubim – Guards the contents

Lid of solid gold ➤ with two cherubim, made of one piece with the lid.

Gold molding ➤

Acacia wood box ➤ plated with gold

Acacia wood poles, plated with gold ➤ Gold rings
Tablets of the Ten Commandments (How we are to live)
- 10 Principles by which we are to live with God and one another
- Jesus had the Law of God on His heart
  - Christ fulfills the Law that the people were unable to fulfill

Dt 10:3 So I made the ark out of acacia wood and chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. 4 The LORD wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the LORD gave them to me. 5 Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the LORD commanded me, and they are there now.

Golden jar of manna (Provision – Christ as the bread of life and fully divine)
- Moses is told to gather some up, put it in a jar, and put it inside the Ark of the Covenant that the Israelites would remember what God did for you.
- Bread from heaven – Jesus is the genuine bread, the bread of life
  - Golden jar = divinity

Jn 6: 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Aaron’s staff that blossomed (Resurrection)
- Almond staff – it blossoms with almonds, even though it has been cut and is no longer alive
- Big rebellion by the people – they all want to be the priests. Moses has each tribe that wants to be the priests lay their staff before the Ark of the Covenant. Let God choose. The staff that God chose had blossomed overnight.
- Dead walking stick that blossomed – speaks of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
- We were dead in sin, now we have been resurrected in Christ

Nu 17:8 The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. …10 The LORD said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die."

Four layers cover the Tabernacle
- Layer 1
  - Consists of 10 curtains of fine-twinned Egyptian linen, embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them.
  - Each curtain measures 28 cubits long (42’) by four cubits wide (6’)

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Each curtain has 50 loops of blue material along the edges. The curtains are then fastened together with 50 golden clasps inserted through the loops.

- **Layer 2**
  - The second layer consists of 11 curtains of goat hair, each measuring 30 cubits long (45’) by four cubits wide (6’).
  - 5 curtains are joined together into 1 set and 6 curtains into a 2nd set.
  - The 6th curtain is folded double at the front of the Tabernacle, and the remaining length hangs down the rear of the Tabernacle.
  - Bronze clasps inserted through 50 loops on the long edges hold the curtains together.

- **Layer 3**
  - The third layer consists of ram skins dyed red.

- **Layer 4**
  - The fourth of the hides of sea cows—probably dolphins, which are dark grey or black in color.
Symbolism of the Tabernacle

- Acacia wood is the hardest wood in this part of the world, but it is wood and is ultimately corruptible – it will rot and burn. It speaks of humanity.
- Gold is the most precious metal of the day – it speaks of divinity
- The Ark of the Covenant – humanity overlaid with divinity
- The silver sockets in which the walls are anchored
  - Ex – Each indivi

Priesthood

- As the Tabernacle is a physical structure that enables a sinful people to gain access to an infinitely holy God, the priest is the mediator between a sinful people and a holy God.
  - A priest by definition stands between the people and God, and he speaks to God on behalf of the people.
  - God appoints Moses’ brother Aaron as high priest and Aaron’s sons (Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar) as priests.
  - In Israel priests are drawn solely from the tribe of Levi.
    - In Judaism one cannot feel “called” to be a priest, aspire to be a priest or study to be a priest
    - One is born a priest—or not. The Jewish priesthood is purely hereditary, from the tribe of Levi

- Only priests are permitted to enter the courtyard or the Tabernacle
- Only the High Priest is permitted to enter the inner chamber—or Holy of Holies—and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, described in Leviticus 16.

Dress (Ex 28)

Ex 28: 2 Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor.

- The priests (Levites) are dressed in white linen
  - We have Pastors, not Priests – Pastors are not making sacrifices
- The High Priest wears 7 garments:
  - Undergarment – Made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen
    - After bathing, the High Priest puts on an undergarment of fine-twinned Egyptian linen, which reaches from his waist to his thigh.
  - White tunic – Made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen
    - Over the undergarment he wears a white tunic made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen.
  - Robe – Made entirely of blue cloth with an opening for the head in its center
    - Over the tunic rests a robe made entirely of blue cloth with an opening for the head in its center
    - The opening has a woven edge to keep it from tearing.
    - Around the hem of the robe hang small alternating golden bells and pomegranates made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn.
  - Ephod –
    - Ex 28:12 …Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the LORD.
    - Only for the high priest (Aaron) for the purpose of bearing the burden of God’s people when he goes before the Lord (the weight of the guilt and sin of God’s people)
      - Christ (the Great High Priest) went to the cross bearing the weight of our sin
    - Covering for the torso
      - Made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen, embroidered with gold and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn
      - Over the robe is an ephod made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen, embroidered with gold and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn.
      - It has two shoulder straps and a waistband made of the same material as the ephod; it is of one piece with the ephod.
- An onyx stone rests on each shoulder in a gold filigree setting.
  - One stone carries the names of the first six sons of Israel, in the order of their birth.
  - The other stone carries the names of the remaining six sons, in the order of their birth.
  - Two braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, anchor the settings.
  - When the High Priest enters the Tabernacle he bears the names of the twelve sons of Israel on his shoulders.

○ Breastpiece –
  - Ex 28:29 “Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the LORD.
  - Heart is the center of life – Heart pumps the blood – life force is in the blood
  - Made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen, embroidered with gold & with blue, purple & scarlet yarn
  - A breastpiece—or pocket—made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen, embroidered with gold and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn attaches to the ephod. It measures a span square (9 x 9 inches).
  - Four rows of precious stones are mounted on the breast piece:
    1. the first row consists of a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl
    2. the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald
    3. the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst
    4. the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper
  - Each is mounted in a gold filigree setting, and on each is engraved the name of one of the twelve tribes.
  - 12 stones represent the whole of God’s people
  - Golden rings and chains hold the breast piece in place.
  - When the High Priest enters the Tabernacle he bears the names of the twelve tribes on his heart.
  - An Urim and a Thummim
    - Sacred lots used by the High Priest to discern God’s will, reside inside the breast piece.
    - The Urim and Thummim provides yes/no answers
    - Hebrews – Christ is the Urim and Thummim giving us answers
    - Acts 2 – we all get the Holy Spirit – You can no longer inquire of the Lord through lots

○ Turban – Headpiece
  - Ex 28: 38 It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron’s forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD.
  - A golden plate is attached to the turban by a blue cord with the words “Holy to the Lord” are engraved on the plate.
    - This is how we should be thinking all the time
    - Romans – Do not conform to this world, but be transformed in the renewing in your mind
  - Made of fine-twinned Egyptian linen sits on the High Priest’s head.
Consecration of the Priests (Ex 29)

- Consecration – We set something apart and God treats it as holy
- Ordained – Set apart by the laying on of hands
- Aaron and his sons – Commands are foreshadowing things that are coming in Jesus
  o Sacrifices – For their own sins, then for the sins of the people
  o Washed – Ceremonial washing – Continual reminder that they need to have their sin washed away (baptism)
  o Dressed in holy garments

Symbolism

- Only the priest can come before God on your behalf – he brings you before God on his shoulders and his heart
- Jesus – I am the good shepherd – If my sheep get lost, I bring them back on my shoulders
  o If we make it into the presence of God, it is not going to be because of anything that we did. We will get there on Jesus’ shoulders.

Lk 15:3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Christ in the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle of Moses as a Prophetic Type

| Gate         | Jesus as the door (Jn 10:9) |
| **Alter** | Jesus as the sacrificial lamb (Jn 1:29) |
| **Laver** | Jesus as the Spirit Baptizer (Jn 1:33) |
| **Shewbread** | Jesus as the Bread of Life (Jn 6:35) |
| **Candlestick** | Jesus as the Light of the World (Jn 8:12) |
| **Incense** | Jesus as the Intercessor who offers the prayers of the Saints to God (He 4:14-16) |
| **Veil** | Jesus as the one who would rend the veil, making it possible for the saints to have direct access to God through Him (Mt 27:51) |
| **High Priest** | Jesus as our High Priest who enters the Holy of Holies in Heaven as our Mediator before the Father (He 8:12; He 9:24) |

- The Tabernacle formed a major unit in Jesus’ syllabus
- The clearest understanding we have in Scripture of the Lord Jesus Christ is not in the Gospels, but in the Tabernacle, in its structure and operation.
  - The epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the Tabernacle is a copy or shadow of the genuine Tabernacle, which is in heaven (Hebrews 8:5).
  - Hebrews goes on to say that as the high priest ministers at the Tabernacle, interceding with God on our behalf, so does Christ, our great high priest who sits at the right hand of the Father, minister at the genuine Tabernacle in heaven.
- Likewise, as the priest offers the blood of sacrificial animals at the Tabernacle as atonement for the sins of the people, so does Christ offer his own blood at the genuine Tabernacle, making atonement once and for all for the sins of humanity.
- After Jesus’ resurrection he spends forty days with his disciples teaching them “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

**How does the Tabernacle apply to us?**

- Symbolic - teaches theological truth
- Theological (figurative, foreshadowing) - Christ fulfills everything

**Golden calf (Ex 32)**

After God raises up Moses to lead his people out of Egypt; after God slams Egypt with ten plagues; after God parts the Red Sea and saves his people; after God reaffirms his covenant with his people; and after God gives his two great gifts, the Law and the Tabernacle, the Israelites turn away from God and Moses to worship a golden calf! What’s that all about?

When Moses didn’t return from the mountain, the people became afraid and made a golden calf to pray to and sacrifice to

- **Golden calf** – Powerful Egyptian goddess Hawthor
  - Nurturing mother goddess of Egypt - Represented as a cow/calf
  - Center of the worship of Hawthor was in the central Sinai, right where the people were
- **Moses ordered the Levites to murder** – 3000 people died
  - Correlates to the 3000 people that are saved at Pentecost (Acts 2:41)
- **Why did they go astray?**
  - Distraction
    - They wanted something tangible to bow down to – did they know about the 2nd commandment yet?
  - Bad leadership – Aaron did not stand up to the people
    - Ex 32: 24 So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!”
- **Consequences**
  - Moses breaks the tablets because the people have broken the Covenant
    - Ex 32: 19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.
  - People have to taste the bitter outcome of their sin
Drinking the golden calf, drinking their own guilt of idolatry
Ex 32:20 And he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.
  o 3000 people killed by the sword (when we turn our back upon God – the wages of sin – are death)
Ex 32:27 Then he said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.’” 28 The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died.

Moses pleads for the people
Ex 32:31 So Moses went back to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, please forgive their sin — but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.”

Christ
Heb 2

Moses recognizes the need for God (Ex 33)

God said that they could have the promised land, but God was not going to go with them
Ex 33:5 For the LORD had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you.

Moses understood the absolute need for God to be with the people
Ex 33:15 Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.
  o You can have everything that life has to offer, but not having God means having nothing

Moses wants to see God’s glory
Ex 33:18 Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.” 19 And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. … 20 But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” 21 Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

What is man’s chief end – To glorify God and know him forever

God’s Glory and the 10 Commandments: 2nd Edition (Ex 34)

LORD = YHWH – Proper name of God revealed to Moses at the burning bush
  o Covenant title – for his people who KNOW him
  o Lord = Adonai – Title – Lord, savior, sovereign over you

When he shows His glory to Moses, we see God’s revelation about himself
Ex 34:5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.”

God’s great do-over
  o After settling the score with the leaders of the “Golden Calf Rebellion,” Moses ascends Mt. Sinai once again to confer with God, who says to him: “Cut two stone tablets like the former, that I may write on them the words which were on the former tablets that you broke” (Exodus 34:1).
  o Ex 34:10-28 God repeats the initial covenant – ultimate do-over
  o Moses then recommits himself and the Israelites to God’s covenant, spending forty days and forty nights on the mountain in an extraordinarily intimate relationship with God.
  o Moses is up on the mountain again for 40 days and 40 nights – When Moses descends the mountain his “face had become radiant” (Exodus 34:29).
The experience transforms/transfigures Moses – Transfiguration of Jesus

- 2Co 3:6-18
  - Paul – How much more argument
  - Moses represented the old covenant and he was transformed by it. But, we are ministers of the new covenant. If that covenant was great, then how much more this new covenant.

**Building the Tabernacle (Ex 35-40)**

When Moses comes down off the mountain once again, work on the Tabernacle begins in earnest. Bezalel the chief artisan, along with his assistant Oholiab and the other craftsmen, construct the Tabernacle, weaving the tent cloth and coverings, building the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, the menorah, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offerings and the courtyard.

Ex 39:42 The Israelites had done all the work just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 43 Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

- This is one of the only times that the Israelites do what the Lord commanded
- Blessing follows the obedience (Dt 28 – Blessings and curses)

**Pillar of Cloud and Fire (Ex 40)**

- Theophany – Visible manifestation of God
  - Burning bush
  - Mt. Sinai – Thunder, lightning, earthquakes, fire
  - Pentecost Sunday in Acts – Holy Spirit enters the world – Now the manifestation of God is with each of us

- We first encountered the pillar of cloud and fire as it led the Israelites out of Egypt:
  Ex 13:21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

- The pillar of cloud and fire both guides and protects the Israelites on their journey to Mt. Sinai

- When the tabernacle is built “the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”
  - Rests over the Tabernacle – specifically over the Holy of Holies
  - When the Pillar of Cloud and Fire moves, the Israelites pack up camp and follow
    - If they weren’t with God, they were dead
  - Ex 40:34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; 37 but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. 38 So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.

- Stays with the Tabernacle until 592 BC
  - The pillar of cloud and fire will stay with the Israelites from the Exodus in 1446 B.C. until 592 B.C. when it leaves the Temple in Jerusalem, ascends the Mount of Olives and disappears down the eastern slope toward Jericho, never to be seen again.
Leviticus Overview

Leviticus is composed of two basic genres Narrative History and Law. It was written by Moses about 1445-1444 B.C. The setting of Leviticus mainly appears to take place at Mt. Sinai. The key personalities of Leviticus include Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu Eleazar, and Ithamar.

It was written to draw the Israelites to the understanding of the infinite holiness of God, and that He desires them to act in a holy manner toward Himself. In doing this, God gives them many instructions to carry out. It describes Moses giving procedural instructions for the Israelites, especially to the Levitical priests, about how they are to carry out offerings, ceremonies, and celebrations. The word “Holy” is mentioned more times in Leviticus, than any other book in the Bible.

- From chapter 1-7, Sacrifice and Offerings are laid out for Priests and individuals in detail. These passages also describe how to use the altar for the sacrifices and the offerings to God.
- In chapters 8-10, Moses describes the instructions for the Levitical Priesthood, since Israel is to be “a kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19:6). He does this from the doorway of his tent. Moses consecrates his brother Aaron and his sons who are the priests.
- From chapters 11-15 Moses teaches the importance and procedures for things that are unclean. These include food, diseases, animals, insects, dead bodies, birth, cleaning and many others. God’s purpose of all this is to protect His people from the illnesses and diseases that come from these sources.
- In chapter 16, Moses gives instruction about the Day of Atonement. This was the day out of the year that the High Priest cleanses and prepares himself ceremonially to meet with God. This ceremony only takes place once a year. The High Priest enters into the Holy of Holies and offers a sacrifice to God for sins on behalf of the entire nation of Israel.
• Chapters 17-27 pertain to the laws that apply generally for living a holy life. These are many laws including sexual immorality, idolatry, land laws, more priestly laws, religious festivals and celebrations, the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee.
Outline

Part One: Sacrifice

I. The Five Great Offerings (1:1-7:38)
   A. Sweet-savor offerings (1:1-3:17)
      i. Burnt offering (1:3-17)
      ii. Grain offering (2:1-16)
      iii. Peace offering (3:1-17)
   B. Non-sweet-savor offerings (4:1-6:7)
      iv. Sin offering (4:1-5:13)
      v. Guilt offering (5:14-6:7)
   C. Regulations governing the offerings (6:8-7:38)

II. The Priests (8:1-10:20)
   A. Consecration (8:1-36)
   B. Ministry (9:1-24)
   C. Restrictions (10:1-20)

Part Two: Sanctification

   A. Food of God’s people (11:1-47)
   B. Children of God’s people (12:1-8)
   C. Cleansing of leprosy (13:1-14:57)
   D. Cleansing of bodily emissions (15:1-32)
   E. The Day of Atonement (16:1-34)
   F. The sanctity of life (17:1-16)
   G. Applications of the laws (18:1-20:27)
      i. Sexuality (18:1-30)
      ii. Social relations (19:1-37)
      iii. Penalty for breaking the commandments (20:1-27)

IV. Holy Days (23:1-44)

V. Holiness in the Promised Land (24:1-26:46)
   A. Lamp stand, showbread, death penalty for blasphemy (24:1-23)
   B. Sabbatical year, year of jubilee, law of the kinsman redeemer (25:1-55)
   C. Conditions of blessing in the land (26:1-46)

VI. Laws Concerning Vows (27:1-34)

Traditional Author: Moses
Traditional Date Written: c. 1446-1406 B.C.
Period Covered: 1445 B.C.

Introduction

Sitting as it does between the brilliant narratives of Genesis and Exodus and the wilderness tales of Numbers and Deuteronomy, Leviticus seems a moment of stasis, a pause in Scripture’s forward movement that dwells on the mechanics of sacrifice and the minutiae of ritual law, subjects of little interest or relevance to a modern audience.
The narrative from Genesis through Deuteronomy (the Torah) is chronologically linear in structure

- Leviticus sits squarely at the center of the Torah, the middle unit of God’s Law:
  - A (Genesis)
  - B (Exodus)
  - C (Leviticus)
  - B’ (Numbers)
  - A’ (Deuteronomy)

In truth, most readers either bog down in Leviticus, or simply skip over it. But not us! If properly understood, Leviticus is a thrilling book, one that parts the paper-thin veil separating heaven and earth, revealing God’s plan of redemption in intimate detail and taking us into the innermost sanctuary of the living God.

Leviticus is probably the most neglected book in the Bible. Most people think of it—if they think of it at all—as an antiquated collection of laws and rituals for worship that have little relevance today: few people have actually read it; fewer still have studied it.

- The Hebrew name for Leviticus is vyeek’rah, the first word of the Hebrew text, and it means “And he called.”

- In the literary structure of the Bible, Leviticus continues the book of Exodus, suggesting that we study Exodus and Leviticus as one narrative unit.
  - Recall that when we left Exodus, God had come down from Mt. Sinai to manifest himself in the Tabernacle built by his people, per his detailed instructions:
    
    *Thus Moses finished all the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled down upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.* (Exodus 40: 33-35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exodus</th>
<th>Leviticus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God speaks to his people from the top of Mt. Sinai in a voice of thunder</td>
<td>God speaks intimately from within the Tabernacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God offers the Israelites a unique role in the plan of salvation</td>
<td>The Israelites learn what that role entails</td>
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- As we enter Leviticus,
  - The Israelites have been in the wilderness for 1 year (Ex 40:17)
  - Leviticus will span 1 month (Nu 1:1)
  - Numbers through Deuteronomy will span another 39 years
  - Total = 40 years

- Holiness is the theme of Leviticus.
  - The Hebrew word for “holy” is kawdoshe, and it appears more often in Leviticus than in any other book of the Bible.
    - In Genesis, “holy” occurs only one time
    - In Exodus, 31 times
    - In Leviticus, 74 times
    - In Numbers, 29 times
    - In Deuteronomy, 10 times.
    - In the entire Bible, “holy” occurs 584 times
  - In Leviticus, God says to Israel, “To me, therefore, you shall be holy; for I, the Lord, am holy” (Lev 20:26)
    - A relationship with God can be based on nothing less.
    - Yet, the human family is not holy: it is steeped in sin and cut off from God.
As far back as Genesis 6:5 we read: “When the Lord saw how great the wickedness of human beings was on earth, and how every desire that their heart conceived was always nothing but evil, the Lord regretted making human beings on the earth, and his heart was grieved.”

In Romans 3:23, Paul tells us that nothing had changed by his day, for “all have sinned are deprived of the glory of God.”

In Paul’s day, as in Genesis, sinful man is a moral pariah, and he cannot approach a holy God.

In Leviticus, God begins to bridge the gap.

- Leviticus lays out two great pathways to a relationship with God:
  - the first is the approach to God through sacrifice (chapters 1-10)
  - the second is the walk with God through sanctification (chapters 11-27)
  - The order is important:
    - the five great offerings made by the priests at the Tabernacle—the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and guilt offering—establish the basis for relationship with God
    - the laws that lead to sanctification operate within this sacrificial framework

- In the New Testament, the epistle to the Hebrews offers a detailed commentary on Leviticus, seeing in the sacrifices a foreshadowing of the person and work of Christ:

  But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer’s ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God. (Hebrews 9: 11-14)

  - If we read Leviticus through the lens of the New Testament, we see in the five great sacrifices—and in the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in chapter 16—the most perfect picture of Christ in the Bible.
  - In the Gospels, we see Christ through men’s eyes; in Leviticus, we see him through God’s eyes.

- Leviticus is a thrilling book of tremendous depth and beauty.
  - For a Jewish reader, Leviticus rests at the very heart of Torah, God’s most precious gift to his people;
  - For the Christian reader, it sets forth the inner dynamics of salvation and of our relationship with God.

A Note on Method
As we begin our study of Leviticus, we need to lay out some guidelines on how to proceed. In scholarly circles, this is called hermeneutics, strictly defined as “the study of the methodological principles of interpretation.”

When we began our verse-by-verse study through the entire Bible, Genesis through Revelation, I noted that the 73 books of the Septuagint canon were written over a period of at least 1,500 years by many different authors, and that nearly all the books had passed through the hands of editors and redactors to become the completed texts that we now have.

- Although ascribed to Moses within the context of our narrative, Leviticus, for example, developed over many centuries, incorporating rituals and laws from several different periods of Israelite history and religious practices, reaching its final form sometime during the Persian Period, 538-332 B.C.
- I went on to insist, however, that the Bible has traditionally been read in its final, finished form as a unified literary work, and that it has influenced Western imagination as a unified work.

- As Professor Northrop Frye argues in his seminal book, The Great Code: the Bible and Literature, the Bible:
  - Has a beginning, middle and end
  - It has a body of consistent, concrete images
  - Its unifying principle is one of narrative shape.

- From a literary perspective, the Bible is a unified work, linear in structure:
  - The curtain goes up in Genesis, and it comes down in Revelation;
• Its main character is God;
• Its conflict is sin;
• Its theme is redemption.

This is a foundational principle for anyone approaching the Bible as literature, and much of today’s most insightful and productive scholarship approaches Scripture from this perspective. And it is an approach imbedded in the text itself.

• For example, in the Gospel according to John, Jesus concludes a scathing attack on the religious leaders of his day by saying: “Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father: the one who will accuse you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, because he wrote about me” (John 5: 45-46).

• And again, in the Gospel according to Luke, we learn that on the evening of Jesus’ resurrection he meets two men on the road to Emmaus. As he talks with them, he says: “‘Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24: 25-27).

• And finally, when Jesus instructs his disciples during the time between his resurrection and ascension, he says: “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24: 44).

In all three examples, the New Testament writers read the Hebrew Scriptures as foreshadowing Christ. Let me analyze a specific instance. As we begin Leviticus we read:

_The Lord called Moses, and spoke to him from the tent of meeting:_ “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When any one of you brings an offering of livestock to the Lord, you shall bring your offering from the herd or from the flock. If a person’s offering is a burnt offering from the herd, the offering must be a male without blemish. The individual shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to find favor with the Lord, and shall lay a hand on the head of the burnt offering, so that it may be acceptable to make atonement for the one who offers it . . . . [It is] a sweetsmelling oblation [“a sweet savor”] to the Lord.” (Leviticus 1: 1-4; 9)

Then in Isaiah we read:

_Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all._ (Isaiah 53: 4-6)

St. Paul applies Isaiah’s idea of a “sin bearer” to Jesus when he says, “For what the law, weakened by the flesh, was powerless to do, this God has done: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for the sake of sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8: 3).

• The Greek expression is peri hamartias, the regular translation in the LXX for the Hebrew “sin offering” in Leviticus. St. Paul links Leviticus imagery with Jesus again when he says, “So, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma” (Ephesians 5: 1-2).

• “Fragrant aroma” occurs over forty times in the LXX translation of Torah, and always in a sacrificial context.

• The epistle to the Hebrews most explicitly links Jesus with the sacrifices in Leviticus, especially when it says:
  • “He has no need, as did the high priests, to offer sacrifice day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did that once for all when he offered himself” (Hebrews 7: 27);
  • and again: “But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice” (Hebrews 9: 26).

Lest we have any doubt that Leviticus foreshadows and speaks of Christ, we might call to mind John the Baptist’s words in the Gospel according to John when he sees Jesus approaching: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1: 29).
This is a direct allusion to the sacrifices in Leviticus.

By John’s day the levitical system of sacrifice was so highly developed and ingrained in Jewish worship that the allusion couldn’t be missed. An offering of “the herd or the flock” had been made twice daily in the temple for nearly 1,000 years.

Finally, when we reach Revelation, the allusion is fully developed, as we see John’s stunning vision of the throne in heaven:

At once I was caught up in spirit. A throne was there in heaven, and on the throne sat one whose appearance sparkled like jasper and carnelian. Around the throne was a halo as brilliant as an emerald . . .. Then I was standing in the midst of the throne . . . a Lamb that seemed to have been slain . . . . I looked again and heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne and the living creatures and the elders. They were countless in number, and they cried out in a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength
honor and glory and blessing!”

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe, cry out:

“To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor, glory and might,
forever and ever!” (Revelation 4:2-3, 6, 11-13)

By following one image introduced in Leviticus through the biblical narrative of the Christian canon as we have done (and we have only touched on the most obvious references), one can see the density and the tight weave of Scripture’s fabric: every thread is connected to every other thread. That is why it is so important to study the Scripture as a whole. What Leviticus introduces, each following verse, chapter and book develops and brings to fruition.

I need to clarify all of this at the start of Leviticus, for if I don’t we will encounter an interpretive can of worms. This is one reason why Leviticus is such a neglected book among Christians: either it is terribly oversimplified (“It’s nothing more than ancient rituals and outdated laws”) or one approaches Leviticus from a fragmented and inconsistent hermeneutic that gets one hopelessly tangled in a verbal and theological thicket.

The Book of Leviticus divides into two major sections:

- Sacrifice (chapters 1-10)
- Sanctification (chapters 11-27).

The order is important:
- The five great sacrifices establish the basis for relationship with God;
- The laws that follow lead to sanctification within the sacrificial framework.
- Put simply, one must confront sin and deal with it before one can live a life of holiness with God.
- The very structure of the tabernacle emphasizes this

Hebrews is a companion book to Leviticus

Need to read/understand Hebrews in order to understand Leviticus (and vice versa)
**Biblical cosmology**

- The tripartite nature of God’s creation as it was viewed in the ancient Near East, c. 1500R500 B.C., and as it is mirrored in Scripture.

- The Hebrew Scriptures envision a 3-part world:
  - Heavens above,
  - Earth in the middle
  - Underworld (*sheol*) below.
  - This 3-part world floated in a mythological cosmic ocean, which encompassed the earth until God created the firmament to divide it into upper and lower portions, revealing dry land. According to biblical cosmology, the world has been protected from the cosmic ocean ever since by the solid dome of the firmament.
As we have God in his heaven and man on the earth, with the firmament and the sky separating the two, so do we have God at the top of Mt. Sinai and the people at the foot of the mountain, with the towering slopes separating the two.
Moses/God

Priests

People

Mt. Sinai

Photography by Ana Maria Vargas
When God gives the blueprints for the Tabernacle in Exodus, it too mirrors the tripartite cosmology of ancient Israel, as well as of Mt. Sinai.

In *Leviticus as Literature* (1999), the brilliant anthropologist Mary Douglas suggests that Leviticus embodies a mode of thought that she calls “analogical,” a mode entirely different from Western “analytic” thinking. Douglass suggests that Leviticus sees reality as an elaborate system of correspondences between the cosmos and Mt. Sinai, on one hand, and Mt. Sinai and the Tabernacle on the other hand.

- With this general scheme in view, Douglas claims that Leviticus displays a purposeful literary structure, one that follows the contours of this tripartite vision of the cosmos.
- Although we have discerned a clear 2-part structure to Leviticus—Sacrifice (1-10) and Sanctification (11-27)—that 2-part structure is imbedded deeply within the tripartite vision of the cosmos that is mirrored in God’s theophany at Mt. Sinai and in the structure of the Tabernacle itself.
- Consequently, when we examine the rituals of the five great sacrifices, the detailed functioning of the priesthood and the hundreds of laws concerning food, sex and various diseases, we do well to see each detail in the context of the whole.
- Leviticus is like a 3-dimensional mosaic, mirroring reality itself, with each individual command a single tile in God’s vision of redemption.
Sacrifice – How to Use the Tabernacle (Leviticus 1-10)

Leviticus is a handbook of holiness.
- In Leviticus God tells his people to “be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19: 2)
- God did not choose the Jews, He chose Abraham and Sarah and then created the Jewish nation

Gaining access to an infinitely holy God – How to operate the Tabernacle, (Le 1-7)
- Priesthood established to act as a mediator between the people and God
- If you want to approach God, as a person, you do so through the 5 great sacrifices

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The very structure of the tabernacle emphasizes this
- One must confront sin and deal with it before one can live a life of holiness with God.
- Entering the Tent of Meeting, one first encounters the Altar of Burnt Offering. Here the five offerings are made. One cannot proceed on to God without them.
- The sacrificial procedure follows a prescribed sequence which emphasizes the symbolism of the offerings.

The Tabernacle

When God gave Moses the blueprints for the Tabernacle in Exodus 25: 1 – 31: 18, he was told to build it exactly as instructed. Hebrews 8:1-5 tells us why:

I The point of what we are saying is this [speaking of the high priest Melchizedek in Heb 7]: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. 3 Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. 4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. 5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

- The Tabernacle is a “copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary,” the very dwelling place of God!
- Since the Fall in Genesis 3, humanity has been cut off from direct access to God, but with the Tabernacle and the “5 Great Sacrifices,” mediated by the priesthood, God invites humanity back into his presence—albeit in a carefully controlled fashion.
The Sacrificial System

• Sacrifice was nothing new in the ancient world: virtually every culture had some form of animal sacrifice to its gods.
  o In ancient religion and in literature such as the *Iliad*, animal sacrifices were meant to thank the gods, to make atonement for wrong doing or to gain favor—what the Assyriologist A. L. Oppenheim called “the care and feeding of the god.”

• The sacrifices in Leviticus, however, depart radically from those in any other culture.
  o Scripture is very clear that for the Israelites sacrifice can only be made at one location: the Tabernacle.
  ▪ Later, when Solomon builds the Temple in Jerusalem (959 B.C.), the Tabernacle is retired, and sacrifice is then made *only* at the Temple.
  ▪ For over 1,000 years, from 959 B.C. un11 A.D. 70 (when the Temple was destroyed), animal sacrifice occurred daily, except during the Babylonian captivity, 586 – 516 B.C., and during a brief period of the Maccabean revolt, 167 – 160 B.C.
  o The five great sacrifices in Leviticus are symbolic acts that express a set of moral and ethical values, which in turn provide a mechanism for all Israelites, regardless of wealth or social status, to communicate directly with God and to participate in the spiritual life of the covenant community.
  o As the psalmist says in Psalm 50:9-13

  *I do not ask more bullocks from your farms nor goats from among your herds.
   For I own all the beasts of the forest, beasts in their thousands on my hills.
   I know all the birds in the sky; all that moves in the field belongs to me
   Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for I own the world and all it holds.
   Do you think I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?*

• The sacrifices in Leviticus serve two purposes.
  o First, they vividly demonstrate the immensity and the seriousness of sin. The sacrifices are steeped in blood and death, and they are repeated daily: the sheer volume of sacrifices calls to mind David, who said, “My sin is always before me” (Psalm 51: 5).
  o Second, they result in fellowship with God. After the offerings are made, sin is covered (Hebrew = kawfar), allowing a sinful person to approach God, who is holy.

• The sacrificial system introduced in Leviticus presents a “shadow” or a “type” of the sacrifice of Christ.
  o The early Church Fathers viewed the five great sacrifices in Leviticus through a Christian interpretive lens as foreshadowing the person and work of Christ.
  ▪ And in his *Summa Theologiae* (q. 102 a. 3 co.) St. Thomas Aquinas states succinctly:

    *The ceremonies of the Old Law had a two-fold cause, namely, a literal cause, according as they were intended for divine worship; and a figurative or mystical cause, according as they were intended to foreshadow Christ; and in either way the ceremonies pertaining to the sacrifices can be assigned to a fitting cause.*

    ▪ Read through such a Christian interpretive lens, the “sweet savor” offerings—the burnt offering, grain offering and peace offering—speak of the person of Christ, of his offering himself wholly and completely to God, of his perfect humanity and of his being our peace.
  o Hebrews
    ▪ This is most clearly expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews. It says: “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves” (Hb 10:1).
    ▪ “He [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (9:26)
    ▪ “By one sacrifice he [Christ] has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (10:14)
    ▪ “We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, is body” (10:19-20).
Romans

Paul says: “God presented him [Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25).

As the epistle to the Hebrews so succinctly puts it: “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (9:22).

- Sacrifice runs like a scarlet thread through the fabric of Scripture. It is a major theme in Scripture.
  - Beginning with Abel's sacrifice in Genesis
  - Climaxing in the blood of the Lamb slain from the creation of the world in Revelation (13:8).

**Atonement (Covering)**

- The Hebrew word *kaphar* means “to cover.”
- When God commands a person to bring a bull, lamb or dove for a sacrifice “to make atonement,” it is “to cover” his sins—not to take them away.
- The five great sacrifices in Leviticus 1-5 “cover” sin and foreshadow the final sacrifice of “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
- The word “atonement” entered the English language during the sixteenth century A.D. as “at-one-ment”; it is the word that describes how Jesus’ death on the cross makes us “at one” with God by taking away our sin.

**Lot of blood**

- Blood = death
- Wages of sin is death
- Worshippers lay their hands on the head of the sacrifice to transfer the sin, then they cut the throat

- God is justly wrathful against sin

**Reconciliation – Expiation, Propitiation**

- Expiation and propitiation are terms used by Christian theologians in attempts to define and explain the meaning of Christ’s death on the cross as it relates to God and to believers. Both words are related to reconciliation, since it is through Christ's death on the cross for our sins that we are reconciled to a God of holy love

  - Ro 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

  - 2Co 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

  - Col 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation — 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

- **Expiation** – emphasizes the removal of guilt through a payment of the penalty
  - The prefix *ex* means “out of” or “from,” so expiation has to do with removing something or taking something away.
  - Taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of atonement.
• Horizontal – Applies to things done on earth
  - Expiation is the act that results in the change of God’s disposition toward us
    • It is the act of what Christ did on the cross.

• Propitiation – emphasizes the appeasement or averting of God’s wrath and justice
  - Propitiation has to do with the object of the expiation.
    - The prefix pro means “for,” so propitiation brings about a change in God’s attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us.
      - Through the process of propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favor with Him.
  - Vertical – Applies to how the act of expiation applies to God
    - The result of Christ’s work of expiation is propitiation—God’s anger is turned away.

• Ransom
  - The distinction between expiation and propitiation is the same as that between the ransom that is paid and the attitude of the one who receives the ransom.
    - In this case, God demanded the ransom, but also paid the ransom

• Placation
  - Together, expiation and propitiation constitute an act of placation. Christ did His work on the cross to placate the wrath of God.
    - ULTIMATELY, JESUS DIED TO SAVE US FROM THE WRATH OF GOD.
  - 1Th 1:10 … his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Jesus

• Jesus covered (atoned for) our sins by paying the penalty (expiation) and appeasing God’s wrath (propitiation)
  - Jesus was our scapegoat – Our sins were transferred to Him, and He was taken outside the city gates and slaughtered

• Jesus’ theology was a crisis theology.
  - The Greek word crisis means “judgment.”
  - And the crisis of which Jesus preached was the crisis of an impending judgment of the world, at which point God is going to pour out His wrath against the unredeemed, the ungodly, and the impenitent.
    - The only hope of escape from that outpouring of wrath is to be covered by the atonement of Christ.

• Jesus provides many warnings concerning the judgment:
  - ‘I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment’ (Matt. 5:22)
  - ‘I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment’ (Matt. 12:36)
  - ‘The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here” (Matt. 12:41).

5 Great Sacrifices

• Offerings of the people – These were very similar sacrifices to those that were given in Egypt

• The early Church Fathers viewed the five great sacrifices in Leviticus through a Christian interpretive lens as foreshadowing the person and work of Christ.
  - The five great sacrifices in Leviticus 1-5 “cover” sin and foreshadow the final sacrifice of “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

• God prescribes the five great sacrifices that enable a sinful people to be brought into fellowship with a holy God:
  - Non-sweet savor offerings – Sin offering and guilt offering
    - Speak of the work of Christ – what He did
• Sweet savor offerings - the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering
  ▪ Speak of the person of Christ – of who He is

• You are to offer the BEST that you have to the Lord
  o Cain & Abel (Gn 4)
    Gn 4:2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering. 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.
    ▪ Abel brought the very best
    ▪ Cain just brought something (left-overs)
  o Malachi
    1:6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?” says the LORD Almighty. “It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. . . . 8 When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong?

• Sacrifices
  o Sin offering or guilt offering
    ▪ Sin has to be dealt with first.
    ▪ Both the sin offering and the guilt offering are non-sweet savor offerings.
  o Burnt offering and grain offering.
    ▪ After dealing with sin, the worshiper commits himself completely to God.
    ▪ The burnt offering is wholly consumed on the altar.
    ▪ Both it and the grain offering are a “sweet savor unto the Lord.”
  o Peace offering
    ▪ After dealing with sin & committing oneself to God, the peace offering symbolizes fellowship with God.
    ▪ It concludes with a communal meal, a sharing of food.
    ▪ Like the burnt offering and the grain offering, the peace offering is a “sweet savor unto the Lord.”

Sweet Savor Offerings (Lev 1–3) – The Person of Christ
• The “sweet savor” offerings of Leviticus 1–3 are voluntary
• The “sweet savor” offerings—the burnt offering, grain offering and peace offering—speak of the person of Christ
  o Of his offering himself wholly and completely to God
  o Of his perfect humanity
  o Of his being our peace

Burnt offering (Lev 1)
• Sweet savor offering #1 – The person of Christ

• The burnt offering pictures Christ offering himself wholly and without blemish to God
  o The burnt offering is both atoning and substitutionary: Christ dies in our place.
  o We are now to offer our lives to God wholly
    ▪ Take my life and let me be consecrated Lord to thee (hymn)

• Each of the offerings pictures Christ in some aspect of his redeeming character:
  o the bull speaks of his strength and perfection;
  o the sheep speaks of his patience and unresisting abandonment to death
    ▪ “He was led like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7)
  o the goat typifies the sinner
When used of Christ, it speaks of he who was “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53: 12).
- As Paul says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21);
- Scapegoat – Our sins are transferred to our goat, which is taken outside the camp and slaughtered
  - the turtledove or pigeon speaks of:
    - mourning innocence (Isaiah 38: 14)
    - the poverty of the one who “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

- Holocaust – Whole burnt offering
  - Drain the blood beside the alter
  - Guts and hide are burned outside the camp

**Grain offering (Lev 2)**
- Sweet savor offering #2 – The person of Christ
  - The grain offering pictures the **perfection of Christ's humanity**:
    - the fine flour speaks of his even personality, of the loveliness of Jesus;
    - the bread without yeast speaks of his total lack of corruption;
    - the bread mingled with oil speaks of his being anointed by the Holy Spirit;
    - the lack of honey speaks of his honesty and forthrightness; there is no “sweetness” in him;
    - the salt speaks of his faithfulness.
      - Salt preserves
      - the “salt of the covenant” binds one’s word to an agreement.

- This represents the personality of Christ, in His perfect, unblemished full humanity
  - He was like fine flour, purely refined, perfect in every way
  - Did not include:
    - Yeast = sin
    - Honey = nothing artificially sweet about Him – never flattered people or told them what they wanted to hear, just the truth
  - Did included salt
    - make people thirsty for God

**Peace (Fellowship/Communion) offering (Lev 3)**
- Sweet savor offering #3 – The person of Christ
  - The communion offering pictures **Christ as our peace**.
    - At peace with God through the redemptive action of Christ, we are invited into communion with him, to share a meal.
      - Paul says, “He himself is our peace” (Ephesians 2: 14)
      - When Jesus leaves his disciples and goes to the cross he says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you” (John 14:27).
      - Ro 5
    - As the penitent sinner at the Tabernacle is invited to share a meal with God in the Communion Offering, so are we invited to share in the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.
      - Eucharist/communion – Sacrifice is made, and then you consume the communion
    - He offered himself totally to God in the burnt offering (fully God and fully human) and then He offers Himself back to us
      - Christ sharing Himself with us
The “non-sweet savor” offerings of 4–5 are mandatory
  o Unlike the “sweet savor” offerings of Lev 1–3 which are voluntary

The “non-sweet savor” offerings purify the sacred space of the sanctuary, which has been defiled by a person’s immoral or illicit behavior
  o If a person’s impurity is physical, only bathing is required to purify the body;
  o If a person’s impurity is moral, a remorseful conscience clears the impurity.
  o Consequently, the sin offering and the guilt offering do not focus on “purifying” the person making the offering; rather, the “non-sweet savor” offerings purify the sacred space of the sanctuary, which has been defiled by a person’s immoral or illicit behavior.

The “non-sweet savor” offerings are based on four principles:
  1. Blood is the ritual cleanser that purges the sanctuary of impurities inflicted by the offender;
  2. Sin committed anywhere generates impurity in the sanctuary in proportion to the magnitude of sin committed
  3. God will not dwell in a polluted sanctuary;
  4. The community is collectively responsible for both individual and communal sin

The “non-sweet savor” offerings expiate for moral or physical impurity, the breach of God’s Law
  o Expiation – emphasizes the removal of guilt through a payment of the penalty
    ▪ The prefix ex means “out of” or “from,” so expiation has to do with removing something or taking something away.
    ▪ Taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of atonement.
    ▪ Horizontal – Applies to things done on earth
    ▪ Expiation is the act that results in the change of God’s disposition toward us
      • It is the act of what Christ did on the cross.

In the ecology of morality, an individual’s sins—even if they are inadvertent—adversely affect not just the person committing the sin, but all of one’s society and, indeed, the sanctuary itself: like a malignant cloud, sin pollutes and poisons the very dwelling place of God.
  o Jacob Milgrom poetically describes this phenomenon as “the priestly Picture of Dorian Gray,”
    ▪ Recalls Oscar Wilde’s 1891 novel.
    ▪ In the novel when the virtuous Dorian is granted eternal life he embarks on a course of debauchery and licentiousness. Oddly, his depravity does not affect his stunning, youthful beauty; instead, his portrait—hidden away—becomes uglier and evermore grotesque.
    ▪ In the same way, sin may not blotch the face of the sinner, but it certainly blotches the face of the sanctuary.

If the pollution of the sanctuary is not cleansed by shedding the blood of the “sin offering” and the “guilt offering,” God will abandon his sanctuary and his people will meet their deserved doom.

As we saw with the “sweet savor” offerings, viewing the “non-sweet savor” offerings through a Christian interpretive lens illuminates the work of Christ, his taking our sin on himself and by shedding his blood on the cross he “takes away” our sin, enabling us to stand before God, pure and righteous in God’s sight.

Sin offering (Lev 4:1–5:13)
• Non-sweet savor offering #1 – The work of Christ

• The purpose is for unintentional sin
  o Lev 4:2 … ‘When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands

• The sin offering pictures Christ atoning for our sin:
o “The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood” (Hebrews 13: 11-12).

o Paul says, God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering” (Romans 8:3).

• Christ became our sin offering
  o As the sin offering is substitutionary in Leviticus, so is the sin offering of Christ substitutionary: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).
  o He went the cross on our behalf – He shed His blood in our place
  o He became a substitutionary offering for us

Guilt (Reparation) offering (Lev 5:14-26)

• Non-sweet savor offering #2 – The work of Christ

• The purpose is for sins or which you are aware
  o Lev 5:15 "When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD’s holy things …

• The guilt offering pictures Christ atoning for the damage caused by our sin.
  o It focuses not on the sin itself, but on its consequences.
  o Restitution – Making restitution for what one has done
  o Psalm 51:4 expresses this aspect of the offering very nicely:
    “Against you [God], you alone, have I sinned. What is evil in your sight I have done, and so you may be justified when you give sentence and be without reproach when you judge.”

Laws governing the offerings (Lev 6-7)

Lesson #4: The 5 Great Sacrifices, Redeux  Leviticus 6: 1–7: 38)&
Whereas Leviticus 1-5 addresses God’s covenant people, setting out a system of sacrificial observance, Leviticus 6-7 addresses God’s priests, delineating their role in the sacrificial system. For the ordinary Israelite the sacrifices are divided into those that are voluntary (the “sweet savor” offerings, chapters 1-3) and those that are mandatory (the “non-sweet savor” offerings, chapters 4-5), reflecting the ordinary person’s day-to-day interaction with the rituals. The sacrifices in chapters 1-3 are ordered from those that are most common in the eyes of ordinary people to those that are least common.

For the priests the sacrifices are divided between those that are most holy (the grain offering, sin offering and guilt offering) and those that are holy (the burnt offering and peace offering). The sacrifices in 6-7 are ordered according to those that are most important to the priests and to the performance of their duties.

Leviticus 6-7 can be divided into nine sections, each section beginning with “The Lord [YHWH] spoke to Moses” (6: 1, 12, 17; 7: 22, 28) or “This is the teaching [torah]” (6: 2, 7, 18; 7: 1, 11, 37). Twice, both phrases are used together (6: 1-2, 17-18). “Teaching” is the primary meaning of torah, although in the particular context of Leviticus 6-7 “ritual,” “procedure,” “regulation” or other synonyms may rightly be inferred. The repetitive use of torah throughout Leviticus emphasizes how Leviticus differs from Genesis/Exodus, Numbers/Deuteronomy in that Leviticus sits at the very heart of the Torah, and it is primarily a book of teaching or instruction. Indeed, one Hebrew name for Leviticus is torah kohanim, “Priestly Instruction,” and Jewish children from the Middle Ages onward have been introduced to the Torah not through the stories of Genesis/Exodus, Numbers/Deuteronomy, but through Leviticus, following the great rabbi Rashi’s injunction: “Let the pure ones come and study laws of purity.”
Typologically

- If we view the sacrifices in Leviticus typologically, we see in them as a perfect portrait of the Lord Jesus.
  - As God takes common sacrificial rituals from the ancient world and raises them to a higher moral and ethical plane in Leviticus, so too does he take the sacrifices in Leviticus and raises them to a higher plane in the sacrifice of Christ.
  - What begins in the ancient world with the blood of bulls and goats takes on a profound meaning as it foreshadows in Leviticus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

- The epistle to the Hebrews summarizes the typology in Leviticus:

  When Christ came as High Priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves: but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9: 11-14)

- As the Israelites gained daily access to God through the repeated bloody sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering, so do we gain access to God once for all through the bloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
  - When he spoke his last words—“It is finished” (John 19:30)—and the spear in his side brought forth a sudden flow of “blood and water” (John 19:34), “the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom” (Mark 15: 38) and he entered “heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf” (Hebrews 9: 24). There he carries out his ministry for each of us today.

- We can’t ignore sin – The cross is the cure!
  - Understanding the sacrifice of Christ from this perspective gives us a profound insight into the meaning of the cross and into the seriousness of sin, the deadly disease for which the cross is the cure.
  - We downplay sin today, seldom speaking of it or glossing over it, even from the pulpit. By doing so we place ourselves in grave danger: ignoring sin in our lives is like ignoring cancer in our bodies. It infects us all, without exception, and it is terminal: it always leads to death (James 1: 15). St. Paul tells us Jews and gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: “There is no one just, not one” (Romans 3: 10), for “all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God” (Romans 3: 23). John is more blunt: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves” (1 John 1: 8). Both Paul and John speak to each one of us in a brutally honest way.
  - Jesus paid an enormous price when he bore the weight of our sin on his shoulders. As he suffered and died on the cross, we shall never know the depth and the blackness of the water through which he passed to cleanse us.
  - In the sacrifice of Christ, God made good his promise in Isaiah: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they may become white be as wool. (Isaiah 1: 18)
    - We need only accept this gift that God has freely given us.
    - Once we do, we may approach the Holy of Holies as new men and women, washed in the blood of Christ and free of sin; once we do, we may take our first steps on the road to holiness and sanctification.

- As we study Leviticus 1-10, we are brought ever-closer to the dynamics of redemption, to the transaction of the cross. In Leviticus 1-10 we are skipping on the mountain tops of Scripture, and from our lofty perspective we see a panoramic view of the depth and breadth of God's love.
**Priesthood (Lev 8-10)**

**II. The Priests (8:1-10:20)**
A. Consecration (8:1-36)
B. Ministry (9:1-24)
C. Restrictions (10:1-20)

Priest vs pastor
Priests offer sacrifices, pastors do not

**Lesson #5:   The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons   Leviticus 8: 1 – 9: 24)**
As we discussed in Lesson #1 Scripture as a whole—and Leviticus in particular—portrays a tripartite cosmology which views the heavens above as the eternal realm of God, the earth beneath as the created realm of man, with a vast chasm of space—an “outer darkness”—separating the two. We saw this tripartite cosmology in the creation story of Genesis 1:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens [above] and the earth [below]—and the earth was without form or shape [a chaotic “welter” and “waste”] . . . then God said: Let there be light . . . God then separated the light from the darkness . . . Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other. God made the dome, and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome . . .

In the creation story we have “the waters above” and “the waters below,” with a great “dome” separating the two. Such “division” lies at the heart of the creation story, and “division” dominates the conceptual world of Scripture: light/dark; day/night; upper water/lower water; dry land/seas; male/female; good/evil; life/death. As Robert Alter points out in his introduction to Leviticus in The Five Books of Moses, a Translation with Commentary (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), p.541, the verb “divide” (Hebrew = hivdil) focuses the major themes of Leviticus. And with division comes a “gap” that must be bridged.

Early in our story bridging the gap was easy, for the gap was minimal: indeed, God stepped from his heaven and walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden, while Adam and Eve shared an intimate relationship with God, speaking with him “face to face.” Once sin entered the world, however, the gap became increasingly wide, a gaping chasm between God and man, with God remote in his heaven and man crawling the earth, far below. Recall in Genesis 11, the story of the Tower of Babel and how the people said to one another: “Come let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky,” and in response “The Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the people had built” (11: 4-5)!

Then in Exodus God “came down” once again on Mt. Sinai, and there he began building a bridge from heaven to earth, allowing man access to God, be it ever so tenuous. Mirroring the tripartite cosmology of heaven/outer darkness/earth, Mt. Sinai consisted of three sacred spaces: the wilderness at the foot of the mountain (where the people could assemble); the bottom third of the mountain (where only the priests could go); and the top of the mountain (where God dwelt in fire and smoke, and only Moses could go). In like fashion, when God gave Moses the blueprints for the Tabernacle, it too consisted of three sacred spaces: the courtyard, (where ordinary people could bring their sacrifices, accompanied by a priest); the Holy Place (the first chamber of the tent, where only a priest could enter as a representative of the people); and the Holy of Holies (where God dwelt, and only the High Priest could enter—once each year, on the Day of Atonement).
In the tripartite cosmology of Scripture, the priest serves as the “middle man” who can bridge the gap between heaven and earth, the representative who can approach God in his heaven and speak to God on behalf of the people. Here in Lesson #5 we establish the levitical priesthood, with the ordination of Aaron and his sons.

Lesson #6: Nadab and Abihu, Toasted  Leviticus 10:1-20
Approaching God as a representative of the people requires meticulous attention to form and ritual, following exactly the procedures that God has established. One does not enter God’s sacred space lightly! In Lesson #6 Nadab and Abihu do . . . and they suffer the dreadful consequences.

Consecration
- The Hebrew word qadash means “to set apart.”
- The Septuagint (LXX), the 3rd century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, renders the word “holy.”
- Consecration means “to set apart for God.”
- The word is positional; that is, something or someone is moved from position A to position B.

Sanctification
- The Hebrew word qudash is the same as for “consecration,” but when rendered in Greek, it suggests the process of becoming holy.

- In Leviticus, Aaron and his sons are:
  - First consecrated as priests – that is, they move positionally from ordinary men to the position of priest
  - Then they are sanctified – that is, they begin the process of becoming priests.

- 3 Major Figures in the Old Testament: Priest, Prophet, King
  - Priest – Speaks to God on behalf of the people
  - Prophet – Speaks to the people on behalf of God
    - Oral
      - Speak – Don’t write anything that we know of
      - We simply have their stories in 1 & 2 Kings, stories about what they said and did.
      - Ex. Elijah and Elisha
    - Written
      - Write books
      - Ex. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve Minor Prophets
  - King

Priests
- Lev 8 – Priesthood instituted
- Must be born a Levite – only way to be a priest
- Role of the priest
  - Mediator between the people and God
  - Offer the sacrifices and prayer on the peoples behalf
  - Represent the people before God, on their behalf – bring their offerings and prayers and present them
- Held to a higher standard
  - Must do precisely what God says to do, in precisely the way that God says to do it, or be held accountable
    - James 3:1 “We who teach will be judged more strictly”
  - You are to be a Holy people, set apart to God
    - Must distinguish between the Holy and the common, the clean and the unclean
    - Consequences of misbehaving are much greater because of their position
• Nadab and Abihu – God is serious about this
  o Must teach the Israelites all the decrees that the Lord has given them through Moses

**The Death of Nadab and Abihu**

- Try to bring fire from the Tabernacle
- Grossly insulted God by thinking that they could be ‘magicians’
- God burned them up instead
  o Killed for their presumption and they were drunk when they went in
- People were not allowed to mourn for them
- Cannot drink wine or other fermented drink when they go into the Tent of Meeting or you will die

Meant to give us pause

Uzza steadys the cart when the Holy of Holies is about to fall into the mud

  The sin of Uzza is much dirtier than the mud of the earth

Acts 5:1 – deaths of liers

Heb 7:23

**Spiritual gifts**

Once we respond to God and move positionally into the family of God, we will get talents/gifts/abilities from the Holy Spirit to be used in the service of the family of God

- Used to build up the family of God
- All gifts are of equal value
- We will be held accountable for how faithfully we exercise these gifts
  o Well done good and faithful servant OR
  o What were you thinking?
- Some people will be held more accountable before God
  o Teachers / pastors – Teaching the wrong thing over and over and over – leading people in the wrong direction
    ▪ Influence more people because of the position that you are in

**Blood**

Heb 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

- Four of these five are animal sacrifices – Blood is shed
  o That animal is identified with you by the laying on of your hands and then it is slain
  o You know that those sacrifices should be you – it’s dying on your behalf – it’s shedding its blood instead of you
- 1445 BC – AD 70 (Temple is destroyed and sacrifices come to an end)
  o Continues until one comes – the Lamb of God – that takes away the sin of the world and sheds His blood on our behalf on the cross
  o Tabernacle is a copy or a shadow of a greater reality
  These 5 sacrifices are a copy or a shadow of a greater reality - Jesus
- We are not saved by the love of God – the love of God never saved anybody
  o The love of God is the motive for our salvation
  o The operative action that enables our salvation is the shed blood of Christ on the cross
  o It enables God to forgive our sin and bring us back into fellowship with him
- Mat 24 This Temple will come down
  o Entire sacrificial system came to an end
  o All these sacrifices came to fulfillment when Christ came into this world and went to the cross on our behalf as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world – it was a final, completed act and there has never again been a necessity for these offerings – they completed in the person and works of Christ
Sanctification – How to apply the Law (Leviticus 11-27)

Part Two: Sanctification

A. Food of God’s people (11:1-47)
B. Children of God’s people (12:1-8)
C. Cleansing of leprosy (13:1-14:57)
D. Cleansing of bodily emissions (15:1-32)
E. The Day of Atonement (16:1-34)
F. The sanctity of life (17:1-16)
G. Applications of the laws (18:1-20:27)
   i. Sexuality (18:1-30)
   ii. Social relations (19:1-37)
   iii. Penalty for breaking the commandments (20:1-27)

IV. Holy Days (23:1-44)
V. Holiness in the Promised Land (24:1-26:46)
A. Lamp stand, showbread, death penalty for blasphemy (24:1-23)
B. Sabbatical year, year of jubilee, law of the kinsman redeemer (25:1-55)
C. Conditions of blessing in the land (26:1-46)

VI. Laws Concerning Vows (27:1-34)

God then gives regulations concerning day-to-day life: what foods may be eaten; what clothing may be worn, and so on. God also institutes the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur. It is to be celebrated in perpetuity.

How people are to live together in community and relate to God via these laws

How to apply the Law in more specific detail

- Ex 21-24 Ways to apply the 10 Commandments
- Gen → Dt 613 specific laws for implementing the 10 Commandments
  - 248 Positive commandments (though shalt do . . .)
    - Corresponds to the 248 constituent parts of the body
  - 365 Negative commandments (though shalt not . . .)
    - Corresponds to the 365 days of the year
  - You were to observe the law with all yourself and every day of the year

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Clean vs Unclean
- The Hebrew nouns taharah and tumah (“clean” and “unclean”) refer to ritual “purity” and “impurity.”
  - Has nothing to do with physical cleanliness – it has to do with sanctification
- A clean thing (sanctified thing) may be used in living a life with God
- An unclean thing (non-sanctified thing) may not be used in living a life with God

- The food in Leviticus 11 is not clean or unclean because of any inherent qualities in it, but because of God’s command.
  - Clean (“pure”) food and objects may be integrated into a “sanctified” life
  - Unclean (“impure”) food and objects may not

- Emerge out of a Bedouin culture
  - Nomadic desert dwellers
  - Big number of people living in a vast and dreadful wilderness – very harsh environment
  - Many of these laws emerge out of surviving in that harsh environment

- Ceremonial uncleanness represents our uncleanliness as sinners before a holy God
  - Ro 3:10 … "There is no one righteous, not even one;

**Food – Kosher Laws (Lev 11)**

**Lesson #7: Excuse me, is this kosher? Leviticus 11: 1B47)**

Lessons 1-6 focused on Leviticus, Part 1: Sacrifice, the means by which a sinful people gain access to an infinitely holy God. With Lesson #7 we enter Leviticus, Part 2: Sanctification, the means by which a covenant people live an intimate relationship with God. Chapters 11: 1 – 22: 33 address “holiness” in daily life, covering such topics as: eating, giving birth, skin diseases, normal and abnormal bodily discharges, the sanctity of life and sexual relations: ordinary topics, to be sure, but why such a detailed, seemingly random catalogue of minor stuff? Why not eat pork? Or lobster? Or squid? Why is a woman “unclean” during her monthly menstrual cycle? A modern reader may well ask: “How can all of this possibly be relevant today?”

In Lesson #7 we begin our quest for holiness by examining food, as we seek the deeper meaning beneath the surface of our text, envisioning each law as a tiny tile in a much larger mosaic.

**Lesson #8: “For unto you a child is born . . . Leviticus 12: 1B8)**

Few things are more basic to the human condition than food and sex. And with sex comes childbirth. As we discovered a deeper meaning in the dietary laws of chapter 11, so in chapter 12 shall we discover a deeper meaning in the birth of a child, as well as the relationship between a woman and her son or daughter.

- “Kosher” foods occur only in Esther 8:5, where it means “proper” or “fitting
  - Kosher means ‘holy’

- Clean foods:
  - This list of what they may and may not eat develops into the Kosher (cleanliness) Laws
    - These “food” laws are given to Israel directly by God, speaking from within the tabernacle
    - This is one of the ways that the Israelites are to be set apart from the surrounding lands – define yourself as holy unto the Lord
    - With all 613 specific laws – You don’t want to break the law, so you build a fence around the law and do not get anywhere near it
      - Don’t mix meat and dairy – Law is: Don’t boil a young goat in it’s mother’s milk – develops into not ever mixing meat and dairy. Not even using the same plates or dishwasher for both. Separate meat days and dairy days.
  - Land – May eat any animals that has a split hoof (completely divided) and that chews the cud:
• May eat beef
• May not eat camel (ceremonially unclean), coney, rabbit, pig
• Divided hoof represents the divided nation of Israel – separated from the surrounding lands
• Chewing the cud – same context as ‘I’m going to chew on that’ – meditate on it, think about it
  o Water – May eat any that have fins and scales – keeps very well in a hot environment
    ▪ May eat fish
    ▪ May not eat lobster, shrimp, eels, crab
  o Air – May eat any that have fins and scales (fish) – keeps very well in a hot environment
    ▪ May eat winged creatures that walk on all fours and that have jointed legs for hopping (locusts, grasshopper)
    ▪ May not eat scavenger birds (vultures, eagle, kite, raven, owl, hawk) or insects that are ‘belly-down’

• The laws serve three purposes:
  o First, they are daily reminders to a Jew that he or she belongs to a covenant people who share a unique relationship with God.
  o Second, they isolate the Jews from surrounding cultures, protecting them from assimilation into those cultures. Since an observant Jew cannot share a meal in a non-kosher home, socializing and intermarriage with non-Jews is greatly restricted.
  o Third, the kosher laws have secondary health benefits; keeping kosher is a very healthy way to live.

• Why do the Jews obey these laws?
  o Because God commanded us to do so and we honor Him by obeying Him without question
  o Living in a very harsh, challenging environment and surviving requires obeying these laws
    ▪ No pig (pork, bacon) or shellfish
      • Pork spoils faster than beef or lamb
      • Shellfish spoils very fast in a hot environment
      • Rather than risking getting sick and dying, you just don’t eat it

• The kosher laws still apply to Jews today:
  o all Orthodox Jews observe them,
  o many Conservative Jews do,
  o some Reform Jews do.
  o In one sense, how closely a Jew “keeps kosher” is a barometer of his or her commitment to religious Judaism.

• Leviticus 11 does not apply to Christians.
  o In Mark 7: 14-15; 19. Jesus says: Hear me all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile . . . (Thus he declared all foods clean).

• “Keeping kosher” was a divisive issue in the early Church.
  o In Acts 10: 14, Peter refuses to eat “unclean” food, and it takes a direct command from God to change his mind: even then, he is squeamish.
  o In Galatians 2: 11-14, Paul directs a stinging, public rebuke at Peter, calling him a hypocrite for sometimes keeping the kosher laws and other times not.

• Paul fully understands that “a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal 2:16).
  o To Paul's thinking, any practice that detracts from this fundamental Christian tenet is wrong.
  o He argues this strongly throughout his epistle to the Romans, and in chapter 14 he applies the principle to food: I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself . . . For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the holy Spirit . . . For the sake of food, do not destroy the work of God. (Romans 14: 14, 17, 20)
  o Yet, as strongly as Paul holds this belief, he is careful to consider its pastoral implications. Paul tells us that Christians who cling to customs concerning food are spiritually immature. When dealing with such Christians, he says: “One person believes that one may eat anything, while the weak person eats only
vegetables. The one who eats must not despise the one who abstains, and the one who abstains must not pass judgment on the one who eats; for God has welcomed him” (Romans 14: 2-3). So long as customs concerning food—or anything else—do not obscure the fact that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ, and not by following rules and regulations, we are to be tolerant of each other’s practices. But when such practices overshadow what Christ did on the cross by what we do or don't do, we are on theologically thin ice, and we risk crashing through into the frigid waters of self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

Birth

Flow of blood represents death
Birth makes you ceremonially unclean
• Son – Ceremonially unclean – set apart for 7 days
  o 8th day – child circumcised and named
  o 33 days to be purified from bleeding
  o 40 days total – no responsibilities in the community or in your family except to bond with the child
• Daughters
  o 80 days total for birth of a daughter

Blood (Monthly period and after she gives birth)
• Sacred thing
• Atonement - When the days of purification are over, must make atonement and become ceremonially clean
  o Lamb for burnt offering
  o Pigeon or dove for a sin offering
• Ex. Mary (Lk 2)
  o Mary offers 2 doves – only indication that Jesus grew up poor

Skin Diseases

Lesson #9: Eeeeew! What’s that? Of scaly infections, mold and mildew! (Lev 13–14)
• As we enter Leviticus 13-14 we encounter detailed instructions concerning a condition that Scripture terms sara’at, a Hebrew word often translated “leprosy.” To be sure, sara’at is a much broader term than “leprosy,” or modern-day Hansen’s disease; in Scripture it is a condition that infects people, clothing and even houses in the form of “mold” or “mildew,” and it manifests itself as “scales”; hence, our Catholic Study Bible translates sara’at as “scaly infection.” Ask a modern-day dermatologist what sara’at is, based upon Leviticus 13-14, and he or she will say, “I don’t know,” for sara’at does not describe any known medical condition, either today or in the ancient past. And that’s a clue for a proper reading of Leviticus 13-14. As Jacob Milgrom observes in his commentary on Leviticus:

  The enigma of [sara’at] cannot be resolved by medical science, but it can, at least, be illumined once the medical approach is abandoned and attention is directed to the text itself. [In Leviticus] we are dealing with ritual, not medicine. Moreover, the text stresses that it is not the disease per se but its appearance that is the source of impurity.

• Following this line of thinking, sara’at becomes a symbol or emblem of sin and death: 1) it becomes overt in loathsome ways; 2) it starts small, as “a swelling or rash or a bright spot”; 3) it advances surely and steadily; 4) it separates us from the community and from God; and 5) if not dealt with it is terminal. In this sense, sara’at is a progressive condition, a movement away from life toward death. Understanding sara’at in this way opens the door to a much deeper understanding of the “scaly infections” in Leviticus 13-14, as well as to the normal and abnormal loss of semen and menstrual blood in Leviticus 15, our next lesson.

Lesson #10: Echoes of Onan (Lev15)
• Leviticus 15 takes us into the arena of normal and abnormal bodily discharges among men and women, a topic that baffles many readers! Why would a woman be “unclean” during her menstrual cycle? Why would a man with a “genital discharge” be “unclean?” And why would any article that touches such a person (bedding, clothing, dishes . . .) also be “unclean?” In short, why this obsession with bodily fluids? In Lesson #10 we find out!
Skin diseases in a very intimate community creates a serious problem
- Have to deal with the issue by isolating them

**Leprosy**

- The Hebrew word *sara'at* (often translated “leprosy” or—in our Catholic Study Bibles—“scaly infection”) is broader than the modern day Hansen’s disease – *sara'at* in the Bible is a condition that infects people, clothing and even houses.
- In Scripture, *sara’at* is a symbol or emblem of sin:
  - 1) it becomes overt in loathsome ways;
  - 2) it starts small, as “a swelling or rash or a bright spot”;
  - 3) it advances surely and steadily;
  - 4) it separates us from the community and from God; and
  - 5) if not dealt with it is terminal.
- In this sense, *sara’at* is a progressive condition, a movement away from life toward death.

- Leprosy = sin
  - We move into Leviticus 16 directly from the three “leprosy” chapters that paint a dramatic and horrible picture of the *condition* of sin. The Hebrew word traditionally translated “leprosy” (or “scaly infection” in our Catholic Study Bibles) is *sara'at*, and as we learn when we study these chapters, it presents a detailed picture of sin: it begins invisibly; it spreads silently; it becomes overt in loathsome ways, and it infects everything it touches. Ultimately it leads toward death.

**Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur (Lev 16)**

Yom = day
Kippur = covering
Yom Kippur = day of covering

Somber day – only time that the Jews are told to fast
Removal of sin and putting us in a right relationship with God

Bull – Sim offering for the high priest
Goat 1 – Sin offering for the people
Goat 2 – Scapegoat
Both goats represent Christ
2 dimensions to the atonement
Propitiation – Appeasement of wrath – goat 1
Expiation – Carrying away – goat 2 – our sin is removed

**Lesson #11: The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16: 1-34)**

- All year long Israel’s sins have been polluting the sanctuary. Although individuals have brought purification offerings (sin offerings and guilt offerings) to cleanse the sanctuary, their offerings have had no affect on the actions of the brazen sinner who has refused to repent; his or her sins continue to pollute the sanctuary, posing the threat that God will abandon his dwelling place, leaving the people to fend for themselves. Thus, we have the annual Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*, when the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, purifying it with a sin offering—the blood of a goat—then transferring the pollution and the sins of the people onto the head of a second “scapegoat,” dispatching it into the wilderness, bearing the sins of *all* the people.
Yom Kippur is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, the day when the slate is wiped clean and the people have a fresh start with God. The Christian parallels are obvious:
  1) as the blood of the goat makes atonement for the sins of the people, so the blood of Christ makes atonement for those who believe in him;
  2) as the “scapegoat” bears the sins of the people, so does Christ bear our sins. As Isaiah wrote:

  Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured.  
  We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted,  
  But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity.  
  He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we are healed.  
  We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way;  
  But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.  
  (53: 4-6)

  3) as the Israelites start anew after the “Day of Atonement,” so do we start anew as a “saved” person, washed clean by the blood of Christ.

Lesson #12: The Scapegoat (Leviticus 16: 1-34)

- High Priest (Aaron) cannot enter the Holy of Holies any time he wants – only once/year on Yom Kippur

- Rosh Hashanah – Head of the year (liturgical year)
  - Blowing of the ram’s horn
  - Remembers the story in Genesis of Abraham sacrificing Isaac
  - Introduces Judaism and distinguishes it from the other polytheistic religions
    - 10 days until Yom Kippur to deal with your own sin
    - Ask forgiveness and make restitution for sins against others
    - Prepare for Yom Kippur

- Yom Kippur – Make atonement for the sins of the entire community
  - We are responsible for our own sins, but also responsible for the collective sins of the community
  - Holiest day in Judaism
  - Day of fasting
    - Black Fast – No food or water
    - Only time in the Bible that fasting is prescribed
    - 3 Pillars of Judaism – Prayer, Alms giving, Fasting

- The annual Day of Atonement (Hebrew= Yom Kippur) is a direct command from God, given to Moses in the Tent of Meeting at the foot of Mt. Sinai.
- It is the most sacred day in the Jewish year.
- On the fourteenth day of the seventh month (that is, Tishri. which falls between September and October), all members of the community, both native-born and resident aliens, are to fast. Since the Jewish day begins at sundown (following Genesis 1:5—“And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.”), and it ends the next evening when three stars appear in the sky, that means a total fast of 24 hours, from evening to evening: no food, no water.

Be holy
- God calls his people to a life of holiness
God calls his people to a life of holiness: “For I, the Lord, am your God. You shall make and keep yourselves holy, because I am holy.” (Lev 11: 44).

If the theme of Leviticus is holiness, the anti-theme is sin.
- We are not holy people; we are steeped in sin, every one of us.
- As Paul says: “All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God” (Romans 3: 23);
- John is even more direct: “If we say, ‘We are without sin,’ we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1: 8).

Sin must be dealt with
- Leprosy
  - We move into Leviticus 16 directly from the three “leprosy” chapters that paint a dramatic and horrible picture of the condition of sin.
  - The Hebrew word traditionally translated “leprosy” (or “scaly infection” in our Catholic Study Bibles) is sara'at, and as we learn when we study these chapters, it presents a detailed picture of sin:
    - it begins invisibly
    - it spreads silently
    - it becomes overt in loathsome ways
    - it infects everything it touches
    - ultimately it leads toward death
- Sin today
  - We seldom hear about sin now, yet everything we read in Leviticus focuses on coming to grips with it
  - Though sin is dealt with daily in the five great sacrifices at the altar of burnt offering, Leviticus 16 provides a means for dealing with sin that is more comprehensive. It operates against the background of the five great sacrifices; that is, it assumes that the community, priests and individuals participate fully and actively in the daily sacrifices.
  - Chapter 16 provides for an annual sacrifice that involves the entire community.

This shall be an everlasting statue for you: on the tenth day of the seventh month every one of you, whether a native or a resident alien, shall humble yourselves and shall do no work. For on this day atonement is made for you to make you clean; of all your sins you will be cleansed before the Lord . . . . This, then, shall be an everlasting statute for you: once a year atonement shall be made on behalf of the Israelites for all their sins. And Moses did as the Lord had commanded him. (Lev 16: 29-30; 34)

Prologue (16:1-2).
- The prologue stresses the extreme seriousness of what is about to happen:
  After the death of Aaron’s two sons, who died when they encroached on the Lord’s presence, the Lord spoke to Moses and said to him: Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he pleases into the inner sanctuary, inside the veil, in front of the cover on the ark, lest he die . . . .

Preparation (16:3-10).
- Aaron lays aside the high priest’s garments of glory and beauty, bathes himself, and puts on plain garments of white linen.
  - Recall that St. Paul tells us that Jesus, “Who, though he was in the form of God,” laid aside his glory, “taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found in human appearance” (Philippians 2: 6-7).
- His sin/burnt offering
  - On entering the sanctuary, Aaron brings with him a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. These are for himself and his household.
  - Hebrews 7: 26-27 tells us that Jesus has no need of a sin offering, for he “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, higher than the heavens.”
- Community sin/burnt offering
• He brings from the Israelite community a ram for a burnt offering and 2 male goats for a sin offering
  • He presents the 2 goats to the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, where he casts lots for them — one for the Lord, the other for the scapegoat

• Purification (16: 11-19).
  o Aaron offers the bull that he brought into the sanctuary as a sin offering for himself and his household.
  o He then takes a censer full of burning coals from the pure gold altar of incense into the Holy of Holies, letting the fragrant smoke fill the room, obscuring the mercy seat, “else he will die” (16: 13).
  o He sprinkles some of the bull’s blood on the mercy seat with his finger; he does this seven times, the number symbolizing completeness.
    ▪ The blood sprinkled seven times before God symbolizes complete substitutionary atonement: the sins of the people are atoned for by the blood (or “life”) of the bull (“since the life of all flesh is its blood”—Leviticus 17: 14).
    ▪ As Hebrews 9: 22 says: “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”
  o When Aaron finishes, he comes back outside and slaughters the goat as a sin offering for the people, takes its blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkles it seven times on the mercy seat, as he did with the bull’s blood.
  o He then sprinkles the goat’s blood on the Tent of Meeting itself, “which is set up among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (16: 16).
  o He does the same thing to the altar of burnt offering.
  o During the purification, Aaron works in the Tent of Meeting alone; no one may come near it.
    ▪ Likewise, in Jesus “we have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister of the sanctuary, the true tabernacle that the Lord, not by man, set up” (Hebrews 8: 1-2).

• Dispatch of the Scapegoat (16: 20-22).
  o When Aaron finishes purifying the Holy of Holies, the Tent of Meeting and the altar of burnt offering

    Aaron shall bring forward the live goat. Laying both hands on its head, he shall confess over it all the iniquities of the Israelites and their trespasses, including all their sins, and so put them on the goat’s head. He shall then have it led into the wilderness by an attendant. The goat will carry off all their iniquities to an isolated place. (Lev 16: 20-22)

  o The rite of the “scapegoat” has produced an enormous amount of speculation by scholars: it ranges from seeing the scapegoat as a pagan ritual to seeing it as a ransom paid to demons.
  o It is certainly a mythopoetic archetype:
    ▪ James Frazer devotes an entire volume of The Golden Bough to the “scapegoat” in the world’s religions;
    ▪ Joseph Campbell treats it, too, in The Hero with a Thousand Faces.
  o The Hebrew word translated “scapegoat” is ’aza’zel, and it is only used once in the Bible: here.
    ▪ William Tyndale, the Protestant reformer and Bible translator, first rendered ’aza’zel as “scapegoat,” following the Greek LXX by properly translating ’az as “goat” and ’azel as a form of the verb “to go away”; hence ’aza’zel is the “go away goat,” or “scapegoat.”
  o Later Jewish theology uses the word as the name of one of the fallen angels, Azazel, in the Book of Enoch
    ▪ (Enoch is not a book of the Bible; it was written around 200 B.C., and is part of the Pseudepigrapha, a collection of sixty-three works on biblical themes written between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200).
  o The two goats represent one offering, each goat representing one aspect of that offering.
    ▪ The goat slain is a sin offering.
      ▪ In Christian typology, God made Jesus “to be sin who did not know sin” (2 Corinthians 5: 21);
      ▪ God sent “his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh for the sake of sin” (Romans 8: 3);
• “you were ransomed...with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1: 18-19).

  - The second goat recalls Isaiah 53: 4-6:

    Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole; by his wounds we are healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. (Isaiah 53: 4-6)

• Aftermath (16: 23--28).
  o Aaron goes into the Tent of Meeting, takes off his linen garments, bathes himself, and puts on the high priest’s garments.
  o He then sacrifices the remaining offerings for himself and the people, both the burnt offering and the sin offering.
  o The hide, flesh, and offal of the sin offerings are taken outside the camp and burnt.
  o The man who releases the “scapegoat” and the man who burns the remains of the sin offerings must then wash their clothes and bathe.

• Epilogue (16: 29-34).
  o God makes the great Day of Atonement—Yom Kippur—a lasting ordinance for the people of Israel.
  o Yom Kippur predates Christianity by nearly 1,500 years, and Jews observe it to this day.
  o In Christian typology, Yom Kippur pictures the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
  o Of all the typology in the Hebrew Scriptures, Leviticus 16 most closely portrays the dynamic of redemption, the transaction of the cross.

The Atonement

• In traditional Christianity, the typology of Leviticus 16 takes us directly into the very complex issue of the atonement.
• “Atonement” is the English rendering of the Hebrew verb ūḇāḥār “to cover.”
  o The sacrifices of Leviticus 16 “cover” the sins of Israel.
  o For all practical purposes, they are removed from God's sight, for he says: “For on this day atonement [ūḇāḥār] is made for you to make you clean; of all your sins you will be cleansed [ṭāḥer, “pure”] before the Lord” (16: 30).

• In the New Testament, the epistle to the Hebrews sees in Leviticus 16 a type or “shadow” of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross:

  But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is not belonging to this creation, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9: 11-12).

• The word “atonement” in our English translations derives from the Middle English “atonement”; hence, “atonement” is the means by which we become “at one” with God.
  o The atonement—as a theological issue—addresses how “at-one-ment” happens.

• In a very important sense, the atonement is the most important issue in the Bible.
  o It is also a critical issue for each one of us today, for how we understand the atonement determines the very nature of our relationship with God and how we live our lives in his presence.

• The Bible does not present a philosophical discussion of the atonement, although it does give a great deal of information about it. We might summarize what the Bible says in this fashion:
  o The atonement is an accomplished and completed fact (Hebrews 9: 13-26);
  o The atonement is essential to human salvation (Luke 24: 41-47; Acts 4: 12);
Although the entire earthly life of Jesus contained an atoning and even sacrificial element, the virtue of the atonement is found chiefly in his death on the cross: Jesus’ death is *indispensable* to our salvation (John 3: 14-15);

In the atoning death of Christ, God exhibited not only wrath against sin but love toward sinful humanity (Romans 3: 25-26; 5: 6-8; John 3: 16);

Redemption was in the thought and plan of God from the very beginning; when man fell, he fell into the arms of divine mercy: the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13: 8; 1 Peter 1: 19-20);

The atonement is not limited, but universal; it applies to the entire human family (Hebrews 2: 9; 1 Timothy 2: 5-6; Romans 5: 18; 2 Corinthians 5: 14-15);

Although the atonement is universal, salvation is not. God’s offer of salvation may be—and often is—rejected; when the rejection is final, atonement counts for nothing (Mark 16: 16; John 3: 36; Hebrews 10: 26-29);

The atonement is the objective ground for the forgiveness of sins and acceptance by God (John 3: 16; Acts 2: 38; Ephesians 1: 7; Colossians 1: 14).

Interpreting what the Bible says about the atonement has taken three directions during the history of the Church, and those three directions still dominate today. A fanciful notion has also surfaced periodically that the death of Jesus was a ransom paid to Satan to redeem men who had come under his power. Origen (AD. 230) taught this, as did Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 370). Although prominent at times, this idea was always met with the strongest opposition and was never accepted as Church doctrine.

- **Satisfaction Theory** – views the atonement as satisfying divine justice: man sinned, a penalty must be paid
  - The first serious understanding of the atonement might be called the Satisfaction Theory.
  - St. Anselm (AD. 1100) stands as its strongest proponent.
  - In his book *Cur Deus Homo* he views the atonement as satisfying divine justice: man sinned, and a penalty must be paid.
    - Although God is love, he is also justice, and the requirements of divine justice must be satisfied before God’s salvation can be granted.
  - Anselm illustrates his theory with an analogy: When Christ bore the punishment for our sins, he literally paid a debt in the manner of a commercial transaction.
  - Carried to its logical conclusion, however, such reasoning leads either to a limited atonement or to universal salvation, both of which pose enormous philosophical and theological problems, not to mention that they flatly contradict the Bible.

- **Moral Influence Theory**
  - The second understanding of the atonement might be called the Moral Influence Theory.
  - Abelard (A.D. 1100), St. Anselm’s chief opponent, stands as its strongest supporter.
  - Abelard rooted the atonement squarely in the love of God, teaching that nothing in God’s essence required satisfaction for sin: God is love, period.
    - The suffering and death of Christ on the cross is the purest example of God’s love; hence, its effect is principally moral.
    - It was intended to soften the hearts of sinful men and to lead them to repentance and devotion to Christ.
  - To my thinking, the moral influence theory, though containing a profound truth (God is love), falls far short of adequately representing what the Bible teaches.
    - It leaves out the fact—stressed in Leviticus and throughout Scripture—of a real, objective basis for atonement, and by doing so reduces the suffering and death of Jesus to an object lesson.
    - Even so, many people in the church today—both Catholics and Protestants—ascribe to the moral influence theory of the atonement, especially among the more liberal movements and denominations.

- **Governmental Theory**
The third understanding of the atonement might be called the **Governmental Theory**.

Grotius (A.D. 1617) is its chief proponent.

Writing against those who denied the vicarious character of Christ’s death, Grotius held fast to Jesus as our “sin bearer,” but he viewed the vicarious nature of Jesus’ suffering and death as meeting a requirement of *moral government*, not some rigid sense of justice inherent in God’s character.

This is a subtle, but important distinction – According to Grotius, Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross *in our place* makes it possible for God to exercise divine mercy, while at the same time it protects the dignity of the Law, the honor of God, and the moral interests of the universe.

As a theory, Grotius’s position is appealing, for in one sense it reconciles the satisfaction and moral influence theories.

Held to strongly, though, the governmental theory:

- Loses sight of the fact that divine government must be a reflection of God’s divine nature, and hence, what is required by divine government must also be required by divine nature.
- Further, if taken to its logical conclusion, the governmental theory degenerates into a cosmic moral spectacle, becoming—in effect—just another approach at a moral influence theory.

Today theologians seek ways of mediating between or uniting these three theories, for each one alone inadequately represents the fullness of what the Bible teaches.

- Clearly, Scripture represents the death of Christ as a profound manifestation of God’s love;
- Yet, it also represents his sacrificial death as *required* by God’s justice.
- It is equally clear that Christ being nailed to the cross *in our place* satisfies the requirements of divine law and the moral economy that God has established.

As we struggle with Leviticus 16 and with the atonement, we would do well to remember Paul’s advice to the Corinthians before we take a strong position:

> When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:11-12)

When we encounter the atonement—that dynamic that allows sinful man to be “at one” with God—we enter an arena where finite man struggles to understand an infinite God. It is no easy task, and no simple answer will suffice.

- If we turn back to Scripture, the Gospel according to Matthew gives us a place to rest our inquiry. Matthew is a very precise and careful narrator, giving us full details throughout his gospel of what Jesus said and did. When he reaches the cross, however— the place where the atonement takes place—the narrative changes: it becomes sparse:

  > As they were going out they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull), they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gal. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. (Mt 27: 32-37)

- Notice that we do not actually see Jesus crucified. They offer him a drink, but he refuses it; then we read: “After they had crucified him…”

  - The crucifixion itself takes place between the lines.
  - The atonement—what actually happens on the cross—is similar.
  - In Matthew, it is a private matter between the Father in heaven and the Son on the cross.

    - Prying eyes are not privy to it.
    - True, those loitering about the cross mock him and heap insults on him
    - But from the sixth hour to the ninth, God lowers a mantle of darkness over the scene and the transaction between Father and Son takes place.
    - It is as if God says: “This is something you cannot look at. It is beyond human understanding. The suffering cannot be comprehended.”
I cannot imagine a greater demonstration of God’s love, nor can I imagine a more profound sacrifice—in the Levitical sense of that word. Yet, I am at a loss as to how to explain what happened precisely. God placed a mantle of darkness over the atonement, and we simply cannot see it in all its details. To pretend that we can is arrogance and idle speculation. So I leave it to rest.

I do know, however, that what transpired on the cross dealt with the issue of sin once and for all: this is clear throughout Scripture. We can add nothing to the completed work of Christ. John—who was there at the foot of the cross—tells us that at the end, Jesus said quietly and simply: “It is finished.” And with that he died. At the same moment the curtain of the temple—the one separating the holy place from the Holy of Holies—was torn in two from top to bottom, giving sinful man access to God once for all.

**Blood (Lev 17)**

Blood is needed for atonement

**Lesson #13: “The life of all flesh is its blood” (Leviticus 17: 1-16)**

If we hover above the Tabernacle and watch its operations—the Burnt Offering, Grain Offering, Peace Offering, Sin Offering and Guilt Offering—we may well be repulsed by the oceans of blood shed by an endless stream of bulls, lambs and goats. Indeed, in Hebrews 9: 22 we read: “According to the law almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” We might also recall the meticulous attention given to menstrual blood, both normal and abnormal, in Leviticus 15; to the waters of the Nile River being turned to blood in Exodus 7; and to St. Peter’s statement that we are ransomed “with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1: 18). Indeed, blood runs through Scripture like a bright crimson thread, a major leitmotif in God’s plan of redemption.

In Lesson #13 we explore the profound meaning of blood in our story.

Any person that eats blood will be cut off

- Life of every creature is its blood
- Blood makes atonement for one’s life
  - Hebrews – Without the shedding of blood, there is no atonement
- Blood is sacred – if an animal is killed for food, the blood must be drained and covered, not just left

**John 6:53**

- Jesus is teaching at the synagogue
- Eat my body (bread) and drink my blood to live
- 53 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. . . 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. . . 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. . . 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. . .”

**Hard** – Greek word is scololeros – we get the word scandalous from this word

**1500 years** – very specific commandment that you may not eat blood or you will be cut off from your people (Lev 17)

**Everyone left** – only the disciples were left

**Goats represent demonic activity**

**Unlawful Sexual Behavior**

**Lesson #14: Everything You Wanted to Know about Sex (but were afraid to ask!) (Leviticus 18: 1 - 20: 27)**

In Leviticus 11: 14 God says: “Be holy, because I am holy,” and in Leviticus 18-20
we learn that being holy has a lot to do with who we have sex with . . . and who we don’t.
In Lesson #14 we take an adventurous stroll through a sexual hall of mirrors.

- Any relationship which will dishonor your parents
- Homosexuality
- Sex with animals

Lev 18:4 You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. 5 Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD

_Catch-all Laws_


In our study of Leviticus 6-7 we examined the role of the priest as the “middle man” between the people and God, the one who stands in the gap of the tripartite cosmology of Scripture, presiding over the five great sacrifices. In Leviticus 8-9 we witnessed the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests, and in Leviticus 10 we saw the punishment of Nadab and Abihu when they appeared before God, unbidden and unrepentant. Now, in Leviticus 21-22 we learn of the high moral expectations God expects of his priests.

- Poverty Plan
  - Leave 10% of your harvest (border) and do not go over your fields a 2\textsuperscript{nd} time – leave it for the poor
  - The poor harvest for themselves – not a handout because they still have to work for it
  - Providing, but not emasculating

- Do not pervert justice
  - No partiality based on economics – either poor or wealthy – judge fairly

- Do not mistreat aliens – non-Israelite that lives with the Israelites
  - You were aliens in Egypt and you know what it is like to be mistreated

- Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity.
Holy Days – Jewish Festivals / Sacred Assemblies (Leviticus 23)

- Sacred space
  - With the building of the Tabernacle in the second half of Exodus we learned of “sacred space,” space that mirrors the tripartite structure of Scriptural cosmology.

- Sacred me
  - In the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur, we examined “sacred me.”
  - We first encounter “sacred me” in the 1st creation story, Genesis 1:1–2:3. In a beautiful example of carefully structured mythopoetic literature, God creates the heavens and the earth in six days, resting on the seventh: “Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.” (Genesis 2:1-3)

- Sacred time
  - Now we learn that “sacred time” punctuates the year, giving it a rhythm that mirrors the natural agrarian cycle of planting, growing, harvest and fallow, as well as God’s intervention into human history for his covenant people.

- The feasts then – Seven feasts were given to Israel to celebrate over a seven-month period of time, beginning in spring and continuing through fall. - (Exodus 12; 23:14-17; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28 & 29; and Deuteronomy 16)
  - The Jewish calendar incorporates seven major periods of “sacred time,” or holidays (e.g., “holy-days”):
    - Passover (Leviticus 23: 5)
    - Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23: 6)
    - First Fruits (Leviticus 23: 11)
    - Pentecost (Leviticus 23: 16)
    - Trumpets (Leviticus 23: 24)
    - Atonement (Leviticus 23: 27)
    - Tabernacles (Leviticus 23: 34)
  - Christianity also observes seven “sacred times” throughout the liturgical year

- The feasts now –
  - Col 2:16-17 "Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."
  - These feasts were prophetic types, or symbols, that pointed to Christ and which would be fulfilled in Him.
    - The first four were fulfilled with the first coming of Christ.
      - Passover, Unleavened Bread, and First Fruits – take place in the spring over 8 days
      - Harvest (Pentecost) is 50 days later at the beginning of summer
    - The last three will be fulfilled with the rapture and second coming of Christ.
      - Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles took place over a period of twenty-one days in the fall of the year.

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• The Bible discusses Jewish festivals—or holidays—in several places. Leviticus 23 offers the most complete list of festivals.
  o Passover / Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:13; Ex 23:15; Ex 34:18; Lev 23:5-6; Nu 28:16-25; Dt 16:1-8)
  o First Fruits (Lev 23:11)
  o Pentecost / Feast of Weeks / Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16; Ex 34:22; Lev 23:16; ; Nu 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12)
  o Feast of Trumpets / Rosh Hashanah (Lev 23:24)
  o Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement (Lev 16; Lev 23:27)
  o Tabernacles / Feast of Booths / Feast of Ingathering / Sukkot (Ex 23:16; Ex 34:22; Lev 23: 34; Dt 16:18-22)

• The 6 festivals prescribed in Leviticus 23 provide God’s people with a rich tradition and a profound sense of identity.
  o They are rooted in Israel’s unique relationship with God and in how that relationship has manifested itself throughout history
  o They reflect the spring and autumn agricultural seasons, the cycles of the year in which people live out their day-to-day lives.
  o Combined, they provide the Jewish people with a heritage, rich in meaning and symbolism.
  o As we have seen, when we move to the New Testament, we encounter stepped-up parallelism, and the Jewish holidays in Leviticus 23 form the foundation for Christian traditions. The two are intimately linked.
  o This life is getting faster and faster and faster – this is a prescription to slow down

Feasts of the LORD
Lev 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.

• Here we have an introduction of sorts as the Lord tells Moses to speak to the children of Israel about “The Feasts of the Lord.”
  o While not a festival, the Sabbath—or Shabbat—stands at the head of Jewish religious observance, providing a point of reference for all the other festivals
    o Literally, Shabbat means “rest”
    o Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday night and ends on Saturday night when three stars appear in the sky. (The Jewish day always begins at sundown, reflecting Genesis 1:5: “And there was evening and there was morning—the first day.”)

• Shabbat is rooted in Genesis 2:1-3. By observing it, one fulfills the fourth of the Ten Commandments:

  Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the stranger living within your gates. For in six days the
Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11),

- Shabbat has two basic purposes
  - By observing it, one honors God: he rested on the Sabbath, and he asks his people to do the same.
  - By observing it, one expresses the freedom and dignity of the human person: we are not to be enslaved by our work.

- Celebrating Shabbat has profound meaning for a Jewish family.
  - Unlike Christianity which is centered in the Church, Jewish life is centered in the home. Shabbat reflects this subtle but important difference.
  - Preparation for Shabbat begins on Friday afternoon and involves:
    - cleaning the house,
    - shopping for dinner (and buying hallot, two round, braided loaves of bread),
    - bathing and putting on clean clothes,
    - setting the Shabbat table (with a clean, white tablecloth, china, kiddush cup(s), fresh flowers, and a tzedakah box—a container for money, which is collected before the Sabbath begins and is later given to the poor).
  - At sundown the family and guests gather around the dinner table.

- The Shabbat service includes nine elements:
  - **Candle Lighting**
    - Shabbat begins when the woman of the house lights the candles. With her head covered she circles the flames with her hands three times, symbolically bringing the warmth and light of the Sabbath to herself and to those gathered around the table. After a pause, she says the blessing. Everyone at the table then wishes each other “Shabbat Shalom,” with hugs, kisses and handshakes.
  - **Singing Shalom Aleikheim (“Peace be with You”)**
    - This is a traditional song welcoming the Sabbath and guests at the table.
  - **Blessing the Family**
    - The man of the house first blesses the children by placing his hands on their heads and saying the traditional blessing
      - for sons: “May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh,” and
      - for daughters: “May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.”
    - This is followed for all children by the blessing from Numbers 6: 24-26, “May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his face toward you and give you peace.”
      - The father also usually hugs each child and whispers something personal to each one.
    - The husband then blesses his wife with a selection from Proverbs 31: 10-31, which praises the “Woman of Valor”;
    - The wife then blesses her husband with a reading from Psalm 112, “Happy is the Man.”
    - Some families use readings from the Song of Songs for the family blessing.
    - The blessing closes by including all at the table: “May the Merciful One bless all of us together with the blessing of peace.”
  - **Singing the Kiddush Prayer.**
    - Wine is poured in the Kiddush cup (Kiddush is from kadosh, “holy”);
      - Each adult at the table has a kiddush cup
      - The head of the household may have a special one that has been passed down through generations or that has been bought in Israel.
      - All stand, and the head of the household begins by raising his cup and saying, “With the permission of friends...”
- He then recites the words from Genesis 2:1-3, the blessing over the wine, and the prayer that sanctifies the day.

- **Washing the Hands.**
  - This is a ritual washing, much as a priest does as he moves into the Liturgy of the Eucharist during a Roman Catholic Mass.
  - A special pitcher and basin is used.
  - Washing is done in silence, in anticipation of the blessing of the bread.
  - Everyone at the table washes.

- **Blessing the Bread.**
  - Two loaves of hallah are used, symbolic of the double portion of manna that fell on Shabbat during the Exodus.
  - Hallah means a round loaf or cake. It is braided and often filled with raisins.
  - The loaves are kept covered with a cloth until the blessing.
    - This is symbolic of the manna being covered by dew until morning. (A popular explanation for children says that the hallot are covered so they won’t get jealous during the blessing of the lights and wine!)
  - As each person at the table holds the hallah, they say the blessing: “Praised are you, Adonai, our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.”
  - Then everyone pulls the hallah apart.

- **Eating the Meal**
  - There is no prescribed Shabbat meal, though many Jewish families include traditional gefilte fish, chicken soup or meat.
  - It is important that the meal be festive, not the usual food served during the week; the meal need not be expensive.
  - The Shabbat meal is a time of fellowship with family and friends and should reflect such a joyous and happy occasion.

- **Singing after the Meal**
  - There are many traditional Shabbat songs, and the meal concludes with a hearty round of them.

- **Blessing after Food.**
  - Christians say grace at the beginning of a meal; we thank God “for what we are about to receive.”
  - Jews also pray at the beginning of the Shabbat meal (blessing the lights, wine and bread, as well as those gathered around the table), but the major blessing comes after the meal is finished.
  - In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people that God will bring them into a new land, a land of milk and honey. And then he says,

  *But when you have eaten and are satisfied, you must bless the Lord, your God, for the good land he has given you. Be careful not to forget the Lord, your God, by failing to keep his commandments and ordinances and statues which I enjoin on you today; lest when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, and your herds and flocks have increased, and all you property has increased, you then become haughty of heart and forget the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that house of slavery.*

  (Deuteronomy 8: 10-14)

  - The prayer that closes Shabbat dinner flows from these verses and stresses four themes:
    - the blessing for food
    - the blessing for the land
    - the blessing for Jerusalem
    - the blessing and remembrance of God’s goodness.
• The four themes form a “salvation history” of the Jewish people,
  • affirming God’s positive role in nature,
  • Israel,
  • the temple in Jerusalem,
  • and the positive outcome of history at the end of time

• The prayer closes with:

_May the Merciful One give us as an inheritance a day that is completely Shabbat, and rest in life everlasting in the world to come. Then shall we receive blessing from Adonai and justice from the God of our deliverance. May we find favor and good understanding in the eyes of God and people. He who makes peace in his heaven, may he make peace for us and for all Israel and let us say. Amen._

• After dinner, many Jewish families go to synagogue, or they may wait until Saturday morning.
  o _Shabbat_ services on Saturday last about three hours; they are shorter on Friday evening.

• As Christians look back with warm memories to Christmas with family and friends, to crackling logs in a fireplace, hauling home the Christmas tree, and the smell of nutmeg and cinnamon, turkey and stuffing, so does a Jew hold warm memories of _Shabbat_, of candles and white tablecloths, china and flowers, songs and laughter, and the smell of chicken soup and warm bread.

• _Shabbat_ and Roman Catholic mass
  o Celebrated weekly, _Shabbat_ rests at the heart of Jewish life as the Mass rests at the heart of Roman Catholic life: each week leads into it and each flows out of it.
  o Both include common elements:
    ▪ blessing over the wine,
    ▪ blessing and breaking of the bread,
    ▪ song and prayer,
    ▪ fellowship with God and man.
  o In the early Church the Eucharist was celebrated in exactly this way—as part of a larger meal.
    ▪ Only later did it become ritualized, as it is today.

• To understand the Jewish festivals listed in Leviticus 23, one must view them against the experience of _Shabbat_ in the Jewish family and community. Appropriately, then, Leviticus 23 begins with Shabbat, and then it moves into the festivals themselves.
These feasts are arranged to tell the story of God’s redemption plan for His people. He wanted to prepare the hearts of His people through the pictures conveyed in these seven feasts.

Spring Festivals: Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Feast of Weeks.
- The first 3 festivals—Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread and First fruits—occur within eight days
- The 4th—the Feast of Weeks, later called Pentecost—follows fifty days after the Feast of First fruits.
- All are springtime festivals, marking the beginning of life, in both a physical and symbolic sense.

Autumn Festivals: Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles
- As the three spring festivals are intimately related, so are the autumn festivals.
- The spring festivals span fifty-eight days and reflect joy in God’s salvation of his people, Israel
- The autumn festivals sound a more somber note: they are more reflective, a serious time of seeking forgiveness, of making amends with one’s neighbor, and of starting anew.
Passover / Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:4-8)

Passover / Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:13; Ex 23:15; Ex 34:18; Lev 23:4-8; Nu 28:16-25; Dt 16:1-8)

Passover is the oldest religious feast among any of the world’s religions. In Jewish life Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, though technically separate feasts, are treated as one.

- 14th day of the 1st month
- Lasts 8 days total (Passover day 1, Feast of Unleavened Bread days 2-8)
- Haggadah – Liturgy of Passover – Outline of the celebration that remembers the Exodus from Egypt
  - No mention of Moses during this celebration
  - How do you remember the Exodus without mentioning Moses? God did it, not Moses

The Passover and Unleavened Bread
Lev 23 4 “These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. 5 On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7 On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. 8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.”

- One of the Pilgrimage Festivals – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles
  - 3 “solemn feasts”—Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles
  - Required that all able-bodied Jewish males travel to Jerusalem to attend the feast and offer sacrifices
  - All three of these feasts required that “firstfruit” offerings be made at the temple as a way of expressing thanksgiving for God’s provision.
    - Feast of Firstfruits celebrated at the time of the Passover included the first fruits of the barley harvest
    - Feast of Weeks was in celebration of the first fruits of the wheat harvest
    - Feast of Tabernacles involved offerings of the first fruits of the olive and grape harvests

- As the story is told in Exodus 12-13, the Israelites are to stay indoors, slay a lamb without defect, put some of the blood on the door frames of each Israelite house, and then roast the lamb and eat it.
  - Remembers the exodus from Egypt – celebrates God freeing his people from Egyptian slavery
    - Pilotable event in the Israelites identity as a people
      - Angle of death passing over the Israelites during the last plague
      - Moses leading the people out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea

Ex 12 10 You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11 And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. 
So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. 17 So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is
leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ “

Ex 13 3 And Moses said to the people: “Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. 5 And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. 6 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. 8 And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ 9 It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. 10 You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

• God outlined the steps Israel was to take, Exodus 12 instructs them to:
  o Make the month of Nisan their first month of the year
  o Take a male lamb 1-year old without blemish
  o The lamb was to be selected on the 10th of the month and be kept until the 14th of Nisan
  o On the twilight of the 14th the lambs were to be “publically” killed by the whole assembly
  o Each family was to take the blood of “their” lamb and apply it to the door posts and lintel.
  o The family was to roast the whole lamb over the fire
  o They were to let no flesh remain until morning, burning what remains
  o The people to wear their belts and sandals with staff in hand, eating in haste

• The day before Passover was known as the Preparation Day, the day one prepared for the feasts Passover and Unleavened Bread. Prior to these feasts families had to prepare. The houses were cleaned, families searched for Leaven and the Lamb had to be prepared for sacrifice. The lamb was to be killed at the twilight on Nisan 14.

• When does Passover Occur?
  o Passover is the first feast of the Jewish year and the foundation of all other feasts.
  o It begins on the twilight of 14th day of Nisan (March/April).
  o Passover is followed by the seven-day feast of unleavened bread.
  o The feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread are celebrated together because they are so closely linked.
  o Before the Babylonian captivity the month of Nisan was known as Abib (Exod. 13:4, 34:18), Israel later adapted the Babylonian names for the months.

• The feast of Unleavened Bread falls on the day after “Passover”.
  o Passover begins on the twilight of Nisan 14; therefore the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on Nisan 15.
  o After Passover, the next day was the feast of Unleavened Bread which lasted 7 days, from Nisan 15 until Nisan 21, a period when Israel was to be holy to the Lord.

• What is Unleavened Bread – Made without yeast?
  o Yeast is a micro-organism that is defined as part of the fungi family; they produce asexually and do not require sunlight. They digest sugar and excrete carbon dioxide and alcohol as by products. They yeast cells population will begin to multiply rapidly as long as there is enough food (sugar) and the conditions are right such as temperature and moisture.
  o When yeast is put in warm dough it begins to digest the sugars and multiply. The yeast produces/excretes carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide bubbles are trapped in the dough. Alcohol is also produced but in the baking process, the alcohol is burned off. The bread is puffed up with air pockets created by the yeast after it is baked allowing the bread to be fluffy and substantial rather than flat. When Israel was leaving Egypt they did not have time for the yeast to raise their dough.
Yeast is also used to create alcoholic wine by letting the yeast cells digest the sugars in the grape juice and excrete alcohol. Yeast cell naturally appears on the grape skin and in the environment. They along with other micro-organisms are involved in the decaying process of life. For example, animals eating decaying fruit have been known to become drunk from the alcohol that naturally is produced from the yeast on the skin. When fruit ripens in the warm sun they can become alcoholic.

- Yeast has a decaying affect on life therefore the Bible uses it as a metaphor for sin.
- The picture of searching your house for yeast is a great analogy for us to search our lives for any hidden sin. Israel was to the take the yeast and rid it from their midst, in the same way we should rid our lives of sin, removing it from our life like the yeast.

**Seder Meal**

**The First Cup**
- To begin the service the father pours out the first cup of wine and asks everyone to rise from the table. Raising his cup he recites the prayer of sanctification, The Kiddush, to set apart this day to the Lord.

  *Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Who has chosen us for Thy service from among the nations… Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who hast kept us in life, Who hast preserved us, and hast enabled us to reach this season.*

- Jesus would have led the Seder in the upper room as he celebrated Passover with his disciples.

**The Washing of the Hands**
- The second ceremony of the modern Seder is the washing of the hands, a family member brings water, bowl and towel to each person at the table to wash their hands before they eat. Jesus in a similar act after supper, showed Himself as a servant and washed the disciples feet and wiped them with a towel. The Messiah was a servant of humanity.

**The Green Vegetable**
- After the hands are washed the karpas, green vegetable, is dipped in the salt water and eaten.
- The saltwater reminds people of the tears of suffering suffered by Israel in the land of Egypt.

**The Middle Matzah**
- On the table is a bag with three loaves of Matzah in three compartments.
- The middle loaves is removed and broken in half. The broken half is then removed and hidden in the house. Later in the ceremony the children have the task of finding the hidden bread.

**The Four Questions**
- After the Matzah is broken and hidden, the youngest child to the right of the head of the table will fulfill the role of Exodus 12:26, “And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?'.
- Why is this night different from all other nights?
- On all other nights, we eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night, only unleavened bread?
- On all other nights, we all eat herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs?
- On all other nights, we do not dip even once, but on this night, we dip twice? On all other nights, we eat sitting or reclining, but on this night, we eat reclining?
- When Jesus performed the Passover with the disciples, John was the youngest and would have been to the right of Jesus (John 13:23). He would have been the one asking the questions about the Passover.

**The Second Cup**
- In response to the four questions, a second cup of wine is poured.
- The story of Passover is retold, starting from Abraham being called from Ur (Genesis 12). The story continues with the stories of Patriarch and the promises. How Joseph was sold by his brothers, and the nation became slaves in the land of Egypt. How Moses was chosen by God to deliver the nation and how God gave them the Law at Mt. Sinai.
For the story of each plague, some wine is poured. The Seder tray and its various foods are woven into the story of Passover.

The first half of the praise psalms, known as Hallel (Ps. 113-118) is recited before the second cup of wine is consumed. According to the Talmud, these songs were recited by the Levites as the lambs were killed.

**The Dipping of Matzah**
- Before the meal, the hands are washed a second time.
- The top Matzah and the remaining half of the middle Matzah are broken into pieces and handed out to everyone.
- Everyone at the table must eat some horseradish and haroset (apple, cinnamon and nut mixture) with their Matzah.
  - The sweetness of Haroset reminds them of their sweet redemption
  - The bitter horseradish reminds of their bitter slavery.
  - Hillel instructed Jews to eat as much horseradish with their Matzah to bring tears to their eyes, so they could feel what their forefathers felt.
- Jesus was in the upper room and told John the one who would betray him was the one who he handed his dipped “Matzah”.

**The Dinner**
- The traditional Jewish dinner would have been roasted Lamb or Goat as prescribed in the Passover.
- In modern times, the Jewish dinner is more varied and includes Gefilte fish, Matzah ball soup, chicken, potato Kugel and other delicious foods. Since the fall of the Temple in A.D. 70, lambs can no longer be sacrificed so the menu became more open.

**The Afikomen**
- When the meal is over the hidden Matzah, from middle loaf, is sought out by the children. The child who finds this bread will receive a reward. Rabbinic law requires everybody at the table eat a portion of the bread to remind them of the Passover Lamb.

**The Third Cup**
- Now the third cup of the Passover, known as the Cup of Redemption follow in the ceremony. Jesus choose this cup to be reminder of His redemptive work on the Cross. He broke bread to remember his broken body and wine for the blood he would shed.
- Luke 22: 17After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 20In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.
- After the third cup the child is sent to the front door to welcome the prophet Elijah. The hope is Elijah would be at the door to announce the coming of the Messiah after drinking his cup of wine. God promises to send the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
- Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
  - Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
  - And he will turn
  - The hearts of the fathers to the children,
  - And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
  - Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”
- Elijah is a precursor to the Second Coming, when Jesus returns in Glory and power. He is seen appearing on the mountain with Moses to Jesus, James and John (Matthew 17:3). John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. In Revelation 11, one of the two witnesses will be Elijah who will be a witness to the Messiah in Israel before the Second Coming. The Third Cup prepares Israel for his coming.

**The Fourth Cup**
- The fourth is the Cup of Acceptance or Praise. It was this cup Jesus said He would not drink until He drank it with His disciples in the Kingdom of God.
Matthew 26:27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

Closing Hymn

- At the conclusion of the Seder a closing hymn was sung from the Hallel, second half from Psalms 115-118. Jesus would have sung these hymn at the close of His Seder with the disciples. Judas had left earlier to betray Jesus, he would lead the armed men to where Jesus would be.
- Matthew 26:30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."
- Earlier Jesus warned Jerusalem, he would not return until they acknowledged Him as Messiah. Jesus quotes from Psalm 118. This is the same verse sung at the close of the Passover Seder.
- Psalm 118:22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; 23 the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. 25 O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.
- Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Jesus Fulfillment (Passover – Death)

- Jesus as the “Lamb” of God was being set aside from the flock to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. For five days he was to remain in Jerusalem, from the 10th to the 14th where he would be killed at twilight fulfilling the picture of the Passover lamb in Exodus. During those five days, Jesus would celebrate Passover with His disciples in the upper room. He was also be examined by the religious leaders and tested before he was sacrificed. (Matthew 21:23-27)

- The death of the Lamb foreshadowed God’s Lamb the Messiah, who would also be killed and entombed at the start of Passover. As the lamb was being cooked oven an open fire, the Messiah body lay in the tomb. As families all throughout Jerusalem celebrated Passover, God’s Passover lamb bore their sins.

- Passover occurs in the spring of the year, on the 14th day of the Hebrew month Nisan (March/April). Passover is a type, or picture of something much greater--it pictured the redemption of God's elect through the sacrifice of the sinless Son of God, the Lord Yeshua. In the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan, at exactly 3:00 p.m. the Passover lamb was to be killed. And 1600 years after Passover was instituted, Yeshua, our Lamb, was killed on the very same day, at the very same time as the Passover lamb; the 14th of Nisan at 3:00 p.m. Like the lamb, Yeshua was without spot or blemish (1Peter 1:19), and had none of His bones broken (John 19:33).

- We take the bread and the wine of Passover as communion, according to what happened on that Passover of crucifixion in the New Testament record. We correctly “do this in remembrance of Me” remembering our deliverance from bondage by the blood of the Lamb (as Israel was delivered from Egypt in the Exodus).

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<tr>
<th>FEAST</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passover – (One Day)</td>
<td>The “Angel of Death” passed over the</td>
<td>Death, the penalty for my sin, is passed over because the blood of the lamb of God was shed for me on the four posts of the cross.</td>
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<td>The Crucifixion</td>
<td>Israelites if blood was on the four posts of</td>
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<td>(Leviticus 23:5)</td>
<td>the door.</td>
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As the families of Israel provided a lamb for their Passover, God Himself would provide a lamb for the family of God. Each of these steps would foreshadow the picture of the Messiah who would God’s Passover Lamb.
## Passover Feast – Pesach - Nisan 14 (Mar / Apr)  
**Exodus 12:1-28; Leviticus 23:5**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
</tr>
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<td>The Children of Israel first celebrated this feast on the same night they left Egypt. The Angel of Death made his way through the land, killing the firstborn of every home but passing over all homes covered by the blood of the lamb. God marked the month of Abib (later named Nisan) as the first month of the religious New Year.</td>
<td>John the Baptist introduced Jesus as “The Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world”. The parallels between Christ and the Passover Lamb are significant, and highlight the sacrificial Messiah (1 Cor 5:7) as the fulfillment of the prophecies, types, shadows and metaphors in the Law, Prophets and Psalms (Old Testament).</td>
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<td><strong>Jewish calendar restarts</strong> – The yearly Jewish calendar is marked by the sacrificing of the lamb</td>
<td><strong>Secular calendar restarts</strong> – The secular calendar was reset after sacrificing of “the” lamb</td>
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<td>“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.  [Exodus 12:2]</td>
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<td><strong>Inspect the lamb for 4 days</strong> – On the 10th day of the first month, a spotless male lamb was to be chosen and then observed for 4 days to ensure the lamb was free of defect and imperfection. “on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb”  [Exodus 12:3] “Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month”  [Exodus 12:6]</td>
<td><strong>Jesus was inspected and found spotless after 4 days – Jesus was found to be innocent, without any sin The authority of Jesus was questioned [Luke 20 and 22]. In the final week of Christ’s ministry on earth, He was examined/tested by His detractors. His responses proved His holiness. (Matt 21-22; Luke 11:53-54; John 8:46; John 18:38)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fire/judgment</strong> – The lamb had to come into contact with the fire/judgment</td>
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<td><strong>Lamb is slaughtered at twilight on the Day of Preparation</strong> – On the 14th, the Passover, the lamb was killed and roasted over an open fire. “Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.”  [Exodus 12:6]</td>
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<td><strong>None of the lamb's bones were to be broken.</strong></td>
<td><strong>None of Christ’s bones were broken – Unlike the thieves</strong></td>
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<td>Israel had to put blood on the doorframes – During the Exodus, the Israelites were required to put the blood of the lamb on their door posts, thereby causing the Angel of Death to pass over their homes. The Angel of Death struck every home not covered by the lamb’s blood. The blood of the lamb was in the shape of a cross on their door</td>
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<td>Jesus shed His blood to cover our sins – On Judgment Day, only those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah are saved by His blood from eternal death. Those not covered by the blood of the Lamb, regardless of their religion, beliefs or ethnicity, will be sent to hell. (2 Thess 1:7-9, Rev 13:8; 21:27)</td>
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| **10TH Aviv** | Procession of Lamb into Temple |
| --- |
| Jesus’ procession into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:17) |
| **10TH Aviv** | Lamb examined, four days (Exodus 12:1-11) |
| Jesus is questioned. His last four days (Matthew 22:15-33) |
| **14TH Aviv** | Passover begins at 6:00 PM. |
| Jesus begins his path to the cross. |
| **3RD Hour** | Lambs are prepared for sacrifice at 9:00 AM. |
| Jesus is beaten, prepared for the cross. (Matthew 27:28) |
| **9TH Hour** | Lambs are sacrificed at 3:00 PM. |
| Jesus is sacrificed on the cross. (Matthew 27:48-52) |

| Lamb was to be completely eaten – Passover was only to be celebrated by true believers (Israelites and proselytes), the lamb was to be completely eaten (any portions not eaten was to be buried), and they were to be fully dressed for travel while eating the lamb. |
| The lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs |
| The lamb had to be “finished” by the morning |
| The bread had to be without leaven |
| Jesus endured the bitterness of the cross |
| Jesus said; “it is finished,” now for resurrection morning |
| Jesus, the bread of life, is without sin |

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**Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. ~ 1 Corinthians 5:7**
When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden they, and their descendants, became separated from God.

God’s plan of redemption came through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the children of Israel. The Bible tells how God rescued the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Although they saw miracles they complained, and showed their unbelief, as they journeyed through the wilderness to the Promised Land. So God imposed the Law, through Moses. Israel accepted the new conditions of blessings for obedience and curses for failure.

The story is instructive because it shows that they, and all people, are unable to measure up in their own strength.

The Law, which was added [Galatians 3:19] to God’s unconditional promises because of their transgressions, and which was a curse on Israel [Galatians 3:10], included moral and ceremonial requirements.

God knew that Israel would not be able to keep the Law. Nevertheless, He gave the Law for these reasons:

- To show His standard of righteousness [Psalms 19:7]
- To show that nobody measures up – He gave the Law to make sin obvious [Romans 3:20]
- To show that we are unable to achieve righteousness by our own efforts – We need a Savior [Hebrews 8:7-8]
- To point to that Savior – The Law pointed to Jesus, the Messiah [Romans 10:4]

The Bible says that the Law was ‘only a shadow of the good things that were to come’ (Hebrews 10:1). The Old Testament has many types and shadows that pointed to the Messiah. The Feast of Passover was one of the ceremonial requirements of the Law.

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Jesus Fulfillment (Unleavened Bread – 3 Days in the ground to remove our sin)

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<th>WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME</th>
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<td>Unleavened Bread – (Seven days) The Burial (Leviticus 23:6-8)</td>
<td>In the exodus from Egypt the Israelites left quickly and didn’t have “leaven” (sin) in the bread.</td>
<td>I leave the old life and die to the old man. Jesus is the bread of new life. Jesus body was the bread to be broken and without sin (leaven).</td>
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- Pointed to the Messiah’s sinless life (leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus’ body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life.

- Leaven symbolizes sin and decay, the power of death. Jesus, God’s Lamb was killed and placed in the Tomb on the twilight of Passover in accordance with the Exodus 12; however His body would not see decay. The feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the burial of Messiah and the feast of First Fruits His resurrection.

- Jesus called himself the “Bread of life” come down from Heaven (John 6:51), John the Baptist called Him the Lamb of God, Paul called him the First Fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20,23). Jesus became our sacrifice, he was buried and resurrected like we will one day be. The death, burial and resurrection are pictured in the first three feasts in the month of Nisan.

- Isaiah reveals the picture of the Messiah and His first coming 700 years before his birth in chapters 52-53.
  - The aspects of the first three feasts are revealed here.
    - The fact that God’s servant would die for the sins of the world.
    - He would be led like a “lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7).
    - He would also be sinless,
    - He is called “My Servant” (Isa. 52:14) and “My righteous Servant who will justify many” (Isa 53:11).
  - This servant came to bear the sins of the world, to be the lamb for our Passover; Isaiah reveals his punishment brought us peace (Isa. 53:5). Though He is killed (vs. 9) he shall see the light of life (vs. 11), resurrection.

- The seven days of the feast of Unleavened Bread foreshadow the complete (number seven) sinless (without leaven) sacrifice of God’s Lamb the Messiah.

- Feast of Unleavened Bread demonstrates our holy walk — “And on the fifteenth day of the same month as the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread” (Lev. 23:6). Leaven, in the Bible, is sin, and the God of Israel asked for a week of eating “sinless” bread. As we walk in Christ, “the Bread of Life,” we demonstrate a continuous keeping of this feast, which is exactly our instruction from the Apostle Paul:

  1Co 5 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

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<th>Nisan 15 (Mar / Apr)</th>
<th>Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:6</th>
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<td>THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD</td>
<td><strong>JESUS IS THE UNLEAVENED BREAD</strong></td>
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<td>Starting the day after Passover, the Israelite’s home was to be rid of all leaven (yeast), a representation of sin. Sin and a holy God cannot abide together (2 Cor 6:14-18), nor can a holy God allow sin to go unpunished (Exod 34:5-7). The feast lasted seven days, the first and last of which were special Sabaaths. All Jewish males were required to travel to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Unleavened Bread.</td>
<td>Jesus was without sin and the perfect sacrifice for all time (1 Peter 2:22-24). After Jesus was killed on the cross, He was placed in a new tomb (In 19:41). While the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Holy Lamb of God was lying, sinless, in a tomb, awaiting resurrection as the Bread of Life. Perhaps it is coincidental, but after the resurrection, Jesus remained untouched by human</td>
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At the Passover meal, they have three pieces of bread. The 3 breads represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 20:17; 20:26-27)

The Matzah-bread in the center is then broken in two. The 2nd Matzah represents Jesus’ body that’s broken.

The Matzah-bread now is two pieces of one bread. Jesus was both fully God and fully man and still is.

The larger of the two is called the "afikomen". Afikomen is a Greek word that could mean “I came”

The Afikomen is wrapped in a cloth and hidden. Jesus’ was wrapped in a burial cloth, hid in the tomb.

Children race to find the afikomen and receive a prize. Come to Jesus as a child, run the race, receive the prize

First Fruits / Yom HaBikkurim (Leviticus 23:9-14)

First Fruits (Lev 23:9-14; Nu 28:16-25)

The Feast of Firstfruits
9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13 Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. 14 You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

- The Feast of First Fruits is closely alligned to Passover/Unleavened Bread
  - The entire eight days of Passover/Unleavened Bread is usually referred to as simply Passover.
    - Passover begins “at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month” (23:5),
    - Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the fifteenth day and continues for seven days (23:6).
  - The Feast of First Fruits, then, follows in sequence, beginning on “the day after the Sabbath” (23:15)

- THE MEANING OF FIRST FRUITS
  - This feast corresponds with the harvest of Barley in the land of Israel. Barley was the first crop reaped from the winter sowing. The priests of the Temple would harvest the first sheaf and bring it into the Temple as an offering before the Lord; the nation was thanking the Lord for the coming harvest.

- THE TIME OF FIRST FRUITS
  - Leviticus does not exactly tell us when “First Fruits” was to be celebrated. Leviticus 23:11 states on the “day after the Sabbath” he shall wave it.
    - The Sabbath did not only occur on Saturday the seventh day
    - Sabbath also occurred on the Nisan 15, the Feast of Unleavened, when Israel was to do no work. (Leviticus 23:7) The day Nisan 15 would have been a “Sabbath” since Israel was to do no work, this day Israel was to hold a “Holy Convocation” (Sacred Assembly) to the Lord.
    - The Jewish historian, Josephus, who lived in the first century wrote; “But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth, for before that day they do not touch them” (Antiquities of the Jews 3.10.15)
    - The feast of First Fruits takes place on the 16th of Nisan, 2 days after Passover begins on the twilight of the 14th. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th of Nisan and ends on the 21st, seven days later. Therefore on the 16th of Nisan, both First Fruits and Unleavened Bread are celebrated.

- Bring sheath of the 1st grain that you harvest
  - Sunday after Passover
• The purpose of Firstfruits is to demonstrate to man that God is owner of all our wealth. He gives us the ability to attain success by returning to the Lord the “first” of our produce. We are acknowledging the source. God declared that the firstfruits on the land was His, including the firstborn of livestock. Even the Donkey was required to be redeemed. (Ex. 22:29, 23:19, 34:26, Dt. 18:4, 26:2). The firstborn son was also to be redeemed according to the law. (Numbers 18:14-19; Luke 2:21-23)

• There are six things that are the foundations for the Feast of First-Fruits in the Torah [Books of Moses]:
  1. The Timing of the Feast – Leviticus 23:10
     ▪ This was to be observed once they entered the Land and not while they were in the wilderness.
  o The Day of the Feast – Numbers 28:26; Leviticus 23:11:
     ▪ On the day of the feast there would be no servile work. It was also observed on the first day of the week after Passover which could be any day of the week. There was a disagreement between the Pharisees and the Sadducees on this feast. The Pharisees and their rabbinic teachings considered the Passover as a Sabbath, meaning that this feast was to be observed the day after Passover. The Sadducees had the biblical approach which was the first day of the week after the day of Passover. Passover could be any day of the week, but as the Lord gave the Feast of First Fruits, it was to be only on one day which was the first day of the week after Passover.
  o The Duty of the Priest – Leviticus 23:11:
     ▪ The priest was to wave the sheaves of grain from side to side with outstretched arms before the Lord.
  o Three Offerings of the Feast – Leviticus 23:12-13; Numbers 28:27-30:
     ▪ Burnt Offering
     ▪ Meal Offering
     ▪ Drink Offering
  o Prohibition of the Feast – Leviticus 23:14:
     ▪ The prohibition was against eating on that day any bread or parched grain until the first-fruits were offered unto the Lord.
  o Command of the Feast – Leviticus 23:14:
     ▪ This Feast was to be observed throughout your generations.

• First Fruits also dates the next major festival – the Feast of Weeks, or Shavuot.
  o Leviticus 23:15-16 says: “From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord.”
  o Shavuot brought the spring harvest to a close.
  o In later Biblical times Shavuot also celebrated the anniversary of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, which we read about in Exodus and Leviticus.
Service of First Fruits

- Firstfruits requires the Temple, and since the Temple is no longer available, Firstfruits is not celebrated in the same sense as it was in the past.

- In the Temple days both the people and the priest would celebrate First Fruits. The priests would set aside a portion of their barley field to be the sheaves used for the harvest on Nisan 16. This barley field was cultivated solely to be used for the first fruits harvest. The Sanhedrin, the ruling council of seventy who headed the nation, would have been responsible for the field.

- In the evening of Nisan 15, at the start of Nisan 16, three Sanhedrin came from the Temple to cut the First Fruit Barley harvest. With three sickles and three baskets the men would prepare to cut down the harvest to be presented in the Temple. The bundles of barley had already been prepared for the Sanhedrin members chosen to harvest the crop.
  - As the Sun was setting, and the new day began, (Nisan 16) the men ask questions to those present.
    - Has the sun set?
    - With this sickle?
    - Into this basket?
    - On this Sabbath?
    - Shall I reap (now)?
  - On the positive response from the crowd the men would repeat the harvesting two more times as a safeguard. The reaping would continue until 2/3 of a bushel was reaped.

THE PRESENTATION OF FIRSTFRUITS

- The three baskets of Barley were then taken to the Temple
- They were threshed with rods, as opposed to ox powered sledges, to preserve the barley heads.
- The barley was then parched in a flame and winnowed in the wind to remove the chaff.
- The barley was then milled and sifted until it was very fine.
  - According to the Talmud the inspectors should be able to stick their hands into the barley flour without any flour sticking to the hands when they were removed. (Menahot 8:2)
- On the morning of Nisan 16 the work of the barley harvest firstfruits were presented to the Lord in the Temple.
  - One “Omer” (5 pints) or barley was mixed with ¾ pint of olive oil, along with some frankincense. This was the firstfruits offering.
  - The priest would wave this before the Lord, burning some and giving the rest to the Levites.

FOR THE FAMILY

- The priest would celebrate the feast of first fruits for the whole nation; and each individual family would also celebrate since Israel was a farming community dependent on the land to produce its wealth.
- Israel’s farming families would prepare for the yearly Firstfruits celebration at the same time they were preparing for Passover. When families came to Jerusalem they were prepared to celebrate three festival days, Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits; since they were celebrated in the one week period, 14th through 21st of Nisan.

- First the family would set aside a portion of the crop to be marked for firstfruits by tying a cord around the area to be harvested for the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
- When the crop was harvested the family would take it along, with their lambs, to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts.
- On the 16th of Nisan people in Jerusalem would have just finished celebrating Passover and would now begin to celebrate Firstfruits.
- The Israelite male was called to Jerusalem to celebrate these feasts.
  - He would have come to the Temple with his lamb, a second lamb after the Passover lamb, and the “first fruits” of his field.
  - As he approached the Temple he would have heard the Levitical choirs lead worship with Psalm 30: “I will extol You, O’ Lord, for you have lifted me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me…”
  - As the masses poured into Jerusalem the Temple the scene would have continued throughout the day.
- The lamb would have been brought into the Temple by the Israelite and the priest would slay the lamb as the Israelite watched the preparation of his sacrifice.
• If he was poor he could offer two turtledoves. (Lev 1:10-17; Lev. 5:7; Lev 12:8, Lev 14:22)

  o The priest returned from the sacrifice of the man’s lamb the man would have presented to the priest his offering of barley, the measure of an omer (5 pints).
  o He would then say, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.
  o As the priest received the basket of grain he would then begin to wave it before the Lord, and the Israelite would now say: '5 My father was a Syrian about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6 But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. 7 Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. 8 So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. 9 He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, “a land flowing with milk and honey”; 10 and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me. (Deuteronomy 26:5-10)

  • The priest would then set the basket down in front of the altar and cast a handful of grain into the fire.
    o The Israelite would then worship the Lord as prescribed in Deuteronomy 26.
    o The Israelite would then have left courts and returned to his waiting family.

THE MODERN OBSERVANCE

• Today, since there is no Temple, the feast of Firstfruits is no longer celebrated.

• What is celebrated now is only the counting of the omer – From the Firstfruits, Israel was commanded to count off seven weeks until the feast of Shavuot (Feast of Weeks).

• Lag B’Omer – What has survived is the non-biblical holiday known in Israel as Lag B’Omer meaning 33 based on the letters of Lamed and Gimmel since the holiday occurs on the 33rd day between Firstfruits and Weeks.
  o According to Jewish tradition it was during this time a plague was stopped in the days of Rabbi Akiba; a plague was averted on his students.
  o Lag BaOmer, the 33rd day of the Omer Count – is a festive day on the Jewish calendar, celebrated with outings (on which the children traditionally play with bow and arrows), bonfires, and other joyous events.
  o Many visit the resting place (in Meron in Northern Israel) of the great sage and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, whose yahrtzeit (anniversary of his passing) the day marks.
  o Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who lived in the 2nd century of the Common Era, was the first to publicly teach the mystical dimension of the Torah known as the “Kabbalah,” and is the author of the basic work of Kabbalah, the Zohar. On the day of his passing, Rabbi Shimon instructed his disciples to mark the date as "the day of my joy."
  o The Chassidic masters explain that the final day of a righteous person's earthly life marks the point at which "all his deeds, teachings and work" achieve their culminating perfection and the zenith of their impact upon our lives. So each Lag BaOmer we celebrate Rabbi Shimon's life and the revelation of the esoteric soul of Torah.

• Lag BaOmer also commemorates another joyous event. The Talmud relates that in the weeks between Passover and Shavuot a plague raged amongst the disciples of the great sage Rabbi Akiva "because they did not act respectfully towards each other"; these weeks are therefore observed as a period of mourning, with various joyous activities proscribed by law and custom. On Lag BaOmer the dying ceased. Thus Lag BaOmer also carries the theme of Ahavat Yisrael, the imperative to love and respect one's fellow.

**Jesus Fulfillment (Resurrection)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEAST</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Fruits – (One day) The Resurrection (Leviticus 23:9-14)</td>
<td>The beginning first barley harvest was a wave offering and on the first day of the week.</td>
<td>Christ’s resurrection (not resuscitation) was the first and the beginning of the first resurrection on the first day of the week, Sunday.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pointed to the Messiah’s resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous. Jesus was resurrected on this very day, which is one of the reasons that Paul refers to him in I Corinthians 15:20 as the "first fruits from the dead."

1Co 15 20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

The term First-Fruits means that there is more to come. When the priest waved the sheaves of the barley harvest before the Lord as the First-Fruits he was thanking God for the abundant harvest that they were about to have. The first-fruits were the first, the very first of the harvest, as it was only the beginning of the abundance of the harvest that was about to follow. Messiah Yeshua, the First-Fruits of the Resurrection, meant that He was the first of the resurrection that would never see death again. The abundance of the harvest of the resurrection means that there will be an abundance of resurrections in the future and will come in two stages:

- At the first resurrection the bodies of the believers will be resurrected and reunited with their souls. This will occur at the Rapture for the Church saints.
- The Resurrection of the Old Testament Saints and Tribulation Saints will occur after the Second Coming of the Messiah.

The Feast of First-Fruits name contains a great truth – If there are first fruits, then there must be a second, a third and so on, and that is the true meaning of this Sunday. We do not merely celebrate the resurrection of the Lord on First Fruits, but more so, the resurrection of the entire church. Jesus celebrated First Fruits in the appropriate manner by rising from the dead on that day. He also gave the Father His proper First Fruits offering; graves were opened and dead people rose and were seen after His resurrection in Jerusalem (Matt. 27:53).

Mt 27 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

This is a fulfillment of Isaiah

Is 26 19 Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise.  Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;  For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Our Lord, not unlike any farmer of the soil, gratefully brought before the Father a few early “crops” of what would be a magnificent harvest later on. We sometimes fail to note that Jesus was not the only deceased person to rise on that miraculous day of First Fruits. Those He brought forth from their graves represent a type of the church. We, too, shall be brought forth from our graves for the big fall harvest — the Rapture — at the Feast of Trumpets. It was not only, then, the Lord’s resurrection that demonstrates our promise, but also the resurrection of those chosen saints of the time, which assures us of our own triumph.

The Feast of First Fruits reveals aspects of the First Coming of God’s Lamb, the Messiah, who would be the First Fruit of God’s redemption. On this feast Israel was to bring before the Lord the “First” of the harvest, by doing this Israel was acknowledging the source of their blessing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feast of Firstfruits – Yom HaBikkurim</th>
<th>Israel</th>
<th>Nisan 17 (Mar / Apr)</th>
<th>Leviticus 23:9-14</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three days after Passover, the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Firstfruits. This three-day ritual brought God’s blessings on the spring harvest by way of a token blessing</td>
<td>Jesus rose from the dead three days after Passover. Paul calls Him the “Firstfruit from the dead”. One day, just like our forerunner, we will be resurrected to new life and will join Him in glory. (1 Cor 15:12-25)</td>
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on the first budding crop. It also started a 50-day
countdown to the Feast of Weeks.

| On the day of Passover, the farmer would go out into his
field, find the ripest sheaf of barley, and bind a cord
around it, marking it as the Firstfruit. |
| On the day of Passover, Judas went into the garden,
identified Jesus to the soldiers, and had Him bound. |

| The next day, he would cut the sheaf, and prepare it for
offering. |
| Jesus’ trial began on the night of the Passover, and by
noon the next day, He was crucified. |

| On the third day after the Passover, he would bring the
Firstfruit, a lamb, grain and wine to the priest. |
| Three days after the Passover, Jesus rose from the dead
and presented Himself to God. (Jn 20:17) |

| The priest’s blessing for the Firstfruit would be a token
blessing whereby the remainder of the crop would also
receive a blessing at harvest time. |
| Jesus’ resurrection from death is the ultimate victory over
sin and death. By God raising Him up, we, as believers,
will be raised up on the last day. (Jn 6:40) |

| Notable Biblical events on this same day in history: |
| • Noah’s ark survived the flood and came to rest on the
rock (Gen 8:4 – civil calendar) |
| • Children of Israel survived the Red Sea and reached
the other side. (Exod 14:26-15:22 cf Num 33:1-8) |
| • Manna ceased as the Children of Israel ate for the first
time from the Promised Land (Josh 5:10-12) |
| • Esther received reprieve for entering the King’s
chamber unannounced in an effort to save her people
from Hamaan’s plot (Esther 3:12-5:5) |
| Jesus the Messiah, the Rock of our Salvation (Ps 18:1-3),
the Manna from heaven (Jn 6:58), laid down His life and
was raised from the dead on this day. |

• “A picture is worth a thousand words”
  o The Israelites were given these visual pictures, as signs pointing to the final destination.
  o Once Jesus arrived the first time to His first destination here on earth, the “sign” wasn’t needed any longer.
  o The signs and symbols had served their purpose in telling them what was coming, namely the person of Jesus
    Christ their Messiah.
  o Though the signs are of no use to us, it doesn’t mean that they are of no value in what they mean to us

• Christian times – Passover and Easter coincide
  o Recall that as Jesus moves toward the cross during Holy Week, he and his disciples are in Jerusalem to
    celebrate Passover.
  o In Christianity, Passover becomes Good Friday/Easter, the time when Jesus, the “Lamb of God,” is slain for
    the sins of the world and is then resurrected on Sunday morning.
  o Good Friday/Easter exactly parallels Passover/Exodus, in the manner of stepped-up parallelism that we so
    frequently see in the New Testament.

| THE MEANING OF FIRSTFRUITS TO ISRAEL |
| IN BIBLE TIMES |
| THE MEANING OF FIRSTFRUITS TO |
| CHRISTIANS TODAY |
| THE LITERAL |
| MEANING |

“Firstfruits” refers to the first portion of the harvest
which is given to God.

Most notably the firstfruits are:
• the first to come in time
• a pledge or hope of the greater harvest to follow
• specially dedicated to God

(A firstfruits ceremony is described in detail in
Deuteronomy 26:1–11.) Note that the “first born,”
whether human or beast, was also considered as
God’s special possession and can be considered a
type of first fruit. (Exodus 22:29, Exodus 34:19)

While there is no New Testament
admonition binding Christians to give of
“firstfruits” we do know that God loves a
cheerful giver. Christians are expected to
give of our substance to support the work
of the church and missions. We, like the
Israelites, need to give.
### THE SPIRITUAL MEANING

By giving God the firstfruits, Israel acknowledged that all good things come from God and that everything belongs to God. Giving the firstfruits was also a way of expressing trust in God’s provision; just as He provided the firstfruits, so He would provide the rest of the crops that were needed. Note that the Feast of Firstfruits was instituted when the nation of Israel was still wandering, without land or crops. It was observed in faith that God would lead the people to the land He had promised.

All Christians are especially dedicated to God in the manner of firstfruits. As it is written in James 1:18, “Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” We need to be mindful, just as God wanted Israel to be mindful, that we and all we have belong to God.

### THE PASSOVER CONNECTION

Three holidays are associated with the giving of firstfruits in the Old Testament. Firstfruits are mentioned in connection with the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) in Numbers 28:26, Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Exodus 23:16 and Passover in Leviticus 23:10. Since Passover (Pesach) was the first of the three holidays, the “first firstfruits” were offered in connection with that holiday. The Passover lambs were sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, the first day of Passover was the fifteenth, and the Feast of First Fruits fell on the sixteenth day of Nisan. (Bear in mind that on a Jewish calendar, a new day begins when the sun sets, not when it rises.) The portion of firstfruits at Passover was called the “omer.” It was forbidden to eat from the crop until this portion had been offered (Leviticus 23:14).

Christ in His resurrection is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (I Corinthians 15:20–23). Jesus gave His life as our Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first Hebrew month, Nisan. We believe that He rose from the dead on the sixteenth of Nisan, the Feast of Firstfruits. Since Jewish reckoning views part of a day as a full day, the fourteenth through the sixteenth was considered three days. I Corinthians may even have been written shortly after Passover, to judge by references such as I Corinthians 5:7–8 and 16:8. Christ rose as the first to be resurrected, but all who trust in Him will also rise from the dead in the final “harvest.”

### THE PROPHETIC MEANING

Israel was described as the “firstfruits of His increase” (Jeremiah 2:3). Israel was to be a pledge of a greater harvest inasmuch as she would experience God’s redemption and witness of this redemption to the nations, that they too might come to know the God of Israel.

In addition to the fact that God has promised that we, too, will be raised from the dead, in Romans 8:23 Paul says that as redeemed people we possess the “firstfruits of the Spirit.” “Paul is saying here either that the measure of the Holy Spirit that we now have is but a foretaste of the greater measure there will be in the age to come, or that the gift of the Spirit now is a foretaste of the many other blessings we will have in due course.”

### FIRSTFRUITS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- Romans 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
- Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
- Romans 11:16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.
- 1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- 1 Corinthians 15:19-21 (in Context)
- 1 Corinthians 15 (Whole Chapter)
1 Corinthians 15:23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

James 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Revelation 14:4 These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.
Pentecost / Shavuot / Feast of Weeks / Feast of Harvest (Leviticus 23:15-22)

- Pentecost / Feast of Weeks / Feast of Harvest / Shavuot (Ex 23:16; Ex 34:22; Lev 23:15-22; Nu 28:26-31; Dt 16:9-12)
- 50 days after the Feast of First Fruits
- Remembers the giving of the Law at Mt. Sanai – marks the birth of Israel as a covenant community under Law

The Feast of Weeks
15 ‘And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. 17 You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. 18 And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 19 Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. 20 The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21 And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

22 ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.’ ”

- Pentecost
  - The Septuagint (LXX – the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures), refers to the fifty days between Passover and Shavuot as pentekonta hemeras, from which we get the term Pentecost. Pentecost, then, originally meant Shavu.

- THE MEANING OF SHAUVUOT – Scripture has three different names for the feast; each name emphasizes a different aspect of its observance.
  - Shavuout – Shavuout in Hebrew means “weeks”.
    - The Hebrew “Feast of Weeks” Hag Hashavuot is designated because there were seven weeks counted from the feast of Firstfruits until this feast was celebrated. (Ex. 34:22; Dt. 16:10; 2 Chr. 8:13)
  - Day of Firstfruits – In Numbers the feast is called Yom Habikkurim “Day of Firstfruits”. (Nu 28:26)
    - This was the time when the first fruits of summer wheat harvest were brought to the Temple
    - Used in contrast to the feast preceding the Barley harvest crop is celebrated in feast of “First Fruits”.
  - The Feast of the Harvest – The third name, Hag Hakatzir is “The Feast of the Harvest” (Ex. 23:16)
    - Meant the start of the official summer harvest season.
  - Atzeret – The Talmud and Josephus also called this feast Atzeret which meant “conclusion”.
    - This was the concluding feast of the first four feasts until the fall feasts.
  - Pentecost – This feast is also known as Pentecost in the New Testament since it celebrated on the “fiftieth” day from the feast of Firstfruits. (Acts 2:1)

- THE TIME OF SHAUVUOT
  - Today, on the Modern Hebrew calendar, Shavuot (Weeks) falls on the sixth day of the month of Sivan.
  - There is no calendar date in the Bible. This feast is tied to the feast of Firstfruits since it is commanded to count off fifty days (the day after seven weeks had passed). (Lev. 23:15-16, Dt. 16:9-10)
  - Since Israel is to count fifty days from Firstfruits until Weeks this period is known as Sefirah, or “counting”.
  - Firstfruits was known as the omer, Hebrew for “measure, sheaf”. This fifty-day period also became known as “the omer”.

- THE RECORD OF SHAUVUOT
  - The portions of the Tanakh (Old Testament) delineate how this feast is to be observed. Leviticus 23:15-21 and Numbers 28:26-31 outline how the Temple portion of the feast is to be observed. The requirements for individual worship were recorded in Deuteronomy 16:9-12.
THE IMPORTANCE OF SHAVUOT

- There are seven feasts appointed by the Lord for Israel. Of the seven feasts, Israel is commanded to appear before the Lord for three of the seven. These three feasts were known as solemn feasts. Israelite men were obliged to appear before the Lord at the Temple. Weeks was the second of these three feasts, with Unleavened Bread being the first and Tabernacles being the third. (Ex. 23:14-17; Dt. 16:16; 2 Chr. 8:13; Ex. 34:22-23)
- Weeks was a Sabbath regardless whatever day it fell upon. Israel was to do no work on the feast of Weeks. (Shavuot) (Lev. 23:21; Num. 28:26)
- One of the Pilgrimage Festivals – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles
  - 3 “solemn feasts”—Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles
  - Required that all able-bodied Jewish males travel to Jerusalem to attend the feast and offer sacrifices
  - All three of these feasts required that “firstfruit” offerings be made at the temple as a way of expressing thanksgiving for God’s provision.
    - Feast of Firstfruits celebrated at the time of the Passover included the first fruits of the barley harvest
    - Feast of Weeks was in celebration of the first fruits of the wheat harvest
    - Feast of Tabernacles involved offerings of the first fruits of the olive and grape harvests

Service of Shavuot

According to scripture, Israel was forbidden to eat the barley crop before the feast of Firstfruits. The same principle is applied toward the wheat crop. All the meal offerings, and showbread offerings, were not to be made from the “new” wheat crop until the Feast of Shavuot.

In the Temple service the celebration of Shavuot is similar to the celebration of Firstfruits, the main difference being the offering of the two leavened loaves of “Wheat” bread commanded by the Lord. “You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loves of two – tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the Firstfruits to the LORD”. (Lev. 23:17)
- These loaves were not to be burned since Israel was commanded to not burn leaven on the altar. “You shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the LORD made by fire”. (Lev. 2:11)
- Israel was to “wave” the offering before the Lord. The priests were later to consume the offering.
  - Leviticus 23:20 The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

THE MODERN OBSERVATION OF WEEKS

- The biblical celebration of Weeks requires the presence of the Temple on the Temple Mount. Today there is no Temple as a result of the Roman destruction of A.D. 70; therefore the modern celebration differs from the Biblical celebration.

- GIVING TORAH
  - The Sanhedrin, in A.D. 140, met in the village of Usha near modern Haifa to decide what to do? They determined Shavuot (Weeks) was the day the Torah was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Shavuot became known as Zeman Mattan Toraenu, “the Time of the Giving of our Law”.

- SYNAGOGUE
  - To celebrate Shavuot today beautiful floral arrangements are hung in synagogues. Embroidered green curtains are hung over the ark where the Torah scroll is stored. These are meant to be reminders that Mt. Sinai was once covered with green trees and grass.
  - Ancient scripture readings are read reflecting on the glorious presence of the Lord. (Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3:12; Hab. 2:20-3:19) These readings date back to the time of the Temple.
  - Ezekiel 1:4 Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. … 24 When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters,
like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. 25 A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings. 26 And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. 27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

Habakkuk 3:3 God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. 4 His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden. 5 Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet.

- **FOOD**
  - Dairy products are part of the celebration of Weeks. Since scripture is depicted as the Milk and Honey of the soul it is also customary to bake two Hallah loaves of Bread on Shavuot to represent the two loaves offered in the Temple and the two tablets of the Law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

- **STAYING UP ALL NIGHT**
  - Observant Jews will also stay up the entire night discussing and studying Torah. During the night there are breaks for coffee and cheesecake. Discussion revolve around the opening and closing scriptures of each Sabbath reading, the opening and closing verses of each book of the Bible, and the entire book of Ruth. In the morning thousands of Jews wind their way toward the site of the Temple and pour onto the Western Wall plaza, there they read the The Amidah “the Standing”
Jesus Fulfillment (Church Age)

Occurred fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits and pointed to the great harvest of souls and the gift of the Holy Spirit for both Jew and Gentile, who would be brought into the kingdom of God during the Church Age (see Acts 2). The Church was actually established on this day when God poured out His Holy Spirit and 3,000 Jews responded to Peter's great sermon and his first proclamation of the Gospel.

On the fiftieth day, during the Feast of Weeks, the Holy Spirit descended upon the followers of Christ who had gathered in the Upper room to celebrate the feast. The church is the harvest of Messiah’s redemption in this age. We are the bread of the harvest. Those who had gathered in the upper room were the first fruits of the “Wheat Harvest”. They were both Jews and Gentiles, the two loaves, with their sins before the Lord, they had “Leaven” in their midst.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>50 days after leaving Egypt the Jews arrive at Mt. Sinai.</td>
<td>50 days after the resurrection the disciples tarried at Mt. Zion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Harvest (One day)</td>
<td>With fire they hear the tongue of the Lord.</td>
<td>There were tongues of fire that came down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church Age (Leviticus 23:15-22)</td>
<td>Moses came down with the law and broke the tablets because of their sin and 3,000 people died that day.</td>
<td>The good news of Lord dying and forgiving the sin of man who broke the law of God was heard. 3,000 people were saved (harvested) that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two loaves waved up and down then left to right form a cross. But these two loaves brought together had leaven (sin).</td>
<td>Two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, because of the cross are brought together both with a sin nature.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two tablets of law are born to show sin nature.</td>
<td>The first cut in the harvest may not have been sufficient leaving behind enough for the “poor” to glean a second time.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feast of Weeks – Shavuot / Pentecost</th>
<th>Sivan 6 (May / Jun)</th>
<th>Leviticus 23:15-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fifty days after Firstfruits (seven weeks and one day), the Children of Israel were to celebrate the Feast of Weeks, thanking God for the harvest. Jewish tradition says that the Mosaic Law was given at Mt. Sinai on this day. Jews were required to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate this special Sabbath feast.</td>
<td>Fifty days after the resurrection, Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles and disciples as they gathered to pray. Jews and proselytes from all over the known world were in Jerusalem as required by the Mosaic Law. The Greek word for “fifty” is “pentecost”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offerings were presented as a “wave offering”. The symbols were waved upwards, downwards and towards the 4 corners of the earth, symbolizing the goodness of God’s provisions spread throughout the whole world.</td>
<td>With the grafting in of the Gentiles, salvation started with the Jews first, but is now available to the whole world of Jews and Gentiles. (Acts 2:32-33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two loaves, made of fine flour with yeast, offered along with new grain and other animals.</td>
<td>New crop of forgiven believers presented to God. (two loaves to represent both Jews and Gentiles?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The feast commemorates God’s giving of Moses’ Law at Mt. Sinai on this day.</td>
<td>God gave the Holy Spirit on Mt. Zion. (Jerusalem) on this same day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People found in violation of the Law were slaves to sin and condemned to die. (Deut 30:15-20).</td>
<td>People with the Holy Spirit are freed from sin and live forever. (Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:1-8; Jer 31:31-34; Titus 3:3-6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>People worshiped golden calf.</td>
<td>People worshiped God.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 people killed following Aaron’s worship.</td>
<td>3,000 people saved following Peter’s preaching.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Jesus was our Passover Lamb for the redemption of humanity. His blood allowed death to Passover our sins, since he took our sins upon Himself. Jesus was in the grave, but he did not decay, fulfilling the picture of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then Jesus rose on the Feast of Firstfruits, Himself being the Firstfruit of the resurrection. Jesus instructed His followers to remain in Jerusalem until they receive the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

  o Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. 6 So when they met together, they asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? 7 He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

  o Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phyrgia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, What does this mean? 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, They have had too much wine.

• On the fiftieth day, during the Feast of Weeks, the Holy Spirit descended upon the followers of Christ who had gathered in the Upper room to celebrate the feast. The church is the harvest of Messiah’s redemption in this age. We are the bread of the harvest. Those who had gathered in the upper room were the first fruits of the “Wheat Harvest”. They were both Jews and Gentiles, the two loaves, with their sins before the Lord, they had “Leaven” in their midst.

  o Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phyrgia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, What does this mean? 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, They have had too much wine.

• On the Feast of Shavuot the first fruit of the Wheat Harvest is celebrated and the harvest of Wheat has begun. This harvest will continue until the Fall when the Fall Harvest is celebrated. Today we the believers are part of the “Wheat” Harvest until the Seventh Month when the End Times will begin. Jesus alludes to this in the Gospel of John, when he refers to the souls from Sycar as the souls of the harvest to be reaped between the 4th and 7th Month of the year.

  o John 4:27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, What do you want? or Why are you talking with her? 28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ? 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him. 31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, Rabbi, eat something. 32 But he said to them, I have food to eat that you know nothing about. 33 Then his disciples said to each other, Could someone have brought him food? 34 He answered, My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

  o John 5:17 Do not make the mistake of thinking that the Moses who gave the Law was a sinner, 18 and yet the sanctuary which he had dedicated was called by his own name, 19 Holy, Holy, Holy. 20 Then Jesus gave the example of the man who was sick for forty-eight years. 21 He said to him, Get up, take your mat and walk. 22 And immediately he was cured, he took up his mat and walked. 23 They questioned him, Who made you do this? 24 He answered, A man called Jesus made me well. 25 But he did not know where Jesus was. 26 Then Jesus said to the man, See, you are well. Go back to your home and worship God. 27 This was to fulfill the prophecy, Jesus says: 28 He said to the man, See, you are well. Go back to your home and worship God. 29 Then they asked him, Who is this, that he can do such things? 30 Therefore, they took him and brought him to Jesus. 31 They asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? 32 He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 33 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. 34 Then his disciples said to each other, Could someone have brought him food? 35 Do you not say, Four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages; even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor. 39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, He told me everything I ever did. 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers.
• In the Old Testament, Pentecost marks the birth of Israel as a covenant community under Law
  o God descends in fire on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19:16-19
• In the New Testament it marks the birth of the Church as a covenant community under Grace.
  o Holy Spirit descends in what seems like tongues of fire marking the birth of the Church.
  o Pentecost became a Christian holiday after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2
  o When we read in the beginning of Acts that “there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every
    nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5), we understand that they were there for Shavuot—the Festival of Pentecost.
    Acts 2:1 simply states: “When the day of Pentecost came, they (the disciples) were all together in one place.”

• Notice the Jewish/Christian parallels in these spring festivals.
  o Pentecost is reminiscent of the Last Supper – In both instances the disciples are together in a house for what
    proves to be an important event.
    ▪ At the Last Supper the disciples witness the end of the Messiah’s earthly ministry as He asks them to
      remember Him after His death until He returns.
    ▪ At Pentecost, the disciples witness the birth of the New Testament church in the coming of the Holy
      Spirit to indwell all believers.
    ▪ Thus the scene of the disciples in a room at Pentecost links the commencement of the Holy Spirit’s
      work in the church with the conclusion of Christ’s earthly ministry in the upper room before the
      crucifixion.
  o Jesus and his disciples come to Jerusalem for Passover, as they should for a pilgrimage festival. Jesus
    celebrates the Passover Seder with his friends in the upper room. He gives new meaning to two important
    elements of the Seder meal: unleavened bread and wine.
  o The day of Passover, Jesus—the Lamb of God—is crucified.
  o The day after the Sabbath—or the Feast of First Fruits—is the day of Jesus’ resurrection.
    ▪ On Easter, Paul says, “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have
      fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20).
  o Jesus stays among us for forty days and then is taken up into heaven; ten days later—at Pentecost, the feast
    marking the birth of Israel—the Holy Spirit descends in what seems like tongues of fire (as God descends in
    fire on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19:16- 19), marking the birth of the Church.
  o The parallels are stunning in both structure and symbol, offering a beautiful example of the stepped-up
    parallelism that is such an important literary feature of the Bible.

• In the story of the golden calf
  o Ex 32 25 Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them,
    to their shame among their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said,
    “Whoever is on the LORD’s side—come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to
    him. 27 And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side,
    and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every
    man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’ ” 28 So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And
    about three thousand men of the people fell that day.
  o On the Day of Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks, the “firstfruits” of the church were gathered by Christ as some
    3,000 people heard Peter present the gospel after the Holy Spirit had empowered and indwelt the disciples as
    promised. With the promised indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the first fruits of God’s spiritual harvest under the
    New Covenant began. Today that harvest continues as people continue to be saved, but there is also another
    coming harvest whereby God will again turn His attention back to Israel so that “all of Israel will be saved”
    (Romans 11:26).
  o Acts 2:40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse
    generation.” 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand
    souls were added to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEAST</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost Wheat Harvest (One day)</td>
<td>The first cut in the harvest may not have been sufficient leaving behind enough for the “poor” to glean a second time.</td>
<td>The first birth as a sinner isn’t sufficient leaving me poor and needing the second</td>
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</tbody>
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Here’s yet another aspect to this Feast; this time it has to do with gleaning from the harvest picturing Jesus as our Kinsmen Redeemer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAOMI AND RUTH</th>
<th>JEW AND GENTILE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruth 1:19</strong></td>
<td>So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruth 2:2-3</strong></td>
<td>Naomi said to her, &quot;Go ahead, my daughter.&quot; 3 So she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ruth 4:13</strong></td>
<td>So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruth 4:14</strong></td>
<td>The women said to Naomi: &quot;Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsmanredeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruth 4:16</strong></td>
<td>Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him. 17 The women living there said, &quot;Naomi has a son.&quot; And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Some see the two loaves of leavened bread that were to be a wave offering as foreshadowing the time when the Messiah would make both Jew and Gentile to be one in Him
  - Ephesians 2 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, *thus* making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.
  - This is also the only feast where leavened bread is used. Leaven in Scripture is often used symbolically of sin, and the leavened bread used in the Feast of Weeks is thought to be representative of the fact that there is still sin within the church (body of Christ) and will be until Christ returns again.

- There’s a timeline of about four months between the “Feast of the Harvest” (Pentecost) and the “Feast of the Trumpets” (rapture) – This points to a time known as the church age.
  - The time between Pentecost and Trumpets is significant as its harvest time in Israel.
    - It’s a time of harvest for the church now, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, (Ro 11:25).
  - It is also interesting to note that the first four feasts were fulfilled on the exact day and even hour with the first coming of Christ. We don’t know the exact day or hour of the rapture, but we can know that it will be fulfilled on the exact day and hour of these feasts.

- In the Feast of Shavuot the first fruit of the Wheat Harvest is celebrated and the harvest of Wheat has begun.
  - This harvest will continue until the Fall when the Fall Harvest is celebrated.
  - Today we the believers are part of the “Wheat” Harvest until the Seventh Month when the End Times will begin. Jesus alludes to this in the Gospel of John, when he refers to the souls from Sycar as the souls of the harvest to be reaped between the 4th and 7th Month of the year.

  *Jn 4 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in*
this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”
Feast of Trumpets / Rosh Hashanah (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Today the Feast of Trumpets is celebrated as Rosh Hashanah or the Jewish New year. Biblically the name Rosh Hashanah does not appear in the Bible; the Hebrew means “Head of the Year”. Following the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 the Feast of Trumpets could no longer be literally celebrated. Rosh Hashanah took the place of this feast. Rosh Hashanah, today, combines elements of the Feast of Trumpets as the nation awaits the redemption of Messiah. The feast of Trumpets is listed as the fifth feast designated by the Lord for Israel to follow.

- Feast of Trumpets / Rosh Hashanah (Lev 23:23-25, Nu 29:1-6)

The Feast of Trumpets

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.’ ”

Offerings at the Feast of Trumpets

29 ‘And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. 2 You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. 3 Their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; 5 also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, to make atonement for you; 6 besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

- 1st day of the 7th month
- Birth of Judaism
  - Sounding of the ram’s horn
  - Remembers Gen 22 and the sacrifice of Isaac
- Later in Jewish history, the Feast of Trumpets becomes Rosh Hashanah (literally, “head of the year”).
  - Although it begins on the first day of the seventh month, it is the Jewish New Year. Like others:
    - The Christian New Year begins on Advent Sunday, four Sundays before Christmas;
    - The academic New Year begins the day after Labor Day, the ninth month;
    - The fiscal New Year begins July 1st, the seventh month.
  - It commemorates the end of the agricultural and festival year.
- The blowing of the trumpets on first day of the month heralded a solemn time of preparation for the Day of Atonement – this preparation time was called “Ten Days of Repentance” or the “Days of Awe.”
  - The trumpet sound was an alarm of sorts and can be understood as a call to introspection and repentance.
  - The Day of Atonement fell on the 10th day of this month, and the Festival of Booths began on the 15th day.

- THE MEANING OF ROSH HASHANAH/ FEAST OF TRUMPETS
  - The Biblical Hebrew name for this feast is Zikhron Teruah (Memorial of blowing [of trumpets], Lev. 23:24) or Yom Teruah (Day of Blowing [trumpets] Num. 29:1).
  - The term Rosh Hashanah was not applied to this feast until the 2nd Century A.D. with the Temple destroyed and the Jewish people scattered after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem observation of the day had to be changed.

- THE TIME OF ROSH HASHANAH
The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) takes place on the first day of the month of Tishri, the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar. This corresponds to mid-September to early October of our calendar.

The Bible calls for a one day holiday, except today it is celebrated as a 2-day feast.

- The reason for the two days is the result of trying to find the exact time the feast occurs.
- The feast occurs on the first day of the seventh month the new moon was the start of the month.
  - Many times, because of clouds and weather, it was hard to spot a new moon.
  - Once a “New Moon” was spotted distant Jewish communities would be notified via bonfires.
  - Since it took time to notify and certify, Rosh Hashanah was celebrated for two days.

- Only once is scripture it is recorded that the Feast of Trumpets was celebrated. After Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity the Temple altar was rebuilt. During this time, on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra read from the law; and the people celebrated the feasts of the seventh month. (Ezra 3:1-6, Neh. 7:73-8:13)

### TYPES OF TRUMPETS – Scripture lists two types of Trumpets Israel was to use.

- **Shofar** – ram’s horn trumpet
  - In the Leviticus passage, the words *trumpet blasts* are a translation of the Hebrew word teruah, which means “a shout” or “a blowing.” It appears that the shofar (ram’s horn) was to be blown at this time, as it was on the other new moons.
  - Also designated as the trumpet for the year of Jubilee. (Lev. 25:9)
  - According to Exodus, God blew the Shofar on the mountain. (Ex 19:16-18)
  - Ps 81:3 Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.

- **Silver trumpets**
  - Nu 10 1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 “Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. 3 When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 4 But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you.
  - Made from silver and fashioned into long trumpet with a flared tip at the end. (Num. 10:1-2)
  - Sounded to bring God’s people up to meet Him, or to assemble for a wedding or to assemble for war.
    - 2 Silver trumpets
      - Blow one – the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you.
      - Blow both – all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting
  - The priest would sound these trumpets over sacrifices as a memorial to the Lord. (Num. 10:10)
  - These trumpets were also used to mark the beginning and end of the Sabbath.

- Jewish tradition indicates that both the ram’s horn and the priestly silver horns (*hazozerah*) were used in the Feast of Trumpets.
- Jewish tradition believes the First trumpet sounded on Sinai, and the Second trumpet (Shofar) will sound when the Messiah comes. (Zechariah 9:14-16)

### 7 TRUMPETS ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN

- 7 Trumpets of Revelation (Rev 8-10)

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<th>Commander’s Name</th>
<th>Joshua Conquest</th>
<th>Jesus Conquest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commander’s Name</strong></td>
<td>Joshua (Jos 5:13)</td>
<td>Joshua (Jesus) (Mt 24:30-31)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trumpets</strong></td>
<td>7 Trumpets (Jos 6:6)</td>
<td>7 Trumpets (Rev 8:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Days of Conquest</strong></td>
<td>7 Days (Jos 6:3-4)</td>
<td>7 Years (Dan 9:27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of Trumpets</strong></td>
<td>Before the Arc (Jos 6:6)</td>
<td>Before the Throne (Rev 8:2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silence</strong></td>
<td>Silence until the 6th day (Jos 6:6)</td>
<td>Silence in heaven ½ hour (Rev 8:1)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Invading Army</strong></td>
<td>Children of Israel (Jos 6:1)</td>
<td>Saints with angels (Rev 19:14, Mt 24:31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of Invasion</td>
<td>End of the 7th trumpet (Jos 6:15-18)</td>
<td>End of the 7th trumpet (Rev 10:7)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holders of Trumpets</td>
<td>7 Priests before the Arc (Jos 6:6)</td>
<td>7 Angels before the Throne (Rev 8:2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>People’s Reaction to the 7th Trumpet</td>
<td>Shout by Israel (Jos 6:16)</td>
<td>Loud voices in Heaven (Rev 11:15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inhabitants Spared</td>
<td>Rahab &amp; her household waiting for Joshua’s invasion (Jos 6:17)</td>
<td>Inhabitants of Earth waiting for the Lord’s return (Mt 25:31-41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions Before the Invasion</td>
<td>Rahab was a prostitute (Jos 6:17)</td>
<td>Israel was a prostitute (Ez 16:33-36; Ez 23; Hos 1:2; Hos 2:4; Hos 4:10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feast of Trumpets**

The celebration of Trumpets is simple. Israel is told to memorialize the first day of the seventh month with the blowing of trumpets and sacrifice. Israel is to keep the day as a Sabbath day of rest. (Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 29:1)

Regarding the Temple service, Israel was to offer additional sacrifices for the seventh month. (Num. 29:2-6) A young bull, ram, and seven lambs were offered as a burnt offering; along with a kid goat as a sin offering. These sacrifices were in addition to the “New Moon” (Nu. 28:11-150 and “Daily” offerings (Num. 28:1-8) Israel was required to offer.

Only once in scripture is it recorded that the Feast of Trumpets was celebrated. After Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity the Temple altar was rebuilt. During this time, on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra read from the law; and the people celebrated the feasts of the seventh month. (Ezra 3:1-6, Neh. 7:73-8:13)

**FEAST OF TRUMPETS – 100 trumpet blasts**

- Tekiah – symbolizes joy and contentment
  - 1 long single blast – a straight, plain, smooth continuous note.
- Shevarim – symbolizes weeping
  - 3 short blasts – a combination of three broken notes.
- Truah – symbolizes trepidation, sorrow, and sobbing.
  - 9 extremely short blasts – staccato notes in quick successions.
- Tekiah Gedolah – symbolizes redemption
  - 1 long final blast – “the great tekiah” or “the last trump”.
- During the ceremony, the first three categories are repeated until there is a total of ninety-nine blasts. Then comes the one-hundredth blast, the tekiah gedolah, also known as the “last trump”.

- Convocation – It’s important that we understand what a holy “convocation” is and what this trumpet sound communicated in calling God’s people.
  - miqra’ (mik-raw’); from OT:7121; something called out, i.e. a public meeting (the act, the persons, or the place); also a rehearsal: KJV - assembly, calling, convocation, reading. (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.)
- Memorial – It was meant to remember something important
- Most Christians (the Church) do not celebrate this Feast but it is important for the Church to be familiar with it as this is thought to symbolize the rapture.
Jesus Fulfillment (Rapture)

The first of the fall feasts. Many believe this day points to the Rapture of the Church when the Messiah Jesus will appear in the heavens as He comes for His bride, the Church. The Rapture is always associated in Scripture with the blowing of a loud trump, the last trump (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:52).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEAST</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) (One day)</td>
<td>On the first day of the month Tishri on the Jewish ceremonial calendar, the feast of trumpets was held; trumpets were blown to gather together God’s people for a holy convocation, relocation, or confrontation.</td>
<td>The feast of Trumpets is a picture of a holy convocation at the sound of a trumpet for the relocation we call the rapture of the Church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:52). A second trumpet is for a holy convocation of Israel’s confrontation for the last days.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Feast of Trumpets – Rosh Hashanah</th>
<th>Israel</th>
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</table>
| On the first day of the seventh month (Tishri), the Children of Israel were to have a special solemn Sabbath followed by a ten-day period of repentance known as the High Holy Days. The new year of the civil calendar began on this day. (Nisan was the beginning of the religious calendar.) | Some scholars speculate that the beginning of the new civil calendar might correspond to the return of Christ and the beginning of the new reign of Christ on earth.          |}

1Th 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1Co 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”
The Day of Atonement / Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:26-32)

- Yom Kippur / Day of Atonement (Lev 16; Lev 23:26-32; Nu 29:7-11)
- 10th day of the 7th month
  o 10 days after Rosh Hashanah
- The annual Day of Atonement (Hebrew=Yom Kippur) is a direct command from God, given to Moses in the Tent of Meeting at the foot of Mt. Sinai.
- It is the most sacred day in the Jewish year.
- Community atones for the sins of the community
  o Time to go to the people that you have sinned against, ask for forgiveness, and make restitution (make it right)

The Day of Atonement
26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27 “Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29 For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. 30 And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.”

THE MEANING OF YOM KIPPUR
- Holy Convocation
- Affliction of souls
- Offering made by fire
- No work on this day
- Atonement for sins
- Expulsion from Israel for those not afflicted
- Destruction for those who violate the Sabbath
- Solemn Sabbath
- Statue Forever

- The Hebrew name for the Day of Atonement is Yom Kippur.
  - Yom means “Day”
  - Kippur is derived from the Hebrew word Kaphar meaning “to cover”
- Atonement, in essence, means “to cover”.
- During the period of Yom Kippur the high priest was to make “a covering” for the sins of Israel committed during the year.
- Lev 17 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.’
- The first bloodshed was the animal which died to cover the shame of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they knew they were naked. God made skins to cover Adam and Eve; the skins required an animal to die, to hide the shame of humanity. (Genesis 3:21)

THE TIME OF YOM KIPPUR
- The feast of Yom Kippur falls on the 10th day of Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew Calendar.
- Yom Kippur falls between the Feast of Trumpets on the 1st and the Feast of Tabernacles on the 15th of the month.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOM KIPPUR
- This day was a solemn day for the nation with stern consequences for those who choose to reject the requirements imposed by the Law. The nation was not seen as only a collection of individuals but as a
composite group. This day was set aside for the covering of sin, not only for the individual, but for the whole nation, from high priest to the servants.

- The people were required to afflict their souls (עָנָה “anah”) meaning to humble yourself, to be downcast, oppressed. The nation was to mourn their sin individually and nationally. Those who did not afflict themselves were cut off from Israel.
  - This was not a festive time, but a time of contemplation and mourning. This affliction of soul was also known as “The Fast”. It was not a time to enjoy the pleasures of food; but to mourn your sins, to be afflicted.
  - They were to not do any sort of work. Those who worked on this day God would destroy. God called for this day to be a “Solemn Rest”. This was the day when the people were to be afflicted with their sin and mourn their wicked ways.
  - The high priest would enter the Holy of Holies to petition the Lord on behalf of the people of Israel. The high priest was to wear a special set of garments for this day; white linen with the golden ephod, and with 12 gemstones representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

- MODERN OBSERVANCE
  - The modern celebration of Yom Kippur is not based on the Laws of Moses since there is no Temple. It is based on the traditions of men, namely the Pharisees. After the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 Rabbi Yohan ben Zakkai is recorded telling Rabbi Joshua, who was grieving the destruction of the Temple and the loss of sacrifice. Rabbi Zakkai says,
    - My Son… be not grieved; we have another atonement as effective as this. And what is it? It is acts of loving-kindness, as it is said, “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ [Hos. 6:6]. (Avot de Rabbi Nathan 4:18)
  - Since that time Israel looks to “good works” (mitzvoth) as the substitute for the sacrifice on Yom Kippur.
    - One Jewish tradition, called the Kaparot, practiced among a circle of Orthodox Jews, sacrifices a chicken as the substitute sacrificial animal. A chicken is chosen since it was not used in the Temple. The chicken is later eaten since Israel is forbidden to sacrifice animals such as lambs and goats without a Temple. (Deuteronomy 12:5-6)

- SYNAGOGUE LIFE
  - During Yom Kippur the Synagogue is full of people.
    - Many come to seek repentance for sins;
    - Some come for traditions.
  - The synagogues are decorated in white to symbolize purity and cleansing from transgression.
  - There are 5 services during Yom Kippur.
    - The services begin with Kol Nidre at sundown, asking God to release worshippers from any vows made unknowingly. The book of Jonah is also read to help people focus on repentance and returning to God.
  - The only hope of Redemption and forgiveness is in the blood and redemption of the Messiah, sacrificed for the sins of the world on Passover.
    - Within Jewish writings there is an understanding of the redemptive work of the Messiah. This will one day lead to a national repentance seeking the Messiah, Jesus.
    - "The Holy One, blessed be He, will tell him (the Messiah) in detail what will befall him... their sins will cause you to bend down as under a yoke of iron and make you like a calf whose eyes grow dim with suffering and will choke your spirit as with a yoke, and because of their sins your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth. Are you willing to endure such things? The Messiah will say: ‘Master of the universe with joy in my soul and gladness in my heart I take this suffering upon myself provided that not one person in Israel shall perish, so that not only those who are alive be saved in my days, but also those who are dead, who died from the days of Adam up to the time of redemption.’” Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 36:1; Zohar II. 212a
Yom Kippur Service

- On the fourteenth day of the seventh month (that is, *Tishri*, which falls between September and October), all members of the community, both native-born and resident aliens, are to fast. Since the Jewish day begins at sundown (following Genesis 1:5—“And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.”), and it ends the next evening when three stars appear in the sky, that means a total fast of 24 hours, from evening to evening: no food, no water. The structure of chapter 16 highlights the observance.

- The service of Yom Kippur is covered in three portions of scripture:
  - The priest are instructed in Leviticus 16
  - The people in Leviticus 23:26-32
  - The sacrifices in Numbers 29:7-11

- **THE PREPARATION**
  - The high priest was to represent the nation before the Lord on Yom Kippur.
    - The atonement of the nation was dependent on the high priest doing his job. Therefore to safeguard against any problems one week before the day the high priest left his home and moved to the Temple.
  - He was sprinkled with ashes from the “Red Heifer” during the week to make sure he was ritually pure in case he had come in contact with a dead body or some other event. (Numbers 19:1-10)
    - A substitute was also appointed for the high priest should he die or become unclean. The substitute became the captain of the Temple having direct command of the officers and Temple guard. We see this in the book of Acts when Peter is confronted by the captain of the Temple guard. (Acts 4:1, 5:24, 26)
  - During the week leading up to Yom Kippur the high priest would conduct Temple sacrifices. He would also practice for the Yom Kippur service so there would be no mistakes.

- **THE MORNING SERVICE**
  - The Temple service on Yom Kippur began at dawn on 10th of Tishri, even though the day started on the evening of the 9th of Tishri (evening to evening).
  - He would also wash himself fully in golden laver in the Court of Priest.
    - Normally, he only washes his hands and feet; but on Yom Kippur he would wash fully immersed in the golden laver and change five times into and out of his two sets of priestly garments.
  - The morning priestly garments were different from the garment the high priest would wear on Yom Kippur.
    - The high priest would wear the garments prescribed in the Law. However, on Yom Kippur, the high priest was to wear linen garments, and to bath fully. (Leviticus 16:4)

- **THE AFTERNOON SERVICE**
  - The Yom Kippur service was the focus of the Afternoon Service.
  - He would make sacrifices for himself and the people.

- **THE CONFESSION OF THE HIGH PRIEST**
  - The first thing the high priest was required to do after bathing and changing into his linen garments was to confess his sins over the bull. He was to take his two hands and place them on the bull; the blood of the bull would later be sprinkled at the Holy of Holies. The bull was the priest’s sin offering.
  - Three times during this period he would utter the name of the Lord (YHWH).
    - When the name of the Lord was spoken the people and high priest would fall on their faces and repeat the words, “Blessed be His name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever!”.

- **THE TWO GOATS**
  - After confessing his sins on the bull, the high priest would move to the eastern side of the altar. There, two goats were brought to him, escorted by the deputy high priest and the chief high priest of the divisions of priests. (I Chron. 24:1-19)
  - Two lots were placed in golden vessel; one inscribed with “For YHWH” the other “For Azael” (Scapegoat).
    - The goat chosen for the Lord became a sin offering
    - The other the scapegoat, let loose into the wilderness.
• The “For Azael” goat was identified with a crimson cord around its horns.
  o After the goats were chosen the high priest returned to the bull.

• THE SIN OFFERING
  o When the priest returned to the bull, he would confess the sins of the priesthood; prior to this he only confessed his personal sins.
  o After confessing the sins of the priesthood the high priest would then slay the bull and his blood would be collected in a golden bowl.
  o An attending priest would stir the bowl of blood so it would not clot. (Leviticus 16:11)

• THE BURNING OF INCENSE
  o After the high priest slaughters the bull, he is to take coals from the altar, along with fragrant incense, and enter the holy of holies. The high priest would then put the incense on the coals. The area filled with smoke, concealing the mercy seat. (Leviticus 16:12)
  o The Arc of the Covenant was no longer present in the Second Temple.
    ▪ By some accounts the Arc was hidden by Jeremiah from the Babylonians in Mt. Nebo. Therefore, the 2nd Temple did not have the Arc; and so the 3rd Temple does not need an Arc.

• SPRINKLING OF BLOOD
  o The high priest, after filling the holy of holies with incense, would then leave the room and go to the priest with the bowl of bulls’ blood and retrieve it. He would then take the blood with him to the Holy of Holies behind the curtain. He would sprinkle the blood on the Mercy Seat (Atonement cover). He would sprinkle the blood seven times. (Leviticus 16:14)
  o The priest would again leave the Holy of Holies and go to the goat that was chosen for the Lord. This goat would be slain and its blood collected. The priest would return to the sacred area for the third time and sprinkle the blood of the goat on Atonement Seat. (Leviticus 16:15)
  o The priest was then to take some of blood from the bull and goat and put it on all the horns of the altar. He would also to sprinkle it seven times with his finger. (Leviticus 16:18-20)

• THE SCAPEGOAT
  o After the priest was finished with placing the blood on the altar the priest then return to the living goat. He would place his hands on the goat and confess the sins of Israel over him. Then a man would lead the goat off into the wilderness, carrying the sins of Israel with him.
  o After the 2nd Temple, the scapegoat was led out about 12 miles from the Temple to a rocky cliff and was pushed off the cliff so it would not wander into inhabited areas.
  o While everybody waited for word on the accomplishment of the scapegoat being led into the wilderness the remains of the bull and goat were removed and taken outside Jerusalem to be burned.

• CONCLUSION
  o The priest would enter the Holy of Holies a fifth time to remove the incense ladle and fire pan. He would then bathe for a fifth, and final time; changing into his traditional priestly garments. He would then perform the normal evening Temple service. In the evening of the 10th of Tishri Yom Kippur would conclude.

Jesus Fulfillment (2nd Coming)

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| Day of Atonement – (One day)  
The 2nd Coming  
(Leviticus 23:26-32) | The “High Priest” would go into the Most Holy Place One Day a Year and make atonement for Israel’s sins. | Our “High Priest” Jesus Christ will return with us on that day, (the “2nd Coming) after the 7-year tribulation. All of Israel will be saved. |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur</th>
<th>Tishri 10 (Sep / Oct)</th>
<th>Leviticus 16: 23:26-32</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
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This special Sabbath feast took place ten days after the Feast of Trumpets. It is the most solemn of all Hebrew feasts, a day of self-denial, fasting, prayer and mourning. It was a national day of repentance and atonement for sins. Some believe this is the day that Jesus will return for His people, and/or the day that all Israel will look on Him whom they pierced and repent (Zech 2:1). Many believe that on this day of repentance, ethnic Israel will be forgiven and restored. (Is 66:5-14; Rom 11:25-32)

A thick curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year on this day to make special sacrifices to atone for the sins of the nation. When Jesus died, the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn by God from top to bottom (Lk 23:44-49), and now access Him directly. (Heb 6:19-20; Heb 9; Heb 10:19-22).

The High Priest acted as a mediator to perform the sacrifices required on the Day of Atonement. Jesus is the only Mediator between man and God. No other human is needed to intercede for man. (Heb 9:15)

The High Priest first had to make atonement for himself before making atonement for the people. Jesus, as the sinless perfect High Priest, did not have to first offer an atonement for His sins before making atonement for His people. (Heb 7:26-28)

Passover commemorates the day when God passed over Israel when the blood of the Lamb was placed on the doors of their homes. Passover was a foreshadowing of the coming of God’s lamb, the Messiah, who would take away the sins of the world. Messiah was rejected by Israel at His first coming. Israel will accept the “Suffering Messiah” at the end of this age as they turn from their sins and repent as a nation. The picture of Israel’s national repentance is foreshadowed in the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The blood of Messiah will be applied to a repentant nation.

Though Jesus, the Messiah, died for the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:6) the nation of Israel, the Jewish people, have yet to receive the redemption that comes through the death of Messiah. The picture of Yom Kippur is a nation coming before the Lord, seeking his forgiveness for sin. The high priest represents the nation and petitions the creator of the universe to cover (atone) for the sins of the nations.

The tribulation period is a 7-year period when Israel is confronted with their sins. The feast of Trumpets calls Israel, and the world, to attention; to prepare for the “Day of Atonement”. In that day the world comes against Israel. The only hope for the nation is to turn to the Lord and repent for their sins. God pours out His wrath on the nations as He judges the world. At the end of this period Israel cries out to the Messiah, who returns with armies of heaven to redeem His people from their sins.

At his first coming Jesus promised Israel that they would not see Him again until they recognized Him as the “One who comes in the Name of the Lord”. (Matthew 23:38-39)

The focus of this day is a day of national repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Prior to the destruction of the Temple, the Day of Atonement was only a temporary measure until the next year when the whole process would be repeated. In the same, the Passover lamb was only a picture of a greater fulfillment. The national repentance will one day occur when the nation of Israel comes to a national realization of Jesus as Messiah.

Zechariah 12:10 foretells a day when God will pour out on the inhabitants the “Spirit of Grace and Supplications”. The people of Jerusalem, and Israel, will then cry out to the Lord, repenting for their sins and turning to the one who was “Pierced”. The nation will then “Mourn” (afflict) themselves for the death of Messiah.

**Zec 12:10** “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

The theme developed in Yom Kippur is of the need for national repentance leading to national salvation. How does Israel go from a state of disobedience and alienation from God to redemption? The formula is revealed in the seven feasts of the Lord. When Jesus, the Messiah, was rejected by Israel at His first coming God opened the promises of Israel to the Gentile nations as discussed by Paul in the book Romans chapter 11. God, however, is not done with Israel. They are still part of His plan and promises in redemption. Paul, in Romans 11:25, informs us this hardening is only temporary “until
the full number Gentiles has come in”, then God will again deal with Israel and the nation will be saved as the Day of Atonement implies.

Ro 11 1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 “LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

… 25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

“The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), represents the affliction and salvation of Israel during the “7” year tribulation and the day of the Lord or “Second Coming” after the tribulation. It’s the day of atonement for Israel who “look upon Him whom they have pierced”, repent of their sins, and receive Jesus their Messiah.

Many believe this prophetically points to the day of the Second Coming of Jesus when He will return to earth at the end of the seven year Tribulation. That will be the Day of Atonement for the Jewish remnant when they "look upon Him whom they have pierced,” repent of their sins, and receive Him as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10 and Romans 11:1-6, 25-36).

Tribulation

• In the tribulation period the nations of the earth turn against Israel. The Tribulation period is a 7-year period known as Daniel’s Seventieth Week. At the end of this seven-year period, through the witness of the Two-Witnesses and the 144,000 (the first fruits of Israel), the nation turns to the Messiah repenting, seeking mercy from the nations. No longer dependent on their own power they seek the Lord as their only help. Jesus then fulfills the words of His promise and returns with the armies of heaven to vanquish the nations and establish the millennial kingdom.

• Jeremiah, Daniel and Jesus refer look to a period of great affliction for Israel, a period of time unequaled in the history of the world and never to be equaled again. However difficult this period is, God promises that Israel will survive it and out of it be redeemed and restored, just as the sixth feast points us to.
  - Jeremiah promises Israel and Judah that even though the “Time of Jacob’s trouble” is unequaled they will survive and be delivered out it.
    ▪ Jeremiah 30:4 These are the words the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah: 6 Ask and see: Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale? How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.
  - Daniel also promises a time of unparalleled “distress” on “Your people”, but those “written in the book” will be delivered.
    ▪ Daniel 12:1 At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people — everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be delivered. 2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge. 13 As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.
  - Jesus also promises an “unequalled” distress, which end with His return. (Matthew 25:30)
Matthew 24:15 So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand — 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again.

- The book of Joel captures the three final feasts of Israel. Another name for the Tribulation period is the “Day of the Lord”, the Day of Atonement. In Joel we see the call of the Trumpet Joel 2:1, 15, this corresponds to the Feast of Trumpet.

The Day of the Lord
Joel 2 1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand:
2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.
A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any such after them. Even for many successive generations.

A Call to Repentance
12 “Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”
...
15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;
16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room.
17 Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, Weep between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, “Spare Your people, O LORD, And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

The Land Refreshed
18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, And pity His people.
19 The LORD will answer and say to His people, “Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil,
And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.
20 “But I will remove far from you the northern army,
And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land,
With his face toward the eastern sea And his back toward the western sea;
His stench will come up, And his foul odor will rise, Because he has done monstrous things.”
21 Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the LORD has done marvelous things!
22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; For the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit; The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.
23 Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you—
The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month.
24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
25 “So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust,
The consuming locust, And the chowing locust, My great army which I sent among you.
26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the LORD your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.
27 Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God And there is no other.
My people shall never be put to shame.
God’s Spirit Poured Out
28 “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.
29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

God Judges the Nations
Joel 3 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness.
16 The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.
17 “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again.”

The nation of Israel is called to assembly, for what? To pray, fast and mourn as they face great affliction. This corresponds to the “Day of Atonement”, they are told to take the Lord seriously.

Finally, Israel is delivered from the event and God’s spirit is poured out on the nation, they then receive the blessing of obedience. This period of blessing corresponds with the Feast of Tabernacles as they “Rest” in the Lord.
Feast of Tabernacles / Sukkot / Feast of Booths / Feast of Ingathering (Leviticus 23:33--43)

- Tabernacles / Feast of Booths / Feast of Ingathering / Sukkot
  (Ex 23:16; Ex 34:22; Lev 23:33-43; Nu 29:12-39; Dt 16:18-22)

The feast of Tabernacles is the final feast of the seven established by the Lord for Israel in Leviticus. The feast is the most joyful of the seven feasts. This feast commemorates Israel’s fellowship with God in the wilderness. This feast also celebrates Israel’s rest with the Redeemer, the Lord God, who rescued the nation from Egyptian bondage.

- 15th day of the 7th month
- Remembers the 40 years in the wilderness

The Feast of Tabernacles

33 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. 35 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. 36 For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred[Ε] assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.

37 ‘These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day— 38 besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.

39 ‘Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. 40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the first fruits of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.’ ”

44 So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

- The Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkoth, begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, five days after Yom Kippur, and it continues for seven days.
- As Rosh Hashanah marks the New Year and Yom Kippur stresses atonement, Sukkoth remembers the wanderings in the desert after the Exodus. The sequence is important:
  o first, we begin anew by setting things right with our fellow man
  o next, we come to a right relationship with God by asking his forgiveness
  o finally, we start on our journey as pilgrims and exiles in this world, heading for the promised land.
  o The symbolism of the three holidays interlocks and resonates with meaning.

- Sukkoth is a joyous holiday, filled with festive food and activities.
  o An autumn festival, Sukkoth also celebrates the fall harvest.

- Tradition of the “Four Species”
  o Leviticus 23:40 says: “On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.”
  o This has developed into the tradition of the “Four Species,” four different types of growing things that represent all growing things in the world. They include:
    ▪ A lulav, the youngest shoot of a palm tree
    ▪ A willow branch
A myrtle branch
An etrog, a fruit that looks like a lemon, but is larger
- The willow and myrtle branches are tied around the lulav, and the etrog is kept in a special decorative box.
- In the synagogue, worshipers enter in procession with the branches, and services include thanksgiving for the harvest and prayers for continued blessings throughout the year.

Jewish Calendar
- Slow down and get in tune with what’s going on around us
  - Keeps God’s commandments, come to Him and get right with Him and others, and live within this liturgical cycle – everything will go well
- Puts time aside for God – one day a week
- Remembers the pivotal events in the history of the people
- All tied together with the agricultural cycle / rhythm of life itself

One of the Pilgrimage Festivals – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles
- 3 “solemn feasts”—Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles
- Required that all able-bodied Jewish males travel to Jerusalem to attend the feast and offer sacrifices
- All three of these feasts required that “firstfruit” offerings be made at the temple as a way of expressing thanksgiving for God’s provision.
  - Feast of Firstfruits celebrated at the time of the Passover included the first fruits of the barley harvest
  - Feast of Weeks was in celebration of the first fruits of the wheat harvest
  - Feast of Tabernacles involved offerings of the first fruits of the olive and grape harvests

The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths, Tents) was commemorated by staying in little thatched houses made out of mainly palm branches. In the month of October during which time this is celebrated, you can see them next to high rise apartment buildings in Israel. The Jews camp in them to remember God’s miraculous provision for their forefathers who slept under the stars in the desert for 40 years before bringing them into the promise-land.

Water was an important part of the Feast of Tabernacles. In Old Testament Biblical times, gold pitchers of water were brought from the pool of Siloam to the temple. The Priest would pour out the water over the altar and recite from Isaiah 12:2-3, 2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. It was a symbol of all of the water that God provided out of the rock while in the desert. But the eighth day was a Sabbath, so there was no procession to the pool of Siloam because God had fulfilled His promise by bringing them into the promise-land.

THE MEANING OF TABERNACLES
- The Hebrew name for Tabernacles is Sukkot meaning “booth” or “hut” made of leaves.
- The English word is derived from the Latin tabernaculum meaning booth or hut.
- God told the nation of Israel to live in huts made of branches and leaves for seven-days in the month of Tishri to remember the time they were in the wilderness and had to live in tents for 40-years.
- This feast was also known as “The Feast of Ingathering”. (Ex. 23:16; Exodus 34:22)

THE TIME OF TABERNACLES
- Tabernacles is the final feast falling on the 15th of Tishri, five days after Yom Kippur (Atonement).
- This feast was to last seven days. The first and the eighth days were “Sabbaths”, no work was to be done, and Israel was to rest.

THE RECORD OF TABERNACLES – The instructions of how to celebrate Tabernacles are in 3 areas in scripture.
- In Leviticus 23:33-43 the people are instructed to live in booths & rejoice with tree branches before the Lord.
- In Numbers 29:12-39 the priesthood is instructed on the Temple offerings.
- On the seventh year (sabbatical year) the Law was to be completely read in the presence of the people. Deuteronomy 31:10-13
• THE IMPORTANCE OF TABERNACLES
  o The ceremony of Tabernacles was prominent in the Bible because it was a joyous time following the mourning and repenting of Atonement (Yom Kippur).
    ▪ The Rabbis of old referred to it as “the holiday”.
  o It was one of the three holidays that all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem and appear before the Temple of God.
  o During Tabernacles the people brought their tithes and offerings to the Temple because you were not to appear empty-handed. (Deuteronomy 16:16)
  o The Temple sacrifice for Tabernacles during the seven-day period was huge.
    ▪ On the first day 13 bulls were to be offered, fourteen lambs, two rams, and one goat, along with meal and drink offerings.
    ▪ On the second day the number of bulls would be twelve and decrease by one each day of the feast, with the other sacrifices being the same each day.
    ▪ All twenty-four divisions of the priests shared in the sacrifices during this period.
  o On this feast the Shekinah glory filled the Solomon’s newly built Temple at its dedication in 1Kings 8 and 2Chronicles 7:1-10.

• THE PRAYER OF TABERNACLES
  o Israel was an agricultural community and they depended on the fruit of the ground for their survival.
  o The nation depended on rainfall for the coming harvest. The rainfall in Israel and Jerusalem, in particular, is 20-inches per year. The majority of this rain falls between November and March following the feast of Tabernacles. Without the proper amount of rainfall the land and its crops will be horrendous. For this reason the prayer for rain in the months following Tabernacles became a part of the Temple service.

  The Service of Tabernacles

Jewish men were required to appear in Jerusalem for this holiday; therefore streams of people would come from surrounding cities and foreign countries to celebrate. The goal was to arrive by the afternoon of Tishri 14, allowing enough time to build a booth to celebrate the feast. The location of the booth would be within a half mile of Temple, a Sabbath’s day journey.

Following building the booth in Jerusalem the next seven days were filled with joy and celebration. Three ceremonies marked this time, the Water Libation, Temple Lighting and the Hoshana-Rabbah Ceremony.

THE WATER LIBATION CEREMONY

• Pouring out water from the pool of Siloam each morning of the feast demonstrated the intense need for water in the coming months. This was the water libation ceremony (sacrificial pouring out of a liquid) the high priest would officiate during each morning of the feast.

• The high priest would take a golden pitcher and exit the water-gate, making his way to the Pool of Siloam to fill up the pitcher. He would be accompanied by a procession of music and worshipers. He would return, via the Water-gate, to the Court of Priest where the Altar was located. As he entered three blasts of the silver trumpets sounded from the Temple. The priest would then say “Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation”. (Isa. 12:3) The priest would then ascend the altar and pour out the water-libation; while he did this another priest would pour out the wine-libation as specified in the Law. The choir of Levites sang the Hallel. (Psalms 113-118)

• At the right point the people would respond waving their palm branches toward the altar singing: “Save now, I pray O Lord: O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity”. (Psalm 118:25) At this time the priests with their palm branches in hand, marched once around the altar.
  o When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem prior to Passover, the people greeted Him with Palm branches on his triumphant entry. The people viewed Him as the Messiah, coming to save them in fulfillment of Psalm 118. The palm branches were from the imagery of the Feast of Tabernacles.
  o We see a similar scene in Heaven in Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne
and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

THE TEMPLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

• On the evening of the second day of the feast was the Temple Lighting Ceremony. This was a celebration known as Simchat Bet Hasho’ayva (“The rejoicing of the House of Water Drawing”).

• The people would crowd into the Court of Women; a barrier separating men from women being raised. In the center of the Court of Women stood four huge menorahs to light the courtyard. The wicks for these menorahs were old priest garments. Members of the Sanhedrin performed torch dances while people watched and walked with their oil lamps. Later in the evening the Levitical choir would assemble in the Court of Israelites and proceed through the Nicanor Gate. At the top of the stairs they would begin to sing the Psalms 120 to 134, one Psalm for each of the 15 stairs. The sound of music would then proceed from the trumpets, string instruments, harps and flutes as the Levites sang.

• This celebration was repeated each night for the next six nights. This was done as a prelude to the Water Libation ceremony in the morning. The Talmud comments on the joy of this event by saying; “He that hath not beheld the joy of the drawing of the water [the Simchat Bet Hasho’ayva celebration] hath never seen joy in his life”. (Sukkah 5:1)

• The lighting of the Temple reminded people of the day the “Glory of the Lord” entered the Temple and filled it with His glory. This will occur again in the days of the Messianic Kingdom as the Lord Himself will rule from Jerusalem over the nations from the Temple.
  o Ezekiel 43:1 Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, 2 and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory. 3 The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. 4 The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east. 5 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

• In the Gospel of John Chapter 7-10 Jesus is in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. He taught in the Temple on the last day of the feast, a Sabbath. In the context of the lighting ceremony Jesus is proclaiming His identity to Jerusalem. At dawn He comes to the Temple courts (lighting ceremony). It is at this point the Pharisees try to trap him. After he asks the one without sin to cast the first stone they leave him. Jesus then declares Himself the light of the world while in the Temple courts during the lighting celebration.
  o John 8:1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” 12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

  o Later to validate his claim He heals a man born blind from birth (John 9). This blind man puts his faith in Jesus after the Pharisees expel him because he testified about Jesus and his healing. This man was healed on the Sabbath of the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

THE HOSHANARABBAH CEREMONY

• The last day of the feast was the greatest day of the feast.
On this day, the priest would blast their trumpets 21 times when the water was poured; three sets of seven blasts.

On this day the priests would also make seven circles around the great altar. As they circled the altar they said Psalm 118:25 and the people raised palm branches. This is why it was known as Hoshana Rabbah or “Great Hoshanna”

On this day Jesus was in the crowd. Jesus proclaimed, with a loud voice, that He is the source of the “Living Water” that everybody is searching for.

- John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. 40 On hearing his words, some of the people said, Surely this man is the Prophet. 41 Others said, He is the Messiah.

The prophet Malachi foretold this day, when he said “The Lord you are seeking will come to his temple”.

- Malachi 3:1 I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come, says the LORD Almighty. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. 5 So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me, says the LORD Almighty.
- This leads to the murder of the Messiah as foretold by Isaiah 53, yet in the last days Israel will turn and accept the Messiah rejected.

**Jesus Fulfillment (Millennial Kingdom)**

This Feast paints an ever so beautiful prophetic portrait of eternity in how it pictures and points to both the Millennium and Heaven.

Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits were the feasts foreshadowing the First Coming of the Messiah. Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles foreshadow the Second Coming. Following the period of Atonement on the earth, known as the Tribulation period, Jesus Christ returns with the Glory and Power of Heaven to establish the Messianic Kingdom. In the Messianic Kingdom the Lord Fellowships and dwells with humanity, ruling the nations from Jerusalem, surrounded by the tribes of Israel. This is exactly the picture presented in Exodus as the tribes of Israel surrounded the Tabernacle of Meeting in the wilderness of Sinai. God’s presence was visible as a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day as He fellowshipped with His people.

Ex 33 7 Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. 8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door. 11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

Tabernacles foreshadow a future day of God’s redemption of humanity when the world will be at rest following God’s judgment on the nations. It points to the Lord’s promise that He will once again “tabernacle” with His people when He returns to reign over all the world during the Millennium (Micah 4:1-7).
Mic 4:1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. 5 For all people walk each in the name of his god, But we will walk in the name of the Lord our God Forever and ever. 6 “In that day,” says the Lord, “I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted; 7 I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FEAST</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS</th>
<th>WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tabernacles – (Seven days and One day) The Kingdom Age and Heaven (Leviticus 23:33-43)</td>
<td>The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated God’s provision in the wilderness while bringing them into the promised land.</td>
<td>This points to us being brought out of the world (wilderness) into Heaven, the “promised land”. God provided this through Jesus (who was probably born on that day in October).</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feast of Tabernacles – Sukkot</th>
<th>Tishri 10 (Sep / Oct)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
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<td>Also known as the Feast of Booths, this weeklong feast was a joyful commemoration God’s forgiveness and provision for His people. The booths were a reminder of God’s sheltering them during the wilderness wanderings. Jews are required to travel to Jerusalem for this feast.</td>
<td>Sukkot represents the future final harvest when all nations will share in the joy and blessings of God’s kingdom. Although celebrated only by believers, it praises God for His presence and goodness everywhere.</td>
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<td>Jews continue to celebrate Sukkot today by building booths (temporary shelters) and living in them during the feast.</td>
<td>This feast may represent the House of the Lord that Christ will make for His people to dwell in forever.</td>
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<td>Four special plants are used in this celebration: citron, myrtle, palm and willow. A lulav, made of willow, palm and myrtle branches, is waved up and down in all four directions (north, south, east and west) to symbolize God’s presence everywhere.</td>
<td>In the Day of the Lord, all believers will one day celebrate this feast (Zech 14:16-19), coming in from all nations to worship before the Lord. Nations that do not respond in worship will be struck with drought and famine.</td>
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<td>According to tradition, a priest would carry water from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple, symbolizing that when the Messiah comes, the whole earth will know God “as the waters cover the sea.” (Is 11:9; Hab 2:14)</td>
<td>On the last day of this feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, &quot;If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’&quot; (Jn 7:37-38)</td>
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<td>People carrying torches marched around the Temple, placing lights around the outside perimeter of the Temple, indicating that the Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles. (Is 49:6; Is 60:1-3)</td>
<td>The next morning, while the torches were still lit, Jesus declared “I AM the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (Jn 8:12)</td>
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<td>The final day of the feast was an especially festive event called the “Day of the Great Hosanna”, looking forward to the coming of the Messiah.</td>
<td>During the Triumphal Entry, the crowds met the Messiah waving palm branches and calling out “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” (This did not take place during the Feast of Tabernacles, but the emblems and titles are the same.)</td>
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Just as the Israelites were brought into the promise-land after 40 years, so to was Noah (the Jews) brought into a new earth (promiseland), after 40 days and nights of rain. Enoch (the church) was caught up (the rapture) to meet the Lord before the world was judged with the flood. Jesus said that the world would be like it was in the days of Noah, right before the second coming and the world is judged by fire.

Jesus was the promised one who fulfilled this Feast while in the temple by proclaiming Himself the very fountain of living water in John 7:37-38

37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Rev 21 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."
Jesus is the fulfillment of these feasts

Col 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

The Hebrew word for feasts, moedim, literally means “appointed times.” Seven special Jewish feasts were divinely appointed by God to point believers to the person and work of the Messiah (Col 2:16-17). These feasts, some of which were designated as extra Sabbath rests, are listed in Leviticus 23, and are separated into two groups: the first set of feasts take place in the spring and are generally understood to point to what Jesus did in His first coming c. 33AD. The second set of feasts takes place in the fall of each calendar year, yet to be fulfilled. It is believed that these fall feasts relate to Christ’s Second Coming. While the Bible does not spell out every correlation between each feast and the fulfillment in Christ, a number of the connections are not difficult to see.

The Hebrew feasts were given by God approximately 1445 years before Christ was born, and have continued till this day. Many sociologists and theologians believe that the nature of the feasts is a primary reason behind the Jewish people being able to maintain their language, religious practices and cultural identity for over 3,500 years – longer than any other civilization alive today.

Although some of the particular practices associated with the feasts have been modified over the centuries, most of the core symbols, elements and practices remain the same. The greatest changes have been due to geo-political changes in Israel’s history: exile to Babylon and destruction of Solomon’s temple in 586BC, rebuilding of the temple in 516BC, destruction of the temple in 70AD, destruction of Jerusalem in 90AD, banishment of Jews from the Holy Land in 131AD, etc. A large number of minor traditions have been woven into the festivals, particularly the Passover, and seem to point directly to the Messiah (nature of the matzah bread, number of wine drinks, etc). While some of the extra traditions were present in Jesus’ day, the origins of many of these embellishments are unknown, and since they are not prescribed in the Bible, many of them have not been addressed in this document. Readers interested in these extra-biblical details might be interested in consulting publications from Messianic Jewish organizations such as Jews for Jesus (www.JewsForJesus.org).

- The Feasts of the Lord reveal pictures of God’s redemptive plan.
  - The first four feasts (Spring Festivals) deal with the First Coming of God’s Lamb the Messiah
  - The last three feasts (Fall Festivals) deal with the Second Coming, when the Lamb returns in Glory and Power as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5).

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<td>What is now (Present)</td>
<td>Rev 2 – 3</td>
<td>Church History (“Church” found 19 times)</td>
<td>Pentecost (Harvest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will take place later (Future)</td>
<td>Rev 4 – 5</td>
<td>The Rapture</td>
<td>Trumpets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev 6 – 19</td>
<td>The Tribulation (Church not mentioned)</td>
<td>Day of Atonement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev 20 – 22</td>
<td>The Millennium (The New Heavens &amp; Earth)</td>
<td>Tabernacles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE SEVEN JEWISH FEASTS
Appointed Feasts and Holy Convocations of Leviticus 23

"These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ"
Colossians 2:17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPRING FEASTS</th>
<th>FALL FEASTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Month of Nisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>17th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>50 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passover</td>
<td>Unleavened Bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leviticus 23:5</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 26:1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crucifixion</td>
<td>Burial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 5:7</td>
<td>Acts 2:29-32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feasts Fulfilled at Christ’s First Coming
Priestly role - Suffering Servant

Church Age

Feasts to be Fulfilled at Christ’s 2nd Coming
Kingly role - Coming King

Trumpets | Day of Atonement | Tabernacles |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zephaniah 1:14-18</td>
<td>Zephaniah 1:14-18</td>
<td>Isaiah 65:17-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers 29:1-6</td>
<td>Numbers 29:1-6</td>
<td>Numbers 29:1-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rapture | 2nd Coming | Millennium/Heaven |
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romans 11:25-27</td>
<td>2 Thess 1:5-10</td>
<td>John 14:1-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are seven Feasts of Yahweh – seven being the number of completion. These seven Feasts represent and typify the sequence, timing, and significance of the major events of the Lord's redemptive career. The study of the Feasts is a study in typology.

Biblical typology takes the unity of both covenants and sees in the Old Covenant types and shadows which prefigure something in the New Covenant. These types can be people, places, objects, events, and animals, etc.

- Typological language in the Old Covenant is called a "type."
- The counterpart in the New Testament is called the "antitype."

A type always prefigures something future. A Scriptural type and predictive prophecy are in substance the same, differing only in form.

So these seven feasts are acted out prophecies to Israel on what Yahweh was going to do in their future to redeem them. As they rehearsed these year after year, at their appointed times, they were seeing a picture of Yahweh and His complete redemption.

- Passover – The lamb was the type, and Yeshua is the antitype.

The spring feasts were literally fulfilled on the actual feast day:
- Passover (Leviticus 23:5) – Pointed to the Messiah as our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) whose blood would be shed for our sins. Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover at the same hour that the lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal that evening.
• Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6) – Pointed to the Messiah's sinless life (as leaven is a picture of sin in the Bible), making Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus' body was in the grave during the first days of this feast, like a kernel of wheat planted and waiting to burst forth as the bread of life.

• First Fruits (Leviticus 23:10) – Pointed to the Messiah's resurrection as the first fruits of the righteous. Jesus was resurrected on this very day, which is one of the reasons that Paul refers to him in I Corinthians 15:20 as the "first fruits from the dead."

• Weeks or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:16) – Occurred fifty days after the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and pointed to the great harvest of souls and the gift of the Holy Spirit for both Jew and Gentile, who would be brought into the kingdom of God during the Church Age (see Acts 2). The Church was actually established on this day when God poured out His Holy Spirit and 3,000 Jews responded to Peter's great sermon and his first proclamation of the Gospel.

Since the spring feasts were literally fulfilled on the actual feast day, it is likely that the fall feasts will be literally fulfilled in the Lord’s Second Coming as follows:

• 5) Trumpets (Leviticus 23:24) – The first of the fall feasts. Many believe this day points to the Rapture of the Church when the Messiah Jesus will appear in the heavens as He comes for His bride, the Church. The Rapture is always associated in Scripture with the blowing of a loud trump, the last trump (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 and I Corinthians 15:52).

• 6) Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27) – Many believe this prophetically points to the day of the Second Coming of Jesus when He will return to earth at the end of the seven year Tribulation. That will be the Day of Atonement for the Jewish remnant when they "look upon Him whom they have pierced," repent of their sins, and receive Him as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10 and Romans 11:1-6, 25-36).

• 7) Tabernacles or Booths (Leviticus 23:34) – Many scholars believe that this feast day points to the Lord's promise that He will once again “tabernacle” with His people when He returns to reign over all the world during the Millennium (Micah 4:1-7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Rapture</td>
<td>Before the Tribulation</td>
<td>&quot;Born Again&quot; Christians who are waiting and watching, will be taken up to meet Jesus Christ. He will take us to His Father's house as His bride. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52)</td>
<td>Twinkling of an Eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Resurrection</td>
<td>Began when Jesus rose again</td>
<td>A bodily resurrection of those who died &quot;in Christ&quot; are taken up to meet together with us, who are alive at the Rapture. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)</td>
<td>Approx. 2000 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tribulation</td>
<td>After the Rapture</td>
<td>The Anti-Christ confirms an existing but uncertain Mid-East peace agreement, (Daniel 9:27) then commits the abomination of desolation. (Matthew 24:15) God's wrath pours out on the earth, which leads to the battle of Armageddon.</td>
<td>7 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Coming</td>
<td>After the Tribulation</td>
<td>The Lord returns to the earth with us His bride. Every eye will see, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. (Revelation 1:7, Matthew 25:31-46)</td>
<td>No Duration Mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Millennium</td>
<td>After the Second Coming</td>
<td>The Devil is cast in the bottomless pit. Those who don’t take the mark are beheaded &amp; will reign with Christ. (Revelation 20:1-4) The rest remain dead until the end of the millennium &amp; don’t take part in the first resurrection. (Revelation 20:11-15)</td>
<td>1,000 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Final Battle | After the Millennium | The Devil is loosed, deceives a multitude and gathers them to battle. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. The Devil is cast into the lake of fire and tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:7-10) | No Duration Mentioned

The Final Judgment | After the Final Battle | At the great white throne judgment, every man is judged. The book of life is open and we are rewarded for those things which are written in it according to our works. We are not part of the white throne judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15) | No Duration Mentioned

The Second Death | After the Final Judgment | Death and hell are cast into the lake of fire, along with anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life. (Revelation 20:14) | For All Eternity

The New Heaven & New Earth | After the Second Death | The new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven. God Himself will be with us and will wipe away all tears from our eyes, there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain. (Revelation 21:1) | For All Eternity

Of the First Resurrection, one commentator put it this way: “Jesus declared in John 5:28,29 that there would be two categories of resurrection, a resurrection of life and a resurrection of condemnation. Those who are genuine believers will be a part of the first resurrection and those that are lost will experience the second. It’s important to understand that His focus was on the “kind” of resurrection, not the “time” of resurrection. Note the following: The Apostle Paul uses a Greek term in relation to the stages of the first resurrection, “tagma,” “each in his own order” (1 Cor. 15:53a) This is a military term frequently used to designate a division or a battalion of soldiers. Paul pictures a military battalion passing by a reviewing stand at different intervals of time and relates this to the first resurrection. There are different stages or battalions that come under the category of the first resurrection: - Christ’s resurrection is first, “the firstfruits” of all who follow - Second Battalion: Token number of saints, Matt. 27:51-53 - Third Battalion: The Rapture, Christians, 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51f - Fourth Battalion: Two Witnesses who are martyred, Rev. 11:1-14 - Fifth Battalion: Tribulation saints martyred, Rev.7:9-17 - Sixth Battalion: The Old Testament Saints, Dan. 12:1,2, Isa. 26:19
**Leviticus 24**

3 uses of the Law  
613 laws  
Ceremonial law  
  Replaced by communion  
Civil law  
Interactions between people  
Our civil laws come from Bible  
Moral law  
Right vs wrong  
Reflects God's perfect nature

**Lev 25 – Sabbath Year and Jubilee**

**Lesson #17: Sacred Time, Part 2 Leviticus 25: 1B55**

As Leviticus 23-24 structures “sacred time” throughout the year, Leviticus 25 extends “sacred time” to every seven years (the Sabbatical Year) and every “seven times seven” years (the Jubilee Year). Every seventh year the land is to lie fallow, allowing it to “rest,” and every “seven times seven” years, on the following year (the 50th, the Jubilee Year) all property shall be returned to its original owners, regardless of debt, thus ensuring that poverty (and wealth) shall not be systemic: each generation will have the slate wiped clean and given a fresh start.

Sabbath year  
No indication that the Israelites obeyed the command to give the land a year of rest.  
Required complete and total dependence on the Lord  
Jeremiah comments during the exile that the land will now enjoy it’s Sabbath rest

Jubilee Year  
Happens every 50 years (after 7 x 7 years)  
Experienced once in your lifetime  
Jubilee means trumpet – begins with the sounding of the trumpet (ram’s horn)  
Begins on the Day of Atonement  
2 Full years of no planting  
All debts are canceled  
  If a fellow Hebrew owes you money, it’s cancelled every 7 years  
  If an outsider owes you money, it’s cancelled every 50 years  
All slaves are to be set free – all are free of bondage  
Jubilee forces you to hold onto the things of this world loosely  
Love your neighbor – return possessions, release slaves  
Jubilee is about Jesus – forgiveness of debts  
  Christ comes again with a trumpet blast and ushers us into a perfect world

To understand the theory, we must know what a Jubilee was. Leviticus 25:9 says a year of Jubilee was to be observed after seven cycles of seven years (49 years total). This fiftieth year was a time of celebration and rejoicing for the Israelites. The ram’s horn was blown on the tenth day of the seventh month to start a year of universal redemption. The year of the Jubilee involved a release from indebtedness (Leviticus 25:23–38) and all types of bondage (verses 39–55). Every captive was set free, slaves were released, debts were forgiven, and lands and properties were returned to the families of the original owners. In addition, all labor was to cease for that year, and those bound by labor contracts were released from their obligations. The year of Jubilee was similar to a sabbatical year (or shemittah) in that the fields and vineyards were left fallow (verses 4–7). During the Jubilee both the land and the people had rest.
Rewards and Punishments (Leviticus 26)

When we studied the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12, we learned that a “covenant” is a binding legal agreement between two parties, and that a covenant involves privileges and obligations on the part of both parties, which must be taken seriously. When God reaffirms his covenant with the entire Israelite community at Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19, those privileges and obligations are implicit.

God’s covenant with Israel is unconditional. In Exodus 4:22 God says, “Israel is my son, my firstborn.” And St. Paul affirms in Romans 11:26, 29 that “all Israel will be saved . . . for the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.” Israel’s position as God’s “son,” his “firstborn” is eternal. But enjoying the prerogatives of that position is conditional, based upon obedience to God’s law.

In Leviticus 26 God enumerates the rewards for obedience and the punishments for disobedience, a list that is expanded and made more graphic in Deuteronomy 28.

Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant that either brought God's direct blessing for obedience or God's direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel.

- Part of the Mosaic Covenant was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the rest of the Law, which contained over 600 commands—roughly 300 positive and 300 negative.
- Deuteronomy 11:26-28 details the blessing/cursing motif
  - Dt 11:26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse- 27 the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; 28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.
  - Lev 26 and Dt 28 detail the blessings and curses
- The history books of the Old Testament (Joshua–Esther) detail how Israel succeeded at obeying the Law or how Israel failed miserably at obeying the Law.

Of Vows and Promises (Leviticus 27)

In Scripture God makes many promises to humanity as a whole, as well as to individual people. In the Abrahamic Covenant, God promises Abraham:

- I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you;
- I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.
- I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.
- All families of the earth will find blessing in you.

(Genesis 12: 2-3)

In the Davidic Covenant, God promises David:

- I declare to you that the Lord will build you a house: when your days have been completed and you must join your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you who will be one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He it is who shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me, and I will not withdraw my favor from him as I withdrew it from the one who was before you [King Saul]; I will maintain him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be firmly established forever.

(1 Chronicles 17: 10-14)

And God promises each of us:
[That he] so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.
(John 3: 16)

Notice that all three of these promises are unconditional. Not one depends upon Abraham, David or us doing anything for God; only God doing for us. Yet nowhere in Scripture does God ask us to make him a promise (perhaps because he knows that we break them)! But if we choose to make God a promise, he expects us to keep it: Leviticus 27 makes this quite clear.

**Lesson #20: Coda**

Christians often view Leviticus as an impenetrable tangle of ancient laws and rituals, things entirely superseded by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the inauguration of the New Covenant.

Nothing could be farther from the truth! For Jews, Leviticus sits at the very heart of the Torah: from God’s lips, to Moses, to you. As we noted in Lesson #1, from the Middle Ages onward, Jewish children are introduced to Scripture, not with the great stories of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers or Deuteronomy, but through study of Leviticus, following the great rabbi Rashi’s slogan, “Let the pure ones come and study laws of purity.”

For a Christian, studying Leviticus and penetrating to the deeper levels of the anagogic (future events of Christian history), typological (how events in the Hebrew Scriptures foreshadow those in the New Testament) and tropological (the “moral” meaning of the stories and how they are applied to us today), gives us the clearest picture we have of God’s plan of redemption and of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this concluding lesson we review and summarize what we have learned from Leviticus [the Hebrew title is Vayikra, “. . . and he called”], the only book of Scripture that is spoken primarily in 1st person God.
**Numbers Overview**

**NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Pessimism</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>Wandering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Doubting</td>
<td>Old generation dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>Promised Land rejected</td>
<td>New census</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHARTERS 1–9**
- Location: Mount Sinai
- Time: 20 days
- Key Word: Wilderness
- Theme: The price of disbelief and disobedience
- Key Verses: 14:22–23
- Christ in Numbers: Pictured in manna (compare John 6:31–33); water from rock (compare 1 Corinthians 10:4); bronze serpent (compare John 3:14); in Balaam's prophecy (Numbers 24:17); pillar of cloud and of fire; cities of refuge

**CHARTERS 10–14**
- Location: En route to Kadesh-barnea
- Time: Several months

**CHARTERS 15–36**
- Location: Wilderness wandering
- Time: 38 years

The book of numbers is largely Narrative History as far as its genre. It was written by Moses about 1450-1410 B.C. Key personalities include Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb, Eleazar, Korah, and Balaam. The purpose of the book of Numbers is to tell about how Israel prepared to enter the promise land, but sinned and was punished. It describes Moses taking two population censuses, hence the name Numbers.

- From chapters 1-9 the Israelites are preparing for their journey and entry into the promise land. Moses begins by taking a census of all the tribes, primarily to see how many men are available and in shape for military service. Next, Moses dedicates the Levites and instructs the Nazirite vows and laws. During this time, the Israelites celebrate the 2nd Passover one year after their exit from bondage.
- In chapters 10-12, the Israelites travel from the wilderness in Sinai to approach the promise land. The people complain about their food, God gives them quail, and because of their greed, He also sends them a plague. Miriam and Aaron learn a lesson about whom God places in leadership.
- In chapters 13-19, we see severe punishment for disobedience and unfaithfulness to God. Moses sends out 12 spies to perform reconnaissance on the promise land. The 12 spies return and only two of them bring good news. The people fear the occupants and rebel against taking the land. For this God punishes them and sends them into the wilderness for forty years to roam.
- The last chapters of Numbers, from 20-36, the new generation of Israelites again attempt to enter the land to take it as God promised. This time they easily destroy two nations that confront them as they are entering. Balak uses his prophet Balaam to learn to seduce the Israelites to worship Baal. Because of this disobedience, about 24,000 people die, including Balaam. Before the book of Numbers ends, Moses again conducts a census, and Joshua assumes the leadership of Israel in place of Moses who is banned from the promise land, due to his disobedience.
Outline

I. At Mt. Sinai (1:1-9:23)
A. The First Census (1:1-3:51)
   i. Counting the people (1:1-54)
   ii. Arranging the tribes (2:1-34)
   iii. Counting the Levites (3:1-39)
      1. Collecting the redemption price (3:40-51)
B. Duties of the Levites (4:1-49)
   i. The Kohathites (4:1-20)
   ii. The Gershonites (4:21-28)
   iii. The Merarites (4:29-33)
   iv. Counting the workers (4:34-49)
C. Duties of the People (5:1-6:27)
   i. Keeping the camp pure (5:1-4)
   ii. Making restitution for wrongs (5:5-10)
   iii. Testing a jealous husband/unfaithful wife (5:11-31)
   iv. Making a Nazirite vow (6:1-21)
      1. The priestly blessing (6:22-27)
D. Setting Up the Tabernacle (7:1-9:23)
   i. Bringing gifts for the dedication (7:1-89)
   ii. Setting up the lamps (8:1-4)
   iii. Setting apart the Levites (8:5-26)
   iv. Remembering the Passover (9:1-14)
   v. The pillar of cloud and fire (9:15-23)

II. On the Move (10:1-19:22)
A. Preparing the Leave Mt. Sinai: Making the Silver Trumpets (10:1-10)
B. The March Begins (10:11-36)
C. Trouble and Conflict Abound (11:1-19:22)
   i. The people complain about food (11:1-35)
      1. God sends quail (11:4-35)
   ii. Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses (12:1-16)
      1. God chastises Miriam (12:4-16)
   iii. Moses sends spies into the land (13:1-14:45)
      1. God punishes the people for their lack of faith (14:10-45)
      2. God reassures his people (15:1-41)
         a. Offerings to be made in the land (15:1-21)
            1) Equal justice in the land (15:15-16)
         b. Offerings for unintentional sins (15:22-31)
         c. Intentional sin punished (15:32-36)
         d. Tassels for remembrance (15:37-41)
   iv. The Priests rebel (16:1-18:32)
      1. God punishes Korah and his followers (16:16-50)
      2. God reaffirms Aaron’s authority (17:1-13)
      3. God reiterates the priests’ responsibilities (18:1-7)
      4. God reaffirms the priests’ privileges (18:8-32)
   v. God institutes an offering for purity: the red heifer (19:1-22)

III. On the Plains of Moab (20:1-36:13)
A. The Move to Moab (20:1-22:1)
   i. Water shortage (20:2-13)
      1. The death of Miriam (20:1)
      2. God provides water from the rock (20:9-13)
a. Moses' sin (20:11-12)
ii. Repulsed at Edom (20:14-29)
1. The death of Aaron (20:22-29)
iii. Victory at Arad (21:1-3)
iv. Moving around Edom (21:4-35)
  1. The people complain (21:4-9)
   a. God sends venomous snakes (21:6-7)
   b. God provides a serpent of brass for healing (21:8-9)
  2. The journey continues (21:10-35)
   a. Victory over Sihon, king of the Amorites (21:21-31)
   b. Victory over Og, king of Bashan (21:32-35)
v. Arriving on the plains of Moab (22:1)
B. Moabite Opposition (22:2-25:18)
  ii. Plan B: Seducing the men of Israel (25:1-18)
C. Preparing for Conquest (26:1-36:13)
  i. The second census (26:1-65)
  ii. The issue of Zelophehad’s daughters (27:1-11)
  iii. New leadership: Joshua to succeed Moses (27:12-23)
    1. Daily offerings (28:1-8)
    2. Sabbath offerings (28:9-10)
    3. Monthly offerings (28:11-15)
    4. Passover offerings (28:16-25)
    5. Feast of Weeks offerings (28:26-31)
    6. Feast of Trumpets offerings (29:1-6)
    7. Day of Atonement offerings (29:7-11)
    8. Feast of Tabernacles offerings (29:12-40)
    9. Special vows (30:1-16)
v. Taking vengeance on the Midianites (31:1-54)
vi. Cutting a deal with God: Ruben, Gad and half of Manasseh bargain for land east of the
  Jordan (32:1-42)
vii. Forty stops in the wilderness: a review (33:1-56)
viii. The Promised Land (34:1-35:34)
    1. Tribal boundaries (34:1-29)
    2. Towns for the Levites (35:1-5)
    3. Cities of refuge (35:6-34)
x. Zelophehad’s daughters, revisited (36:1-13)

Moving Out (Numbers 1-10)

With the Law in hand and the Tabernacle functioning, Moses organizes the Israelites by tribe, clan and family.

2 million Israelites

- 603,550 Men of fighting age (20-50)
- Same number of women
- People below 20 and above 50

Cross around Tabernacle

- The way that the Israelites are told to encamp around the Tabernacle forms a cross from an aerial view
- Pillar of Cloud and Fire billows up into the air over the Tabernacle
Identity

• Every Israelite knows who he is, where he belongs and what he is supposed to do relative to the Tabernacle

Nazirite (Nu 6)

• Vow of separation to the Lord (not from the community)

OT Nazirite Vow

1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD as a Nazirite, 3 he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. 4 As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.

5 “During the entire period of his vow of separation no razor may be used on his head. He must be holy until the period of his separation to the LORD is over; he must let the hair of his head grow long. 6 Throughout the period of his separation to the LORD he must not go near a dead body. 7 Even if his own father or mother or brother or sister dies, he must not make himself ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of his separation to God is on his head. 8 Throughout the period of his separation he is consecrated to the LORD.

…13 “Now this is the law for the Nazirite when the period of his separation is over. He is to be brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 14 There he is to present his offerings to the LORD

…18 “Then at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that he dedicated. He is to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.

Lifelong Nazarites

All miraculous births – mothers were barren
  1. Samsun
  2. Samuel
  3. John the Baptist

NT Nazirite vow

• Although the Nazirite vow is an Old Testament concept, there is a New Testament parallel to the Nazirite vow
  o Ro 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

• For Christians, the ancient Nazirite vow symbolizes the need to be separate from this world, a holy people consecrated to God.
  o 2Ti 1:9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time
  o 1Pe 1:15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;

• How can we do this?
  o Can be male or female
  o 1-2 weeks – Spend time with God, nothing else
  o Silent retreat – Monastic communities
AT the end of the vow, you go through a ceremony in which you cut the hair that grew during the time of the vow and present that to God as an offering.

**Red heifer (Nu 19)**

Numbers 19 is perhaps one of the most fascinating chapters in the entire Bible as it relates to the prophetic picture in which it paints.

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 "This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come.

- Red heifer – a cow that has never given birth or produced milk, and had to be completely red in color.
  - This would not only be rare, but pure as well, which as we’ll see shortly, has profound implications.
  - In addition to being rare and pure, this red heifer had to be without defect and it was to never have had a yoke, or burden placed on it.
- The Lord gives them a new ordinance of the law commanding them to bring a red heifer without blemish as a sacrifice to the Lord.
  - This is interesting because it’s given years later, and the red heifer was to be sacrificed outside the camp instead of in the tabernacle.
  - I believe it’s for that reason a whole chapter is devoted to this sacrifice and the specific details regarding the instructions for the priests.
- Charles Spurgeon – Observe that this red heifer was one where there never came a yoke. Perhaps this sets forth how willingly Christ came to die for us. Not dragged to His death. The free Son of God wears no yoke, except that yoke which was easy to Him and that burden which was light, the yoke of love which constrained Him to lay down His life for His people.  [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org)
- One commentator noted how that the Talmud claims the Red Heifer sacrifice was the only one of God's commands that King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, claimed he did not understand. They say that when Solomon wrote, "this was beyond" me Ecclesiastes 7:23), he was referring to the Red Heifer ritual.

3 You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him;

- They were to bring the red heifer to Eleazar who, as a priest, was to take it outside of the camp and slaughtered as he looked on.
- While it’s about to get very graphic and very detailed, all of these specific instructions will have profound prophetic implications.

4 and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. 5 Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. 6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. 7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8 And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9 Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin.

- Notice the graphic detail with which the sacrifice of this red heifer was made.
- Also, notice the types of articles used in this sacrifice. They were to have cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet, fire, and water, all of which were part of this unique sacrifice unlike all of the others.
- The use of scarlet will paint a powerful prophetic picture as it relates to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- "When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she would never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to enter their own life..."
cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted. What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding His precious blood that He might "bring many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10)! He died for us, that we might live through Him! Ps. 22:6 describes such a worm and gives us this picture of Christ. (cf. Isa 1:18)"  Henry Morris, "Biblical Basis for Modern Science" p. 73

10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them. 11 He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. 13 Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him. 14 This is the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean seven days; 15 and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. 16 Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is the large numbers of deaths everyday in the wilderness wandering. There is much speculation as to how many deaths per day, but suffice it to say, they would have touched dead body’s every day.
- One reason for this purification was that it would protect them from diseases that one could get from coming into contact with a body.
- This cleansing was for those who were unclean from touching a dead body. This was an effective medical law as well as a spiritual law. The water was combined with cedar, hyssop, and scarlet thread. This combination actually had the ability to destroy germs and infection because it contained "cedar" oil that came from a kind of juniper tree that grew in both Israel and in the Sinai. This cedar oil would irritate the skin, causing the person to vigorously rub the solution into their hands. The hyssop tree-associated with mint, possibly marjoram would produce hyssop oil. This hyssop oil is actually a very effective antiseptic and antibacterial agent containing 50 percent carvacrol, an antifungal and antibacterial agent still used in medicine. (Taken in part from: None Of These Diseases)
- The Book of Hebrews (9:12-14) reveals that Paul, an educated rabbi, understood that the Red Heifer sacrifice had a practical medical effect (v. 13 “for the purifying of the flesh”), as well as its more obvious spiritual element.

17 And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. 18 A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. 19 The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.

- Now we get into specific uses for the ashes and how they were to be put on a vessel in order to purify and cleanse those items as well.

20 But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. 21 It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. 22 Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening."

- Here the Lord gives them additional detailed instructions as it relates to purifying and cleansing oneself when becoming defiled.
- It’s interesting to note that one must purify himself, and if he is assisting in the purification of another, he must be purified himself.
Also, one's uncleanness could easily make other people unclean in the event that he came into contact with them. How true is this?

**Prophetic Implications**

There are many prophetic implications of this chapter – all the details in this sacrifice of the red heifer paints a perfect picture of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VS</th>
<th>THE DEATH OF THE RED HEIFER</th>
<th>THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Had to be red in color.</td>
<td>Jesus, the second Adam, came for the remission of sin that entered mankind by the first Adam, thus His red blood was shed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Red” in Hebrew is very close to Adam’s name, man-mankind.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Had to be a pure virgin female. (Only this sacrifice was a female). Leviticus 27:3-4</td>
<td>Jesus born of a virgin was sacrificed to die and for thirty pieces of silver (the price of a female). Matthew 26:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Had to be without spot or blemish.</td>
<td>Jesus was without a spot of sin or blemish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Had to be under a yoke of bondage.</td>
<td>Jesus had never been yoked to man or in bondage to sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Had to be given to the priest Eleazar by virtue of his being a son of Aaron.</td>
<td>Jesus has given us the priesthood as a believer when we enter into a personal relationship by virtue His being the Son of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Had to be slaughtered outside the Horse-gate or Damascus Gate located North.</td>
<td>Jesus had been crucified outside the Horse-gate to the North of the city at Calvary, (Golgotha).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Had to be put to death while Eleazar, the second priest, looked on.</td>
<td>Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was put to death while God the Father looked on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Had to have its blood sprinkled “7” times.</td>
<td>Jesus had His blood shed “7” times in seven different places. (2 hands, 2 ankles, back, head, side)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Had to be cedar wood.</td>
<td>Jesus was likely crucified on a cross made of cedar wood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Had to be hyssop</td>
<td>Jesus had been offered to take hyssop soaked in vinegar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Had to be scarlet wool.</td>
<td>Jesus became that scarlet sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Had to be led out of Jerusalem, bound and thrust into a pit ignited by fire as the cedar wood and hyssop bound by scarlet wool were thrown onto it.</td>
<td>Jesus was led out of Jerusalem as the innocent Lamb of God to the wooden cross. Nails where thrust into his hands and feet. As the God Man was bound by our sin that was thrown onto Him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Had to use the ashes from the death of the heifer in order to be cleansed.</td>
<td>Jesus offers us forgiveness in His death on the cross in order for us to be cleansed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Had to put some ashes into a vessel and pour “running water” upon them.</td>
<td>Jesus, the Word, gave us His Word that He would send the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Had to be &quot;running water&quot; in the Hebrew, &quot;living waters shall be given&quot;.</td>
<td>Jesus gives us the Third Person of the Trinity the Holy Spirit, so our lives are full-“filled” and become torrents of “living water”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Had to dip hyssop in water with the ashes and sprinkle them in order to be cleansed.</td>
<td>Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit Who showers us with gifts and empowers us to live a pure (clean) and holy (whole) life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Had to be applied with hyssop to be purified.</td>
<td>Jesus died, and His death has to be applied for us to be purified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Had to be one man willing to become unclean (sin) in order to cleanse all men from uncleanness (sin).</td>
<td>Jesus, “behold the man” was the one who willingly became sin for us in order to cleanse us from all sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Had to be used for cleansing on the “third” and “seventh” day.</td>
<td>Jesus our “New Covenant” (in the “seventh” millennium) made the “Old Covenant” with Israel at Mt. Sinai during the “third” millennium on the Jewish calendar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The red heifer is significant prophetically as it relates to the first coming of Jesus Christ and the second coming of Jesus Christ as well.

- “The orthodox Jews today, envision a tremendous problem in the rebuilding of the temple, before they could start sacrifices and all again, the priest would have to be purified. Well, interestingly enough, in one of the
Ashbeas in the old city, young men are being trained for the priesthood right now. …But, as the orthodox point out, they cannot enter into the priesthood without going through the cleansing rites, and to go through the cleansing rites, “We have to have the ashes of a red heifer.” Pastor Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa

- On March 2nd of this year, Arutz Sheva’s Israel National Radio broadcast some breaking news reporting that “A Red Heifer is Alive and Well in Israel!”
  - “In this highly charged live special two hour broadcast of Temple Talk, Yitzchak Reuven and Rabbi Richman reflect upon the lessons of Purim and modern-day Hamans. They also talk about the relationship between the Golden Calf and the mysterious Red Heifer, including the dramatic revelation of a new red heifer alive and well in Israel at an undisclosed location! Our hosts take some lively calls from listeners and interview Yosef Rabin, a Temple activist working diligently on the International Temple Mount Awareness Day (March 16th) project. How are you going to be active in your community to raise Temple Mount awareness? Rabbi Richman reads an angry, threatening letter from a Moslem, plus a letter from the US government, both indicating that people are definitely taking notice of, and acknowledging the importance of, International Temple Mount Awareness Day.” [http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Radio/News.aspx/2001]

**In the Wilderness (Numbers 11-36)**

The march to the Promised Land takes 40 years. But the Israelites do not wander aimlessly in the wilderness during that time. (Recall the old explanation that Moses, like most men, was too stubborn to stop and ask for directions!) Refused passage through Edom on the King’s Highway, Moses diverts northwest to Kadesh Barnea, a large oasis, where the Israelites spend nearly 37 of the 40 years, finally entering the Promised Land through Moab, by a remote and very dangerous desert route.

**Israelites Leave Sinai**

Travel up the King’s Highway, but the King of Edom will not allow 2 million Israelites to travel through his country

- Need to get to an oasis that will support 2 million people
- Kadesh Barnea is the Oasis that the Israelites spend 37 years at

**Complaining**

People started complaining instantly

1 Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. 2 When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down. 3 So that place was called Taberah, because fire from the LORD had burned among them.

Taberah means burning

**Mixed Multitude**

Ex 38 Many other people (mixed multitude in KJV) went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds

- Neither Israelite or Egyptian, but some combination of both - Israelites that had intermarried with Egyptians & vice versa
  - Don’t know who they are or why they are there
  - Don’t fit into the counting of tribe, clan or family – somewhere in between
  - They are the ones that began to complain
- These are the rabble in Nm 11:4

4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”
**Manna – Miraculous**

- Appeared out of nowhere – came with the dew
- Did not last for more than 1 day, except on the Sabbath when it kept for 2 days
- It was there every day, except the Sabbath
- It started when God said that it would start
- It ended when God said that it would stop – on the plains of Jericho
- Perfect nutrition – their feet did not swell during the trip through the desert
- Like coriander seed, looked like resin, it was good

**70 Elders**

Nm 11:16 The LORD said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting that they may stand there with you. 17 I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone...”

He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. 26 However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. 27 A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” 28 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, my lord, stop them!” 29 But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” 30 Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Parallel story with Jesus

- Jesus’s disciples reported to Him that there were other people baptizing as well
- Should we stop them? NO! They’re either with us or against us – if they’re baptizing, then they’re with us

**Quail**

Nm 11:18 …Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will eat it. 19 You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, 20 but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”...”

31 Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea. It brought them down all around the camp to about three feet above the ground, as far as a day’s walk in any direction. 32 All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered quail. No one gathered less than ten homers. Then they spread them out all around the camp. 33 But while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the LORD burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague. 34 Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had craved other food.

**Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses**

Nm 12:1 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite.

- Have to read between the lines
  - Moses married a Midianite – Zipporah – and their sons were circumcised (See Ex 4:24)
  - Now he is married to a Cushite and his sons are not circumcised

Nm 12:4 At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.” So the three of them came out. 5 Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance...
to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, 6 he said, “Listen to my words: “When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. 7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” 9 The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them. 10 When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam—leprous, like snow.

- Miriam was punished for talking against God’s chosen leader, Moses
  - Moses asked God to heal her – brought them all back together again
  - She had to stay outside the camp for 7 days – they did not move until she came back

**Exploring Canaan**

Nm 13:30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.

- Sent the recon team from Kadesh Barnea
- Caleb and Joshua were both on the recon team of 12
  - Only 2 that gave a favorable report
  - Only 2 that entered the promised land from this generation

**People Rebel**

The Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron

- Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb fell facedown & tore their clothes and said, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us”. But the whole assembly talked about stoning them

- Lord was angered
  - Nm 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.”
  - Moses convinces God not to do it – 19 In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now,“
    - Moses has a very intimate relationship with God

- Lord forgave them, but punished them
  - Nm 14:22 not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times — 23 not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. . . . 29 In this desert your bodies will fall —every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. 30 Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun . . . .34 For forty years —one year for each of the forty days you explored the land —you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.” 35 I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die.”
  - The men that gave a bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD

**Moses’ Failure (Breaking Biblical typology)**

Does God care about Biblical typology? Ask Moses about that!
2 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3 And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: “If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! 4 Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink.” 6 So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 “Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”

- The Israelites are complaining again about not having water
- The Lord instructs Moses to SPEAK to the rock in front of the people
  - Why? The rock is Jesus, and He was only struck once. Now we can speak to Him
- In his anger, Moses struck the rock
  - Moses broke the Biblical typology and it cost him entrance into the Holy Land

**Journey to the Promised Land**

Can’t use the King’s Highway – Moabites will not allow
- Head east from Kadesh Barnea
- Cross the King’s Highway
- Come around the north and in through the back door of Moab to Rabbah
  - Very dangerous – no water
- Follow the linking road down to Jericho

Nm 26:51 Everyone recounted
- Total number of men 601,730
- How could they survive 40 years in the wilderness?
  - They don’t – only 3 survive
    - Moses
    - Joshua & Caleb – only 2 to give a good report during the recon
- New generation grows up in the wilderness
  - Hardened, toughened by life in the desert
  - This is the generation that can take the Promised Land

**Bronze Snake (Nu 21)**

People continued to complain
Nu 21:4 … But the people grew impatient on the way; 5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”

6 Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

8 The LORD said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

- The bronze snake continued to travel with the Israelites and was eventually put into the Temple
  - The people treated it like an idol at the Temple
  - Named Nehushtan

- Foreshadows Christ and what He would do
  - All that look up to Christ will be saved
  - As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life - (John 3:14-15)

The bronze serpent was a type of Christ. Just as the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents died, so men bitten by Satan’s serpent of sin must also suffer spiritual death. And just as the bronze serpent was lifted up for their salvation, in like manner, Jesus was lifted up on a pole to save men from their sins.

Bronze and serpents are both Biblical symbols of sin. Jesus is typified as a brazen serpent on a pole because He took the sins of mankind upon himself while He was on the cross.

Finally, those bitten by the snake only had to look in faith at the bronze serpent in order to be healed. And in like manner, sinners only need to look to Jesus in order to be saved.

**Baalam (Nu 22-25)**

- Balaam’s name derives from the word Baal, which means ‘to conquer the people’
  - The name Baal appears about 63 times in The Bible referring to the kind of pagan worship

- Israelites are camped on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho
  - The king of Moab (Balek) is terrified & seeks the help of the famous prophet Balaam to put a curse on them
  - Nu 22 2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel.

- The king sent for the prophet Balaam to place a curse on the Israelites
  - Nu 22 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: “Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”
  - He made the mistake of believing that prophets have the power of God
    - He believed that whatever a prophet says, happens
    - It seems that charismatic movement of today has the same belief

- God answer to Balaam was no
The men returned to Balaek with the answer, but he sent more princes and more riches.

- **Nu 22** 15 Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me.” 20 And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do.” 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

**God is angry with Balaam’s decision to go with the men – talking donkey**

- **Nu 22** 22 Then God’s anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. 23 Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. 24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall; so he struck her again. 26 Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam’s anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!” 30 So the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?” And he said, “No.”

31 Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. 32 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. 33 The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live.”

If God gave Balaam permission to go to Balak, why would He then change His mind and become angry with Balaam “because he went” (vs. 22)—so much so that He sent His Angel to stand in the way of Balaam?

- The key to the answer lies in the two letter word—“if.”
- **Nu 22** 20 And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do.” 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

It is easy to read through God’s statement to Balaam and miss the condition that He placed on giving Balaam permission to go: “If the men come to call you, rise and go with them” (verse 20).

- Adam Clarke explains, “the pronoun הוא (hu) is sometimes used to denote a person’s doing a thing out of his own head, without regard to the directions of another. Thus in the case of Balaam, when God had allowed him to go with the messengers of Balak, if they came in the morning to call him; because he was more hasty than he ought to have been, and went to them instead of staying till they should come to him – It was said of him, not כי חלחל (ki halach), that he went, but כי הלך (ki holech hu), i.e., he went of his own head—without being called” (2013, Numbers 22:20).
- Matthew Henry concurs, stating that, “God gave him leave to go if the men called him, but he was so fond of the journey that we do not find he staid for their calling him, but he himself rose up in the morning, got everything ready with all speed, and went with the princes of Moab, who were proud enough that they had carried their point. The apostle describes Balaam’s sin here to be that he ran greedily into an error for reward, Jude 1:11 (2014, Numbers 22:21).”
Jude 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary similarly argues that “[t]he displeasure arose partly from his neglecting the condition on which leave was granted him—namely, to wait till the princes of Moab ‘came to call him’ (Numbers 22:20), and because, through desire for ‘the wages of unrighteousness’ (2 Peter 2:15), he entertained the secret purpose of acting in opposition to the solemn charge of God” (2012, Numbers 22:22).

2Pe 2 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

One might assume that Balaam’s request that Balak’s messengers stay with him that night meant that they would stay with him in his own tent or house. This would seemingly make God’s condition on Balaam going—“If the men come to call you” (vs. 20)—trivial, as they would have already been with him in the tent. Their “calling him” in the morning would seem to be an inevitability, and therefore, the text would not need to directly state the fulfillment of the condition. However, the fact that the disclaimer is given is significant, as God does not waste words. Every word of God would be expected to be and is significant and noteworthy (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 5:18; 12:36).

In truth, it is highly unlikely that the entourage was staying in the same tent with Balaam, considering that the text indicates there were “numerous” princes in the caravan (vs. 15), and most certainly, an envoy of many troops to protect the princes and servants to see to their needs. More likely, a large camp with several tents was set up.

Thus, God intended for Balaam to wait for the princes to come to Balaam’s tent the next morning to inquire after God’s will—a humbling experience for them, to be sure. This would highlight to the messengers that God was the ultimate Source of authority for blessings and curses, and would help alleviate the impression Balaam was surely giving: that he was all too eager to go with the men to do their bidding: to curse God’s people—who God said in verse 12 were blessed.

In light of 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11, it is likely that Balaam’s greedy desire for profit from the Moabites would have certainly shown itself as eagerness to the envoy.

Sadly, Balaam ignored God’s condition. His eagerness for gaining money, his desire to appease Balak, and perhaps his own interest in cursing the Israelites overpowered him. Instead of waiting for the men to call the next morning, he got up, saddled his donkey, and left with the princes.

God did not unjustly threaten Balaam. God’s anger was aimed at Balaam’s presumptuous disregard for His stipulations, and His response was to send His Angel to confront him for his error and warn him of his impending doom.

If he ignored God’s first stipulation, it would have been easy for him to ignore the second stipulation—that he was to only speak what God told him to (vs. 20).

While God’s disfavor with Balaam for ignoring His first stipulation was obviously significant, if Balaam attempted to curse the Israelites, it would have most certainly caused his own death.

Balaam’s eagerness was clearly getting away from him. From his perspective, it is reasonable to suppose that since God allowed him to go, he would also allow him to do what the Moabites desired and curse the Israelites.

Unfortunately for Balaam, the words he would be given by God to communicate to Balak were far from what he wanted to say. The blessing he bestowed on the Israelites would have been a humiliating experience for Balaam and a very dangerous action to engage in in front of the king of the Moabites.

Ironically, if Balaam had bridled his greediness (2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11) and simply listened to God the first time he asked to curse the Israelites and not gone to Balak (Numbers 22:12), he would have saved himself the trip, embarrassment, and personal danger from the Moabites.

Instead, he made himself look like a fool to the king, and simultaneously does the unthinkable: he blesses the Israelites three times at the word of the Lord (Numbers 23:5-24:11).

Balaam blessed the Israelites 3 times and prophecies against the Moabites
• Sadly, Revelation 2:14 records that Balaam found another way to “curse” the Israelites through teaching Balak how to create stumbling blocks for them
  o Rev 2 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
  o Nu 25 1 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.” 5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.” …So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. 9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

• Ultimately, it ended badly for Balaam. Balaam was killed with the sword by the Israelites.
  o Nu 31 1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 “Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people.” …7 And they warred against the Midianites, just as the LORD commanded Moses, and they killed all the males. 8 They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.
Deuteronomy Overview

Deuteronomy

The genre of the book of Deuteronomy is not much different from that of Exodus. It is Narrative History and Law, although there is a Song from Moses just after he commissions Joshua. This song describes the History that the Israelites had experienced. Moses wrote Deuteronomy approximately 1407-1406 B.C. The key personalities are Moses and Joshua. Moses wrote this book to remind the Israelites of what God had done and to remind them of what God expects of them. The name literally means “Second Law”. Moses gives “the Law” for the second time.

- In chapters 1-4, Moses reviews some of the details of the past history of Israel such as the Exodus and the wandering in the wilderness. He then urges that they obey the Laws of God.
- Then, in chapters 5-28 Moses restates the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. Moses explains the principles and instructions for living a Godly life as God’s chosen nation. These include how to love the Lord, laws of worship, laws regarding relationships (like divorce), and also the consequences and penalties if these laws are broken.
- Chapters 29-30 there is a move to commit themselves, as a nation, and to stand apart unto God. This consists of not only knowing the many laws that God has commanded, but also obeying them and placing God first.
- Finally, in chapter 31 through 34, we see the first change in leadership in Israel. Moses, the one who has been leading them the entire time, hands over his authority to Joshua, and commissions him. Moses blesses the tribes, which reminds us of Jacob blessing his sons almost 450 years earlier. In the last chapter, God shows Moses the promise land, although he cannot enter it, after this, Moses the servant of the Lord dies on Mt. Nebo.
**Literary Features – Suzerain/Vassal treaty covenant**

The entire book of Deuteronomy is saturated with Suzerain Treaty language and structure. It is not properly the treaty document itself, but it is based upon such a treaty, making reference to it often. Below are some examples.

- Historical Prologue language and structure: Dt 4:32-40
- Stipulations: Dt 4:44 – 5:21
- Blessings and Curses: Dt 6:4-25 and Dt 27-28
- Reflects all the sections of a suzerain treaty: Dt 8 and Dt 11
- Reflects the relationship of a vassal king to the Suzerain: Dt 17:14-20
- Reflects the language and structure of war-time arrangements between a Suzerain and his people: Dt 20
- Covenant Renewal: Dt 29
- Classic presentation of Ancient Near East Treaties: Dt 30:11-19

**Deuteronomy**

During the 40 years in the wilderness, all the Israelites who had left Egypt die: 603,548 of the 603, 550 men—all except Joshua and Caleb. On the Plains of Jericho Moses tells the new generation their story. This is not a simple recounting of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers; it is a retelling of the story to a new generation on the back end of 40 years of experience. Deuteronomy is Moses’ farewell address. At the end of the book he dies.

- Literally means a repetition of the law
- Hebrew title – Dbareem – Means “These are the words”
  - These are the words that Moses speaks to the new generation on the plains of Jericho

**Time**

- 11 days to go from Horab (Mt. Sinai) to Kadesh Barnea by the Mt Sair road

**Vast and dreadful wilderness**

- Moses’ description of the journey they had taken
- He had spent 40 years in this wilderness as a shepherd – he knew it like the back of his hand
- Very challenging climate – 120° during the day, freezing at night
- Exactly what this new generation needs in order to conquer the Promised Land

**Historical Continuum**

You are part of something much bigger than yourself

- We are part of our history and our community to which we belong
- We are who we are as a result of our accumulated experiences within our community

Moses, in speaking to the new generation, speaks to them as though they had been there during this whole 40 years

- “You did this and that . .”
- They specifically didn’t do that, but they did as a part of the historical continuum

You are not an isolated individual

- You are part of an historical continuum
- You are part of a community
- You are part of your community’s history
- You are part of something much bigger than yourself
- They are there in the experience of their ancestors
• Nicodemus talking to Jesus
  o I am who I am as a result of my accumulated experiences of my life within a community

**Message of Deuteronomy**

Why is this book so important? Why does it conclude the Torah (5 books of Moses)? Because it makes this point:
• We are not individual, independent units
• We are part of an historical continuum, we are part of a community, we are shaped by that community, and we are who we are because of that community

**Mezuzah (Dt 6)**

Creed – Statement of belief

Dt 6:4-9 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Mezuzah – Belief of Israel – written on a scroll and hung on the doorframe of every devout Jewish home
• When you enter the home, you touch the mezuzah and remember these words
• Have to teach the new generation their history – starting with Abraham

**Mosaic Covenant – Blessing for obedience, Curses for disobedience (Dt 28)**

The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant that either brought God's direct blessing for obedience or God's direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel.
• Part of the Mosaic Covenant was the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the rest of the Law, which contained over 600 commands—roughly 300 positive and 300 negative.
• Deuteronomy 11:26-28 details the blessing/cursing motif
  o Dt 11:26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; 28 the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.
  o Lev 26 and Dt 28 detail the blessings and curses
• The history books of the Old Testament (Joshua–Esther) detail how Israel succeeded at obeying the Law or how Israel failed miserably at obeying the Law.

**Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10)**

The Palestinian Covenant, or Land Covenant, amplifies the land aspect that was detailed in the Abrahamic Covenant. According to the terms of this covenant, if the people disobeyed, God would cause them to be scattered around the world (Deuteronomy 30:3-4), but He would eventually restore the nation (verse 5). When the nation is restored, then they will obey Him perfectly (verse 8), and God will cause them to prosper (verse 9).

• Dt 30:3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. 4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. 5 He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. 7 The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. 8 You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. 9 Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the
young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers,

**Song of Moses (Dt 32)**

- Dt 32
- Very much a man of words now

The 2nd Song of Moses (Dt 32) prophecies Israel’s unfaithfulness (Dt 32:5; 15-18) and God’s decision to set them aside and work instead through the church (Dt 32:19-21). This song also gives us a glimpse of the horrors of the tribulation (Dt 32:23-27) as God pours out His wrath to bring the Jews to repentance. And just as the song leads us to believe that there is no hope for the Jews, it suddenly reveals the glorious grace of God in His salvation of the remnant (Dt 32:36). The Lord sums up the action saying “I have wounded, and it is I who heal…” (Dt 32:39)

- Dt 32:5 They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation.1
- Dt 32:15 Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior. 16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. 17 They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. 18 You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.
- Dt 32:19 The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. 20 "I will hide my face from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful. 21 They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.
- Dt 32:23 "I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them. 24 I will send wasting famine against them, consuming pestilence and deadly plague; I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts, the venom of vipers that glide in the dust. 25 In the street the sword will make them childless; in their homes terror will reign. Young men and young women will perish, infants and gray-haired men. 26 I said I would scatter them and blot out their memory from mankind, 27 but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy, lest the adversary misunderstand and say, 'Our hand has triumphed; the LORD has not done all this.' "
- Dt 32:36 The LORD will judge his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.
- Dt 32:39 "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

**Land Covenant (Dt 28-30)**

The land covenant of Dt 28-30 lays down the conditions for the Jews possession and enjoyment of their Promised Land. It contains a panorama of Jewish history:

- Dispersion among the nations as punishment for idolatry (Dt 28:58-64)
- Persecution by nations where the Jews are dispersed (Dt 28:65-67)
- Affliction of the land of Israel until it becomes a “wasteland” (Dt 29:22-28)
- Repentance of the Jews (Dt 30:1-2)
- Spiritual regeneration of the repenting remnant (Dt 30:6,8)
- Regathering of the remnant to the land of promise (Dt 30:3-4)
  - This is regathering in belief that will take place at the 2nd advent, not the regathering in unbelief that is happening now
- Repossession of the Promised Land by the Jews (Dt 30:5)
- Punishment of the enemies of Israel (Dt 30:7)
• Blessing the re-established nation of Israel with material prosperity (Dt 30:5,9)

Death of Moses

• 120 years old when he died, but his eyes were not weak and his strength was not gone
  o Dt 34:7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.
• No one knows where the grave a Moses is – intentional so that no one is worshipping Moses

How was Moses able to live to 120? And how was Moses able to live to 120 yet still have his strength and vitality?

The life of Moses can be divided into three periods of forty years. According to Acts 7:23, for the first forty years of his life, Moses was essentially a member of the Egyptian royal family. Once Moses determined to side with the people of Israel instead of the Egyptians, he was forced to live in exile for the next forty years of his life (Acts 7:30). After returning to Egypt to free the nation of Israel from slavery, Moses lived another forty years (Acts 7:36). So, Moses was a prince for forty years, an exiled shepherd for forty years, and then the leader of a nation of freed slaves for forty years.

One would think that what Moses learned as a prince of Egypt for forty years was what prepared him to be Israel’s leader during the forty years of wilderness wanderings. But the Lord also wanted Moses to learn humility. Moses’ forty years as a shepherd taught him to be humble and to rely on the Lord. Numbers 12:3 declares, “Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.” Moses’ experience and training during the first eighty years of his life prepared him to be Israel’s leader. But it was his face-to-face relationship with God that truly made Moses a powerful and godly leader (Exodus 33:11).

It is interesting to note that, when Moses died at the age of 120, he did not die of old age. This is despite the fact that, by Moses’ day, the typical lifespan was much shorter than 120. Moses had been supernaturally strengthened and protected from the effects of aging; he died because God had completed what He had planned for Moses. God had used Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, record God’s Law, and deliver the Israelites to the borders of the Promised Land. Because of Moses’ failure to obey the Lord in Numbers 20:1–12, God did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land with the Israelites. So, when the Israelites were ready to enter and take possession of the land, Moses went up Mount Nebo and saw the land from an overlook, and then the Lord took him home (Deuteronomy 34:1–7). The 120 years of Moses’ life are a perfect example of a follower of God being “indestructible” until God’s plan for him or her is completed.
The genre of the book of Joshua is Narrative History. It was authored by Joshua the leader of the Israelites circa 1405-1383 B.C. The key personalities are Joshua, Rahab, Achan, Phinehas, and Eleazar. It was written to assure the Israelites the Living God will reward obedience, and also to record the entrance and conquest of the promise land. Joshua demonstrates his faith in God as He follows the orders given to Him and takes leadership of the nation. Joshua truly was “strong and courageous” (1:7).

- In chapters 1-4, Joshua and the Israelites enter the promise land and in doing so we read of an amazing entry. As they arrive at the Jordan River, we find details of an incredible, miraculous crossing. God shows His incredible grace to a prostitute named Rahab, the ancestress of King David.

- Then in chapters 5-12, Joshua follows God’s orders and first conquers the central of the promise land. This includes the unlikely manner in which they conquer the grand fortress of Jericho. God alone moved and conquered this impossible achievement. Ai was the next town and although it took two tries, the first due to sin in the camp, on the second attempt God again moved and dominated. Next, the Israelites occupied the southern land and then the northern land to complete the occupancy; however, although they controlled the region, they never did completely conquer it.

- Finally, in chapters 13-24, the land is divided up and distributed among the tribes of Israel. Some of the larger cities are placed aside for the Levitical priests who did not receive a portion of land, due to their duties. Lastly, Joshua dies but before he passes he gives one of the greatest challenges that lasts for all generations including our
own, “Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (24:15).

Outline

Conquest (Joshua 1:1-24:33)
A. Prologue (“Be strong and courageous”) (1:1-18)
B. Staging for War (2:1-5:12)
   i. Reconnaissance mission to Jericho (2:1-24)
      1. Spies commissioned by Joshua (2:1)
      2. Spies enter Jericho (2:2-7)
      3. Rahab’s confession and bargain (2:8-14)
      4. Spies leave Jericho (2:15-21)
      5. Spies report back to Joshua (2:22-24)
   ii. Crossing the Jordan (3:1-4:24)
      1. Preparation (3:1-8)
      2. Crossing (3:9-17)
      3. Memorial (4:1-24)
   iii. Ritual Preparation (5:1-12)
      1. Circumcision (5:1-8)
      2. Passover celebration (5:9-10)
      3. Manna stops (5:11-12)
C. Attack (5:13-13:7)
   i. Joshua meets the commander of the Lord’s army (5:13-6:5)
      1. Strategy for Jericho’s defeat revealed (6:2-5)
   ii. The defeat of Jericho (6:6-6:27)
      1. Strategy implemented (6:6-27)
   iii. The defeat of Ai (7:1-8:29)
      1. First attempt (7:1-26)
         a. Spies commissioned by Joshua (7:2-3)
         b. Israelites defeated (7:4-5)
      2. Cause of defeat: Achan’s sin (7:6-26)
         a. Inquiry (7:6-12)
         b. Identifying guilty party (7:13-23)
         c. Punishing Achan (7:24-26)
   3. Second attempt (8:1-29)
      a. Strategy for Ai’s defeat revealed (3:1-2)
      b. Strategy implemented (3:3-29)
   4. Reaffirming the covenant (8:30-35)
      a. Joshua erects altar on Mt. Ebal (8:30-31)
      b. Joshua writes the words of the Law on stones (8:32-33)
      c. Joshua reads the words of the Law to the people (8:34-35)
   iv. Gibeonite deception (9:1-27)
   v. Defeat of the Amorite coalition (10:1-28)
      1. Amorite coalition forms (10:1-5)
      2. Joshua attacks (10:6-15)
         a. The “sun stands still” over Gibeon (10:12-14)
      3. Amorite kings killed (10:16-28)
   vi. Defeat of the southern territories (10:29-43)
   vii. Defeat of the northern territories (11:1-23)
   viii. List of defeated kings (12:1-24)
   ix. Land still to be taken (13:1-7)
D. Conquered land allocated (13:8-21:45)
   i. Land east of the Jordan River (13:8-33)
Comparison between Joshua and Jesus

- Identical Name: Yehoshua, "Yahweh is Salvation"
  - Yehoshua means "Yahweh [the Lord] is Salvation."
  - The Hebrew to English spelling of Yehoshua is “Joshua.”
  - When translated from Hebrew into the Greek language, the name Yehoshua becomes Iēsous. The English spelling for Iēsous is “Jesus.”
  - Basically, what this means is Joshua and Jesus are the same name.
    - One is translated from Hebrew into English (Joshua)
    - The other from Greek into English (Jesus)

- Identical Roles: Leader of Israel
  - JOSHUA: "Because of you the Lord became angry with me also and said, "You shall not enter it, either. But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will enter it. Encourage him, because he will lead Israel to inherit it." (Deuteronomy 1:37-38)
  - JESUS: "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel." (Matthew 2:6)

- Identical Mission: Peace
  - JOSHUA: "The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath." (Joshua 9:14-15)
• **JESUS:** "And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

**Identical Number of Appointed Men: 12**

- Joshua appointed 12 men from each tribe: "So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites." (Joshua 4:4)
- Jesus appointed 12 apostles: "These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." (Mark 3:16-19)
- Jesus 12 apostles will judge the 12 tribes of Israel: "Jesus said to them [twelve apostles], "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

**Identical Representations: 12 Stones**

- Joshua choose 12 men from each tribe and represented each one by a gemstone
  - "The Lord said to Joshua, "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." (Joshua 4:1-3)
  - Priestly Garments: Ex 28:15 “Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions [By means of the Urim and Thummim] … 17 Then mount four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row there shall be a ruby, a topaz and a beryl; 18 in the second row a turquoise, a sapphire and an emerald;19 in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; 20 in the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper. Mount them in gold filigree settings. 21 There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

  1. Ruby  
  2. Topaz  
  3. Beryl  
  4. Turquoise  
  5. Sapphire  
  6. Emerald  
  7. Jacinth  
  8. Agate  
  9. Amethyst  
  10. Chrysolite  
  11. Onyx  
  12. Jasper

- Jesus choose 12 apostles with each apostle represented by a gemstone in the Book of Revelation
  - "It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb ... "The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst." (Revelation 21:12-20)

  12. Jasper  
  5. Sapphire  
  8. Chalcedony (Agate)  
  6. Emerald  
  11. Sardonyx (Onyx)  
  1. Carnelian (Ruby)  
  10. Chrysolite  
  3. Beryl  
  2. Topaz  
  4. Chrysoprase (Turquoise)  
  7. Jacinth  
  9. Amethyst

- The types of gemstones representing the 12 tribal leaders of Israel are the same as the 12 gemstones representing the 12 apostles but in different order
  - If the top half of the matrix of the 12 tribal leaders is rotated by 180 degrees, and the bottom half turned upside down, with Onyx additionally swapping places with Topaz, the lists become extremely similar with only four differences.
  - There are 4 colors – red, green, yellow, and blue
  - Clear gems
• Red – Carbuncle
• Green – Heliodor
• Yellow – Chrysolite
• Blue – Amethyst

• Opaque gems
  o Red – Carnelian/red Jasper
  o Green – green Jasper
  o Yellow – yellow Jasper/yellow Serpentine
  o Blue - Lapis Lazuli

• Striped gems
  o Red – Sardonyx
  o Green – Malachite
  o Yellow – pale golden Agate
  o Blue – sky-blue Agate

  ▪ The four colors of red, green, yellow, and blue, are the first four colors (apart from black and white) distinguished by languages, and are distinguished in all cultures with at least six color distinctions (the other two being black and white)
  ▪ These colors roughly correspond to the sensitivities of the retinal ganglion cells (the retinal ganglia process color by positioning it within a blue to yellow range, and separately positioning it within a red to green range)

Israel Attacks! (Joshua 1-8)

After staging on the Plains of Jericho, the Israelites cross the Jordan River and attack Jericho. It is springtime; the Jordan River is at flood stage; the Israelites approach a heavily fortified city across five miles of open territory; and they attack a city on a plateau, moving up hill. How in the world do the Israelites accomplish this daunting task?

Jericho

• Camped on the east side of the Jordan River in plain view of the people of Jericho
  o Guards are watching the Israelites and they are preparing for battle

Rahab

• Joshua sends 2 spies into the land to probe for its weaknesses, esp at Jericho
  o Go to the house of Rahab the Prostitute – good place to get info
  o She helps them in return for protection for her family during the attack
  o Big weakness – they are terrified of the Israelites because of what they’ve heard
    ▪ They’re scared? Good – Let’s scare them more

Jos 2:8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof  9 and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.

• Rahab
  o Gentile who lived in Jericho around 1400 BC
  o Prostitute
    ▪ Jos 2:1 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute [1] named Rahab and stayed there.
    ▪ Heb 11:31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.
    ▪ Jas 2:25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?
  o Liar
Jos 2:3-7 She hid the men on the roof and lied to the king’s servants
Our past does not need to hinder our present

- Woman of faith
  Faith Hall of Fame – Heb 11:31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.
  Considered righteous – Jas 2:25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?
  She is in the family tree of King David and Jesus – Mt 1:5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David.
  - Rahab + Salmon \(\rightarrow\) Boaz
  - Boaz + Ruth \(\rightarrow\) Obed
  - Obed \(\rightarrow\) Jesse
  - Jesse \(\rightarrow\) King David

- Rahab’s belief was based on what she heard
  Jos 2:8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. 10 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 Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.
  Ro 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.
  Acts 16:14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.
  - This is a strong argument as to why we should pray for salvation for our family and friends

- The scarlet thread – the blood of Jesus
  Winds its way all the through Scripture
  Rahab asked for salvation for herself and her family
  The sign of this salvation was a scarlet cord
  - Jas 2:17 The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us 18 unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house.
  It’s the shed blood of Christ on the cross that enables our salvation
  - Heb 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

**First strategic problem – Crossing the Jordon**

- Jordon River is in flood stage at this time of year (spring)
  - Class 4 rapids at Jericho – Huge vertical drop in a very short amount of time
    - Snow melt from Mt. Hermon (10,000’ above sea level)
    - Jericho 900’ below sea level
    - A couple of miles between them
- Jordon River stops flowing – miraculous
  - 4 Priests carry the Arc of the Covenant in full view of everyone (including the people of Jericho)
  - When the Arc of the Covenant enters the Jordon, the water stops 17 miles above where they are
  - The entire nation crosses over on dry land
Next strategic problem – Taking the fortified city of Jericho

- Forces and weight of stones stacked on one another – very solid structure
- Jericho is on a plateau - have to go up to the fortified city

Jos 6:2 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. 3 March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in.”

- Everyone in Jericho is on the wall watching the Israelites – for 6 days, marching around the city
  - On the 7th day, when the Israelites give out a great war cry, the people on wall turns and runs inward to protect the city
  - The force of the people turning inward and running pushes outward on the wall and the walls collapse
  - The Israelites charged in over the rubble and took the city

The Plunder is the Lord’s

Jos 6:16 The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! 17 The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 18 But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. 19 All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury.”

- Why do men fight battles?
  - Not for idealistic abstract concept
  - Glory & Honor
    - What men say about you during your lifetime and after you die
      - Not an internal condition, it’s external
      - Performance in battles develops what men say about you – your reputation
      - Accumulated honor is your reputation that will live after you
    - Plunder is distributed based on the performance of each individual warrior
      - Honor is recognized in material reward from the plunder

- Achan’s Sin

Jos 7: 1 But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD ’s anger burned against Israel.

Jericho Curse

Jos 6:26 At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates.” (1406 BC)

1Ki 16:34 34 In Ahab’s time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun. (930 BC)
## Jesus in Jericho

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### Ai
- Ai is the next city to take on the east side of the mountain range
- Spies were sent to Ai - Ai will be easy to take with a few men

Jos 7:3 When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there.” 4 So about three thousand men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5 who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water.  

...  
11 Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. 12 That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

- Achan’s Sin  

19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give him the praise. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.” 20 Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: 21 When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

...  
24 Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. 25 Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.” Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. 26 Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.

○ Achan’s sin endangered everyone – the punishment was justified
o Valley of Achor = Valley of Trouble

- Ai is destroyed

Jos 8:1 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.”

... “Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go very far from it. All of you be on the alert.
5 I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. 6 They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are running away from us as they did before.’ So when we flee from them, 7 you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will give it into your hand. 8 When you have taken the city, set it on fire.

... 16 All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city. 17 Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel.

- Ambush – 5000 men sent to the west of the city
  - The Israelites attacked from the east – the same way they did in Jericho
  - All the men of Ai went out to attack Israel – they chased the Israelites back to the east
  - The ambush from the west entered the city easily and set the city on fire
  - When the Israelites saw the smoke from the city, they turned and attacked the man of Ai
    - The ambush men also attacked
    - The men of Ai were caught in the middle and cut down

Conquest (Joshua 9-24)

At Jericho the Israelites kill every living thing in the city: men, women, children and infants. They spare nothing that breathes. And this is God’s command for the remainder of the conquest, as well: kill them all.

By the end of Joshua the Israelites have a foothold in the land of Canaan, but the conquest raises several critical issues:
  1) Strategically, how do the Israelites conquer a much stronger and more numerous enemies?
  2) Can a land conquered so brutally result in a peaceful and blessed life for the conquerors?
  3) What about the moral and ethical issues involved in such a conquest?

Joshua is a deeply disturbing story on several levels.

Coalition of Tribal Warlords

Jos 9:1 Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—those in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Great Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites) — 2 they came together to make war against Joshua and Israel.

The Gibeonite Treaty

Jos 9:3 However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn–out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. 5 The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. 6 Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.”
18 But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders 19 but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. 20 This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them.” 21 They continued, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community.” So the leaders’ promise to them was kept.

- Joshua makes a treaty without consulting with the Lord – seemed obvious
  - When the truth came out, Joshua kept his word and did not attack Gibeon
    - Integrity – You keep a promise even when there is no reason anymore to do it
    - 1406 BC

- The Gibeonites Avenged 1010 BC (400 years later)
  2Sa 21:1 During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the LORD. The LORD said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood–stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.” 2 The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.) David asked the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? How shall I make amends so that you will bless the LORD ‘s inheritance?”
  - Joshua had made a treaty with the Gibeonites that they would not be harmed in 1406
    - Beginning of David’s reign – 1010 BC – 400 years later
  - Saul wanted to ‘correct the error’ of not taking the Gibeonites
    - Reading between the lines – Saul must have rounded up the Gibeonites and executed them
  - David is king
    - Legal case with the Gibeonites
    - You were wronged – how can I make right what was wronged of you
  - Gibeonites Avenged
    - 7 of Saul’s male descendants were killed and exposed before the Lord at Gibion for 7 days
      - Ultimate disgrace to be exposed to the elements – everyone is buried within 24 hours
      - That brought justice for the Gibeonites
    - Then David retrieved the bodies and provided them with a state funeral – great honor
      - Buried beside Saul and Jonathon
    - David’s test
      - King David’s 1st big test of wisdom, diplomacy, justice, and mercy
        - The Gibeonites were avenged and got justice
        - The men who were killed were honored by David with a state funeral and a proper burial
    - Very hard decision for David

**Conquest Continues**

- Israelites continue to take the land, town by town
  - Central mountain range, up into Galilee
  - Down to the Negev

- Israelites do not take the entire land
  - Still significant pockets of resistance
  - Entire land not taken until the time of David – 400 years later
  - Never do take the coastal plain – Philistines have 5 fortified cities along the Via Maris
    - Dan is given this land – they give up and go north and attack a peaceful and unsuspected people
Sun Stands Still

- The Gibeonites area attacked by the Amorites and the Israelites come to their aid
  - Jos 10:2 Gibeon was an important city, like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were good fighters.
  - The 5 kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon—joined forces to attack Gibeon
  - Treaty – The Israelites need to help
- Joshua did an all-night march up through the night from Gilgal with his entire army & took them by surprise
  - Attacked at night by surprise
    - Theory of special operations warfare – a small group of men can defeat a much larger and stronger group if certain conditions are met: surprise, speed, and overwhelming violence
- The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel
  - Storm – Jos 10:11 “…the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites”
- Sun stands still
  - Jos 10:12 On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: “O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon. 13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies”
    - Strategically – Why would Joshua want the sun to stand still? No advantage to have daylight
      - Joshua needed the chaos – surprise, speed, and overwhelming violence
      - Needs the cover of darkness – sun stand still, that is, don’t come up
      - Sun doesn’t actually stop – Storm provided the cover of darkness for Joshua to enhance the chaos (Creasy)
  - Jos 10:14 There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!

Distribution of the Land

- Each tribe (except Levites) gets a consolidated territory marked out by natural boundaries
  - Boundaries – Natural geographical and topographical boundaries – mountains, valleys, streams, hills, etc
- Levites – priests
  - No land – their inheritance is God
  - 10% tax (tithe) from the people to support them
  - 48 towns that they live in from which they will minister to the people
    - They don’t own the land but they can use the land for their flocks and herds
  - Dark shadow
    - Jos 24:33 And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.
    - The priests got real estate
      - Very slight shadow – compromise is already creeping in
- Joseph
  - Jos 24:32 And Joseph’s bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph’s descendants.
    - Gen 50:24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” 25 And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, “God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place.”
    - When Moses takes the people out of Egypt, he pauses to get the mummy of Joseph
The book of Judges includes several interesting genres; Poetry, Riddles, and mainly Narrative History. Its author is anonymous but it is usually assumed that Samuel, the prophet wrote it. It was written about 1086-1004 B.C. Key personalities include Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Jephthah, Samson, and Delilah.

Its purpose was to teach Israel that God is faithful and certain to punish sin therefore each person must remain loyal and devoted to Him. This book shows the immediate generations after the conquest of the promise land and unfortunately, the results of unfaithfulness are similar to what we have seen in the past... awful.

- In chapters 1:1-3:6, we find that the Israelites have failed to keep their part of the covenant (among many other things), and did not entirely conquer and take control of all the land that they were promised. This problem unfortunately grows wildly out of control as time goes on.
- From 3:7-16, God raises up judges to rescue Israel several times. A cycle of sin-rescue-worship-sin continues constantly. These rescues were temporary because we find that the nation’s obedience only lasted as long as the life of that particular judge. Out of the 14 judges mentioned, the major judges that stand out are famous stories of Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.
- In chapters 17-31, we see Israel slumping into a horrid state of moral demise and ruin. Predominantly in the tribes of Dan and Benjamin, we see how far man has really turned from the God of Abraham. The Dan tribe had almost completely given in to the worship of idols made by a man named Micah, even to the point that they practically defend it. Later, the entire tribe of Benjamin is wiped out down to 600 men in a violent and vicious civil war. It is
here we read the sad passage of truth, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21:25).

Outline

Settlement (Judges 1:1-21:25)
A. Prologue (1:1-3:6)
   1. From success to failure, from victory to defeat (1:1-36)
   2. The commander of the Lord’s army resigns (2:1-5)
   3. The pattern of failure (2:6-3:6)
B. Leadership emerges: the judges—good, bad and ugly (3:7-16:31)
   1. Judge #1: Othniel (3:7-11)
   2. Judge #2: *Ehud* (3:12-30)
   3. Judge #3: Shamgar (3:31)
   7. Judge #7: Tola (10:1-2)
   8. Judge #8: Jair (10:3-5)
   10. Judge #10: Ibzan (12:8-10)
   11. Judge #11: Elon (12:11-12)
   [Bold indicates “major” judges.]
C. Israel fails utterly (17:1-21:24)
   1. Michah and his idols (17:1-13)
   2. Dan rejects its inheritance and attacks peaceful Laish (18:1-31)
   3. The loathsome Levite and his concubine (19:1-30)
   4. Israel slaughters their brother Benjamites (20:1-48)
   5. The ultimate self-deception (21:1-24)
D. Epilogue (“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit”) (21:25)

*Settlement (Judges 1-21)*

It is one thing to conquer a land; it is quite another to settle it and live in it. Judges is a book of settlement. Although the Israelites are to be a “holy people”; although they are in a covenant relationship with God; although they have God’s Law and his Tabernacle; although they have God’s presence in their midst: in the end, they become worse than the people they conquered, no longer recognizing God and doing “that which is right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25). Like Joshua, Judges is a deeply troubling book.

At this point in our story, Israel is no more than a loose confederation of twelve tribes, each living life in rather isolated tribal territories bounded by mountains, rivers and valleys, having little to do with one another. When outside forces threaten, the tribes coalesce and a leader—or judge—emerges to fight off the threat. Once it is subdued, the tribes revert back to a loose confederation. All the while, however, as one generation succeeds another, the leaders become weaker and the people more corrupt, until the final, terrible story of the Levite from the hill country of Ephraim and his concubine triggers the slaughter—and near extermination—of the entire tribe of Dan by their brother Israelites. Indeed, “in those days Israel had no king, and everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.” In a time of political, economic and religious chaos, the Israelites have become worse that the people who were in the land to begin with, and as readers we can only ask, “What happened to the theme of salvation introduced in Genesis 12?”

The Talmud identifies Samuel as the author of Judges, although one could certainly argue that Judges is an anthology of several separate stories, compiled at a later time.
Israel

- Israel is not a united nation
  - It is an amphictyony – A loose confederation of tribes
    - Each lives in its own territory, isolated by rivers, mountains, valleys and other natural terrain
  - Have little to do with one another until times of trouble
    - Once it is subdued, the tribes revert back to a loose confederation.

- Israel has not been teaching the new generations about God
  - Jdg 2:10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel.
  - Jdg 3:5 The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 6 They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

- Jdg 3 –
  1 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan
  2 (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience) …
  4 They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD ’s commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

- God left some of the original people there – Why?
  - To teach the Israelites warfare
  - To test the Israelites

Judge

- Judges draws its name from the fact that several of its main characters are said to have “judged” Israel
  - There were thirteen judges in our narrative leading Israel during times of national crisis.

- Better translated “ruler” or “leader” than “judge,”
  - The Hebrew verb (sopetim) has a much wider semantic range than the strictly judicial function
    - Does not have a judicial job (dealing with legal affairs and making decisions regarding legal events)
    - Only 1 has a judicial function – Deborah
  - Rather these are military leaders that emerge and deal with a particular threat
    - Charismatic leaders raised up by God and the Holy Spirit to do great feats for His people

- When an outside threat intrudes, the tribes come together and a leader (called a “judge”) emerges
  - He (or she, in the case of Deborah) deals with the threat

- 13 leaders in Judges
  - Each of these judges emerges when an outside threat pushes into Israel
  - Pattern – Hands on a clock
**Clock-like Cycle (Deuteronomic Cycle)**

- The hands go around the clock 13 separate times
  - With each time, the whole clock spirals downward by 1 notch
    - As the story progresses, they become more and more corrupt

- Basic cycle
  - Relapse
  - Retribution
  - Repentance
  - Rescue

- In the account of Othniel’s judgeship, the author provides the basic literary form he uses in his accounts of the major judges, filling it out in each case with the materials he considered necessary to his purpose:
  - Beginning statement
  - Cycle of apostasy
  - Oppression
  - Distress
  - Deliverance
  - Recognizable conclusion

**Literary Features**

- 5 Major Judges
  1. Ehud (Jdg 3:12-30), a lone hero from the tribe of Benjamin who delivers Israel from oppression from the east.
  2. Deborah (Jdg 4-5), a woman from one of the Joseph tribes (Ephraim, west of the Jordan) who judges at a time when Israel is being overrun by a coalition of Canaanites under Sisera.
  3. Gideon and his son Abimelech (Jdg 6-9), whose story forms the central account. In many ways Gideon is the ideal judge, evoking memory of Moses, while his son is the very antithesis of a responsible and faithful judge.
  4. Jephthah (Jdg 10:6-12:7), a social outcast from the other Joseph tribe (Manasseh, east of the Jordan) who judges at a time when Israel is being threatened by a coalition of powers under the king of Ammon.
  5. Samson (Jdg 13-16), a lone hero from the tribe of Dan who delivers Israel from oppression from the west.

- The arrangement of these narrative units is significant.
  - The central accounts of Gideon (the Lord’s ideal judge) and Abimelech (the anti-judge) are bracketed by the parallel narratives of the woman Deborah and the social outcast Jephthah — which in turn are framed by the stories of the lone heroes Ehud and Samson.
  - In this way even the structure focuses attention on the crucial issue of the period of the judges: Israel’s attraction to the Baals of Canaan (shown by Abimelech) versus the Lord’s kingship over his people (encouraged by Gideon).

**13 Judges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judge</th>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Enemy Defeated</th>
<th>Years of Oppression</th>
<th>Years of Rest</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Mesopotamia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ehud</td>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Moabites</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Shamgar</td>
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<td>Philistines</td>
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<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Ephraim</td>
<td>Canaanites</td>
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<td>Gideon</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abimelech</td>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>Civil war</td>
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<td>Tola</td>
<td>Issachar</td>
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<td>Jair</td>
<td>Gilead-Manasseh</td>
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<td>Judah or Zebulun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samson</td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Philistines</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ehud (Jdg 3)**

- Left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin
  - Only 3 people in the Bible are described as left-handed – they are all from the tribe of Benjamin
  - Eglon invaded Jericho the same way that the Israelites did
  - When Ehud brought the tribute to Eglon, king of Moab, he told him that he had a secret message from God
  - Made a doubles-edged dagger and attacked him in the upper room of his summer palace

**Deborah (Jdg 4-5)**

- At the time of the Canaanite threat from the north, Israel remained incapable of united action until a woman (Deborah) summoned them to the Lord’s battle. Because the warriors of Israel lacked the courage to rise up and face the enemy, the glory of victory went to a woman (Jael) — and she may not have been an Israelite
  - Leading Israel because the men were such weak leaders
  - A prophetess
  - The only judge with a judicial role
  - Sent for Barak and told him:

  Jdg 4:6 “…The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. 7 I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands. ’” 8 Barak said to her, “If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.” 9 “Very well,” Deborah said, “I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman.”

- Jdg 4:12 When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, 13 Sisera gathered together his nine hundred iron chariots and all the men with him,
  - Mt. Tabor – not a mountain, just a hill surrounded by excessive flat valley
  - Iron chariots – the top technology of its day
    - Sisera controlled with top technology and massive power
    - He had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for 20 years

- Jdg 4:14 Then Deborah said to Barak, “Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?” So Barak went down Mount Tabor, followed by ten thousand men. 15 At Barak’s advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot. … All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left.
  - Why would Sisera leave his chariots and flee on foot? – Answered in Chapter 5, Song of Deborah
    - Jdg 5:4 “O LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the land of Edom, the earth shook, the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water.
- As Sisera began his attack, a gigantic storm broke out – rain in Jezreel valley causes flooding
  - The ground gets soft and muddy
  - Chariots get stuck in the mud – no longer an asset, but a liability

- Jdg 4:17 Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there were friendly relations between Jabin king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite. 18 Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, “Come, my lord, come right in. Don’t be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she put a covering over him. 19 “I’m thirsty,” he said. “Please give me some water.” She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up
  - Jael treated him like a baby – comforted, gave him a blanket and milk

- Jdg 4:21 But Jael, Heber’s wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died
  - Jdg 4:9 “…for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman”

- Song of Deborah – Great song of Thanksgiving for the victory over Sisera
Gideon (Jdg 6-7)

- Gideon was a farmer, not a warrior
  - Only believed after an angel came to him and God granted him 3 miracles
- Very unsure of both himself and God's command, he requested proof of God's will by three miracles:
  - Jdg 6:16 The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.” 17 Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. 18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.” And the LORD said, “I will wait until you return… 21 With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. 22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, “Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!”
  - Jdg 6:36 Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— 37 look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.” 38 And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.
  - Jdg 6:39 Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.” 40 That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.
- Gideon defeats the Midianites with 300 men
  - God informed Gideon that the men he had gathered were too many – with so many men, there would be reason for the Israelites to claim the victory as their own instead of acknowledging that God had saved them.
    Jdg 7:2 The LORD said to Gideon, “You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, 3 announce now to the people, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” 4 But the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.” 5 So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink.” 6 Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. 7 The LORD said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place.” 8 So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.
    - Gideon’s encouragement and revelation through a dream
      - During the night God instructed Gideon to approach the Midianite camp.
      - Gideon overheard a Midianite man tell a friend of a dream in which God had given the Midianites over to Gideon.
      - Gideon worshiped God for His encouragement and revelation.
    - Gideon returned to the Israelite camp and gave each of his men a trumpet (shofar) and a clay jar with a torch hidden inside. Divided into three companies, Gideon and the three hundred marched on the enemy camp.
      - The Midianites scattered at the trumpet sound and were pursued by the Israelites
      - The heads of their kings (Oreb and Zeeb) were brought to Gideon
    - The Israelites pleaded with Gideon to be their king, but he refused, telling them that only God was their ruler.
      - Interestingly, however, he carries on to make an "ephod" out of the gold won in battle, which causes the whole of Israel again to turn away from God.
      - As soon as Gideon died of old age, the Israelites again turned to worship the false god Baal-Berith and ignored the family of Gideon.
Jephthah (Jdg 11)

- Jephthah, having been born illegitimately, is driven out by his half-brothers and takes up his dwelling in Tob, east of Gilead. "There gathered around him some worthless ["empty"] men, and they went out with him." (Judges 11:3)
- The elders of Gilead ask him to be their leader in the campaign against the Ammonites, but he holds out for a more permanent and a broader position,
  - The elders agree that, provided Jephthah succeeds in defeating Ammon, he will be their permanent chieftain.
- On behalf of Israel as a whole and in reliance on the might of God the Judge, Jephthah challenges the Ammonites.
- Jephthah swears an oath: Jdg 11:31 “whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

Jdg 11:34 When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, “Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break.” 36 “My father,” she replied, “you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites.

Jdg 11:37 But grant me this one request,” she said. “Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry.” 38 “You may go,” he said. And he let her go for two months. She and the girls went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. 39 After the two months, she returned to her father and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite custom 40 that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

- Later, Jephthah was forced to fight against the Ephraimites, who refused to aid him in his struggle against the Ammonites.
  - This story is remembered for the killing of the fugitive Ephraimites who were identified by their accent; they said the Hebrew word shibboleth as sibboleth. "And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand." (Judges 12:5-6).
  - He is commemorated as one of the Holy Forefathers in the Calendar of Saints of the Armenian Apostolic Church on July 26.
Sampson (Jdg 13-16)

- Horrible person morally – spends most of his time fooling around with Philistine women
- Horrible judge – does not succeed in defeating the Philistines

- Miraculous birth – Sampson is to be a life-long Nazirite, set apart to God, to begin the deliverance of Israel
  Jdg 13:2 A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless. 3 The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, “You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. 4 Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, 5 because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines.”

- Philistine woman from Timnah
  o Week before the wedding, they went to Philistine for the bridegroom feast
  - Killed a lion along the way
  - Only 3 people in the Bible that killed lions with their bare hands – Sampson, David, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada (worked for David)
  o Sampson told her companions a riddle – answer within 7 days or 30 pieces of linen
  o Sampson’s fiancé betrayed him and gave her friends the answer
    - Jdg 14:18 Samson said to them, “If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle.” – terrible insult to his fiancé
  o She was given to someone else to marry

- Delilah
  Jdg 16:4 Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. 5 The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, “See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver.” 6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.” …

15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you won’t confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven’t told me the secret of your great strength.” 16 With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death.

17 So he told her everything. “No razor has ever been used on my head,” he said, “because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.” …

19 Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him.

  o Strength was not in his hair, but in God
  o In revealing this, he voluntarily ended his Nazirite vow
  o They gouged out his eyes and bound him

- The account of Samson’s extraordinary exploits and flawed character has a literary structure of special note.
  o His first encounter with a Philistine woman (14:1-20) and its aftermath (15:1-8) are closely balanced by the account of his last encounter with a Philistine woman (16:4-22) and its aftermath (16:23-31).
    - What happens in his first encounter foreshadows what happens in his final encounter.
  o Between these two major cycles are three episodes:
    1. Judah’s attempt to appease the Philistines by binding Samson over to them (15:9-17),
    2. God’s rescue of Samson from life-threatening dehydration (15:18-19) and
3. Samson’s escape from Gaza, the gates of which he deposits on a hill overlooking Hebron, Judah’s main city (16:1-3).
   - The author reminds his readers in the brief centerpiece (15:18-19) that mighty Samson shared in the universal vulnerabilities of human life.

- Death of Sampson and 3000 Philistines

Jdg 16:26 Samson said to the servant who held his hand, “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.” 27 Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. 28 Then Samson prayed to the LORD, “O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.” 29 Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, 30 Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

- Did not ask for strength to accomplish God’s will, but rather for his own revenge
- Did not succeed in defeating the Philistines
- Sampson’s death – his arms were stretched across in a “t”

**Moral Failure of Israel**

- Israelis reject God as their king – frames this section
  - Jdg 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.
  - Jdg 21: 25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

**Micah’s idols (Jdg 17)**

- Jdg 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.
- Illustrates corruption in Israeliite worship by telling of Micah’s establishment of a local place of worship in Ephraim, aided by a Levite claiming descent from Moses.
- This paganized worship of the Lord is taken over by the tribe of Dan when that tribe abandons its appointed inheritance and migrates to Israel’s northern frontier.

**Danites Settle in Laish (Jdg 18)**

- Jdg 18:1 In those days Israel had no king.
- Danites could not overtake the Philistines, so they overtook Laish, a peaceful and unsuspecting people

**A Levite and His Concubine (Jdg 19)**

- Jdg 19:1 In those days Israel had no king.
- Benjamin – Parallel story to Sodom
  - Jdg 19:22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, “Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.”
  - Levite gave his concubine to the men of the town and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. She died.
  - Dismembering the concubine’s body and sending parts to each of the 12 tribes was intended to awaken Israel from its moral lethargy and to marshal the tribes to face up to their responsibility.
    - 1Sa 11:7 He [Saul] took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, “This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.” Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they turned out as one man.
- Causes civil war
**Civil War – Israelites Fight the Benjamites (Jdg 20)**

- Benjamites all but completely wiped out – only 600 men remain, no women
  Jdg 20:3 Then the Israelites said, “Tell us how this awful thing happened.” 4 So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, “I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. 5 During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died. 6 I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel’s inheritance, because they committed this lewd and disgraceful act in Israel. 7 Now, all you Israelites, speak up and give your verdict.” …

11 So all the men of Israel got together and united as one man against the city. 12 The tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, “What about this awful crime that was committed among you? 13 Now surrender those wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel.” But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. …

46 On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled into the desert to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months. 48 The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

**Wives for the Benjamites (Jdg 21)**

Jdg 21:15 The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. 16 And the elders of the assembly said, “With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left? …20 So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, “Go and hide in the vineyards 21 and watch. When the girls of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, then rush from the vineyards and each of you seize a wife from the girls of Shiloh and go to the land of Benjamin. 22 When their fathers or brothers complain to us, we will say to them, ‘Do us a kindness by helping them, because we did not get wives for them during the war, and you are innocent, since you did not give your daughters to them.’” 23 So that is what the Benjamites did. While the girls were dancing, each man caught one and carried her off to be his wife.

**What happened to the theme of salvation**

By the end, as readers we can only ask, “What happened to the theme of salvation introduced in Genesis 12?”

- As one generation succeeds another, the leaders become weaker and the people more corrupt, until the final, terrible story of the Levite from the hill country of Ephraim and his concubine triggers the slaughter—and near-extinction—of the entire tribe of Dan by their brother Israelites.
- “In those days Israel had no king, and everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.”
  - The king is in reference to God as their king
- In a time of political, economic and religious chaos, the Israelites have become worse that the people who were in the land to begin with
- When we leave the book of Judges and look back over our shoulder, we see a charred, smoking and bloody landscape, reeking of death and destruction.
Ruth (Ru)

Ruth Overview

The book of Ruth is the Narrative of a love story, yet also has some important Genealogy. The timeline of this book is intertwined during the period of the Judges. The author was anonymous but some believe it was perhaps written by Samuel the prophet; however, it is unlikely that he was alive when this book was written. It was written about 1046-1035 B.C. Key personalities include Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz.

Its purpose was to demonstrate the kind of love, and faithfulness that God desires for us. It shows the difference between what happens when a nation does not follow in obedience to the covenant of God (Judges), and when God’s people follow in faithfulness within the covenant (Ruth).

- In chapter 1, Ruth remains loyal to her mother-in-law Naomi after the death of her husband and in-laws. Naomi decides to return to her home land of Bethlehem alone, however, Ruth insists on staying with her and adopting Naomi’s God as her own. “But Ruth said, ”Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God” (1:16).
- Chapter 2 we see Ruth gleaning in the fields of Naomi’s relative Boaz. Boaz out of compassion and obedience to the law allows Ruth to glean but also leaves extra grain for her purposely.
- In chapter 3, Naomi encourages Ruth to seek marriage with Boaz as a kinsman redeemer. Ruth obeys Naomi and asks for her rights and Boaz agrees but mentions that he must first be sure there are no others with first rights.
- Chapter 4 Boaz and Naomi are married and Ruth conceives a son named Obed, the grandfather of the great King David, in the lineage of Christ our Messiah.
Outline

Recapitulation (Ruth 1:1-4:22)
A. Prologue (“Back in the days when the judges ruled . . .”) (1:1-5)
   1. Famine in the land (1:1a)
   2. The move from Bethlehem to Moab (1:1b-2)
   3. Death of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech (1:3a)
   4. Naomi’s sons, Mahlon and Kilion, marry Orpah and Ruth, Moabite girls (1:3b-4a)
   5. Death of Mahlon and Kilion, leaving Naomi empty and destitute (1:4b-5)
B. Act 1: The Return to Bethlehem (1:6-22)
C. Act 2: In the Fields of Boaz (2:1-23)
D. Act 3: The Encounter at the Threshing Floor (3:1-23)
E. Act 4: The Resolution at the City Gate (4:1-12)
F. Act 5: “A Son Is Born to Naomi!” (4:13-17)
G. Epilogue (From “back in the days when the judges ruled” to David . . .) (4:18-22)

A Love Story (Ruth 1-4)

Notice that from Genesis through Judges, our story moves across a linear timeline: we move in a straight line from Genesis through Judges, from creation through roughly 1,000 B.C.

Ruth is a flashback – a recapitulation; it turns around and goes back to the “bad old days” when “the days when the Judges ruled” (Ruth 1:1) – a time of chaos and brutality when “there was no king in Israel” and “everyone did what was right in their own sight” (Judges 21:25). Back in those awful days, there was Ruth, Naomi, Boaz—and the greatest love story in the Bible. The plan of salvation continues on…

By the end of Judges, as readers we can only ask, “What happened to the theme of salvation introduced in Genesis 12?”

• “In those days Israel had no king, and everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.”
• Ruth answers the question.

Back in those awful days, there was Ruth, Naomi, Boaz—and the greatest love story in the Bible. The plan of salvation continues on…

• Only four chapters long, Ruth moves us from the dark days of the judges to the bright light of a new dawn.
  o If we look closely, we see a flash of light in the muck, the sparkle of a diamond in the mire: Ruth.
• Through Ruth, the genealogy leads to King David
  o Ruth and Boaz leads us to the birth of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of king David.
• At the end of Ruth we are on the cusp, poised between chaos and Camelot.

Ruth is the greatest love story in Scripture, and it operates on three levels:

1) the love story of Ruth and Naomi;
2) the love story of Ruth and Boaz; and
3) the love story of Christ and the Church.

We begin our story with a lovely family in Bethlehem: Elimelech and his wife, Naomi, and their two boys, Mahlon and Kilion. There was a famine in the land, and Elimelech and his family leave Bethlehem and travel to Moab to find safety and security. As soon as they get to Moab, however, Elimelech dies, leaving Naomi a widow. Her two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, quickly marry Moabite girls, Orpah and Ruth. And then the boys die.

Having lost everything, Naomi determines to go back to Bethlehem, and she urges both Orpah and Ruth to return to their own families, for they would never be accepted in Israel. Orpah returns, but Ruth refuses, making the dangerous journey with Naomi—and old woman and a beautiful young girl traveling the dangerous roads alone.
When they arrive in Bethlehem, they are penniless: no property, no friends, no food—nothing. Naomi is broken and bitter, while Ruth goes into the fields to glean at the barley harvest, the only option for the desperately poor and hungry. There Ruth meets the owner of the field, a prosperous man of Bethlehem: Boaz.

Of course, it’s love at first sight: Boaz falls head over heels for Ruth; Ruth, her modest eyes cast shyly toward the ground, takes little notice, but she does tell Naomi about Boaz, and Naomi begins hatching a plan: Boaz, we learn, is a “kinsman redeemer!” Recall in our study of Deuteronomy that if a man dies before having a child, his brother (or the next nearest relative) is to marry the dead brother’s widow, and the first son they bear will become the legal heir of the dead brother (25: 5-10). This is a levirate marriage. In addition, as a kinsman-redeemer, Boaz has the opportunity—indeed, the responsibility—to redeem the land and property lost by Ruth’s husband, Mahlon, ten years earlier.

With Naomi pulling the strings, Ruth meets Boaz at the end-of-harvest party, and she spends the night with him. But there’s a problem: there is another relative, a closer kinsman-redeemer, who has the right to marry Ruth ahead of Boaz!

In Ruth 3:9, we see a beautiful and poignant picture of the needy supplicant, unable to rescue herself, requesting of the kinsman-redeemer that he cover her with his protection, redeem her, and make her his wife. In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ bought us for Himself, out of the curse, out of our destitution; made us His own beloved bride; and blessed us for all generations. He is the true kinsman-redeemer of all who call on Him in faith.

- Seeing God through tragedy
  - God is in the details – God’s grace through hurt
  - Ruth 1:3-5 Naomi’s family dies within 10 years
  - She is at her end in her hurt and pain
    - She tells her daughter-in-laws to go home
    - Naomi means pleasant; Mara means bitter
  - Relationships – God’s grace in disguise
    - Ruth was a Moabite, but she stayed with Naomi

- Christ fulfills all of the requirements to be our kinsman redeemer:
  - Next nearest relative – Jesus must be fully man and fully God in order to redeem us
  - He must have the resources – If He is going to pay the penalty for our sin, then He must be sinless himself. Otherwise He wouldn’t have the resources to pay the penalty for our sins.
  - He must be willing – He had to willingly go to the cross. He’s not caught in a trap of political and religious intrigue. He willingly goes – and He is the one controlling all of the events, right to the very end.

- Rahab + Salmon → Boaz + Ruth → Obed → Jesse → King David → Jesus
1st and 2nd Samuel (1Sa, 2Sa)

**1st Samuel Overview**

### First Samuel

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1st Samuel is a story of Narrative History and includes a great deal of Drama. It is written by the last of the Judges for which the book is named, Samuel. It was written at about 930 B.C. Key personalities include Eli, Hannah, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David. It was written to show Israel how they chose a king but in the process, they blatantly neglected and abandoned God.

- In chapters 1-7, Samuel is born to Hannah as a Nazirite, dedicate to God. Soon after, Samuel was brought to the tabernacle to serve God. During this time, the Israelites are in a vicious battle with the Philistines and they lose the Ark of the Covenant, which is captured by the Philistines. Struck down by deadly plagues, the Philistine are happy to return it to the rightful owner in an oxcart pulled by two cows.
- From chapters 8-15, the Israelites select, who they believe, will be a great king. Samuel anoints Saul to be king and although things go well at first, as usual, trouble looms in the near future. Due to continuous bad decisions and direct disobedience to God’s will, Samuel informs Saul that God has rejected him as the rightful King.
- In Chapters 16-31, God selects His King who is David, and he is called, “a man after God’s own heart” (13:14). Samuel anoints David as a young boy, and several years later stands up to a Philistine giant in front of both the armies of the Israelites and Philistines. With God as his protector, David drops the oversized soldier with one simple stone claiming victory for Israel and displaying true leadership. Saul, eaten away by envy and jealousy and driven by hate, begins to pursue David in fear of losing his throne. Although David could have easily taken his life twice, he respected his king in a Godly manner. In the end, Saul tragically takes his own life while losing on the battlefield.
The book of 2nd Samuel is a Narration of David as he becomes the King of Israel and the time during his reign, yet it also includes two psalms in hymns of praise in the final chapters. Its author is Samuel the prophet who wrote it at about 930 B.C. The key personalities are David, Joab, Bathsheba, Nathan, and Absalom. It was written to record the history of David’s reign and to demonstrate effective leadership under the submission of God. Approximately half of the book tells of King David’s success and the other half shows his failures.

- In chapters 1-10, we find that David becomes the king of Judah while the Northern part of the nation (Israel) rejects God and chooses to go with the dynastic tradition, by selecting Saul’s son Ish-Bosheth to rule. Ish-Bosheth eventually was executed and the northern tribes asked David to rule the entire nation of Israel. King David chooses to establish a new capital, Jerusalem, and through a tragic process, brings the Ark there.

- In chapters 11-24, we observe the sinful side of King David during his reign, and how it affected the nation of Israel. First, David commits adultery with a married woman named Bathsheba and she becomes pregnant. Afterward, he has her husband murdered in an attempt to repair things. The prophet Nathan confronts him and David repents and soon after the child dies. Bathsheba later gives birth to Solomon, who will be the next king of Israel. Absalom, David’s other son, plots a rebellious takeover and the nation approves. David flees for his life, yet ultimately raises enough troops and a strong backing to take back his seat and restore order; in the process, his rebellious son was killed.

The genre of the book of Amos is Narrative and Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Amos wrote it around 760-750 B.C. This was shortly before the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria, which took place in 722 B.C. Key personalities are Amos, Amaziah, and Jeroboam II.
To better understand the story of David, watch Francis Ford Coppola’s The Godfather (1972). This academy-award winning film is routinely ranked among the greatest films ever made; it was voted greatest film of all time by Entertainment Weekly; and it is ranked by the American Film Institute as the second greatest film in American cinematic history, trailing only Citizen Kane. In many ways, the life of mobster Vito Corleone parallels the life of tribal warlord, David.

**Summary of David’s really brilliant God-inspired moves:**
- Confronting Goliath with a sling and a pebble
- Going to King Achish  
  - Acting insane so as not to be killed at the approach to the city gates

**Summary of David’s political moves to gain power:**
- Confronting Saul instead of killing him  
  - He had 2 opportunities  
  - Instead he confronted Saul, but really was speaking to his 3000 men  
  - The 3000 men start wondering if maybe they’re working for the wrong man  
- David’s lament  
  - Elevated Saul and Jonathon to heroic heights  
  - Very public – Taught all his men the lament  
  - Captured the hearts of all Saul’s men  
- Appropriate and approved actions for Abner and Ish–Bosheth  
  - David was uninvolved in their murders, and he gave them state funerals

**1st and 2nd Samuel – Exceptional story**

This is one of the greatest stories in all of world literature (not just the Bible)
- Dazzling in its brilliance  
- Stunning in its nuance  
- Profound in its understanding of human nature  
- Multi-layered  
- Complex motives  
- Memorable characters  
- Engaging themes  
- Mystery  
- Suspense  
- Political intrigue

**The Final Judge (1 Samuel 1-7)**

At the end of Judges (c. 1000-1050 B.C.) we read: “In those days Israel had no king, and everyone did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21: 25). It was a time of moral, political and economic chaos. As we move into 1 Samuel, things get worse. Although Samuel strives mightily to bring the Israelites back to God, the priesthood and the people continue their downward spiral.

- Samuel is Judge 14
- Red flags  
  - Ephraim – Central mountain range – not a very nice place – very tough  
  - 2 wives – trouble – Hannah and Peninnah  
  - 1 wife with lots of children (Peninnah) and the other wife had none (Hannah)  
  - Elkanah loved one wife more than the other (loved Hannah more than Peninnah)

**Hanne**

- Peninnah provoked Hanne year after year
1Sa 1:6 And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. 7 This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.

- While at Shiloh to worship and sacrifice, Hanne prayed to the Lord

1Sa 1:10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. 11 And she made a vow, saying, “O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

- She became pregnant and gave birth to a son
  - Miraculous birth
  - Named him Samuel – because she asked the Lord for him
  - Gave Samuel to Eli when he was weaned (~3 years old)
    - Had a 3 year old bull as a sacrifice – sacrifice should have happened at the end of 40 days
    - Suggests that the bull was set aside as the sacrifice when the boy was born
  - Hanne made a little robe for Samuel each year and gave it to him when they saw him at the annual sacrifice
  - Had other sons and daughters
    1Sa 2:20 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, “May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD.” Then they would go home. 21 And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

- Hanne’s song of praise
  - Hannah’s prayer is constructed of two balanced parts (vv. 1-5, 6-10)
    - While there is considerable overlapping of themes between the first and second halves, the focus of Hannah’s praise shifts from a celebration of the ways of God that “raised up” her “horn” to a celebration of the ways of God that will “exalt” the “horn” of his anointed.
  - “Magnificat of the OT”
    - This song has sometimes been termed the “Magnificat of the OT” because it is so similar to the Magnificat of the NT (Mary’s song, Lk 1:46-55).
    - It also has certain resemblances to the “Benedictus” (Zechariah’s song, Lk 1:67-79).
  - Hannah’s song of praise finds many echoes in David’s song near the end of the book (2Sa 22).
    - These two songs frame the main narrative, and their themes highlight the ways of God that the narrative relates — they contain the theology of the book in the form of praise. Hannah speaks prophetically at a time when Israel is about to enter an important new period of its history with the establishment of kingship through her son, Samuel.

_Eli and his sons (Hophni and Phinehas)_

- Accuses Hanne of being drunk while she was praying
- Eli’s sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. Eli did nothing to stop it.

1Sa 2:16 If the man said to him, “Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want,” the servant would then answer, “No, hand it over now; if you don’t, I’ll take it by force.” 17 This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD’s sight, for they were treating the LORD’s offering with contempt.

22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

- Samuel presents a sharp contrast to the 2 sons of Eli

1Sa 2:16. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.
26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.
  ▪ Similar to Luke’s description of Jesus, when he was 12 years old, in the temple.
  Lk 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- Prophecy Against the House of Eli
  ▪ A prediction of the decimation of Eli’s priestly family in the death of his sons (4:11), in the massacre of his descendants by Saul at Nob (22:18-19) and in the removal of Abiathar from his priestly office (1Ki 2:26-27).

  1Sam 2:27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “This is what the LORD says:

  29 Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?’ … Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.

  31 The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line…34 ‘And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day.

  35 I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always.

**Samuel (14th and last judge)**

- From 3 years old on, he was brought up in the home of the High Priest (Eli) and taught to minister at the Tabernacle
- How does Samuel grow up so well in such a bad family?
  ▪ God is with him – nurturing him and protecting him from the evil influences of Eli and his family

- The Lord Calls Samuel

  1Sa 3:1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.
  ▪ Not because there weren’t any, but because people were not paying attention, not open to them

  7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” 10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

  11 And the LORD said to Samuel: “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. 12 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. 13 For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them. 14 Therefore, I swore to the house of Eli, ‘The guilt of Eli’s house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.’”

  19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. 21 The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

**Ark of the Covenant Captured and Returned (1Sa 4-6)**

- Israel is still at war with the Philistines – Sampson did not defeat them
- When the Israelites were defeated at Aphek, they decided to bring the Ark into battle with them
  ▪ Treated it like a good luck charm
o Carried into battle by Hophni and Phinehas (each corner carried by a priest)

*Ark is captured by the Philistines
  o Hophni and Phinehas are killed in battle
    ▪ Predicted in Samuel’s calling
    ▪ When he hears, Eli falls backwards are breaks his neck – he dies as well

o Dagon (Philistine God) bows to the Ark of the Covenant
  1Sa 5:2 Then they carried the ark into Dagon’s temple and set it beside Dagon. 3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4 But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained.

o Outbreak of hemorrhoids
  ▪ 1Sa 5:6 The LORD’s hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors.
  ▪ Ark is passed between Philistine cities – Ebenezer, Ashdod, Gath Ekron

*Ark returned to the Israelites
  o 1Sa 6:1 When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months, 2 the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.”
    ▪ Send it back with a guilt offering – 5 golden tumors and 5 golden rats
      ▪ 5 for the number of Philistine rulers
      ▪ Why rats? Suggests that there had been an outbreak of the bubonic plague there

**Samuel Subdues the Philistines at Mizpah (1Sa 7)**

1Sa 7:3 And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” 4 So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

5 Then Samuel said, “Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the LORD for you.” 6 When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, “We have sinned against the LORD.”

7 When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. And when the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. 8 They said to Samuel, “Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9 Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel’s behalf, and the LORD answered him.

10 While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. 11 The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far has the LORD helped us.” 13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israeliite territory again.

*Samuel is functioning as:
  o Judge – leader and deliverer
    ▪ 1Sa 7:13 Throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines. 14 The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to her, and Israel
delivered the neighboring territory from the power of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

- Prophet – speaking to the people on behalf of God
- Priest – speaking to God on behalf of the people
  - In a limited function – not a Levite (from the tribe of Ephraim)
  - Priesthood is totally corrupt

- Samuel is a true leader and a true man of God
  - Things are just getting back on track
  - Samuel is old and his sons are as corrupt as Eli’s sons were
  - The Israelites demand a king
Israel Demands a King (1 Samuel 8-15)

With Samuel an old man and his sons corrupt, the people demand a king to lead them, like all the other nations have. God tells Samuel, “It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king” (1 Samuel 8:7). So the people choose Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin to be their king (1050-1010 B.C.). Although Saul looks like a king, he lacks the heart of a king, and very quickly the weight of kingship begins to crush him.

- Samuel appoints his sons as judges
  - Joel and Abijah
  - But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

1Sa 8:5 They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.” 6 But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. 8 As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. 9 Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”

- Israelis reject God as their king
  - Jdg 17:6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.
  - Jdg 21: 25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.
  - 1Sa 8:7 ...they have rejected me as their king

Israelites demand a king

- Predicted in Deuteronomy
  - Dt 17:14 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” 15 be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses.

- Why do they want a king?
  - To lead them and fight their battles
  - To be like everybody else
    - 1 of the 4 cultural assumptions – everyone is ruled by a king
    - Ex 19:5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’
      - Holy – To be set apart
      - You will be a kingdom of priests that will speak to me on behalf of humanity and you will be set apart to me
        - You are not to be like other nations
        - You are supposed to be unique people with God as their king
        - Jews are not God’s chosen people – Jews didn’t exist
          - God chose Abraham and Sarah and created the Jews

- With a king in place, there is no longer reason to have a judge
  - The king should be doing that job – Samuel resigns

Samuel’s warning

This is what the king who will reign over you will do (1Sa 8:11-18):
- He will take your sons & make them serve with his chariots & horses, & they will run in front of his chariots
- Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties
- Others to plow his ground and reap his harvest
- Still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots
- He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers
- He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants
- He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants
- Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use
- He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves

**Rules for the King**

Dt 17:14-20 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses.

- He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.
- The king must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.”
- He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.
- He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.
- When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees
- He must not consider himself better than his brothers
- He must not turn from the law to the right or to the left
- Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

**Anoint – to raise status for use by God**

- Hebrew word is meshiahh
  - Root of the word Messiah
  - Messiah means ‘the anointed one’
  - Elevated to a position of kingship
- When you anoint someone or something, you set it apart for use by God
  - Take what it is and elevate its status
- You can anoint people (ex. Saul & David) or things (All the items in the holy place of the Tabernacle)

**King Saul’s Reign**

- Saul is Israel’s first king
- From the tribe of Benjamin
- 30 years old when he became king
- Reigns from 1010-1050 BC

**Samuel anoints Saul (1Sa 9)**

- Saul Meets Samuel while looking for his lost donkeys
  - 1Sa 9:15 Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel: 16 “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.”
  - 1Sa 9:27 As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us”—and the servant did so—“but you stay here awhile, so that I may give you a message from God.” 1Sa 10:1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the LORD anointed you leader over his inheritance? … 9 As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.
- Saul is from the least tribe, Benjamin, and from a family that is not particularly important

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Saul is made king (1Sa 10)

1Sa 10:17 Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah and said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: … 19 you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, ‘No, set a king over us.’

So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans.” … 21 Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. 22 So they inquired further of the LORD, “Has the man come here yet?” And the LORD said, “Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage.”

23 They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. 24 Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.” Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

Although Saul looks like a king, he lacks the heart of a king

- There is no one like him among all the people – this is not meant to be a compliment – sarcastic
- The people rejoice anyway

Saul does nothing

- 1Sa 10:27 But some troublemakers said, “How can this fellow save us?” They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.
  - 1Sa 10:12 The people then said to Samuel, “Who was it that asked, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring these men to us and we will put them to death.” 13 But Saul said, “No one shall be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel.”
    - Wise political decision – shows mercy
- When Saul orders Jonathon’s death, his men refuse
  - 1Sa 14:45 But the men said to Saul, “Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

Characteristics of Saul

- Total failure as king
  - Afraid of his own men
  - Indecisive
  - Fails to exert effective leadership
- Crumbles under the weight of kingship
  - As the job gets more and more difficult, Saul slips over the edge into madness
  - Paranoid – Always sits with his back to a wall

War with the Philistines continues

- Israel has been disarmed and all the blacksmiths killed
  - Have to go to Philistines to have their farm equipment sharpened
  - Use the farm equipment in battles
  - Philistines are in total control
  - 1Sa 13:22 So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

Saul Rescues Jabesh Gilead (1Sa 11)

1Sa 11:1 Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, “Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you.” 2 But Nahash the Ammonite replied, “I will make a treaty
with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel.”

4 When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people ... 6 Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger. 7 He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, “This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.” Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they turned out as one man.

11 The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

- Nahash the Ammonite – Snake of Amon
- Gouge out the right eye – lose depth perception – cannot fight
- Took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel
  - Similar to what the Levite did with his concubine at the end of Judges (Jdg 19)
  - Rallies the tribes and they set out to rescue the men of Jabesh Gilead

Samuel Rebukes Saul

- Saul offered the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings to God instead of waiting for Samuel
  1Sa 13:11 “What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, “When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, 12 I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD ’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”
  13 “You acted foolishly,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. 14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD ’s command.”

Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

- Jonathon has absolute faith in God
- Jonathan and his armor–bearer killed 20 men and panic struck the Philistine army
  1Sa 14:6 Jonathan said to his young armor–bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few.”

  8 Jonathan said, “Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. 9 If they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands.”

  13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor–bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor–bearer followed and killed behind him. 14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armor–bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

  15 Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.

  20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle….23 So the LORD rescued Israel that day,

- Before this, Saul does not know what to do with the Philistines
  - Chooses to pray and fast – fasting not a great idea before a big battle
1Sa 14:24 Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, “Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!”

27 But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. 28 Then one of the soldiers told him, “Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, ‘Cursed be any man who eats food today!’ That is why the men are faint.”

29 Jonathan said, “My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?”

Saul orders Jonathon’s death because he ate some honey, his men refuse

45 But the men said to Saul, “Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

God fires Saul as king

- Saul disobeys God’s direct order to attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything
  - Note the reference to the LORD your God
  1Sa 15:2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’” …9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

10 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: 11 “I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.”

20 “But I did obey the LORD,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.”

22 But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.”

26 But Samuel said to him, “I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!”

28 Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you.

- God has fired Saul
  - The gift that God gave Saul is now gone
  - Similar to the removal of God’s gift to Sampson when his hair was cut and his Nazirite vow was ended
  - Saul begins a slide into madness, confusion, despair

A Real King (1 Samuel 16-20)

As Saul crumbles under the weight of kingship, a young man rises to take his place – David. God said of David: He is a “man after [my] own heart” (1Sa 13:14). David is one of the greatest characters in world literature.
The early days of David

Samuel anoints David (1Sa 16)

- David is the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah
- David is about 14 years old when he is anointed by Samuel
  1Sa 16:1 The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”
  10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The LORD has not chosen these.”
  11 So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered, “but he is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.” 12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.
  Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.” 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.

David and Goliath (1Sa 17)

Philistines continue to attack

- Samson was supposed to begin the defeat of the Philistines, but instead he messed around with Philistine girls
- Saul never did deal effectively with the Philistines
- Philistines are now camped just inside of Israel
  - 2 vast armies on opposite hilltops – the valley in between will be the field of battle
  - David 3 oldest brothers had followed Saul to war - Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah
  - David was sent to his brothers to take food and bring back news of the battle

Goliath challenges the Israelites

  1Sa 17:4 A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. … 8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.”

- Goliath was a champion – a huge man, a seasoned warrior
- 1Sa 17:11 On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.
- Challenge remained unanswered for 40 days

Saul asks for a volunteer

- 1Sa 17:25 “…The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father’s family from taxes in Israel.”
- Israel wanted to a king to fight their battles for them
  - King Saul should have been the one to accept the challenge

David accepts the challenge

  1Sa 17:26 “…Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” …32 David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” …36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. 37 The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you.”
  - David has absolute faith that God will deliver Israel
  - David is about 15 years old when he battles Goliath
  - David, by the age of 15, has already killed a lion and a bear
Only 3 men in the Bible that killed lions with their bare hands – Sampson, David, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada (worked for David)

David and Goliath

1Sa 17:40 Then he [David, with no armor] took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

45 David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. … 47 All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD ’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

…48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

50 So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. 51 David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

Jonathon finds a kindred spirit

1Sa 18:1 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. … 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. 5 Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul’s officers as well.

• Jonathon is a great warrior himself
  o Taunted the Philistines, then 2 of them killed 20 Philistines
• Jonathon gives his armor to David
  o This is a gesture of the highest respect for the magnificent deed that David has done
  o In effect saying – you have done even greater than I could have done
  o You deserve to wear the prince’s armor
• David rises very quickly in Saul’s army
  o If he is about 15 when he kills Goliath, by about 20 he is a general in Saul’s army

Saul becomes jealous

1Sa 18:6 When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. 7 As they danced, they sang: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.”

8 Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. “They have credited David with tens of thousands,” he thought, “but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?” 9 And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

10 The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand 11 and he hurled it, saying to himself, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” But David eluded him twice.

12 Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul.
• Saul has seen the threat of David emerging on the field of battle
  o Now, Saul’s officers are looking toward David
  o The women are all looking at David as well
• Saul has been fired by God, but he is still in the position of king
  o He becomes jealous, paranoid, and slips further into madness

_Saul sent David into suicidal battles_

1Sa 18:13 So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. 14 In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. 15 When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him.

• Saul sent David into suicidal battles
• David was a prodigy at war and tactically maneuvered through the difficulties
• 1Sa 18:17 For Saul said to himself, “I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!”

_Saul’s plot against David_

_Saul offers his daughters (spies) to David_

_Merab_

1Sa 18:17 Saul said to David, “Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD.” 18 But David said to Saul, “Who am I, and what is my family or my father’s clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?”

• Saul offers his daughter so that he can get inside information on what David is thinking and doing so he could put him in a position that would have him killed
• David turns down the offer of the king’s daughter
  o Why? Because of David’s humility? No
  o David can see what Saul is doing – he knows that Saul is out to get him and this would put a spy in his bed

_Michel_

• Saul’s daughter Michel was actually in love with David
• Saul repeats the offer but David still declines – he still knows what Saul is up to
  o 1Sa 18:23 “Do you think it is a small matter to become the king’s son-in-law? I’m only a poor man and little known.”
• Saul knows how to get to David
  o 1Sa 18:24 “The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.” Saul’s plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.
    ▪ Not circumcision
    ▪ In battle, the way that they know how many men were slain is by going through the fields afterwards and cutting off the penis of the men and present them as proof
    ▪ David is going to kill 200 Philistines and cut off their penises to present to Saul
  o Saul presents Michel to David in marriage
• Saul becomes more afraid of David
  o Saul wanted Michel to be a spy for him, but she did just the opposite – she told David what Saul was thinking
  o 1Sa 18:28 When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, 29 Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

_Saul tried to kill David_

1Sa 19:1 Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David 2 and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard
• Jonathon talks to Saul about David
Saul assures Jonathon that he is not trying to kill David

- Saul tries to kill David
  1Sa 19:9 But an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp, 10 Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.

**David on The Run (1 Samuel 17-31)**

As David’s star rises, Saul becomes ever more paranoid, sinking into a morass of delusion and despair, finally ordering David’s assassination. Informed of Saul’s plan, David runs, a wanted felon and an outlaw. For ten years David works as a mercenary for Israel’s enemies, the Philistines, gathering around himself a band of very tough characters that becomes his inner circle. The action culminates at Mt. Gilboa, where the Saul and his sons are killed and the Philistines thunderously defeat Israel.

**David escapes**

11 Saul sent men to David’s house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David’s wife, warned him, “If you don’t run for your life tonight, tomorrow you’ll be killed.” 12 So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped.

17 Saul said to Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?” Michal told him, “He said to me, ‘Let me get away. Why should I kill you?’”

18 When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there. 19 Word came to Saul: “David is in Naioth at Ramah”; 20 so he sent men to capture him.

1Sa 20:1 Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?”

**David and Jonathon**

1Sa 20:5 So David said, “Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. 6 If your father misses me at all, tell him, ‘David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.’ 7 If he says, ‘Very well,’ then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me.

**Jonathon’s covenant with David**

- Jonathon knows that if David is correct, then helping David may mean his life as well. So, Davis, I want you to swear to me as my brother in arms and my friend, if anything happens to me, please take care of my family. David agrees and they make a covenant/agreement.
- 2 warriors, in that brotherhood of warriors, who are closer than close friends could ever be in any other context
  1Sa 20:13 But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.” 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD call David’s enemies to account.” 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

**The truth comes out**

- Every time that we see Saul, he is sitting against a wall, with a weapon in his hand. He trusts no one. Slipping further in madness, completely paranoid..
1Sa 20:24…When the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat.  25 He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was empty.  26 Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean.”  27 But the next day, the second day of the month, David’s place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?”  
…30 Saul’s anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, “You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don’t I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? 31 As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!”  32 “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” Jonathan asked his father. 33 But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David. 34 Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father’s shameful treatment of David.

David and Jonathan say goodbye

41 After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.  42 Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’” Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

David persecuted by Saul

- David now becomes a wanted felon and goes on the run
  - Spends the next 10 years on the run from Saul
  - How will David survive?
    - Israel is very small
    - The king has virtually unlimited resources
- David is now about 20 years old
  - He is a prodigy at war
    - He has learned his skill working for Saul

David goes to Ahimelech

- David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest.
  - David is on good terms with the priests
  - Ahimelech is serving at the Tabernacle, which at this point is at Nob

- When Ahimelech asked what he was doing there, David lied and said that he was on a mission from Saul
  - Does not want to implicate Ahimelech since he is now a wanted man (in case Saul found out he was there)
  - 1Sa 21:7 Now one of Saul’s servants was there that day, detained before the LORD; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul’s head shepherd.

- David asks for supplies – food and weapons
  
  1Sa 21:3 Now then, “what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.”  4 But the priest answered David, “I don’t have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here …  6 So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.  
  8 David asked Ahimelech, “Don’t you have a spear or a sword here? I haven’t brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king’s business was urgent.”  9 The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one.” David said, “There is none like it; give it to me.”
**David goes to Gath**

- Where is David going to go? How will David survive? Israel is very small and the king has unlimited resources
- He goes to his enemies, the Philistines, where Saul would never look for him
- Goliath was from Gath

> 1Sa 21:10 That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. … 12 David .. was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. 13 So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.

  - marks on the doors – Peed on the city gates

- Achish brings David into the city and talks to him
  - David lays out what has happened – David is on the run, Saul wants David dead
  - Achish decides to hire David to work for him as a mercenary
- David will work for Achish for 10 years (20 years old – 30 years old)
  - He gathers 600 other men (mercenaries) from as far away as eastern Turkey of today (Hittites)
    - He forges a small army of highly skilled warriors and David is leading them
    - Really refines his trade as a warrior
  - Has he turned traitor to Israel? No
    - Playing a very dangerous game – he is functioning as a double agent
    - David is feeding information to Jonathon
    - When David is told to attack an Israelite city, he attacks a city, but not an Israelite city
      - He loots the city and presents the loot to King Achish
      - He kills every living thing in it so that word cannot get back about what he did

**David at Adullam and Mizpah**

> 1Sa 22:1 David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. 2 All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

3 From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, “Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?” 4 So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.

- David’s family is now in danger because Saul will stop at nothing to get to David
- Why does he go to Moab? David’s great great grandmother (Ruth) was from Moab – he has relatives there
- The King of Moab agrees to take David’s family into political asylum and protect them from Saul

**Saul Kills the Priests of Nob**

> 1Sa 22:9 But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul’s officials, said, “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. 10 Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” 11 Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father’s whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king.

13 Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, …?”
14 Ahimelech answered the king, “…Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father’s family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.”
16 But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father’s whole family.” 17 Then the king ordered the guards at his side: “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, ….” But the king’s officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.
18 The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty–five men who wore the linen ephod. 19 He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.
• They exterminated the town of Nob

1Sa 22:20 But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David. 21 He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. 22 Then David said to Abiathar: “That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father’s whole family. 23 Stay with me; don’t be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me.”

• Abiathar was the only one to escape
• David takes full responsibility
  o He knew that Doeg was implicate Ahimelech
  o Lapse in David’s judgment – he knew that he should have killed Doeg right then and there

David spares Saul’s life

• David stays on the move because Saul is constantly hunting him

En Gedi

1Sam 24:1 After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the Desert of En Gedi.” 2 So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David … 3 He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. 4 The men said, “This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’” Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. … 8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9 He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? 10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the LORD’s anointed. 11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. 12 May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.
• En Gedi
  o Dead sea on western side – limestone cliffs come right up to the water – filled with caves, esp on north side
  o 2/3 of the way south on the west side is a canyon going into the cliffs
  o At the back of the canyon is waterfalls – fresh water to drink
  o Ibex – like deer w/ big curved horns – often called mountain goats – live on the cliffs – Food
  o Canyon gets more narrow and higher toward the back
  o This becomes David’s hide-out – it has food, drinking water, caves to store supplies & protection for people

• Saul thinks that he is going to trap David at the back of the cliffs
  o David has look-outs at the top of the cliffs – they see him coming from far off
  o David and his men move to the front of the canyon and hide in the northern caves
  o 3000 men are going to fan out, sweep the canyon, trap David and his men and slaughter them

• Saul stopped at the cave at the sheep pens to poop
  o He went up into a cave, turned to face his men, lifted his robe and took care of business
  o David and his men were in the back of that very cave
  o David will not lift a hand against the LORD’s anointed – he cuts a piece of his robe

• David confronts Saul
  o David calls out to Saul and shows him the piece of robe
  o He announces to everyone that he has no intention of harming Saul, though the Lord had just delivered him
  o David has done no wrong, yet Saul is hunting him
  o David confronts Saul, but he’s speaking to Saul’s best 3000 men – might they be working for the wrong man?

• Why did David do this?
  o Because he was a holy man and would not touch God’s anointed king – No
  o Brilliant tactical decision
    ▪ If David had killed Saul, he would have committed regicide, he would have assassinated the king
He could never have a legitimate claim to the kingship if he got there through assassination.

**Desert of Ziph**

1Sa 26:2 So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search there for David. … 5 Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.

7 So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him. 8 Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won’t strike him twice.”

9 But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed and be guiltless? 10 As surely as the LORD lives,” he said, “the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. 11 But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let’s go.”

12 So David took the spear and water jug near Saul’s head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

13 Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them. 14 He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, …”

15 What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men deserve to die, because you did not guard your master, the LORD’s anointed. Look around you. Where are the king’s spear and water jug that were near his head?”

17 Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is that your voice, David my son?” David replied, “Yes it is, my lord the king.” 18 And he added, “Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of?

**End of Saul’s reign**

**Philistines are gathering of their forces**

Philistines are gathering all of their forces for a final push into Israel

- Army is being led by King Achish, whom David is working for
- David and his men would have been the tip of the spear against Israel’s spear tip, Jonathon and his men
- Achish’s men do not trust David and urge him to send David home, which he does
- David acts indignant, but is actually really relieved

1Sa 31:4 …” He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting. How better could he regain his master’s favor than by taking the heads of our own men? 5 Isn’t this the David they sang about in their dances: “‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands’?”

6 So Achish called David and said to him, “As surely as the LORD lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. From the day you came to me until now, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don’t approve of you. 7 Turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers.”

8 “But what have I done?” asked David. “What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can’t I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?”

**David destroys the Amalekites**

- When David gets back to Ziklag, he finds that the Amalekites had raided, taken everything, and burned Ziklag
  - The Amalekites raided the Philistine territory while their army was up north, including David’s city of Ziklag
  - As David and his men moved north with the Philistines, it left the south unprotected
- David instantly turns around and heads back north in a forced march and catches up with them quickly
  - Follows the route that the Amalekites would have taken to sell slaves at the slave market in Damascus
A handful of cowardly Amalekites run away from the battle.

1Sa 30:3 When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. 4 So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. … David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him, 8 and David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?” “Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

9 David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind, 10 for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit. 11 They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. 13 … He said, “I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. 14 We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag.” 15 David asked him, “Can you lead me down to this raiding party?” He answered, “Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.”

17 David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. 18 David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. 19 Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.

- Because the victory was the Lord’s, everyone was given a fair share in the plunder
  22 But all the evil men and troublemakers among David’s followers said, “Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go.”

23 David replied, “No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us. 24 Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”

25 David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

The final showdown at Mount Gilboa

1Sa 31:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. … 6 So Saul and his three sons and his armor—bearer and all his men died together that same day.

8 The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, … and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

11 When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all their valiant men journeyed through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. 13 Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

- The battle is over if you take the king
  o They hang the bodies of Saul & his sons on the eastern wall of Beth Shan facing Israel
- Jabesh Gilead was the 1st big battle that Saul engaged in when he first became king
  o The one really good thing that he did
  o He save them from the snake of Amon, who wanted to cut out the right eye of all the men
- The men of Jabesh Gilead do a forced march through the night to get Saul and his sons
Saul had rescued the men of Jabesh Gilead at the beginning of his reign, and the men of Jabesh Gilead rescue the bodies of Saul and his sons from the walls of Beth Shan 40 years later at the end of his reign. 

**Who killed Saul? Conflicting stories**

Final answer – God killed Saul

**Saul killed himself**

1 Sa 31:4 Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me.” But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. 5 When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. 6 So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day.

**An Amalekite killed Saul**

2Sa 1:5 …“How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?”

6 “I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, ” the young man said, “and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him. 7 When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, ‘What can I do?’

8 “He asked me, ‘Who are you?’ ”‘An Amalekite,’ I answered.

9 “Then he said to me, ‘Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I’m still alive.’

10 “So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord.”

1Sa 31:8 The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

- They left the bodies on the battlefield overnight, and the Amalekite came upon them as he was passing through after his battle with David.

**God killed Saul**

1Ch 10:13 Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, 14 and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

**David’s Rise to Power (2 Samuel 1-10)**

With Saul and his sons dead, the door opens for David to become king (1010-970 B.C.). But it’s not easy. Although we read that God gave the kingship to David, it is another matter entirely to convince the people that David should be king. In a series of deft—and often brutal—political moves, David maneuvers his way to the throne. David forges a united monarchy out of a loose confederation of 12 tribes through 40 years of warfare. This is not the pious story we hear in church!

- With Saul and his 3 sons gone, the door opens for David to become king
  - There is 1 surviving son (Ish-Bosheth) and grandchildren who have rights to the crown

- How can David have a claim on the throne?
  - Kingship rests with the tribe of Benjamin (within the family of Saul), while David is from the tribe of Judah
  - Saul still has a surviving son and grandchildren
  - David has been an outlaw for a decade, working for Israel’s enemies, the Philistines

- David is God’s golden boy – He can do no wrong
  - Forges a united monarchy out of a close confederation of 12 tribes
  - Fights battles in strategic locations to control the trade routes – Via Maris and the King’s Highway
Defeats the Philistines
David legitimates his claim to the throne

The death of Saul and his family

David gets the crown

- The 3rd day after returning from defeating the Amalekites, David gets word that Saul and his family have fallen
  - The person bringing word is an Amalekite
    - The cowardly Amalekites that ran from the battle with David a few days ago would have headed north on the Via Maris to Damascus, right past Mt. Gilboa
    - He passed overnight, after the battle was over and found the king as he was pick-pocketing everyone
    - He thought that he would get great rewards, but instead lost his life

2Sa 1:14 David asked him, “Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD’s anointed?” 15 Then David called one of his men and said, “Go, strike him down!” So he struck him down, and he died. 16 For David had said to him, “Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, ‘I killed the LORD’s anointed.”’

David’s lament

- Another brilliant political move by David
  - Saul’s son, Ish-Boseth, has the official claim to the crown
- CS Lewis
  - Christian apologist and professor of mid-evil literature at Oxford and Cambridge
  - This is the greatest lament ever written in any language at any time – it is world-class
- Elevates Saul and Jonathon to heroic heights
  - David praises Saul and eulogizes Jonathon, and he does it in a very public way
  - All David’s men must learn this
- Heart-felt
  - David & Jonathon were VERY close friends – genuinely devoted to one-another as brothers-in-arms
- Very shrewd political move
  - He could have very well said good riddance and captured the kingship
  - If he had done so, he would not have also captured the hearts of the men
  - David smooth’s the path for Saul’s men to become loyal to David

King over Judah

2Sa 2:2 So David went up there …3 David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns. 4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

- Should David re-enter Israeliite life given that he’s been a wanted felon on the run, working for the enemy for the last 10 years?
- The Lord told him to go back to Israel, to the town of Hebron
  - Hebron – biggest city, right in the center of the tribe of Judah
  - Judah borders the Philistine territory near Ziklag – David has been living right over the border
  - David is from the tribe of Judah
    - Make your re-entry back into your own tribe
    - Much higher likelihood of acceptance among your own people
- The men of Judah make David king over Judah
  - Don’t think formal king – think tribal warlord/leader
    - They recognize David as their tribal warlord/leader over the tribe of Judah
    - David is more than capable as a leader / warrior
      - Prodigy at war, and has had 10 years of rigorous experience as a mercenary
David thanks the men of Jabesh Gilead

2Sa 2:4 … When David was told that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul, 5 he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead to say to them, “The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him. 6 May the LORD now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this. 7 Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”

Civil war between the houses of David and Saul

- Abner son of Ner was the commander of Saul’s army
  - Abner was the power behind Saul, the real power behind the throne
  - Under the influence of General Abner, Ish−Bosheth was recognized by the other 11 tribes as legitimate king
- Potential civil war brewing
  2Sa 2:8 Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul’s army, had taken Ish−Bosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. 9 He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel. 10 Ish−Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he reigned two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.

- Joab (David’s commanding general) and Abner (Ish−Bosheth commanding general) meet for a summit meeting
  - The meeting falls apart, swords are drawn, men are killed, and a civil war begins
  2Sa 2:12 Abner son of Ner, together with the men of Ish−Bosheth son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon. 13 Joab son of Zeruiah and David’s men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side.
  2Sa 3:1 The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.
- Abner was a very strong force, and Ish−Bosheth a very weak force
  - Abner was thinking – I am going to have the throne very soon – Ish−Bosheth is disposable
  2Sa 3:6 During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul.

Enemies of David

Abner

Abner Joins David

- Abner was accused of sleep with Saul’s concubine – a serious offense
  - Ish−Bosheth suspects that Abner’s act was part of a conspiracy to seize the kingship
  - Abner is infuriated by this and joins David
    - Abner has the loyalty of 11 tribes, under Ish−Bosheth who can be disposed of easily enough
    - Abner wants the position of commanding general over all 12 tribes, with David as king

2Sa 3:7 … Ish−Bosheth said to Abner, “Why did you sleep with my father’s concubine?” 8 Abner was very angry because of what Ish−Bosheth said … This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven’t handed you over to David. Yet now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman! 9 May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the LORD promised him on oath 10 and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David’s throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba.” … 12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, “Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you.”

- Michal
  - David agrees, but only under the condition that Abner brings Saul’s daughter Michal (his lost wife) with him
  - Why?
    - Did David love her and miss her? No – he has several other wives and hasn’t thought once about her
- Having the daughter of Saul (Michal) as his wife adds another step to his legitimacy for the kingship
  - He is married to Saul’s daughter, Saul is David’s father-in-law
  - Adds an additional level of claim to the throne

- Abner gets all the political support in position
  - He meets with David and they make an agreement – they shake hands and make an agreement
    - Abner is going to deliver the 11 tribes
  - Abner leaves in peace, under the protection of David

2Sa 3:17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, “For some time you have wanted to make David your king. 18 Now do it! For the LORD promised David, ‘By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.’ ” 19 Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin wanted to do.

**Joab Kills Abner**
- Joab returns from a raid and hears about the agreement – he realizes that he is about to lose his job
  - Joab is commanding general over the mercenaries and the 1 tribe of Judah
  - Abner, the enemy general, is about to become supreme commander of all 12 tribes

2Sa 3:24 So Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you let him go? Now he is gone! 25 You know Abner son of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing.” 26 Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know it. 27 Now when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the gateway, as though to speak with him privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died. … 30 (Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)

- Creates a huge problem for David
  - 11 tribes were willing to change their loyalty based on Abner’s leadership
  - Now, David’s general has assassinated Abner – how is he going to get the 11 tribes back?

**Damage Control**
- David curses Joab and his family for what they have done
- David provides a huge formal state funeral with all the honors for General Abner
  - Joab and his men are wearing sackcloth and mourning, hanging their heads low
  - David is walking behind the casket, weeping
  - When they get to the burial site, David sings the lament that he has written for Abner
- Everyone sees what David did, and they say oh, poor David (not David’s general killed Abner)
- David is secretly happy that Abner is gone
  - Abner was the enemy commanding general
  - Abner’s loyalty to David would be very questionable given that Abner wanted the throne for himself
  - Abner he has a great deal of influence over 11 of the tribes – creates a big political risk
  - Joab may be a vicious barbarian that sometimes spins out of control, but Joab is absolutely loyal to David

2Sa 3:28 Later, when David heard about this, he said, “I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. 29 May his blood fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father’s house! May Joab’s house never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food.”

31 Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, “Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner.” King David himself walked behind the bier. 32 They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wept aloud at Abner’s tomb. All the people wept also. 33 The king sang this lament for Abner …36 All the people took note and were pleased; indeed, everything the king did pleased them. 37 So on that day all the people and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner.
**Ish-Bosheth**
- Ish–Bosheth was a weak king to begin with, but is considerably weaker now
  - Ish–Bosheth was only alive and king because Abner was in control
  - Ish–Bosheth has no influence over anyone, but he is still alive and ruling king

  2Sa 4:1 When Ish–Bosheth son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel became alarmed.

**David’s subtle hint**
- Subtle hint by David that there are still enemies that need to be dealt with
  - Who is the primary enemy? Ish–Bosheth. He is the legitimate king, the sole surviving son of Saul

  2Sa 3:38 Then the king said to his men, “Do you not realize that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel this day? 39 And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!”

**Recab and Baanah stab Ish–Bosheth**
- Recab and Baanah – leaders of Ish–Bosheth’s raiding bands
- They pick up on David’s subtle hint, sneak into Saul’s bedroom while he was sleeping and stab him
- Their reward – death

  2Sa 4:7 They had gone into the house while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. After they stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night by way of the Arabah. 8 They brought the head of Ish–Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, “Here is the head of Ish–Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring.”

  9 David answered Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, “As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble, 10 when a man told me, ‘Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news! 11 How much more—when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!”

**Damage control**
- David has done the right thing by Ish–Bosheth
  - He executed the assassins
  - He buried Ish–Bosheth with Abner in the tomb of honor

  12 So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish–Bosheth and buried it in Abner’s tomb at Hebron.

**Mephibosheth**
- Saul’s grandson, Jonathon’s son, and sole surviving heir to the throne

  2Sa 4:4 (Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)
- Mephibosheth could certainly step forward as king at any point
  - Mephibosheth is now a teenager and in hiding for fear that he would end up like Ish–Bosheth and Abner

**Covenant between David and Jonathon**
- David makes a covenant with Jonathon (his brother-in-arms) to care for his family forever
1Sa 20:14 May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family —not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.” 16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD call David’s enemies to account.” 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

Mephibosheth comes to live with David

2Sa 9:3 The king asked, “Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God’s kindness?” Ziba answered the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet.”

5 So King David had him brought … 6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor… 7 “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.”

9 Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul’s servant, and said to him, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master’s grandson may be provided for.

- Ziba thought this was another subtle hint to eliminate the last possible threat to the throne
  - But now, instead, he is working for Mephibosheth
- Mephibosheth assumed that this was a call to death
  - He walked in the door dead-man-walking and now he has become a prince
  - Mephibosheth will live at the palace, eat at David’s table and be part of David’s family
- David fulfills his promise to Jonathon to protect Jonathon’s family
  - But David knows that Mephibosheth is a threat
  - Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer
  - Very shrewd political move

King over Israel

David takes the kingship

All 12 tribes elevate David to supreme kingship over Israel

2Sa 5:1 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “We are your own flesh and blood. 2 In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.’”

3 When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty–three years.

David moves his capital to Jerusalem

- Hebron is in the southern part of Judah, Jerusalem is in the northern part of Judah
  - David needs a capital that will accommodate all 12 tribes on neutral ground
  - Jerusalem is more of a political center for all of Israel
- David conquers the Jebusites and takes over the city of Jerusalem
  - Renames is the City of David
God’s Approval

- Final thing needed to seal the deal of the kingship
  - All 12 tribes are on board
  - David has moved his capital to Jerusalem
  - Michel, daughter of Saul, is back with David as his wife
  - Neutralized or eliminated all the enemies

- Ark of the Covenant is brought from the Tabernacle up to Jerusalem to his palace
  - Placed in a courtyard of his palace in a tent that he erected
  - The Pillar of Cloud and Fire that rested over the Tabernacle moves with the Ark

- As the people sit in Jerusalem and look towards the palace, they see the Pillar of Cloud and Fire – the physical manifestation of God himself – in residence at David’s palace
  - This is validation

Davidic Covenant (2Sa 7 – God’s Promise to David)

Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16). The Davidic Covenant amplifies the “seed” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promises to David in this passage are significant. God promised that David's lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away permanently (verse 16). Obviously, the Davidic throne has not been in place at all times. There will be a time, however, when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and rule as king. This future king is Jesus (Luke 1:32-33).

- Summarized in 1Ch 17:11-14 and 2Ch 6:16
  - 1Ch 17:11 When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. 14 I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.'
  - 2Ch 6:16 "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me according to my law, as you have done.'

- The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David.
  - God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants).
    - 2Sa 7:10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore
  - God then promises that David’s son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this son (Solomon) would build the temple.
    - 2Sa 7:12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name
  - Then the promise continues and expands:
    - 2Sa 7:13 I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
    - 2Sa 7:16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

- What began as a promise that David’s son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple turns into something different—the promise of an everlasting kingdom.
  - Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House.
  - This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.
  - The promise that David’s “house,” “kingdom,” and “throne” will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign.
The covenant is summarized by the words:
- “house,” promising a dynasty in the lineage of David
- “kingdom,” referring to a people who are governed by a king
- “throne,” emphasizing the authority of the king’s rule
- “forever,” emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel

United monarchy of Israel

- Up until now, Israel has been a loose confederation of 12 tribes
- David is now recognized by everyone as king over the united monarchy of Israel

David defeats the Philistines

- David inquires of the Lord and follows his instructions and quickly defeats the Philistines
- David knows how the Philistines fight – he’s been working for them for 10 years
- Philistines defeat was a long time coming
  - Sampson was supposed to start the defeat of the Philistines – instead he messed around with Philistine girls
  - Saul never really made a dent in the battle with the Philistines
  - David finishes it easily
- David takes control of the coastal plain

David controls international trade routes

David defeats all the surrounding people

- Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Amalekites
- The battles that he fights, outside of establishing his kingship, are for control strategic locations on the trade routes
  - Kings highway, extending from Egypt, through the eastern mountain range, up to Damascus
  - Via Maris, extending from Egypt, up the coastal plain, up to Damascus
  - 3 major linking roads east to west that connect those 2 major international trade routes
  - David controls the land bridge connecting Europe, Asia and Africa

Economic treaty with Hiram king of Tyre

- Tyre controls the maritime trade route in the Mediterranean and Agia
- Together, they control the entire distribution system for the ancient world’s total economy
  - This is when he becomes rich
- Hiram was the first international king to recognize David as Israel’s leader of a united monarchy

Summary

- David is golden – he can do no wrong
  - Every situation that he is in, he inquires of the Lord and he succeeds
- David is king
  - Forged a united monarchy out of a loose confederation of 12 warring tribes
  - Did it politically – all 12 tribes want him as their king
- Taken control of both international trades routes and all 3 major linking roads
  - David controls the land bridge connecting Europe, Asia and Africa
- David is recognized internationally as Israel’s leader of a united monarchy

David’s Fall (2 Samuel 11)

We’ve all heard the story of David and Bathsheba, but never like this: there is no great love affair between David and Bathsheba; adultery is not David’s great sin; and although God forgives David for what he does, there are far reaching consequence that shake the kingdom and bring David to his knees. This is one of the greatest stories in all of world literature, dazzling in its brilliance, stunning in its nuance and profound in its understanding of human nature.
David’s great sins:
- Betrayal and murder of Uriah and his men
- Adultery with Bathsheba
- By the end of the chapter, David does not realize that he’s done anything wrong

David does not go to battle

2Sa 11:1 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

- Why did David not go?
  - 2Sa 20-24 – Vignettes/flashbacks looking back onto David’s life and illustrating who David was
    - 2Sa 21 – 2nd vignette

2Sa 21:15 Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. 16 And Ishbi–Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David’s rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, saying, “Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished.”

- Ishbi–Benob is Goliath’s brother – He wanted to kill David to avenge his brother
- David is about 40 and still leading from the front line – he’s still the tip of the spear
  - He’s very old for a front-line warrior
  - David is a king – you can’t afford to put a king at the tip of the spear – you have to protect the king
- David is not happy about not going into battle
  - David has been a warrior his whole life – what good is he now?
  - David is walking about the palace, twiddling his thumbs, wondering what he can do

Rape of Bathsheba (Adultery)

2Sa 11:2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3 and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” 4 Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”

- Bathsheba was bathing from her uncleanness (period) – Religious ritual in Mosaic law
  - She was not bathing on the roof – David saw her through her bathroom window while he was on his roof
  - Not trying to seduce David
  - Proof that the baby is David’s
- Eliam and Uriah are both David’s top officials
  - 2Sa 23:24 – Listing of David’s senior officers
    - People that have been with him since his mercenary days – his core group of men
  - 2Sa 23:34 Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite
    - Ahithophel is David’s senior political advisor
    - Eliam and Uriah are both listed as senior officers
  - What should David’s response have been? Hands off?
    - These are people that are fiercely loyal to David – brotherhood of warriors – you don’t do that
- Bathsheba is summoned to the palace
  - She thinks that her husband has been killed in battle
  - What else could she think – She does not know David
- David raped Bathsheba
  - He slept with her (NIV euphemism) – he took her – No love-making involved
  - Word here is a course, brutal, harsh word – same word used when Judah takes his daughter-in-law Tamar
- What happened to David here?
Feeling useless – he can no longer lead the way that he has done all his life
Boredom
Mid-life crisis

**Murder of Uriah**

2Sa 11:6 So David sent this word to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent him to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. 9 But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master’s servants and did not go down to his house.

Does Uriah know why David has brought him home?

- What can Uriah think except that his wife is dead
- Lots of messengers – lots of gossip/rumors
  - David sent someone to find out about her – he comes back and tells him who she is
  - David sent messengers to get her (plural) – they bring her to the palace and take her back home
  - The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”
  - David sent this word to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.”

- Reading the gaps
  - Reading between the lines
    - Make assumptions that move us from one line to the next – Enables us to move ahead in the story
      - Assumption may be correct or incorrect – Have to test them and revise accordingly as you move on
    - Very sophisticated technique
      - Author creates the gap, forcing us to make assumptions that we will have to test and either validate or invalidate as we move through the story
      - Active method of reading – not simply reading the words on the page and here’s the story
      - Actively engaging the text on multiple levels, revising and re-revising as we go and building the narrative interpretation as we read
      - Places demands on us as readers that are considerably above what an ordinary reader of scripture would do
    - Does Uriah know what’s happened? Crucial assumption to understanding the story
      - If yes, we read the story in one way. If no, we read it in another
      - All the while we are testing the assumption with additional information that we are getting as we move on in the story and revise accordingly.
      - We have to make these crucial assumptions in order to engage the text in the proper way
  - Uriah is on the way back from Rabah with the messenger – 3 day journey
  - Uriah asks the messenger – what’s going on? Why does the king want to see me?
    - Messenger either:
      - Doesn’t know
      - Does know and he can either tell Uriah or not
  - When Uriah gets back to Jerusalem, does Uriah know what’s happened?
    - He probably does, based on his reaction when him and David meet
      - General chit chat – you brought me home for general chit chat???
      - wash your feet – NIV euphemism for rip roaring sex

2Sa 11:10 When David was told, “Uriah did not go home,” he asked him, “Haven’t you just come from a distance? Why didn’t you go home?” 11 Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!” 12 Then David said to him, “Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 At David’s invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master’s servants; he did not go home.
Reading the gaps (Cont.)
- Uriah slept at the palace with the guards, he did not go home
  - Why not? Because he did not want a nice night at home while his men were at war? No
  - If Uriah knows, he is right at the edge of drawing his sword and taking out David
- Everyone can see Uriah sleeping with the guards
  - If David could see Bathsheba from the palace, then Bathsheba can see the palace and both Bathsheba and David can see Uriah not going home
- David’s plan didn’t work
  - If he could get Uriah to go home and sleep with his wife, he could pawn the kid off as Uriah’s

Uriah’s Murder
2Sa 11:14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In it he wrote, “Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.” 16 So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 17 When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David’s army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. 18 Joab sent David a full account of the battle. 19 He instructed the messenger: “When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, 20 the king’s anger may flare up, and he may ask you, ‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? … If he asks you this, then say to him, ‘Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.’”
- If Uriah knows, then he also knows that he is being sent back to the battle lines with his death warrant
- Joab cannot tell Uriah’s men to betray Uriah and let him die while they pull back
  - They have been fiercely loyal to him for 20 years, they will never betray him like that
  - Joab puts Uriah and Uriah’s men in a suicidal position and they all die
- David is at first angry with the bad battle move until he hears that Uriah is dead
2Sa 11:26 When Uriah’s wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 27 After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

Bathsheba
- Bathsheba loved her husband
  - There was no love affair between David and Bathsheba – David didn’t even know who she was
- David rapes her, she is now pregnant and has just lost her husband in war
  - She probably has a good idea of how her husband’s death came about – Bathsheba is nobody’s fool
- 2Sa 11:27 But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.
  - The greatest understatement in all the bible

Consequences & Calamity (2 Samuel 12-13)
 Forgiveness of sin does not cancel the consequences of sin. And in 2 Samuel 12-13 the consequences envelop David. David’s eldest son and heir to the throne, Amnon, rapes his half-sister, Tamar. Absalom, Tamar’s brother and David’s favorite son, murders Amnon in revenge, and then Absalom flees into exile.

Nathan rebukes David
- 2Sa 11:27 But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.
  - The greatest understatement in all the bible
  - By the end of chapter 11, David does not realize that he’s done anything wrong
- 2Sa 12:1 The LORD sent Nathan to David.

Nathan
- Prophet – Speaks to the people on behalf of God
- He has been with David for a long time
- Close friend of David’s – David names one of his sons after Nathan
  - Jesus is through the biological line of David via Nathan → Mary
- Official in David’s court
Nathan rebukes David
  - David is holding court
    - One of the things that kings did was hold court – judicial decisions that need to be made
    - Open court – attended by a lot of people – anyone that needed a judicial decision
  - Rich man vs. poor man – poor man represented by Nathan
    - Rich man (who has lots of sheep) takes the poor man’s only sheep (family pet) for a traveler’s dinner
    - God has given everything to David – and would have given him more – but he took from Uriah
    - Nathan publically accuses David of murder and adultery
      - Everyone hears about David’s deepest darkest secret

2Sa 12:5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.” 7 Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man!

… 9 Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’

11 “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

Links to when Peter denies Jesus 3 times – Jesus is being lead out of the courtyard where Peter is hiding, their eyes meet, and Peter understands what he’s done. He runs out of the courtyard, collapses into a heap and weeps bitterly.
  - Jesus has forgiven Peter, but Peter does not forgive his own sins
  - We don’t hear from Peter again for a long time – after Jesus returns and has a 1-on-1 with him
  - This is resolved in John 21 – Jesus enables Peter to forgive Peter

**Death of the child (Consequences)**

2Sa 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.”

15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and he became ill. … 18 On the seventh day the child died.

19…”Is the child dead?” he asked. “Yes,” they replied, “he is dead.” 20 Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped.

21 His servants asked him, “Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!” 22 He answered, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

**I have sinned against the LORD.**

- David did not realize before this that he had done anything wrong
- Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die [as you deserve]. 14 But … the son born to you will die.”
  - God forgives David – immediately once David confesses and repents
  - But the forgiveness of sin does not cancel the consequences of sin
• David fasted & prayed for the child to be saved. Once the child was dead, he stopped. Reverse of the norm.
  o David is utterly distraught at the recognition of what he has done and that the consequences will come upon this child

**David went into the house of the LORD and worshiped**

• Went to the courtyard of the palace where the he had sent up the tent for the Ark of the Covenant
  o David got flat on his face in front and God and they had a conversation
  o Offer no excuse, no explanation – simply throws himself before God’s mercy, confesses what he’s done, and asks for God’s forgiveness
  o When he comes out of the tent, David is OK. He realizes that God has forgiven him for what he has done
• What did he say in the tent? Ps 51 David’s great penitential psalm
  o Opening prayer for mercy and pardon (1-2)
  o Confession of sin (3-6)
    ▪ Ps 51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.
    ▪ There was probably never a night that David did not see Uriah’s smiling face before him
  o Renewed prayer for pardon (7-9)
  o Prayer for purity (10-12)
    ▪ For a pure heart, a steadfast spirit of faithfulness and a willing spirit of service
    ▪ These can be his only if God does not reject him and take his Holy Spirit from him.
    ▪ If granted, the joy of God’s salvation will return to gladden his troubled soul.
  o Vow to praise (13-17)
  o Prayer for Zion (18-19)
• Afterwards, he ended the fast and went inside to eat
  o He thought that perhaps the Lord would let the child live. Once the child was dead, there was no point.
  o I will go to him, but he will not return to me
    ▪ David knows with certainty that his son went to be with God
    ▪ We can know for sure that all children go to heaven
    ▪ Jesus – “Let the children come to me”
  o Psalm 23 conclusion – “…and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. “
    ▪ David knows with certainty that he will be with the Lord forever
    ▪ Not because David is David, but because God is God. God made a promise to David and David was confident that the promise would be kept.

**David went to comfort Bathsheba**

2Sa 12:24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; 25 and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.

• They conceive another son – Solomon (who will become king)
  o Jedidiah – The giving of this name suggests that the Lord’s special favor rested on Solomon from his birth. And since the name also contained an echo of David’s name, it provided assurance to David that the Lord also loved him and would continue his dynasty.
• 1Ch 22: 9 But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon, and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign.

**Amnon rapes Tamar (Calamity)**

Amnon – David’s oldest son
Tamar – David’s daughter, Amnon’s step-sister

**David’s sons born in Hebron**

2Sa 2:2 Sons were born to David in Hebron:
  1. His firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel
2. His second, Kileab the son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel
   a. Don’t hear much about him – maybe died in childhood
3. The third, **Absalom** the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshu
   a. Very much like David in all ways
   b. If David had his choice, Absalom would have been the successor to the throne
4. The fourth, **Adonijah** the son of Haggith
5. The fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital
6. The sixth, Ithream the son of David’s wife Eglah

**Amnon wants Tamar**

- 2Sa 13:1 …Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar – Not love, but lust
- 2Sa 13:3 Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David’s brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man.
  o Jonadab is Amnon’s uncle – David’s brother
  o Suggests plan of attack to Amnon – pretend to be ill & have your sister bring you food in bed, then take her

  2Sa 13:11 But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, “Come to bed with me, my sister.” 12 “Don’t, my brother!” she said to him. “Don’t force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this wicked thing. 13 What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.” 14 But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. 15 Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out!”

  2Sa 13:11 “Come to bed with me, my sister.” – NIV euphemism
  o She pleads with him to stop, but he does not
  o Afterward, he hated & and forces her away – get this ‘thing; out of here and lock the door – literal translation

  2Sa 13:19 Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went. 20 Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don’t take this thing to heart.” And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a desolate woman. 21 When King David heard all this, he was furious. 22 Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

  The family is torn apart
  o Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a desolate woman – she never does marry, becomes an old maid
  o David is furious, but did nothing about the rape of his daughter – after all, he raped Bathsheba
     ▪ David is a deeply flawed man – he should have dealt with this, but he did not
  o Absalom’s anger grew
     ▪ He is furious with Amnon
     ▪ He is furious that David has done nothing

**Absalom murders Amnon**

- David loves Absalom
  o Absalom is just like David
  o If David had his choice, he would have made Absalom king, not Amnon – Amnon is not king material

- 2 years have passed since the rape of Tamar
  o Absalom invites his family to a party. David passes, but the brothers all join him
  o Absalom arranged for the murder of his half brother, usurping his father’s royal authority and acting in violation of long-established rules of hospitality.
2Sa 13:28 Absalom ordered his men, “Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to
you, ‘Strike Amnon down,’ then kill him. Don’t be afraid. Have not I given you this order? Be strong and brave.”
29 So Absalom’s men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king’s sons got up, mounted their
mules and fled.
31 The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes
torn. 32 But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David’s brother, said, “My lord should not think that they killed all the
princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom’s expressed intention ever since the day Amnon raped his
sister Tamar. 33 My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king’s sons are dead. Only
Amnon is dead.”

- Jonadab is the one that told Abnon to rape Tamar in the first place
- With the murder of Amnon, Absalom not only avenged the rape of his sister but also secured for himself the position
of successor to the throne
- Just like dad
  - In the wicked acts of Amnon and Absalom, David’s oldest sons became guilty of sexual immorality and
murder, as their father had before them – Bathsheba and Uriah

Absalom flees into exile

2Sa 13:37 Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned for
his son every day. 38 After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. 39 And the spirit of
the king longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon’s death.

- If David is king, and holds court to make judicial decisions, he cannot just forgive Absalom for murdering his brother
- Absalom flees to Geshur, where grandpa is king, for political protection
- David mourns for Absalom, not Abnon
  - Absalom and David are just alike
  - David should have known what Absalom would eventually do, and should have acted
- Absalom stays in Geshur for 3 years (5 years out from the original rape)
- 2Sa 12:11 “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you.
  - Consequences – Just like dad
    - Why did Amnon rape Tamar? David raped Bathsheba
    - Why did Absalom kill Amnon? That is absolutely what David would have done
  - Calamity has struck with this series of events – Amnon’s rape of Tamar → Absalom fleeing

Disaster (2 Samuel 14-18)

With good intentions David’s commanding general, Joab, engineers Absalom’s return from exile to an uneasy peace
between father and son. All the while, Absalom chafes under David’s refusal to reinstate him as his eldest surviving son
and heir to the throne, and as time passes, Absalom gains support, raises an army, and marches against his father. If
David stays in Jerusalem and defends the city, he knows he will ultimately face his own son in battle, and when he does,
David will kill him. So David abdicates the throne, leaving Jerusalem without a shot being fired. Not satisfied with
David’s abdication, Absalom pursues David, leading to open warfare and the death of Absalom at Joab’s hands. When
David returns to Jerusalem and the throne, he is never the same. In the end, David never recovers from his grief over
Absalom’s betrayal and death.

- What starts as calamity – Absalom killing Abnon and fleeing to Geshur – is going to become disaster
  - Going to snowball and get bigger and bigger and bigger
  - Eventually it will break David

Absalom’s Rebellion

Absalom’s return to Jerusalem

- Joab engineers Absalom’s return from exile
Joab had good intentions – he “knew that the king’s heart longed for Absalom”
Joab arranges for Absalom’s safe return to Jerusalem, with the condition that he may not see the king

Uneasy peace between father and son
David refused to let Absalom see him – the king cannot blatantly disobey the laws that he made
2Sa 14:28 Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king’s face.

David and Absalom are reunited
2Sa 14:32 “Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there!” Now then, I want to see the king’s face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death.”
Absalom insists that he has not done anything that David would not have done
2Sa 14:33 So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

Beautifully reunited – everything seems fine, but not so
Absalom has had 5 years to stew over what was done to him
Chafes under David’s refusal to reinstate him as his eldest surviving son and heir to the throne

Suggestions at the city gates
Starts with flattering chit-chat at the city gates suggesting that he would be a better king
2Sa 15:4 And Absalom would add, “If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice.”
2Sa 15:5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. 6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

David would certainly know that this is happening, and yet he does nothing

Absalom declares himself king in Hebron
2Sa 15:10 Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, ‘Absalom is king in Hebron.’” 11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. 12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom’s following kept on increasing.

Absalom asks permission to go to Hebron to fulfil a vow to the Lord – David says “Go in peace”
Palace coo – Absalom is going to march against David and take the crown
Strength in numbers – 200 men accompanied him, though they knew nothing about the rebellion
Ahithophel the Gilonite – David’s senior political advisor
Bathsheba’s grandfather (2Sa 23:34 Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite)
David ruined Bathsheba’s life 15 years ago – and Ahithophel never forgave him for it
His anger toward David congealed into hatred
He remained as senior political advisor until the right time – and the time is now
When David finds out that Ahithophel has crossed over, he knows that he has big trouble

David Flees
2Sa 15:13 A messenger came and told David, “The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.” 14 Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, “Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword.” …16 The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace.

His men support his decision, though they wonder why. David has never fled from a battle – why now?
Absalom will lead from the front just like David
David knows that he will be forced to face his son in battle and he will be forced to kill him
David won’t do it, so he flees to Jericho
• Leaves 10 concubines to take care of the palace
• Barzillai of Gilead – Supplied David when he fled from Absalom

2Sa 16:3 …Ziba said to him, “He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, ‘Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather’s kingdom.’” 4 Then the king said to Ziba, “All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.”

• Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, meets David along the way
  o Comes with gifts (food & drinks) – very much sucking up to David
  o Tells David that Mephibosheth has stayed in Jerusalem

**David makes several very smart moves**

• Prays to God to confuse Ahithophel’s advice
  o He knows that there will be big trouble with Ahithophel advising Absalom
  o 2Sa 15:31 Now David had been told, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” So David prayed, “O LORD, turn Ahithophel’s counsel into foolishness.”

• Sends the Levites back to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant
  2Sa 15:25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD’s eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. 26 But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.” … 29 So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

• Sends Hushai to Jerusalem to switch sides and act as a double agent
  o To let him know what Absalom is doing, what is going on at the palace
  o Suggest alternatives to Ahithophel’s advice
  2Sa 15:32 … Hushai the Arkite … return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king; I was your father’s servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,’ then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel’s advice. 35 Won’t the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king’s palace. 36 Their two sons … are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear.” 37 So David’s friend Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

**David’s Depression**

• David has been betrayed by many people close to him:
  o Absalom – Chafes under David’s refusal to reinstate him as his eldest surviving son and heir to the throne
  o Ahithophel – Never forgave David for ruining his granddaughter’s (Bathsheba’s) life
  o Mephibosheth – Thinks that Absalom will give him back his grandfather’s kingdom

• Shimei Curses David
  o Shimei is from the Saul’s clan, tribe of Benjamin
  o David is distraught – tells his men to leave him alone as he is right in his insults
  o He is running along the hilltop beside David and pelting him and his men with dung

2Sa 16:11 David then said to Abishai and all his officials, “My son, who is of my own flesh, is trying to take my life. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. 12 It may be that the LORD will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today.” 13 So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt.

**Absalom’s Rebellion (Cont)**

2Sa 16:21 Ahithophel answered, “Lie with your father’s concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench in your father’s nostrils, and the hands of everyone with
you will be strengthened.” 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he lay with his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel’s advice.

**Lie with your father’s concubines**

- Ahithophel says – Have sex with your father’s wives and let everyone know it
- This was the worst possible thing that any son could do
- Absalom has crossed the point of no return

- Nathan foretold this
  - 2Sa 12:11 “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

- Ahithophel’s advice is like the words of God – spot on
  - Both David and Absalom felt this way

**Absalom attacks David – Conflicting advice**

- Ahithophel’s advice to Absalom – leave immediately strike David while he is down
  - David is distraught – he is at the bottom of a deep, dark place
    - He has been betrayed by the people he loved
    - He left Jerusalem so he would not have to kill you
    - He feels that he has lost everything
    - He is depressed and confused, weary and weak
  - Strike now before he has a chance to regain his composure, because then you have no chance
  - Strike only the king and bring all the people back to Jerusalem with you
  - This is the advice that he should have followed if he wanted to win

- Hushai’s advice to Absalom – Muster all the troops and attack with as big a group as possible
  - Hushai is David’s plant
  - He knows that this is the way that David can win, that Ahithophel’s advice will mean David’s defeat
  - The Lord answered David’s prayer
  - 2Sa 17:14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel.” For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

- Ahithophel hangs himself
  - 2Sa 17:23 When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He put his house in order and then hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father’s tomb.
    - When Absalom follows Hushai’s advice, Ahithophel knows that the battle has been lost
      - The only chance that Absalom had was a surgical hit, right now when David is weak & confused
      - David is a special-ops warrior – a prodigy – Absalom cannot win now
    - He goes home to get his affairs in order and hangs himself
    - Only 4 suicides in the Bible
      - King Saul and his armor-bearer
      - Ahithophel and Judah – Parallel characters – Both betray their lords and hang themselves
        - Ahithophel betrays David
        - Judas betrays Jesus
Absalom’s death

2Sam 18:6 The army marched into the field to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. 7 There the army of Israel was defeated by David’s men, and the casualties that day were great—twenty thousand men. 8 The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest claimed more lives that day than the sword.

9 Now Absalom happened to meet David’s men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom’s head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going. …

14 Joab … took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom’s heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree. 15 And ten of Joab’s armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him and killed him.

- David organizes his forces under 3 generals, and (as always) says that he will lead from the front
  - His men say no, you must not go – they understand now that David does not want to kill his son
    - They make up a lame excuse, and David is grateful for their understanding and stays behind
    - There is absolutely no doubt that David will kill Absalom – he is that great of a warrior
  - As the troops are moving out, David gives the order “Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake.”
    - David still loves Absalom

- Forest is the place for a strategic battle where you can separate the troops and pick them off one at a time
  - David takes the fight to a terrain that gives him the tactical advantage
  - David knows exactly what he is doing again
  - ‘Forest claimed more lives that day than the sword’ – getting their heads caught in branches while riding

- Absalom’s death
  - Absalom’s head got caught in an oak tree – really a pistachio tree
    - One of his men reported this to Joab, who rebukes him for not finishing the job
  - Joab plunged 3 javelins into Absalom’s heart

- Message is sent to David
  - The messenger that is sent is determined by the message being sent
    - Ahimaaz son of Zadok – should have been the messenger for good news (also what David assumes)
    - Joab sends a Cushite (a foreigner) because it is bad news (for David) – Absalom is dead

David is undone

2Sam 18:33 The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!”

19:1 Joab was told, “The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” 2 And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, “The king is grieving for his son.” 3 The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. 4 The king covered his face and cried aloud, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

5 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, “Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 6 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. 7 Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the LORD that if you don’t go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come upon you from your youth till now.”

The victory that day turned into mourning

- The victory that saved David, saved Jerusalem, saved the kingship
- Whole army stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed

- Joab is furious with the king’s behavior

413
o Rumors are flying all over the kingdom about what is happening
o David has to pull it back together again

David returns to Jerusalem as king

• David forgives – no repercussions to the men that followed Absalom
  o Blanket immunity to everyone – brings everyone back into the fold by doing this
  o Shimei – the guy that was flinging dung from the cliffs at David as he fled from Jerusalem
    ▪ David’s men want to put him to death – David says no – no more need to die – very shred move
  o Mephibosheth claims that Ziba lied to David
    ▪ David cannot tell who is telling the truth and orders that everything be split evenly between them
• David is king
  o The administration is back in place
  o The conspiracy ended in disaster – Absalom is dead and David will never be the same
  o David is about 60 years old
    ▪ About 40 at the time of the Bathsheba incident
    ▪ 20 years of consequences and disaster
    ▪ David is back in power, but he is a broken man

David Prepares the Temple of God

• In his last 10 years, David has an obsession with building a temple for God
• God would not let David build the temple because he had shed too much blood
  o Not the blood from warfare, but the blood of the innocent – Uriah and his men

1Ch 17:1 After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent.”

3 That night the word of God came to Nathan, saying: 4 “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in. … I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever.

Preparations for the Temple

1Ch 22:5 David said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it.” So David made extensive preparations before his death.

14 “I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the LORD a hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone. And you may add to them. 15 You have many workmen: stonemasons, masons and carpenters, as well as men skilled in every kind of work 16 in gold and silver, bronze and iron—craftsmen beyond number. Now begin the work, and the LORD be with you.”

17 Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon. 18 He said to them, “Is not the LORD your God with you? And has he not granted you rest on every side? For he has handed the inhabitants of the land over to me, and the land is subject to the LORD and to his people. 19 Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the sacred articles belonging to God into the temple that will be built for the Name of the LORD.”
David’s Plans for the Temple

1Ch 28:2 ...“Listen to me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. 3 But God said to me, ‘You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.’

6 He [God] said to me: ‘Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7 I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out my commands and laws, as is being done at this time.’

8 So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever.

9 “And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. 10 Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a temple as a sanctuary. Be strong and do the work.”

11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. 12 He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. 13 He gave him instructions for the divisions of the priests and Levites, and for all the work of serving in the temple of the LORD, as well as for all the articles to be used in its service. 14 He designated the weight of gold for all the gold articles to be used in various kinds of service, and the weight of silver for all the silver articles to be used in various kinds of service: 15 the weight of gold for the gold lampstands and their lamps; with the weight for each lampstand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for each silver lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand; 16 the weight of gold for each table for consecrated bread; the weight of silver for the silver tables; 17 the weight of pure gold for the forks, sprinkling bowls and pitchers; the weight of gold for each gold dish; the weight of silver for each silver dish; 18 and the weight of the refined gold for the altar of incense. He also gave him the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and shelter the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19 “All this,” David said, “I have in writing from the hand of the LORD upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan.”

20 David also said to Solomon his son, “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished. 21 The divisions of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work on the temple of God, and every willing man skilled in any craft will help you in all the work. The officials and all the people will obey your every command.”

- We think of it as Solomon’s temple, but it was really David’s temple. Solomon was just the contractor that built it.
- David:
  - Had the idea
  - Drew up the blueprints
  - Financed the temple
  - Wrote almost half of the songs that would be sung at the temple (73 of the 150)
  - Cuts all the stone and had it brought to Jerusalem
  - Organizes the priesthood (tribe of Levi) to serve at the temple
    - Organized them into 24 divisions who would rotate in service at the Temple on 2 week rotations across the year
    - Organized part of the priesthood as musicians – Asaph was the leader of this group
  - Every detail is put in place – the only thing he doesn’t do is pick up a stone and put it on another
• 1Ch 28:9 but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever
  o Not as a person, but as king, just as God rejected Saul as king

**Look back onto David’s Life (2 Samuel 21-24)**

David story ends at the end of chapter 20, but then there are 6 vignettes that flashback into David’s life and characterize who he is.

• David story ends at the end of chapter 20 with the recounting of David’s cabinet
• Chapters 21-24, there are 6 vignettes that are flashbacks into David’s life that characterize what kind of man David was
• David’s character
  o He was a magnificent warrior
  o Tremendous king
  o Profound man of God
  o Total absolute failure as a husband and father
• David’s legacy
  o Transfer of leadership from the house of Saul to the house of David (kingship moving from the tribe of Benjamin to the tribe of Judah)
  o David established Jerusalem as the holy city and religious center for all Jews to this day
  o David stamped out idolatry in the land
  o David extended the borders of Israel
  o David planned the temple
  o David brought all 12 tribes together into a united monarchy
  o David made Israel the military and economic power of it’s world
• 6 vignettes that flashback into David’s life
  o Have a chiastic pattern
    ▪ A - 2Sa 21:1-14 – God’s wrath – Difficult decision early in David’s reign (The Gibeonites avenged)
    ▪ B – 2Sa 21:15-22 – David’s warriors – David’s men kill the sons of Goliath (War against Philistines)
    ▪ C – 2Sa 22:1-51 – Poem – David’s song of praise (Recounted as Psalm 18)
    ▪ C’ – 2Sa 23:1-7 – Poem of praise – Last words of David
    ▪ B’ – 2Sa 23:8-39 – David’s warriors (David’s mighty men)
    ▪ A’ – 2Sa 24 – God’s wrath – Difficult decision late in David’s reign (David counts the fighting men)

*The Gibeonites avenged*

*War against the Philistines*

*David’s song of praise*

*Last words of David*

*David’s mighty men*

*David counts the fighting men*
The book of 1st Kings is Narrative History and Prophecy. The author is anonymous; however, some suggest the prophet Jeremiah. It was written about 560–538 B.C. The key personalities are David, Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel. **The purpose of 1st Kings is to contrast those who obey and disobey God throughout the ruling kings of Israel and Judah.** The book describes the rule of Solomon as the last king of Israel and then the split of the kingdom after his death. It includes a great prayer to the Lord in chapter 8. The writer of the books of Kings describes the events of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms after the division.

In chapters 1-11, Solomon becomes the king, in a violent method, after his father David dies. David instructs Solomon to “walk in His (God’s) ways” (2:3). Solomon asks God for wisdom and God is pleased at this request and approves. Solomon begins a building production, which included the temple that his father David desired and prepared for him to do. He began building the temple 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt. Seven years later, the Ark was brought to the temple, the glory of the Lord descended on it, Solomon prays a powerful prayer, and then sacrifices were offered. Solomon although the wisest king ever, does not so wise things and begins to worship the gods of his wives and is subdued by his lust for women. His downfall was looming and he died shortly thereafter.

- Chapters 12-22 show the beginning of the end of the united kingdom of Israel.

The nation, with tough decisions to make chooses a wrong one. In 931 B.C., the kingdom splits in two: North and South. Rehoboam inherits the kingdom and is persistent about enforcing high taxes. The Northern tribes begin a revolt and Jeroboam is crowned king of Israel. Ten tribes became the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the two tribes of Judah and...
Benjamin became the Southern Kingdom of Judah. God raises up his prophet Elijah to warn evil king Ahab to turn from idol worship and to return to the YHWH.

**2nd Kings Overview**

### Second Kings

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The book of 2nd Kings is Narrative History and Prophecy concerning the affairs of the divided kingdoms. The author is anonymous; however, some suggest the prophet Jeremiah. It was written about 560-538 B.C. Key personalities are many; they include Elijah, Elisha, the woman from Shunem, Naaman, Jezebel, Jehu, Joash, Hezekiah, Sennacherib, Isaiah, Manasseh, Josiah, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar. Its purpose was to demonstrate the value of those who obey God, and the fate of those who refuse to obey and make Him ultimate ruler.

In this book, God performs amazing miracles through his prophets as He sends these messengers to herald His messages. The two kingdoms are far from the Lord and lost in the monotonous confusion of their sins. God’s prophets bring the only hope to this lost yet, chosen nation.

- In chapters 1-17, we read of the rulers of the divided kingdoms who lead them to their fate in exile. The prophet Elijah concludes his ministry and hands over the reins to another up and coming prophet who God will use named Elisha. Elisha is an apprentice of sorts, and follows Elijah as he follows God’s lead. God took Elijah in a whirlwind to heaven and the apprentice asks for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit, and it was granted to him (2:9). In Elisha’s ministry, he carries out twice as many miracles, as Elijah, as God does His will through his prophet. We also find in these chapters, details about kings and dynasties, which ultimately disobey and ignore God’s orders and provisions. Finally, during the reign of the last evil king, Hoshea, the Assyrians take the Northern Kingdom into captivity. They have neglected the warning and coming judgment announced by the prophet Hosea. It is fitting that the more evil of the two kingdoms (Northern Kingdom) is the kingdom that goes into permanent captivity. There is no record or evidence of these 10 tribes of Israel ever returning from exile.
• In chapters 18-25, it is apparent that the Southern Kingdom is not doing much better, and soon would also face God’s judgment. “Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and every seer, saying, ‘Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets. However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God” (17:13-14).

From Biblical Training.com – 2nd Kings
Tonight we look at a period of time in which great materials are produced. The whole Book of Isaiah is produced during this time. I am going to have us look at the first half because such a huge chunk of Isaiah looks forward to the time period after the exile that it is appropriate to look at it in connection with that time period. But all of the book is written and, of course, it is one of the grandest books of all Scripture and a huge prophetic book. We also look at Micah and Nahum, and we are going to take a look at a small portion of 2 Kings and, as well, a small portion of Chronicles, mainly as a reflex compared to the material that we have in Kings. In so doing, we trust that God will be with us, and let’s ask Him to do so by prayer.

Father, we would love to have, as the result of our time spent, the fact that Your word was better and clearer in our minds, and we know that You know how to help that process. So we pray that you will be with us for the next two and one-half hours, and that, when we leave, we will indeed have grown in our ability to appreciate and to use Your word for good purposes. That we ask for Christ’s sake. Amen.

== I. The Assyrian Empire ==
This map is titled the Assyrian Empire. If you look at the dotted line area it goes up to around here, it says Assyrian Empire as of 824 BC. So there was an extensive Assyrian empire, but as you can see it gets no further, no closer, to Jerusalem and Judah or Israel or anything than Damascus, which is southwestern Syria. The empire of the Assyrians is not at first a big problem, but then, look at the line as it is drawn for 640 BC, which is where our time period concludes tonight, this little chunk of time we are looking at. The time period for 640 of the empire has it going across all habitable regions of the great Arabian Desert fully, including all of Syria and Israel and Judah and so on down, and covering almost all of Egypt and including even in Cyprus way up into parts of modern day Turkey and huge portions of what today would be Armenia, etc. It is massive. That is a development that we contend with during this time period. A number of references that we make tonight, a number of things you read in the commentaries, things that you read about in the actual books that you look at are dealing with the significance of the rise of the Assyrian Empire.

== II. Tiglath-Pileser III ==
It really comes to the fore with a king called Tiglath-Pileser III. That is just a name that you will read about. It is in the commentaries so you can check it out. His actual name in Assyrian was Tukulti-apal-esharra which means “the Tigress River has provided an heir”. We know him through Greek and Latin as Tiglath-Pileser. In the Bible he is called by just one syllable out of that name, “Pul”. Sort of like somebody with a very long name, like “Ike” for Eisenhower, just shorten it way down. It is a nice abbreviation because can you imagine his mother and all the time she would have to spend calling him home, “Tukulti-apal-esharra III, come for supper;” pretty soon it is cold. The empire is, to a considerable degree, launched into the domain of the Israelites, into the area that the Assyrians called “across the river,” meaning across the Euphrates River, and what we would call Palestine or Syria-Palestine, by this guy Tiglath-Pileser III.

== A. Why Expand? ==
When he came to power in 748 he said, “We’re going to expand”. Why did people do that? What was going on in the minds of kings that would make them have this lust for land? Why did they want to grab more and more? The answer is, basically, it was an economic consideration. When a king comes to power, if he wants to build new temples, they are going to be very expensive. If he wants to build new palaces, they are going to cost a lot of money. If he wants to have wealth for his people and do public works projects and dig new canals, all of it is expensive.

== B. Tax, Toll and Tribute ==
Where can the money come from; where do you get the money? The answer is: you get money in the ancient world from tribute, tax, and tolls, the three T’s: tribute, tax and toll. We even have, in a number of Biblical texts, those three mentioned. They do not all have T’s in the Hebrew, but tribute, tax, and toll.

"Tribute" is what you can get from another country that you force it to pay to you every year. If you conquer a country you can say, “You’ve got a choice, I’ll kill you all or you can pay us and send it to my capital every year so much”. That was very popular. It was a great system. It was a kind of what you might call “protection money”. In American culture we have gangsters who go to a store and they say, “You have a choice, we’ll throw a brick through the window or you can give us thirty dollars a week,” so the store owner pays the thirty dollars a week for protection from the gang. It is like that.

Then, also, there was "tax", so you could have a regular taxation system. You know, Jesus was born in Bethlehem because the Romans were taxing everybody. Joseph owned some property in Bethlehem because he is of that lineage, he is a descendent of David and that is David’s family town and that is why they are there. They normally would be at home at Nazareth, meet with the tax collectors and have their property surveyed and so on. In that connection Jesus was born. That is what the Romans did just like everybody else before them had done it. Then there is also "toll". Troops are garrisoned at key points on the roads. If you want to travel off the roads, good luck. It is very hard to travel in Palestine off the roads. So they would simply at narrow points on the roads, between hillsides that make it difficult to go around, station what we would call tollbooths and they would collect money that way.

Tribute, tax and toll, that is what they are after and you cannot get that unless you get more territory. Basically, what happens is a king says, “I want to do all those things, I want to have the money for these grand things. How am I going to get it? I’ll just take it from another country.” The other countries do not like this. Naturally, they want to fight and they will resist in every way that they can. The story of the Assyrian Empire is a story of conquering and then drawing back, because you cannot keep enough occupation troops everywhere to do everything you might like, and then countries eventually say, “Okay let’s give it a try. Let’s stop paying tribute, tax, and toll and see if we can get away with it.” If the original conquering empire is strong enough, back will come the troops and they will conquer you again. That is really what happened. You get cycles of this sort of thing waxing and waning and there is much of that going on. It is not behind the scenes; it just is not always super-visible to you unless you realize that that is an awful lot of why the Israelites are threatened by the Assyrians and why some of the events we will talk about tonight even happened. Tiglath-Pileser launches it and by 745 BC, three years into his reign, he already had begun the process of expanding his empire and his first military raids into Palestine, into Israel and Judah and other places come as early as 745 BC.

== III. Overview ==
In general, let’s look at 2 Kings, where this kind of thing is described, because we have not had a chance yet just to talk about 2 Kings as a book.

== A. Elijah and Elisha ==
The first eight chapters are especially devoted to Elijah and Elisha. Elisha comes into the picture after Elijah, who is all alone, is very discouraged, and Elisha is his first disciple. Gradually the mantle is moved over to Elisha, who is his heir. I would like to comment on one little thing. This is just a kind of a detail, in a way, but it is so often misunderstood and misapplied. In 2 Kings 2:9 Elisha asks an interesting thing of Elijah. Elijah says, “What can I do for you before I am taken from you? I know that my life is short and you’re going to be my successor.” Elisha says to him, “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.” That is quite a statement to make.

How do people get portions of God’s spirit? Could I have a single portion and somebody here have a double portion? Could somebody else have a double portion compared to that person, so it is a four-to-one ratio of that person to me spiritually? Is that the way the Holy Spirit works? Some people have thought so, based on this passage. It is really, however, a misunderstanding of an idiomatic way of speaking about something. In ancient Israel the heir, that is the heir, the older child in a family, usually got the double portion of whatever the parent was leaving to the children. If there were three children in a family, the oldest would always get double what any of the others would get. So what you have to do to divide the shares up is add one for that extra share so
something can be doubled. Think about it. If you have two children, for the oldest to get double the youngest, you have to add one. So, two children is $N + 1 = 3$ that is the shares. The oldest one gets two and the youngest one gets one. What does the oldest one get? Two-thirds and the younger one-third. If you have three children you have to add one to get into fourths. The oldest gets two-fourths that is one-half, and each of the younger gets one-fourth. If you have nine children, you add one. The oldest gets two-tenths that is one-fifth, each of the others gets one-tenth and that is how it works. You always add one and then divide up the shares giving the oldest child the double one. The double portion is an idiomatic way of saying “inheritance”. I got my double portion or people might say, “Your dad is pretty old now, I suppose you will be coming into your double portion pretty soon, hey Ralphie?” and Ralphie might say, “Yeah, I’m going to miss my dad like everything but he has put it aside for me.” That would be the way it would be spoken of.

What Elisha is really asking is, “May I inherit your ministry. May I, in fact, carry on your work; not just that I will succeed you as “a” prophet, but may I really step into your shoes?” Elijah says 2 Kings 2:10, “You’ve asked a difficult thing. Here is how you will know, if you see me when I’m taken from you, it will be yours.” This will be a sign from God, is what he is saying, that you are to carry on my ministry directly and unbroken, not just have your own, but carry on in my place, exactly as my full heir. “If not,” he says, “if you don’t see me, you won’t be my heir. It does not mean you can’t be a prophet, you just won’t be my heir.” Then what happens in the story, he does get to see him. He sees a fabulous thing; he sees a chariot of fire and horses of fire appear, and the two of them get separated. Elijah is taken up into heaven in a whirlwind. When he sees this he cries out, “My father, my father;” that is what the people called the prophet, they call him father. That is what the disciples called any teacher, so he called him “my father, my father”. He says, “The chariots and the horsemen of Israel.” He is just so excited, he gets to see him go and he also gets to see a vision of Israel’s chariots. This is a great thing; this is exciting to him.

But, of course, it also means that he now will carry on the ministry of Elijah. How does this work? In particular, his ministry is endorsed by miracles. Actually, this is one of the closest parallels to Jesus Himself. If you look at the ministry of the Lord Jesus, all the Gospel writers will point out to you that He just did so many miracles that many people said, “You just had to believe.” That happens with Nicodemus in John 3. He comes to Jesus, what does he say? He says, “Teacher we know You are sent from God because nobody could do all these miracles You do and not be sent from God.” That is what he says. So miracles are sometimes used by God to give credentials to somebody. I think this is the way it still works today. You might not need a miracle to convince your congregation of the first church you take, “Fuzworth Center Baptist Church” in “Fuzworth Center, Iowa”, a full twenty-eight people there to here you preach your candidating sermon. You may not need a miracle to convince them, but some people in some places may. It is very interesting how that works. In some parts of missionary activity and so on, miracles seem to happen in greater numbers. They are credentialing things. They are ways that God shows, in affect, what kind of power He has and, therefore, uses through an individual.

But miracles are also a reminder of what heaven is like. Do not every forget that. The essence of a miracle is that it is a little bit of a glimpse into the wondrous things of eternal life. If someone is miraculously healed from an illness, everybody in heaven will be healed; there is no illness in heaven. The one sure thing you can say, if you are a Christian, is that all your illness will one day be healed, because they sure will be, but it may not come, and it usually does not come for people, until death and transformation into heavenly existence, but it will come for everyone. Once in a while God causes it to come in this time, in this place, and that is very exciting. Elisha can use some of those miracles, just like Elijah could, because it is a tough situation they have got. These prophets are preaching to heterodox people who are worshipping idols in northern Israel and that is not easy. They have got tons of opposition and they are giving stern warning and that is not going to be well-received, so the miracles help to convince people. “I don’t like what he says, but how can you deny that he must be someone from God;” that is basically what people said about them.

== B. Jehu Massacres Baal / Ashara Worshippers ==
Then a dramatic thing happens in chapter 9 and 10, a Yahwist northern king massacres everyone of the Baal and Ashara worshippers. It is a vast massacre; it is wild. This is not necessarily the way to solve problems, but he did it. It certainly shook up support for Baal and Ashara worship and increased a focus on Yahweh. Sadly it was a kind of brutally produced revival. It did not last all that long, but it was certainly evidence of how strongly
someone like Jehu felt he had to deal with the dominant Baal / Ashara worship that the government certainly advocated.

== C. Focus on Kings of Judah ==
Then the focus is more on the kings of Judah in chapters 11 to 14.

== D. Destruction of the North ==
Then finally, in 15-17 is recorded the destruction of the North. It is captured by the Assyrians in 722 BC. Its population is partly exiled and partly replaced. You can read in 2 Kings 17 about that replacement, how people from all over other places in the Assyrian Empire were, by a king named Ashurbanipal, relocated into what then became known as Samaria. That is, of course, where the issue of the Samaritans and the Jews in New Testament times comes from. These Samaritans living in the north were neither ethnically pure Jews nor religiously pure Jews. They had many strange notions and doctrines, and they were what we would regard today as a cult. The Judeans, the Jews, regarded the Samaritans as members of a cult and did not even want to associate with them, and a lot of what happens in the New Testament relative to the Samaritans is against that background.

== E. Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah ==
Then the chapters that we look partly at tonight and partly not, 18 -25 is a chunk of material in which Judah continues on for a whole century and a half. Three kings stand out in this century and a half, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Manasseh. What is fascinating is that Manasseh is right in the middle. I listed the two good guys first then Manasseh second. If you think about it, you have a good king, Hezekiah, and he institutes a number of reforms. Some of that is what Isaiah helps with and helps to inspire and encourage. Then a terrible king after him, in the person of Manasseh, who has, by the way, the longest reign of any Israelite or Judean king. He has a fifty-five year reign; so the worst guy reigned the longest. Then you have Josiah, the last good guy, in chapters 22 and 23.

== F. Fall of Jerusalem to Babylonians ==
Then comes, after a brief interlude, the story of the fall of Jerusalem in chapter 25, and there it is the Babylonians. It was the Assyrians who captured the north but, by the time 2 Kings is over, the Babylonians have taken over the Assyrian Empire and, indeed, also extend it. Because that is the way; if you are the Babylonians, you get what you want. If you have a big enough appetite and are a big enough risk-taker you can say, “Let’s not just conquer some small nations, let’s swallow up this huge empire that we’ve been paying tribute, tax, and toll to. That is basically what the Babylonians did. It took years; it was a terrible struggle for almost a whole decade of bitter fighting, but they succeeded in capturing that empire.

That is a little overview of 2 Kings and what is going on. It is really some chapters here in this block, this block of the Judean remnant state period where the north, Israel, is gone and you have just got that one southern tribe, Simeon and Judah together had kind of merged but it is all just called Judah after a while, that is the remainder of the still independent, still functioning and worshipping people of God.

General
• The Bible is a ‘text’ – from the Latin word ‘textus’ which means fabric (textiles). The Bible is a fabric that is all interwoven together
  o Self-referential
    ▪ See examples of the serpent & dragon in Genesis, Revelation, and Ps 91 – written by different people at different times, but all interwoven together
  o Literally made of fabric
    ▪ Throughout the 1st century nearly all “books” were in the form of scrolls, sheets stitched end to end, and then rolled. Each book of the Hebrew Scriptures would have been on an individual scroll (or scrolls).
    ▪ By the 4th century the scroll had been replaced by the codex, individual sheets stacked one atop the other, bound by stitching on the left side and held together between two covers, a major technological advancement.

• The word “Bible” in Greek is “ta biblia”, meaning “the little books,” an anthology of many individual works, not the product of a single person.

• The Bible was written a long time ago, in a culture very different from our own, and yet it is still the bestselling book even today
  o 30 million copies sold each year
  o More than 150 billion copies have been sold since 1453 (invention of the printing press)
  o Yet, very few people have actually read the Bible, and even fewer have studies the Bible all the way through

• The Bible as a whole - Genesis 1 and 2 set the stage for our story in highly poetic fashion. In these chapters we learn that God created all that is, that his creation is good, perfect and complete, and that God maintains an intimate relationship with what he has created. But all good stories have a conflict, and in chapter 3, conflict enters our story, and the rest of the Bible, from Genesis 4 through Revelation 22, follows a trajectory toward resolving that conflict.
  o Has a beginning (Genesis) and an end (Revelation)
  o Has a clear overarching structure, or narrative shape
  o Its main character is God
  o Its conflict is sin
  o Its theme is redemption
  o It has a set of concrete images that create textual cohesion: mountains, water, oil, bread, wine, and so on.
  o Self-referential – the story is all woven together are refers to itself throughout

• In Hebrew, God’s name is Elohim, a plural noun, which suggests majesty and power

• Shape of the narrative – U

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<th>Everything is going just fine</th>
<th>God creates everything new again</th>
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<td>Resurrection</td>
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| Christ is crucified on the cross | |

Outlines

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**Solomon becomes king (1 Kings 1-4)**

**End of David’s reign**

1Ki 1:1 When King David was old and well advanced in years, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. … 3 Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful girl and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4 The girl was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no intimate relations with her.

- David is old and sick
  - Old and sick, the consequences of David’s sin continue to dog him.
  - 70 years – Not that old, but a lot of mileage
  - Abishag, the Shunammite – the most beautiful girl in the kingdom – brought to David as his nurse
    - Emphatically not a wife or a concubine, just a nurse

**Adonijah tries to assume the kingship**

Adonijah, now David’s eldest surviving son, engineers a palace coup to overthrow David.

- Adonijah, now David’s eldest surviving son, is in line for the throne – the legitimate heir to the throne
  - 1Ki 1:5 “I will be king.” – Dad is sick, it’s time for me to take over

- Adonijah prepares to become king
  - Adonijah got the support of Joab and Abiathar the priest – military and priesthood
    - Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David’s special guard did not join Adonijah
  - He got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him.
  - He sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves and he invited all his brothers, the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah who were royal officials
  - He did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon
    - Did not have their support
    - Not inviting Solomon suggests that he knew that Solomon was supposed to become king
  - 1Ki 1:6 (His father had never interfered with him by asking, “Why do you behave as you do?”…)
    - Key to David’s character - He was a magnificent warrior, tremendous king, profound man of God, total absolute failure as a husband and father

- David had promised the throne to Solomon
  - As David’s tenth son, Solomon is nowhere close to being heir to the throne, but David raises him to power to fulfill a promise made to Bathsheba.
    - David knows that what he did to Bathsheba – raped her, killed her husband (& the other men to cover it up) – ruined her life. And he spends the rest of his life trying to make it up to her. Recognizing that he had sinned, David tried to make it right.
    - Promising the throne to Solomon is David’s way of trying to make it right
    - Bathsheba engineered Solomon’s rise to the throne behind the scenes – it was David’s promise to her that put him there

- David is told
  - Nathan is David’s confidant – he knew that Solomon was to become king
  - Nathan advises Bathsheba - 1Ki 1:12 Now then, let me advise you how you can save your own life and the life of your son Solomon.
    - If Adonijah knows that Solomon is supposed to become king, which is suggested by Solomon not being invited to the feast, then Nathan knows that Adonijah will get rid of Solomon & Bathsheba to ensure his kingship
    - Tell David what is happening, and I will come in during and confirm that what you say is true
Bathsheba tells David that Solomon was not invited to the feast, which indicates that, if this goes through, Solomon and Bathsheba will be put to death.

David is livid.

- 1Ki 1:29 The king then took an oath: “As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, 30 I will surely carry out today what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place.”
- Note the promise that he made to her (Bathsheba) that Solomon would be king – retribution for what he did to her.

David makes Solomon king.

When David learns of the plot, he anoints his son, Solomon, as king (970-930 B.C.).

1Ki 1:32 King David said, “Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.” When they came before the king, 33 he said to them: “Take your lord’s servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. 34 There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ 35 Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”

38 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites went down and put Solomon on King David’s mule and escorted him to Gihon. 39 Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” 40 And all the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound.

- Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada – 3 men that David could trust absolutely.
- Solomon rides into Jerusalem as king on a mule – the same way that Jesus did.
  - People shake palm branches as Jesus rides in – symbolic swords – represent the Kerethites and the Pelethites (mercenaries) who were there when Solomon rode into Jerusalem as king on a mule.

41 Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they were finishing their feast. … Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. …. “Our lord King David has made Solomon king. The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the king’s mule, 45 and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon. From there they have gone up cheering, and the city resounds with it. That’s the noise you hear. 46 Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. 47 Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make Solomon’s name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!’ And the king bowed in worship on his bed 48 and said, ‘Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.’”

- There is no question now who is king.

49 At this, all Adonijah’s guests rose in alarm and dispersed. 50 But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51 Then Solomon was told, “Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’”

- Adonijah’s guests don’t want anything to do with him now that they know the truth.
- Adonijah is afraid that Solomon will do to him exactly what he was going to do to Solomon – death.

David’s legacy to Solomon.

- Solomon was given the greatest inheritance of anyone that ever lived.
  - Transfer of leadership from the house of Saul to the house of David (kingship moving from the tribe of Benjamin to the tribe of Judah).
  - David established Jerusalem as the holy city and religious center for all Jews to this day.
  - David stamped out idolatry in the land.
David extended the borders of Israel
David planned the temple
David brought all 12 tribes together into a united monarchy
David made Israel the military and economic power of its world
David gave Solomon an example of a profound relationship with God of a real person
  ▪ Example of a very flawed man in an intimate relationship with God, struggling with that relationship, yet knowing at the end of his life that he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever
  ▪ Solomon could have taken an intimate knowledge of God and spread it to the whole world

All of this was handed to Solomon on a silver platter

Solomon’s throne established

It is one thing to become king – it is another thing entirely to remain king

David’s charge to Solomon

1Ch 28:8 “So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever. 9 “And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

1Ki 2:1 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. 2 “I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man, 3 and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, 4 and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’

  “So be strong, show yourself a man”
  o Solomon is not a particularly strong or decisive person, or David would not have had to say this
  o David is going to have to ensure Solomon’s safety

Davidic covenant – If/then clause
  o ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’

1Ki 2:5 “Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me—what he did to the two commanders of Israel’s armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle, and with that blood stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. 6 Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace.

7 “But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom.

8 “And remember, you have with you Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD: ‘I will not put you to death by the sword.’ 9 But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood.”

10 Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. 11 He had reigned forty years over Israel—seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 12 So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.
• David turns from theological to practical
  o If Solomon does not take care of Joab and Shimei, he will not last 2 weeks as king
  o Brutal reality of being king, so David tells Solomon what to do
• Joab
  o “you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me” - killed Absalom against direct orders not to
  o Killed Abner and Amasa - He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle
  o Joab is a cross between a Pit bull & a Rottweiler, and David had to keep him on a very short leash, and sometimes David could not even do it – you know that he’s a danger
  o He was loyal to David – he gave his loyalty to Adonijah – he is a threat to Solomon
• Barzillai of Gilead – Supplied David when he fled from Absalom
• Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim
  o Cursed David and pelted him with dung as he fled from Absalom
  o Do not consider him innocent – he cannot be trusted

Solomon’s eliminates the threats

To secure the throne, David advises Solomon to kill anyone who poses a threat, including his brother, Adonijah. Upon David’s death, Solomon follows David’s advice, and Solomon secures the throne, littering the stage with bodies.
• Adonijah
  o Adonijah asked Bathsheba to ask for Abishag, the Shunammite as his wife and he’ll go away
    ▪ Bathsheba is Solomon’s primary advisor – she is no fool
  o Bathsheba sees no reason why not to
    ▪ Abishag was not a wife or concubine of David’s – just his nurse
    ▪ This will not help Adonijah in any to take ownership of the throne
  o Solomon is furious and orders him to be killed
  o Over-the-top reaction – why?
    ▪ There is no political advantage to Adonijah if he marries her
    ▪ Solomon loved Abishag
    ▪ Song of Songs written about Solomon’s first love - Abishag, the Shunammite
• Abiathar
  o 1Ki 2:26 To Abiathar the priest the king said, “Go back to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not put you to death now, because you carried the ark of the Sovereign LORD before my father David and shared all my father’s hardships.” 27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the LORD, fulfilling the word the LORD had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli (1Sa2).
• Joab
  o 1Ki 2:28 When the news reached Joab…he fled to the tent of the LORD & took hold of the horns of the altar.
  o Joab seeks sanctuary, but the right of asylum is extended only to those who accidentally caused someone’s death (Ex 21:14)
  o Benaiah told Joab to come out, but he answered, “No, I will die here.” and so he was did
  o Solomon was completely justified in denying this right to Joab, not only for his complicity in Adonijah’s conspiracy, but also for his murder of Abner and Amasa.
• Shimei
  o 1Ki 2:36 Then the king sent for Shimei and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there, but do not go anywhere else. 37 The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, you can be sure you will die; your blood will be on your own head.” 38 Shimei answered the king, “What you say is good. Your servant will do as my lord the king has said.”
  o Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for 3 years, then went to retrieve his slaves from Gath and was put to death
• 1Ki 2:46 The kingdom was now firmly established in Solomon’s hands.

Alliance with Egypt

• 1Ki 3:1 Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter.
• David created the united monarchy and established control of the trade routes through 40 years of war
  o This 40 years of war enables the 40 years of peace that Solomon will enjoy
Solomon does not fight a war

- The 1st thing that Solomon does is reach out to Egypt and make an economic trade agreement with Pharaoh
  - He seals the agreement by marrying Pharaoh’s daughter – now they’re family

- What is accomplished by this?
  - Solomon vertically integrates the entire economy of the ancient world and he controls it
    - This is where all of the fabulous wealth comes from
  - Solomon already controlled the distribution system for all the goods in the ancient world
    - Controlled 2 major trade routes (Via Maris & King’s Highway) and the 3 major linking roads
  - Egypt was the food production center of the ancient world
    - With Pharaoh, he now controls the food production center
  - Reinforces the alliance with Hiram, King of Tyre who controls the maritime trade routes

- Smart move economically and politically, but God said don’t go back to Egypt
  - Dt 17 – Rules for a King
  - Dt 17:16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.”

**Wisdom to govern God’s people**

1Ki 3:3 Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 4 The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.” …7 “Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 9 **So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.** For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. 11 So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for **discernment in administering justice,** 12 I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. 13 Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor —so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. 14 And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” 15 Then Solomon awoke —and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

- Sacrifices were only to be made at the Tabernacle, not at the high places
  - God thought to Himself, the boy needs help and direction
- Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings – he never did anything small
  - After the offering, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said – tell me what you need to do this job
- I am only a little child
  - Solomon became king when he was 30
  - What he is saying is tremendously inexperienced and not even a shadow of his father David
- Asks for wisdom to govern the people
  - Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong
  - God interprets the request as discernment in administering justice
  - Solomon does not ask for wisdom in the general sense, but a specific wisdom in the administration of God’s people – very specific
- Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor —so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings.
  - Double-edged sword – Midas touch
    - Wisdom to administer justice
• Tremendous wealth and absolute power – which will eventually corrupt Solomon
  o With one hand, God gives
  o On the other hand, there is a down-side to it – it’s not a positive thing
• So, Solomon is given the gifts of wisdom to administer justice and tremendous wealth and absolute power

**Example of Solomon’s wisdom**

• 2 Prostitutes – each has a baby. 1 dies. And there is disagreement over who’s baby is alive.
  o Solomon proposes to cut the baby in half
  o The real mother says no – give the baby to the other mother but let it live
  o 1Ki 3:27 Then the king gave his ruling: “Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother.” 28 When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

**Solomon’s wisdom**

1Ki 3:29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. …32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. 34 Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

• He was wiser than any man alive
• He spoke 3,000 proverbs
  o Takes traditional wisdom and state it in a very concise and memorable way, typically in 2 lines
  o Book of Proverbs has 375 of the 3000
• His songs numbered a 1,005
  o Best one is the Song of Songs
• Solomon had the means and the leisure to pursue all kinds of interest – and became an expert in all of them

**Solomon’s reign (1 Kings: 5-11)**

David forged a united monarchy from a loose confederation of twelve tribes; Solomon overlays that monarchy with a brilliant administrative structure. God grants Solomon his request for “discernment in administering,” and in doing so, Solomon builds a kingdom unlike any that had ever appeared before.

Too, Solomon carries out David’s wish to build a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem, a temple worthy of God’s name.

Throughout his reign, Solomon lives in wealth and splendor, greater than any other king on earth. In the end, though, he is the greatest failure in the Bible. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon writes his own epitaph: “Meaningless! Meaningless! . . . Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless” (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

Solomon’s reign was 970-930 B.C.

David – 1st one to capture the trade routes and control the entire distribution system for the world’s economy of his day
• Solomon inherits the united monarchy, then he lays a brilliant administrative structure over it and raises his position to world power.

**Solomon builds God’s Temple**

• Hiram, king of Tyre, provides the cedars of Lebanon for the Temple
• 1Ki 5:13 King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel
  o Forced labor – becomes a big problem – people resent it
  o Eventually causes the civil war in Israel and divides the kingdom during Rehoboam’s reign
In all of his wisdom, Solomon makes a foolish decision

- Made of cedar
  - Entire interior overlaid with 24K gold
  - Elaborately decorated and etched and embossed
- Takes 7 years to complete

Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication
- Dedicated in 959 BC
  1Ki 8:41 “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name—42 for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, 43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.
- Western Wall – Part of the retaining wall of the platform built to hold the temple
  ▪ Only thing that remains of the 2nd temple (nothing remains of Solomon’s temple)
  ▪ Holiest spot in all of Judaism
  ▪ Anyone can go there and pray – men on left, women on right
  ▪ Why do we get to go to the holiest spot in Judaism and pray? Because of this prayer by Solomon

Timeline
- 1Ki 6:1 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.
  - 970 BC Solomon began his reign
  - 480th year after the exodus, 4 years into Solomon’s reign, he began to build the temple – 966 BC
  - 966 BC – 480 years = 1446 BC as the date of the Exodus
    ▪ Internally consistent with our narrative in scripture
  - This is the anchor-point for all the dating both backward and forward

Solomon builds his own palaces
- It took Solomon 13 years to build his own palace (1Ki 7:1)
- Took 7 years for all of those men to build the Temple, which was like a Faberge Egg
  - What did Solomon’s palace look like if it took those same men 13 years to build it?
    ▪ It was grander than the House of God itself
- He had another summer palace in the cedar forests of Lebanon
- The palaces were unlike anything that anyone had ever seen anywhere (1Ki 10:16-22)
- Solomon had a huge court – he had a huge amount of daily provisions just to support his court
- Solomon is living a fabulous life – he has everything
- The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore–fig trees in the foothills. (1Ki 10:27)

Solomon’s taxation
- 1Ki 10:14 The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, 15 not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.
  - Solomon has enormous wealth
    - 666 talents = 25 tons of gold ($55 M / year) – personal checkbook from heavy taxation of the people
      ▪ Extremely high taxation which the people come to resent
    - Revenues from the trade routes – Tribute for passage of their caravans through Israelite territory
Extent of Solomon’s control

- Solomon didn’t have to fight any wars – he enjoys the benefit of what David had done
  - Peace comes at a high cost – the peace that Solomon enjoys, David and his men paid for
- Spent his time & wisdom is commerce to make money
  - 1Ki 3:20 The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. 21 And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon’s subjects all his life. …
  - 24 For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the River, from Tiphsah to Gaza, and had peace on all sides. 25 During Solomon’s lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree.

- The River – the Euphrates River
- land of the Philistines – border of the Mediterranean
- He didn’t control them as king, but through economic control
- He extended the influence of Israel all the way over into central Iraq and all the way down into Egypt through his various trade alliances
  - 1Ki 10:22 The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.
- Solomon reinforced the trade agreement with Hiram and have access to the maritime trade routes in the Mediterranean
- Solomon and Hiram also built a fleet of trading ships that operated out of the Gulf of Acaba in the Red Sea and sailed to the orient

Queen of Sheba (1Ki 10)

- The world’s greatest date
  - 1Ki 10:1 When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. 2 Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan —with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind. 3 Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. 4 When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, 5 the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.
  - 6 She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. 7 But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. 8 How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! 9 Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness.”
  - 10 And she gave the king 120 talents of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. …
  - 13 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

- Sheba was part of the mercantile kingdom that flourished in SW Arabia during this time (archaeological evidence)
  - Sheba is an Arabian queen
  - Came all the way to Jerusalem to see for herself if all that she heard was true – she’s laying it on thick
- Queen of Sheba gave huge gifts to Solomon
  - 120 talents of gold – 16 tons of gold – today gold is $1000/oz (16 oz/lb) (2,204 lb/ton) = $35 M
  - In return, King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for
- Descendants of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba
  - Any Jew has a right to citizenship in Israel, all they have to do is show up and claim it
1980s – Big influx into Israel from Ethiopia (hundreds)
Went to Israeli Supreme Court and they decided, based on this story, that they were telling the truth

Solomon fails

Davidic Covenant

- Solomon knows the if clause quite clearly – say it in his Prayer of Dedication
  1K1 8:25 “Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.’” 26 And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

- Solomon not only builds the Lord’s Temple, he also builds temples to the gods of his wives:
  - Hill of Corruption – All built within sight of the Lord’s Temple
    - Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians
    - Chemosh the vile god of Moab
    - Molech the detestable god of the people of Ammon
  - Chemosh and Molech require the human sacrifice of children as part of their worship

Dt 17 – Rules for a king

- Solomon breaks all of these rules
  Dt 17:16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” 17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

- He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold
  - Does accumulate large amounts of silver & gold through heavy taxation & trade route control ($55 M/year)
  - Built 1 Temple for the Lord, and 2 for himself
    - Spent 7 years building the Lord’s Temple
    - Spent 13 years to build his temple, then built another summer temple
    - Had another summer palace in the cedar forests of Lebanon

- Acquires great numbers of horses from Egypt
  1Ki 10:26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. … 28 Solomon’s horses were imported from Egypt

- Must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray

  1Ki 11:1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

  - Wives were his way of sealing economic trade agreements with the surrounding nations of the Middle East
    - Why should we fight? We can all make money if we’re at peace.
    - Mutual protection agreements – now we’re family and we protect each other
Harem of 1000 women
- 700 wives of royal birth
- 300 concubines

Did Solomon love these women?
- He never met most of them
- They were just the results of his trade agreements with the surrounding kings and tribal warlords

What was the result?
- 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods
- 7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.
  - Right next door to the Temple (hill east of Jerusalem = Mt. of Olives)
  - Chemosh and Molech both required the human sacrifice of children in their worship

**Solomon falls into sin**

Love for the world – These things take you away from God

1Jn 2:12 I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.
13 I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.
I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.
14 I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

**Cravings of sinful man – Lust of the flesh**

1Ki 11:3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

Pro 13:20 He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

Pro 22:24 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, 25 or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

Pro 1:10 My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.

**Lust of the eyes**
Looking at something that is not yours and wanting it

1Ki 11:3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

God gave everything to Solomon
2Ch 1:7 That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." … 10 Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?" 11 God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, 12 therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

Solomon did not acknowledge God for anything – everything was “I” - Pride

Ecc 2:3 I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. 4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man.

Pride of life – Boasting of what he has and does

Satan’s great sin – pride

Is 14: 12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

Solomon also had great pride, and because of it, he hated life

Ecc 2:9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. … 17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.

Snapshot of Solomon’s life – Fear God and do what He says

Ecc 12:13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

The Lord takes the kingdom away from Solomon

- The Lord became angry with Solomon
  - Davidic covenant – If/then clause - ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’
  - The Lord took away the kingdom because Solomon turned his back on God
  - His own kids did not know the true God

- The adversaries take political asylum in Egypt
  - Pharaoh had an economic trade agreement, not political
  - With Solomon coming to the end of his life, Pharaoh did not think that Rehoboam would be able to hold the kingdom together – Pharaoh was backing his alternate bet

- Rehoboam splits the kingdom
1Ki 12 21 And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22 But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 23 “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 24 ‘Thus says the LORD: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.”’ Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

Prophecy

1Ki 11 - Solomon’s Heart Turns from the Lord

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. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.”
- Solomon clung to these in love.
- 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.
- For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians,
- and after Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon.

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.

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 had commanded. 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 days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; 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.”

Fulfilled Prophecy

1Ki 12 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.

God gives ten tribes to Jeroboam

Ki 11 26 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.
29 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. 30 Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 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 32 (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), 33 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. 34 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. 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand and give it to you—ten tribes. 36 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. 37 So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 38 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 be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. 39 And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.””

40 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.

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**Solomon fails as a father**

2Ch 12:14

2 truths that all dads need to know

- Shepherding your kids is better than succeeding in the world – it’s the most important job
  - The difference between they (world) and we (Christians)
- Being an example is better than giving instruction
  - Solomon talked the talk (wrote the wise, instructional books of Scripture) but did not walk the walk (1000 wives, temples to other gods)
  - His son did not know God and lost it all – 3 years after Solomon died, everything that the Lord gave him was gone
  - Ja 2:17 – Faith without works is dead – live by example
- When you get to heaven, you will be held accountable for what God gave to you to steward – you family, not your job

**End of Solomon’s Life**

1Ki 11:42 Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 43 Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

- He had the greatest inheritance/legacy of anyone, ever and he squandered it on self-indulgence, fame, riches & glory
  - Solomon had everything he could ever want, but in the end, he squandered it all

- Double-edged sword
  - Wisdom to administer justice.
  - Also great wealth and untold power.
  - Solomon was not up to living with that in a proper way – Solomon sees it himself

- Solomon was a magnificent king, but made several critical strategic errors in his kingship
Forced labor for all of his building projects – 250,000 people – Lasted >20 years
Heavy taxation – 25 tons of gold / year
People were not happy – incipient rebellion built up under the surface that emerges after Solomon’s death

- Dramatic contrast between David and Solomon – Study in contrast
  - Solomon writes Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs at the end of his life
  - Ecclesiastes – Solomon’s evaluation of his entire life – Meaningless, meaningless, meaningless
  - Psalm 23 – David’s evaluation of his entire life – The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want … I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.
  - At the end of the day:
    ▪ David is a magnificent king, a profound man of God and God loves David
    ▪ Solomon squandered a magnificent legacy and was a failure, planting the seeds for the destruction of the united monarchy of Israel

- Ecclesiastes – Solomon summarizes the meaning of life
  - Solomon’s evaluation of his entire life
    ▪ Ec 1:2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”
  - How did Solomon feel?
    ▪ Ec 2:17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool?.

**A Kingdom Divided (1 Kings 12-16)**

With the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam, ascends the throne. All twelve tribes gather at Shechem to anoint him king—but they demand two concessions: 1) lower the taxes and 2) end conscripted labor. Rehoboam refuses, triggering a civil war. In 930 B.C. the united monarchy splits, ten of the twelve tribes forming the northern kingdom of Israel, with its capital in Samaria, and two of the twelve tribes forming the southern kingdom of Judah, with its capital in Jerusalem. Rehoboam reigns as king in Jerusalem (930-913 B.C.), and Jeroboam as king in Samaria (930-909 B.C.). Civil war rages. Jeroboam, knowing that if people continue traveling south to worship at the temple in Jerusalem, their loyalties will revert to the house of David, builds two places of worship in the north: one at his northern border in Dan; the other at his southern border in Bethel. Here Jeroboam places two golden calves, and he appoints a priesthood to serve them. In one of the Bible’s great understatements we read: “And this thing became a sin” (1 Kings 12: 30). In the south, people continue worshipping at the temple in Jerusalem, but they sink into idolatry and corruption. Both kingdoms begin a relentless downward slide.

**Summary**

- 930 BC Solomon dies, Rehoboam becomes king
- 39 kings between the northern and southern kingdoms
  - 19 Israel (north) – all bad
  - 20 Judah (south) – 7 are good (5 of the 7 initiate revivals), all the rest bad
- End of a bad king and introduction to the next bad king, we read: He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, walking in the ways of Jeroboam and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit.
  - Indicates that they followed in the practice of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel
- Annals of the books of the kings of Judah and Israel
  - Collection of material about the reigns of the kings
  - A lot of the material in 1st and 2nd Kings is from this source
  - Congressional records of the day

Northern kingdom of Israel - 200 years, 20 Kings, 9 families
Southern kingdom of Judah - 350 years, 20 Kings, 1 family
Levites went to Judah - Jereboam assigned his own priests for the Golden Calf worship
The Genealogy of the Kings of Ancient Israel and Judah

- Denotes transfer of power
- Indicates rulers of the united Kingdom of Israel
- Indicates rulers of Israel (after the division of the kingdom)
- Indicates rulers of Judah (after the division of the kingdom)
## Kings of Israel and Judah

<table>
<thead>
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### The Last Five Kings of Judah

1. Josiah
   - Reigned 31 years (690-660 BC)
   - Taken prisoner to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho

2. Jehoahaz (Shalum)
   - Reigned 3 months (669 BC)
   - Taken prisoner to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho

3. Jehoiakim (Jehoiakim)
   - Reigned 11 years (660-590 BC)
   - Died in Jerusalem

4. Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah)
   - Reigned 3 months (December 9, 598 - March 16, 597 BC)
   - Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar

5. Zedekiah
   - Reigned 11 years (597-589 BC)
   - Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (with Ezekiel)

722 BC Fall of Samaria to Assyria
Rehoboam

- Jeroboam returns from Egypt and 10 of the 12 tribes (Israel) view him as their spokesman
  - 1Ki 12:3 Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 “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.”
  - The tribes come together to support Rehoboam as king as long as he concedes to 2 concessions
    - Lighten the harsh labor – No more forced labor
    - Solomon used forced labor to build the Lord’s Temple and his own palaces
    - Lighten the heavy yoke he put on us – Lower the taxes
      - High taxes were used to pay for it all

- Rehoboam consults:
  - Elders who had served his father Solomon
    - 1Ki 12:7 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.”
    - But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him.
  - The young men who had grown up with him
    - 1Ki 12:10 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 put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!’ ”
      - A king is not to be loved, he is to be feared
      - My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist

- Rehoboam responds:
  - 1Ki 12:13 Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!”
    - So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

- Israel rebels:
  - 1Ki 12:16 Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: “What share 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. 17 But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.
    - The Israelites leave and do not support Rehoboam as king

- Rehoboam is furious
  - Rehoboam sends out Adoniram, who is stoned to death, and Rehoboam barely escapes with his life
    - 1Ki 12:18 Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem.
    - So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.
  - Rehoboam rallies the troops to attack
    - 1Ki 12:21 And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22 But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to
the rest of the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.”’  Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

- Fulfilled prophecy
  - 1Ki 11 - Solomon’s Heart Turns from the Lord
    - But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh:
      - women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—
      - Solomon clung to these in love.
      - 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.
    - 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.
    - 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 had commanded. 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 days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; 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.”

- The united monarchy splits into 2 kingdoms
  - Israel – North – 10 tribes – Capital in Samaria in the Central Mountain Range
  - Judah – South – 2 tribes – Capital is Jerusalem

- Civil war begins – lasts nearly 100 years
  - So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. Also in every city he put shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.
1. Jeroboam (931-910, 22 years)

1Ki 12: 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.

- 1st king of the northern kingdom of Israel - Reigns 22 years
- Triggers and leads the civil war
  - Jeroboam fortifies his cities for a long and vicious war
- Builds the alters to the golden calves at Dan and Bethel
- Abijah is one of the prophets that deal with him
- When he dies, his son Nadab succeeds him

Golden Calves at Bethel (South) and Dan (North)

1Ki 12: Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.”

28 Therefore the king asked advice, 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!”

29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.

31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

○ Jeroboam knows that if people keep coming back to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship 3 times a year, they will eventually switch sides and join Judah
  - Temple has only been standing for 29 years – a whole generation
  - Can’t say ‘You can’t go’ – what he does say is ‘It is too much for you to go’
○ Golden calf – Seen in Exodus – Powerful Egyptian goddess Hawthor - nurturing
  - He made the Golden Calves and created all the ‘normal’ worship and festivals around them
  - 30 And this thing became a sin
○ Shrine at Dan has been partially reconstructed
  - Shrine at Bethel has been completely destroyed
○ The Levites and priests leave Israel and return to Judah - made Rehoboam strong
  - Jeroboam assigns non-Levite priests at the golden calves
  - 2Ch 11: And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him [Rehoboam].

14 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.

16 And after the Levites left, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.
1Ki 13 1And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, “O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.’” 3And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.” 4So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Arrest him!” Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. 5The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. …

32 For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.” 33 After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.

Josiah becomes King in about 300 years, and that’s exactly what he’ll do

- 2Ki 23 13 Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. 14 And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men. 15 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. 16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

Ahijah’s Prophecy - Judgment on the House of Jeroboam

14 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. 2 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. …he will tell you what will become of the child.”

5 Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, “Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman.” 6 And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, “Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news.

7 Go, tell Jeroboam, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, 8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; 9 but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— 10 therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. 11 The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!’” 12 Arise therefore, go to your own
house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 13 And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14 “Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! 15 For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. 16 And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin.”

- Abijah is the one that told Jeroboam that he would be king
- Disguised because Jeroboam doesn’t think that Abijah likes him anymore, given the golden calves
- You have done more evil than all who lived before you

2. Nadab (910-909, 2 years)

1Ki 15 25 Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. 27 Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. … 31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

- Son of Jeroboam
- Reigned in Israel 2 years
- Baasha, the son of Ahijah, assassinates Nadab and becomes king

3. Baasha (909-886, 24 years)

1Ki 15 27 Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. … 33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. 34 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. …

1Ki 16 5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6 So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place. 7 And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them.

- Baasha assassinates Nadab and becomes king
- Reigned in Israel 24 years (909-886 BC)
- When he dies, his son Alah succeeds him
Baasha fulfilled Ahijah’s prophecy against the house of Jeroboam

1Ki 15 29 And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 30 because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

- Baasha was the son of Ahijah the prophet that told Jeroboam, from the Lord “I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel—slave or free.” (1Ki 14:10)
- Baasha then kills Jeroboam’s whole family, in accordance with the Word of God
- See Ahijah’s Prophecy - Judgment on the House of Jeroboam

Jehu’s prophecy against the house of Baasha

1Ki 16 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying: 2 “Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, 3 surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4 The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields.” … 7 And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them.

- Fulfilled by Alah in 1Ki 16:11-13

4. Elah (Alah) (886-885, 2 years)

1Ki 16 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah. Now his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

- Son of Baasha
- Reigned in Tirzah 2 years
- Zimri (his servant) assassinates Elah and becomes king

5. Zimri (885, 7 days)

1Ki 16 In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. Now the people who were encamped heard it said, “Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king.” So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king’s house and burned the king’s house down upon himself with fire, and died, because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason he committed, are not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

- Zimri assassinates Alah and becomes king
- Zimri burns down the palace while inside once he sees that he has lost the kingship
- Reigned in Tirzah 7 days
- Omri succeeds him as king
Zimri fulfilled Jehu’s prophecy against the house of Baasha

1Ki 16 11 Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. 12 Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.

6. Omri (885-874, 12 years) – Evil

1Ki 16 21 Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. 22 But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned. 23 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. 24 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. 25 Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who were before him. 26 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. 27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 28 So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place.

- Reigned reigned 12 years, 6 of them in Tirzah (885-874 BC)
- When he dies, his son Ahab succeeds him as king

Bought Samaria

- 1Ki 16 24 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.
- Surrounding territory becomes the territory of Samaria (in the Central Mountain Range)
- Under the next king, Samaria will become the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel
- Samaritans – To a Jew, the Samaritans are the enemy
  - Samaritans are from the Central Mountain Range of the northern kingdom
  - Rebekah against the house of David
  - They are Jews, but have broken away from Judaism and the Temple
  - Worship idols – golden calves at Dan and Bethel
  - Fought a 100 year civil war against Judah
  - Good Samaritan – oxymoron – shocking point of the story is that there is no such thing as a good Samaritan

7. Ahab (874-853, 22 years) – Very evil

1Ki 16 29 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. 30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. 31 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. 32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. 34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.
• Son of Omri
• Reigned in Samaria 22 years (874-853 BC)
• Very powerful king based on the archeology and history of the northern kingdom of Israel
  o 1st and 2nd Kings is told from the point of view of the southern kingdom of Judah
  o From this perspective, Ahab is a very weak king
    ▪ Wimp
    ▪ Afraid
    ▪ Not a very strong king/person
• God keeps demonstrating to Ahab that He is the Lord
  o Mt. Carmel against the prophets of Baal
  o Defeat of the Syrians
• Ahab in Moby Dick refers to the Ahab of the Bible
  o Need to understand the Ahab of the Bible to understand the Ahab in Moby Dick
  o End of Moby Dick – Ahab attached to the whale on the rampage – same as Ahab tied in chariot – jostling
• Particularly bad king
  o Worship of the Golden Calves at Dan and Bethel (trivial sin)
  o Worship of Baal and Asherah (primary god in the land of Canaan), including a temple in Samaria
    ▪ Ahab built a huge Temple to Baal in Samaria
    ▪ Judah has Temple of God, Israel has temple of Baal
    ▪ Can start to see why the Jews hated the Samaritans
  o When the kingship and the priesthood become corrupt, God often raises a great prophet to counter them.
    ▪ Elijah is that prophet here
• When he dies, his son Ahaziah succeeds him as king

Jericho curse fulfilled (1Ki 16)
Jos 6:26 At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates.” (1406 BC)

... 1Ki 16:34 In Ahab’s time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun. (930 BC)

Elijah confronts the Prophets of Baal (1Ki 18)
See Elijah challenges the 450 Baal prophets

Aram [Syria] attacks Samaria (1Ki 20)
1Ki 20:13 Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and announced, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

• Ahab assembled the rest of the Israelites and attacked at noon while Ben–Hadad (king of Aram) and the 32 kings allied with him were in their tents getting drunk.

• Ben–Hadad loses the battle, but replaces his army and strikes again in the spring
  o The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside. – they were vastly outnumbered
1Ki 20:28 The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because the Arameans think the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD.’”

- The Israelites inflicted a hundred thousand casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day. 30 The rest of them escaped to the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty–seven thousand of them. And Ben–Hadad fled to the city and hid in an inner room.

1Ki 20:31 His officials said to him, “Look, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful. Let us go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads. Perhaps he will spare your life.” . . . When Ben–Hadad came out, Ahab had him come up into his chariot. 34 “I will return the cities my father took from your father,” Ben–Hadad offered. “You may set up your own market areas in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.” Ahab said, “On the basis of a treaty I will set you free.” So he made a treaty with him, and let him go.

- Ben–Hadad pleads for mercy
  - Promises to return previously conquered land
  - Agree to an economic trade agreement – enough fighting, let’s both make money
    - Syrian marketplace was found recently outside the walls of Dan – now an archaeological site
    - Pottery and coins from this period – proves the story
    - Also with this archeological site – stone from the wall with a reference to David – only reference to David outside the Bible
  - Peace lasts 3 years – Ben-Hadad does not return Ramoth Gilead

1Ki 20:41 Then the prophet … said to the king, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.’”

Naboth’s Vineyard (1Ki 21)

1Ki 21 7 Then Jezebel his wife said to him, “You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

8 And she wrote letters in Ahab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who were dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9 She wrote in the letters, saying,

Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with high honor among the people; 10 and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, “You have blasphemed God and the king.” Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 So the men of his city, the elders and nobles who were inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, … 15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, “Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” 16 So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

- Naboth had a vineyard close to Ahab’s palace in Samaria
  - Ahab offered to buy the vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, but Naboth refused
  - Ahab went back to his palace and sulked around

- Jezebel, disgusted with Ahab’s behavior, plotted and murdered Naboth
  - 1Ki 21:16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth’s vineyard.

- Elijah confronts Ahab
1Ki 21:17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 18 “Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth’s vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. 19 Say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?’ Then say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!’”

20 Ahab said to Elijah, “So you have found me, my enemy!” “I have found you,” he answered, “because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD. 21 ‘I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. 22 I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.’

23 “And also concerning Jezebel the LORD says: ‘Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.’ 24 “Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country.”

27 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly.

Israel attacks Aram [Syria] – Ahab dies (1Ki 22, 2Ch 18)

• Ben–Hadad did not return Ramoth Gilead to the Israelites (as promised)

• Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, arranges a tentative peace between Israel and Judah
  o Civil war has been raging for almost 100 years – here is where it ends

• With the support of Jehoshaphat, Ahab goes to war against Aram [Syria] at Ramoth Gilead
  o Jehoshaphat suggests seeking the advice of the Lord
  ▪ Ahab’s 400 Baal prophets ensure success – they tell the Lord exactly what he wants to hear
  ▪ Jehoshaphat insists on a real prophet of the Lord

Micaiah’s prophecy of Ahab’s death

• Micaiah is brought from the dungeons – he prophesies against Ahab

1Ki 22 19 Then Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. 20 And the LORD said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 21 Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ 22 The LORD said to him, ‘In what way?’ So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the LORD said, ‘You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.’ 23 Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you.”

• Ahab has Jehoshaphat enter battle as the king, but at random, Ahab is killed

1Ki 22:29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 30 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

31 Now the king of Aram had ordered his thirty–two chariot commanders, “Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel.” 32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, “Surely this is
the king of Israel.” So they turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat cried out, 33 the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him.

34 But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, “Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I’ve been wounded.” 35 All day long the battle raged, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot, and that evening he died. …

37 So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried him there. 38 They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed), and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the LORD had declared.

Jezebel

- Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon
  - 1Ki 16 31 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.
  - The name ‘Ethbaal’ means ‘Baal is with him’
  - He was a high priest of Astarte, Babylonian mysteries in the Zidonionite Kingdom
  - Became king by murdering his predecessor, and ruled for 32 years

- Jezebel and her family were devoted Baal followers
  - Jezebel aggressively promoted worship of the Canaanite god Baal during the time of Elijah and Elisha in 1 & 2 Kings
  - Jezebel was a prophetess of Baal
  - She was a temple prostitute - and she loved those pleasures.
  - She had 450 Baal prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah (both started in Babylon)
    - 1Ki 18 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.”
  - She also killed many of the prophets of the true God (1Ki 18:4)
    - 1Ki 18 4 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.) … 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 cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “Elijah is here.” ’ He will kill me!”

- Jezebel married king Ahab to seal a profitable trade alliance between Israel and Phoenicia (now Lebanon)
  - According to law, a king was never supposed to marry a pagan priestess
  - When she came into Israel, she brought all that paganism with her.
    - Jezebel was intent in enforcing Baal upon all of Israel
    - She set up temples of Baal and started child sacrifices to Baal
    - Little girls were put up as prostitutes in the Pagan temples – these people were child molesters and murderers
  - She and king Ahab usher in the worst period in Old Testament history.
Children – Ahaziah, Jehoram, and Athaliah

- Jezebel’s murder

2Ki 9:30 Now 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. Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, “Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?” And he looked up at the window, and said, “Who is on my side? Who?” So two or three eunuchs looked out at him. Then he said, “Throw her down.” So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot. Then he said, “Go now, see to this accursed woman, and bury her, for she was a king’s daughter.” So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, “This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as refuse on the surface of the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, ‘Here lies Jezebel.’”

- 1Ki 21:23 “And also concerning Jezebel the LORD says: ‘Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.’” [Elijah]

8. Ahaziah (853-852, 2 years)

51 Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

- Son of Ahab
- Reigned in Samaria 2 years (874-853)
- When he dies, his brother Joram succeeds him as king

- Served and worshiped Baal
  - 1Ki 22:53 He served and worshiped Baal and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger
  - 2Ki 1:2 Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, “Go and consult Baal–Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury.” … 16 He [Elijah] told the king, “This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal–Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!” 17 So he died, according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king …

9. Joram (Jehoram) (852-841, 12 years)

2Ki 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. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. 3 Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.

- Son of Ahab, brother of Ahaziah
- Reigned in Samaria 12 years (852-841)
- Assassinated by Jehu – Fulfilled prophecy by Elijah
Moab attacks Israel (2Ki 3)

2Ki 3 5 But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. 6 So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. 7 Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, “The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?” And he said, “I will go up; …

9 So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them. 10 And the king of Israel said, “Alas! For the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab.”

11 But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?” So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat is here; …

12 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. …

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. 15 But now bring me a musician.” Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16 And he said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Make this valley full of ditches.’ 17 For thus says the LORD: ‘You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.’ 18 And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. 19 Also you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones.” 20 Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered; and they stood at the border. 22 Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood. 23 And they said, “This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!”

24 So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered their land, killing the Moabites. 25 Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth intact. However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.

26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indignation against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to their own land.

Battle against Syria (2Ki 8)

2Ki 8 28 Now he [Ahaziah] went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29 Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

Joram’s death – Fulfilled prophecy by Elijah

1Ki 21:17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 18 “Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth’s vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. 19 Say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?’ Then say to him, ‘This is
what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!’” … 21 ‘I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. 22 I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.’ …

27 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. 28 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 29 “Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.”

- See Jehu kills Joram and Ahaziah (Descendants of Ahab)

10. Jehu (841-814, 12 years) – Anointed by God

2Ki 10 29 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. 30 And the LORD said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” 31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 35 So Jehu rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place. 36 And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

- Anointed by God, so he assassinates Joram to become king
- Reigned in Samaria 28 years (841-814)
- When he dies, his son Jehoahaz succeeds him

- Did God’s Will
  - Jehu is a tough fellow
    - Kills the 2 kings of the north and the south
    - Kills Jezebel
    - Slaughters all the descendants of Ahab
    - Puts to death all the prophets of Baal
  - Some may call him a psychopath, mass murderer, conqueror
  - 2Ki 10:30 The LORD said to Jehu, “… you have done well in accomplishing what is right in my eyes.”

Jehu is anointed King

2Ki 9 6 “…‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I have anointed you [Jehu] king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. 7 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. 8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free. 9 So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. 10 The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.’ ”

- Elisha finishes the last of the 3 tasks that Elijah was given – anointing Jehu the king of Israel
- The rest of the military supports Jehu
  - 2Ki 9:13 They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

Jehu kills Joram and Ahaziah (Descendants of Ahab) – Fullfilled prophecy

- Jezebel and all the males of Ahab’s family are killed by Jehu at the command of God

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• Joram king of Israel [son of Ahab] killed
  2Ki 8 29 Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrains had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

  2Ki 9 14 So Joram … conspired against Joram. … 16 So Joram rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there; and Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram. …

21 … Then Joram king of Israel [son of Ahab] and Ahaziah king of Judah [grandson of Ahab] went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22 Now it happened, when Joram 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?” 23 Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, “Treachery, Ahaziah!” 24 Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25 Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, “Pick him up, and throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the LORD laid this burden upon him: 26 ‘Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,’ says the LORD, ‘and I will repay you in this plot,’ says the LORD. Now therefore, take and throw him on the plot of ground, according to the word of the LORD.”

• Ahaziah king of Judah [grandson of Ahab] killed
  2Ki 9 27 But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled by the road to Beth Haggan. So Jehu pursued him, and said, “Shoot him also in the chariot.” And they shot him at the Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there. 28 And his servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the City of David.

**Jehu kills Jezebel – Fullfilled prophecy**

• Jehzebel’s Violent Death
  2Ki 9 30 Now 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. 31 Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, “Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?” 32 And he looked up at the window, and said, “Who is on my side? Who?” So two or three eunuchs looked out at him. 33 Then he said, “Throw her down.” So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot. 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.” 35 So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. 36 Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, “This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as refuse on the surface of the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, “Here lies Jezebel.” ’”

  1Ki 21:23 “And also concerning Jezebel the LORD says: ‘Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.’ [Elijah]

**Jehu kills Ahab’s 70 sons – Fullfilled prophecy**

  2Ki 10 6 Now the king’s sons, seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who were rearing them. 7 So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king’s sons and slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel. … 10 Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah.” 11 So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

• The people that killed the princes were the very ones that were to protect and care for them
Jehu kills Ahaziah’s Forty-two Brothers – Fullfilled prophecy

2Ki 10:12 On the way [to Samaria], at Beth Eked of the Shepherds, 13 Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, “Who are you?” So they answered, “We are the brothers of Ahaziah; we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother.” 14 And he said, “Take them alive!” So they took them alive, and killed them at the well of Beth Eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.

Jehu kills the rest of Ahab’s family – Fullfilled prophecy

2Ki 10:15 Now when he departed from there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab, ... 16 Then he said, “Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD.” So they had him ride in his chariot. 17 And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to Elijah.

Jehu kills the ministers of Baal

18 Then Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much. 19 Now therefore, call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live.” But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal. 20 And Jehu said, “Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal.” So they proclaimed it. 21 Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. So they came into the temple of Baal, and the temple of Baal was full from one end to the other. 22 And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, “Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal.” So he brought out vestments for them. 23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal, “Search and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you, but only the worshipers of Baal.” 24 So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed for himself eighty men on the outside, and had said, “If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, whoever lets him escape, it shall be his life for the life of the other.”

25 Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, “Go in and kill them; let no one come out!” And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the guards and the officers threw them out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. 26 And they brought the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. 27 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. 28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

2Ki 10:18 Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, “Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. 19 Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his ministers and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come will no longer live.” But Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the ministers of Baal.

20 Jehu said, “Call an assembly in honor of Baal.” So they proclaimed it. 21 Then he sent word throughout Israel, and all the ministers of Baal came; not one stayed away. They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full from one end to the other. 22 And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, “Bring robes for all the ministers of Baal.” So he brought out robes for them.

23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Recab went into the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the ministers of Baal, “Look around and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you—only ministers of Baal.” 24 So they went in to make sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had posted eighty men outside with this warning: “If one of you lets any of the men I am placing in your hands escape, it will be your life for his life.”
25 As soon as Jehu had finished making the burnt offering, he ordered the guards and officers: “Go in and kill them; let no one escape.” So they cut them down with the sword. The guards and officers threw the bodies out and then entered the inner shrine of the temple of Baal. 26 They brought the sacred stone out of the temple of Baal and burned it. 27 They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal, and people have used it for a latrine to this day. 28 So Je‌hu destroyed Baal worship in Israel.

11. Jehoahaz (814-798, 17 years)

2Ki 13 1 In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He did not depart from them. … 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 9 So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Joash his son reigned in his place.

- Son of Jehu
- Reigned in Samaria 17 years (814-798)
- Israel is impoverished and wobbling – barely holding together
- Steady decline from here – each king is worse than the one before
- Jehoash his son succeeded him as king

Hazael (King of Syria) oppresses Israel

2Ki 10 32 In those days [when Jehu was king] the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Israelites throughout their territory 33 east of the Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aror by the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.

2Ki 13 3 Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, all their days. 4 So Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5 Then the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before. 6 Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin, but walked in them; and the wooden image also remained in Samaria. 7 For He left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing. … 22 Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz.

12. Jehoash (Joash) (798 -782, 16 years)

2Ki 13 10 In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years. 11 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, but walked in them. 12 Now the rest of the acts of Joash, all that he did, and his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 13 So Joash rested with his fathers. Then Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

- Son of Jehoahaz
- Reigned in Samaria 16 years (798 -782)
- Elisha, the last of the prophets for Israel, dies during the reign of Jehoash
- Jeroboam II (his son) succeeded him as king
Elisha’s promise to defeat Syria

2Ki 13:14 Now Elisha had been suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. “My father! My father!” he cried. “The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”

15 Elisha said, “Get a bow and some arrows,” and he did so. 16 “Take the bow in your hands,” he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands. 17 “Open the east window,” he said, and he opened it. “Shoot!” Elisha said, and he shot. “The LORD’s arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!” Elisha declared. “You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek.”

18 Then he said, “Take the arrows,” and the king took them. Elisha told him, “Strike the ground.” He struck it three times and stopped. 19 The man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times.” …

22 Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. 23 But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence. 24 Hazael king of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad his son succeeded him as king. 25 Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz recaptured from Ben-Hadad son of Hazael the towns he had taken in battle from his father Jehoahaz. Three times Jehoash defeated him, and so he recovered the Israelite towns.

Israel defeats Judah

• See Israel defeats Judah

13. Jeroboam II (782 -753, 41 years)

2Ki 14:21 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years. 24 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did—his might, how he made war, and how he recaptured for Israel, from Damascus and Hamath, what had belonged to Judah—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 29 So Jeroboam [l]rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

• Son of Jehoash
• Reigned in Samaria 41 years (782 -753)
• Zechariah (his son) succeeded him as king

Restored the boundaries of Israel

2Ki 10:32 In those days [when Jehu was king] the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Israelites throughout their territory 33 east of the Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aror by the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.

2Ki 14:25 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 of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hepher. 26 For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter; and whether bond or
free, there was no helper for Israel. 27 And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

14. Zechariah (753 -752, 6 months)

2Ki 1 8 In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. 9 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 10 Then Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck and killed him in front of the people; and he reigned in his place. 11 Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 12 This was the word of the LORD which He spoke to Jehu, saying, “Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” And so it was.

- Son of Jeroboam II
- Reigned in Samaria 6 months (753 -752)
- Assassinated by Shallum son of Jabesh
  - Ends the 4th generation of Jehu that the Lord promised
    - 2Ki 10 30 And the LORD said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.”

15. Shallum (752, 1 month)

2Ki 1 13 Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him; and he reigned in his place. 15 Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he led, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

- Assassinated Zechariah
- Reigned in Samaria 1 month (752)
- Assassinated by Menahem, son of Gadi

16. Menahem (752-742, 10 years)

2Ki 1 17 In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. 18 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. … 21 Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 22 So Menahem rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

- Assassinated Shallum
- Reigned in Samaria 10 years (752-742)
- Pekahiah his son succeeded him as king

Israel attacked Tiphsah

2Ki 1 16 Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphsah, all who were there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked it. All the women there who were with child he ripped open.
2Ki 15 462

**Assyria attacked Israel – Paid to go away**

2Ki 15 19 Pul king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. 20 And Menahem exacted the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land.

**17. Pekahiah (742 -740, 2 years)**

2Ki 15 23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years. 24 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 25 Then Pekah the son of Remaliah, an officer of his, conspired against him and killed him in Samaria, in the citadel of the king’s house, along with Argob and Arieh; and with him were fifty men of Gilead. He killed him and reigned in his place.

- Son of Menahem
- Reigned in Samaria 2 years (742 -740)
- Assassinated by Pekah son of Remaliah

**18. Pekah (740 -732, 8 years)**

2Ki 15 27 In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years. 28 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. … 30 Then Hoshea the son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed him; so he reigned in his place in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

- Assassinated Pekahiah
- Reigned in Samaria 8 years (740 -732)
- Assassinated by Hoshea son of Elah

**Assyria attacked Israel – Took land and took captives to Assyria**

2Ki 15 29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria.

**Pekah makes an alliance with Syria to attack Judah**

2Ki 16 5 Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to make war; and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome him.

- As the combined armies of Israel and Syria approached Jerusalem, it looked like everything would be lost. Ahaz was challenged to trust God when things were bad, and it looked like soon, all would be lost.

**19. Hoshea (732 -712, 9 years)**

2Ki 17 1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. 2 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him.

- Assassinated Pekah
- Reigned in Samaria 9 years (732 -712)
**Assyria Conquers Israel**

2Ki 17 ³ Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser’s vassal and had paid him tribute. ⁴ But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. ⁵ The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

2Ki 18 ⁹ In King Hezekiah’s fourth year, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it. ¹⁰ At the end of three years the Assyrians took it. So Samaria was captured in Hezekiah’s sixth year, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. ¹¹ The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in towns of the Medes. ¹² This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant—all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out.

- Shalmaneser attacks
- Hoshea waves the white flag and gives up
  - He agrees to be a vassal king of the Assyrian Empire
- On the sly, he sends a delegation to Egypt to form a coalition to fight against Assyria
  - King of Egypt knows that if Assyria has taken the northern kingdom of Israel, they will then take Judah, then Egypt

**Assyria Conquers Israel in 722 BC (2 Kings 17)**

With the death of Ahab and Jezebel, Jehu (841-814 B.C.) murders all of Ahab’s family, consolidating power in the north. Meanwhile in the south, Athaliah (the only female king) murders her grandchildren and crawls over their butchered bodies to seize the throne, initiating a 7-year reign of terror. With the ensuing chaos, both kingdoms weaken and begin to crumble.

Black storm clouds gather in the north as Assyria (Northern Iraq of today) emerges on the stage as a world power. Seeing his opportunity, Shalmaneser V king of Assyria (727-722 B.C.), attacks Israel in the winter of 722 B.C., capturing Samaria and deporting the survivors to Assyria. His successor Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) mops up, taking credit for the victory.
Shalmaneser captures Samaria

- 722 BC
  - 9th year of Hoshea ends the 3 year siege and capture of Samaria
  - 10 of the 12 tribes comes to an end – only Judah and Benjamin remain
    - Hezekiah is king of Judah at this time
- Shalmaneser captures Samaria
  - All the people that survive the attack are deported to Assyria where they are taken captive.

Why does this happen?

- Israel Exiled Because of Sin

  2Ki 18 12 This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant—all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out.

  2Ki 17 7 All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods 8 and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. 10 They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. 11 At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that aroused the LORD’s anger. 12 They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, “You shall not do this.” 13 The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in
accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.”

14 But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the LORD their God. 15 They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do.”

16 They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. 17 They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sought omens and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

18 So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, 19 and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. 20 Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

21 When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin. 22 The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them 23 until the LORD removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there.

- When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin.
  - The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them until the LORD removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria.

- They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced.
  - They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, “You shall not do this.”
  - They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole.
  - They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal.

- The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right.

- They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger.
  - They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire.
  - They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree.
  - At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done.
  - They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.
  - From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns.

- The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.”
  - But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God.
  - They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them.
They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless.
They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do.

- So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence.
  - Only the tribe of Judah was left, and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God.
    - They followed the practices Israel had introduced.
  - Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

**God Foretold this**

- The Israelites have not entered the promised land. They have been in the wilderness for 40 years. The generation that left Egypt has died, and Moses is telling the story to the generation that is about to go into the Promised Land.
  - Dt 4:25 After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and arousing his anger, 26 I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. 27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the LORD will drive you. 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and
- God uses the king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) as the instrument for His judgment on the Israelites
Judah

1Ki 1 22 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. 23 For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. 24 And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

- Baal is the primary god in this land – Asherah is his counterpart
  - Baal – God of the life-force
  - Worship involved ritual sex on a hilltop under a spreading tree with an Asherah pole (phallic symbol sitting on top of the hill)
  - Big attraction to the Israelites – go to the Temple and be told ‘Don’t do this, that and the other thing’ or have ritual sex on a hilltop?
    - Rehoboam permitted it to happen and turned a blind eye from it

1. Rehoboam (931-913, 17 years)

2Ch 1 13 Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king; and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. 14 And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD. 15 The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. 16 So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then Abijah his son reigned in his place.

- Rehoboam was the son of Solomon
- He was 41 years old when he became king of Judah
- Reigns 17 years in Jerusalem (930-913 BC)
- When he dies, his son, Abijah, succeeds him

Egypt attacks (2Ch 12)

2Ch 12 1 Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him. 2 And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, 3 … 4 And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.

5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, “Thus says the LORD: ‘You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak.’ ”

6 So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, “The LORD is righteous.” 7 Now when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, “They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8 Nevertheless they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations.”

9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house; he took everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made. 10 Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king’s house. 11 And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard would go and bring them out; then they would take them back into the
guardroom. 12 When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy him completely; and things also went well in Judah.

- Egypt sided with Jeroboam
  - Jeroboam took political asylum there from Solomon
  - Although a treaty with Solomon, Solomon was about to die and Pharaoh knew that Rehoboam would not be strong enough to hold Israel together - was hedging his bets on Jeroboam
- Jeroboam is king in the north and Rehoboam is a very weak king in the south – Egypt attacks the south
  - So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house; he took everything.
- With David, his men were armed to the teeth all the time
  - With Rehoboam, the weapons were checked out, used ceremonially and checked back in
  - Rehoboam did not trust anyone with a pointy object anywhere near him

2. Abijah (913-911, 3 years)

1Ki 15 1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. [the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah (2Ch 13:2) 3 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. 4 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; 5 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. 6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 So Abijam rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place.

- Son of Rehoboam
- 1Ki 15:6 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout Abijah’s lifetime.
- Reigns for 3 years (913-910 BC)
- When he dies, his son Asa succeeds him

Civil War with Israel

2Ch 13 2 And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah set the battle in order with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand choice men. Jeroboam also drew up in battle formation against him with eight hundred thousand choice men, mighty men of valor.

4 Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, “Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: 5 Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. 7 Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. 8 And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you are a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods. 9 Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests, like the peoples of other lands, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of things that are not gods? 10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites attend to their duties. 11 And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; they also set the showbread in order on the pure gold table, and the lampstand of gold with its lamps to
burn every evening; for we keep the command of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him. ¹² Now look, God Himself is with us as our head, and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!”

¹³ But Jeroboam caused an ambush to go around behind them; so they were in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them. ¹⁴ And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line was at both front and rear; and they cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded the trumpets. ¹⁵ Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. ¹⁶ And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand. ¹⁷ Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter; so five hundred thousand choice men of Israel fell slain. ¹⁸ Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.

¹⁹ But Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephrain with its villages. ²⁰ So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died.

²¹ But Abijah grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. ²² Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings are written in the annals of the prophet Iddo.

### 3. Asa (911-870, 41 years) – Good

I Ki 15 ⁹ In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. ¹⁰ And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother’s name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. ¹¹ Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David.

²³ The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴ So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

- Son of Abijah
- Good king, despite not removing the high places – they were very popular among the people
  - I Ki 15 ¹² And he banished the perverted persons from the land,
  - and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.
  - Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron.
  - He also brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils.
  - 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.
  - ²⁴ He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment.
- Illness and Death of Asa
  - ²² The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴ So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.
- Reigned in Jerusalem 41 years
- When he dies, his son Jehoshaphat succeeds him
2Ch 15 1 Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. 2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. 3 For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; 4 but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. 7 But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!”

8 And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and

- removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim;
- and he restored the altar of the LORD that was before the vestibule of the LORD.

9 Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10 So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11 And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. 12 Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; 13 and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14 Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams’ horns. 15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

16 Also he removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah; and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned it by the Brook Kidron. 17 But the high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days.

18 He also brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. 19 And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

No war – Building/fortifying

2Ch 14 6 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. 7 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. 8 And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand 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.

Civil War with Israel – Asa’s Treaty with Syria

- Civil war continued throughout his reign
  - Baasha, king of the north, moves to the southern border and fortified Ramah – built a wall
    - Getting ready to escalate the civil war
  - He attacks Judah – what can Asa do?
    - Help from Egypt (south)? No – they have already sided with Israel
    - Syria (Aram in the Old Testament) – north of Israel
  - Asa makes an alliance with Ben–Hadad, king of Syria
    - Asa paid him in silver and gold
2Ch 16 1 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. 2 Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries 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, 3 “Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.”

4 So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. 5 Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work. 6 Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

1Ki 15 22 Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

Hanani’s Message to Asa

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. 8 Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 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.” 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.

Ethiopia attacks

2Ch 14 9 Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. … 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!”

13 So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people who were with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army. And they carried away very much spoil. 14 Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. 15 They also attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

4. Jehoshaphat (870-848, 25 years) – Good

1Ki 22 41 Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 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. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 44 Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46 And the rest of the perverted persons, who remained in the
days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. There was then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king.

Jehoshaphat made merchant ships to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber. Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Let my servants go with your servants in the ships.” But Jehoshaphat would not. And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

2Ch 17:1 Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place, and strengthened himself against Israel. 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.

3 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. Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.

7 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, Nathaniah, Zebediah, 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.

10 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. Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats.

12 So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah. He had much property in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valor, were in Jerusalem.

- Son of Asa
- 35 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 25 years
- When he dies, his son Jehoram succeeds him

Ended the civil war with Israel
- Made peace with the king of Israel, but alliances with the bad kings of Israel created problems for Judah

Israel attacks Aram
- Joins Ahab in battle against Aram [Syria] (See Israel attacks Aram)
  - Ahab is killed
- Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer, meets Jehoshaphat when he returns
  - 2Ch 19:1 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you. Nevertheless good things are found
in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek
God.”

Moab attacks Israel

• Joins Joram in battle against Moab (See Moab attacks Israel)

Moab and Ammon attack Judah

2Ch 20 1 It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides
the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, “A great
multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar” (which is En
Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all
Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek
the Lord.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new
court, 6 and said: “O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the
kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand
You? 7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to
the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for
Your name, saying, 9 ‘If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before
this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You
will hear and save.’ 10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let
Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy
them— 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to
inherit. 12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming
against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord. 14 Then the Spirit of
the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a
Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, “Listen, all you of Judah and you
inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed
because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. They
will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of
Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of
the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against
them, for the Lord is with you.”

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem
bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the
children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat
stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you
shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.” 21 And when he had consulted with the people,
he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out
before the army and were saying: “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.”

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and
Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood
up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the
inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. 24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the
wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. 27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. 28 So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. 29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

35 After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. 36 And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37 But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works.” Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

5. Jehoram (848-841, 8 years)

2Ki 8 16 Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat having been king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. 17 He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of His servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.

20 In his days Edom revolted against Judah’s authority, and made a king over themselves. 21 So Joram went to Zair, and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. 22 Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah’s authority to this day. And Libnah revolted at that time.

23 Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 24 So Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

- Son of Jehoshaphat, son-in-law of Ahab
- Married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel
- 32 years old when he became king
- Killed his brothers
- 2Ch 21 4 Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also others of the princes of Israel.
- Reigned in Jerusalem 8 years
- Elijah’s prophecy against Jehoram
- Philistines and the Arabians invaded Judah and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king’s house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.
- After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19 Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain.
- When he dies, his son Ahaziah succeeds him
Edom revolts against Judah

2Ch 21 8 In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 9 So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. 10 Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. 11 Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray.

Elijah's prophecy against Jehoram

2Ch 21 12 And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, 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, 13 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, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, who were better than yourself. 14 behold, the LORD will strike you people with a serious affliction—you your children, your wives, and all your possessions; 15 and you will become very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.

Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. 17 And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz (Ahaziah), the youngest of his sons.

After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19 Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers.

6. Ahaziah (841, 1 year)

28 Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29 Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

2Ch 22 1 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his [Jehoram's] youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned. 2 Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. 3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. 4 Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.
Son of Jehoram and Athaliah (daughter of Ahab)
Killed by Jehu at the same time as Joram, King of Israel
Reigned in Jerusalem 1 year

Battle against Syria
Joins Joram in battle against Syria (See Battle against Syria)

2Ch 22 5 He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.

2Ch 22 6 Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wound which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick. His going to Joram was God’s occasion for Ahaziah’s downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah’s brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, “because,” they said, “he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart.” So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.

7. Athaliah (841-835, 6 years) – Only female, very bad

2Ki 11 1 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah; so he was not killed. 3 He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

Joash Crowned King of Judah
4 In the seventh year … Jehoiada brought out the king’s son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, “Long live the king!”

Death of Athaliah
13 When Athaliah heard the noise made by the guards and the people, she went to the people at the temple of the LORD. She looked and there was the king, standing by the pillar, as the custom was. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her robes and called out, “Treason! Treason!”

15 Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops: “Bring her out between the ranks and put to the sword anyone who follows her.” For the priest had said, “She must not be put to death in the temple of the LORD.” So they seized her as she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

17 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the people, that they should be the LORD’s people, and also between the king and the people. And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down. They thoroughly broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD. Then he took the captains of hundreds, the bodyguards, the escorts, and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and went by way of the gate of the escorts to the king’s house. Then he sat on the throne of the kings. So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword in the king’s house.

476
• Killed all of her grandchildren, who were heirs to the throne, to become queen
  o Jehosheba – Joash’s aunt, Athaliah’s sister – saves Ahaziah’s baby Joash and takes him to the Temple

• She was the only female king in all of Judah and Israel
  o She has a reign of terror for 6
  o She is the absolute worst of the bad girls of the Bible

• Athaliah is killed by order of Jehoiada the priest when Joash became king

8. Joash (Jehoash) (835-796, 40 years) – Good

2Ki 12 1 In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3 But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. …

19 Now the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 20 And his servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of the Millo, which goes down to Silla. 21 For Jozachar the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, struck him. So he died, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

• 7 years old when he became king
• Reigned in Jerusalem 40 years
• Assassinated by his officials (Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer)
• When he dies, his son Amaziah succeeds him

Joash becomes king (2Ki 11)

2Ki 11 1 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah; so he was not killed. 3 He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

4 In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the commanders … made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the LORD. Then he showed them the king’s son. 5 He commanded them … 8 Station yourselves around the king, each of you with weapon in hand. Anyone who approaches your ranks is to be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes.” 9 The commanders of units of a hundred did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. …

12 Jehoiada brought out the king’s son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, “Long live the king!” … 21 Joash was seven years old when he began to reign.

• Jehoiada orders massive protection for the king
Repairs the Temple (2Ki 12)

2Ki 12 4 And Jehoash said to the priests, “All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the LORD—each man’s census money, each man’s assessment money—and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the LORD, let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found.”

6 Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, that the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. 7 So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests, and said to them, “Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take more money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple.” 8 And the priests agreed that they would neither receive more money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.

9 Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the LORD; and the priests who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the LORD. 10 So it was, whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king’s scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD. 11 Then they gave the money, which had been apportioned, into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the LORD, 12 and to masons and stonecutters, and for buying timber and hewn stone, to repair the damage of the house of the LORD, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. 13 However there were not made for the house of the LORD basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling-bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver, from the money brought into the house of the LORD. 14 But they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the LORD with it. 15 Moreover they did not require an account from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to workmen, for they dealt faithfully. 16 The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD. It belonged to the priests.

- Jehoiada was a good priest - He mentored the young king and brought him up in the right way
  - Casts a shadow – when Jehoiada didn’t instruct him, he didn’t do well
- Joash ordered for the Temple to be repaired
  - 23 years later, the Temple was still not repaired
  - The money that was being collected was not being used to repair the temple – the priests were corrupt
  - Jehoiada is a good priest, but all the other priests are corrupt
- Jehoiada makes a chest that money could go into, but not out of easily
- The money collected was used to fix structural damage to the Temple

Apostasy of Joash (2Ch 24)

2Ch 24 5 But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; ... 17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. 19 Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

Zechariah’s prophecy and stoning

2Ch 24 20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them. “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.’ ” 21 So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, “The LORD look on it, and repay!”
Syria Threatens Jerusalem

2Ki 12 17 Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. 18 And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king’s house, and sent them to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

2Ch 24 23 So it happened in the spring of the year that the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. 24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.

- Joash tries to pay off Hazael, king of Syria, to keep him from attacking Jerusalem

Death of Joash

2Ch 24 25 And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died. And they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.

9. Amaziah (796-767, 29 years) – Good

2Ki 14 1 In the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 3 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he did everything as his father Joash had done. 4 However the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

17 Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 19 And they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 20 Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 22 He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

- Son of Joash
- 25 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 29 years (796-767)
- Jerusalem conspired against Amaziah and killed him
- When he dies, his son Azariah succeeds him

Executed his servants who had murdered his father (2Ki 14, 2Ch 25)

2Ch 25 3 Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. 4 However he did not execute their children, but did as it is written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, “The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin.”
Judah defeats Edom and takes their gods

2Ch 25  Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to their fathers’ houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them to be three hundred thousand choice men, able to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. But a man of God came to him, saying, “O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel—not with any of the children of Ephraim. But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! Even so, God shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has power to help and to overthrow.”

9 Then Amaziah said to the man of God, “But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?”

And the man of God answered, “The LORD is able to give you much more than this.” So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

11 Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir. Also the children of Judah took captive ten thousand alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces.

13 But as for the soldiers of the army which Amaziah had discharged, so that they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much spoil.

14 Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, “Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?”

16 So it was, as he talked with him, that the king said to him, “Have we made you the king’s counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?”

Then the prophet ceased, and said, “I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice.”

Israel defeats Judah (2Ki 14, 2Ch 25)

2Ch 25 17 Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, “Come, let us face one another in battle.”

18 And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, “The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son as wife’; and a wild beast that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to boast. Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall—you and Judah with you?”

20 But Amaziah would not heed, for it came from God, that He might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought the gods of Edom. So Joash king of Israel went out; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles
that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king’s house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

Death of Amaziah (2Ki 14, 2Ch 25)

2Ki 14 17 Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 19 And they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 20 Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

10. Uzziah (Azariah) (767-740, 52 years) – Good

2Ki 15 1 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king.

2Ch 26 1 Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. … 3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5 He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

- Son of Amaziah
- 16 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 52 years (767-740)
- When he dies, his son Jotham succeeds him

Defeated the Philistines

2Ch 26 6 Now he went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities around Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7 God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. 8 Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong.

Restored Judah (2Ch 26)

2Ch 26 7 He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king [Amaziah] rested with his fathers.

9 And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. 10 Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; he also had farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil.

11 Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king’s captains. 12 The total number of chief officers of the mighty men of valor was two thousand six hundred. 13 And under their authority was an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears,
helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.

The Penalty for Uzziah’s Pride — Entered the Temple, Leprosy

2Ch 26 16 But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18 And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.”

19 Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

21 King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. 23 So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings, for they said, “He is a leper.” Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

11. Jotam (740-732, 16 years) — Good

2Ki 15 32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign.

2Ch 27 1 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still the people acted corruptly. [2Ki 15 38 However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.]

7 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 So Jotham rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

• Son of Uzziah
• 25 years old when he became king
• Reigned in Jerusalem 16 years (740-732)
• When he dies, his son Ahaz succeeds him

Building Projects (2Ch 27)

2Ch 27 3 He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. 4 Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers.
Defeated Ammonites (2Ch 27)

2Ch 27 5 He also fought with the king of the Ammonites and defeated them. And the people of Ammon gave him in that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. 6 So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

12. Ahaz (732-716, 16 years) – Bad

2Ki 16 1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign.

2Ch 28 1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done. 2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. 3 He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

2Ki 16 19 As for the other events of the reign of Ahaz, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 20 Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

- Son of Jotham
- 20 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 16 years (732-716)
- Bad king
  - Ahaz was a wicked king of Judah, worshipping other gods and even sacrificing his son to Molech.
    - 2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel,
    - and made molded images for the Baals.
    - 3 He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom,
    - and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.
    - 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.
  - “He was a cowardly, superstitious and hypocritical ruler, one of the worst kings Judah ever had.” (Bultema)
  - Isaiah is the prophet raised up to counter Jotham and Ahaz
- When he dies, his son Hezekiah succeeds him
  - The only good thing Ahaz seemed to do was father Hezekiah, who became a good king of Judah.

Judah is attacked by Syria and Israel (2Ki 16)

2Ki 15 37 In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah.

2Ki 16 5 Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to make war; and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome him. 6 At that time, Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram by driving out the people of Judah. Edomites then moved into Elath and have lived there to this day.

7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me.” 8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria. 9 So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

- As the combined armies of Israel and Syria approached Jerusalem, it looked like everything would be lost.
- Ahaz was challenged to trust God when things were bad, and it looked like soon, all would be lost.
  - Ahaz gets help from Assyria instead of God

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• The war against Judah took a great toll against the southern kingdom.
  o 2Ch 28 5 Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought them to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter. 6 For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7 And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

• The attack on Jerusalem was ultimately unsuccessful
  o 2Ch 28 9 But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: “Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah. He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven. 10 And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; but are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? 11 Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you.” 12 Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, … stood up against those who came from the war, 13 and said to them, “You shall not bring the captives here, for we already have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.” 14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. 15 Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.
  o Is 7 1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it.

  ▪ It is important to understand that the events Isaiah happened before Ahaz made his final decision to put his trust in Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria. Though we are told the end result of the attack in Isaiah 7:2 (could not prevail against it), Isaiah is telling us the end result before he describes his prophecy to Ahaz. This disregard for chronological order may be frustrating to us but is completely natural to the ancient Hebrew mind.

Judah attacked, Assyria refuses to help

2Ch 28 16 At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him.
  • 17 For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives.
  • 18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there.

  19 For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. 20 Also Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. 21 For Ahaz took part of the treasures from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave it to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

Ahaz builds Syrian pagan alters

2Ki 16 10 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. 11 Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made it before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.
And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar and made offerings on it. 13 So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. 14 He also brought the bronze altar which was before the LORD, from the front of the temple—from between the new altar and the house of the LORD—and put it on the north side of the new altar. 15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, “On the great new altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by.” 16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

King Ahaz cut off the side panels and removed the basins from the movable stands. He removed the Sea from the bronze bulls that supported it and set it on a stone base. 18 He took away the Sabbath canopy that had been built at the temple and removed the royal entryway outside the temple of the LORD, in deference to the king of Assyria.

• When Ahaz went to meet Tiglath-Pileser, his new master, in Damascus, he saw the pagan altars and places of sacrifice. He copied these designs and remodeled the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem after the pattern of the pagan temple and altars in Damascus.
  o Ahaz is a powerful, extreme example of someone who enters into an ungodly alliance for “good” reasons and is thoroughly corrupted thereby.

Apostasy and Death of Ahaz

2Ch 28 22 Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This is that King Ahaz. 23 For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, “Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.” But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. 24 So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25 And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

26 Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27 So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

13. Hezekiah (716-687, 29 years) – Very Good

2Ki 18 1 In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother’s name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. 3 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.) 5 Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. 6 He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. 7 And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook.

He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory. 9 In King Hezekiah’s fourth year, … Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it. 10 At the end of three years the Assyrians took it. So Samaria was captured …
As for the other events of Hezekiah’s reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? Hezekiah rested with his ancestors. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

- Son of Ahaz
- 25 years old when he became king
- Good king – Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook.
- One of the 5 kings of Judah that initiates a revival
- Reigned in Jerusalem 29 years (716-687)
- When he dies, his son Manasseh succeeds him

Cleanse the Temple (2Ch 29)

2Ch 29.3 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, and said to them: “Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned their backs on Him. They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel. Therefore the wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes. For indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity.

10.“Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense.” … And they gathered their brethren, sanctified themselves, and went according to the commandment of the king, at the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. So they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

Destroy the bronze snake of Moses (Nehushtan)

2Ki 18:4 He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)

- Refers to Numbers 21, when they grumbled against Moses and the Lord, so the Lord sent snakes into their camp
  - They were being bitten by snakes and were dying

Nu 21.4 They traveled … But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!” Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. The LORD said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

- This is 700 years later
• The bronze snake travelled with the Israelites and settled into its own space in the Temple
• It had become an idol – They named it (Nehushtan), burned incense to it, prayed to it

Restores Temple Worship

2Ch 29 20 Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. 21 And they brought … a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. … 24 And the priests killed them; and they presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering to make an atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering be made for all Israel.

35 And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets. 26 The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. 27 Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. 28 So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. 29 And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. 30 Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, “Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD.” So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings. 32 And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33 The consecrated things were six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. 34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended and until the other priests had sanctified themselves, for the Levites were more diligent in sanctifying themselves than the priests. 35 Also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings and with the drink offerings for every burnt offering.

So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36 Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.

Passover Reinstated (2Ch 30)

2Ch 30 5 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. 6 Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command 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. 7 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 desolation, as you see. 8 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 your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. 9 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.”

10 So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them. 11 Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12 Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD.
Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month.  

For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.”  

And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments. And Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

Then the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast another seven days, and they kept it another seven days with gladness. For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

The Reforms of Hezekiah (2Ch 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.
2. And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD.
3. The king also appointed a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts, as it is written in the Law of the LORD.
4. 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. And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, “Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left is this great abundance.”
5. Now Hezekiah commanded them to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them. Then they faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes, and the dedicated things;
6. … they distributed to everyone who entered the house of the LORD his daily portion for the work of his service, by his division, and to the priests who were written in the genealogy according to their father’s house, and to the Levites from twenty years old and up according to their work, by their divisions, and to all who were written in the genealogy—their little ones and their wives, their sons and daughters, the whole company of them—for in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in holiness.
• Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, who were in the fields of the common-lands of their cities, in every single city, there were men who were designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.

20 Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God. 21 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.

Assyria Attacks – Hezekiah pays them to go away

2Ki 18 13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 14 So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: “I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.” The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace. 16 At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the LORD, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Assyria (Sennacherib) Threatens Jerusalem

2Ch 32 1 After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself. 2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, … gave them encouragement, saying, 7 “Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him. 8 With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

• Representatives of Sennacherib come to the walls of Jerusalem and provide a compelling argument for surrender to Sennacherib, king of Assyria

2Ki 18 17 The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. … 18 They called for the king; and Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to them.

19 The field commander said to them, “Tell Hezekiah: ‘This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours? 20 You say you have the counsel and the might for war—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? 21 … 22 But if you say to me, “We are depending on the LORD our God”—isn’t he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem”? … have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the LORD? The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.’”

26 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.”

27 But the commander replied, “Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall—who, like you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?” 28 Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29 This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. 30 Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, ‘The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ 31 “Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, 32 until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death!
“Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘The LORD will deliver us.’ Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”

36 But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, “Do not answer him.”

Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

• Psychological warfare – Hezekiah’s officials ask them to speak in Aramaic so the people on the wall will not understand, but they call out in Hebrew even louder so all the men can hear

God defeats Assyria (2Ki 19)

2Ki 19 1 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. 2 He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 3 They told him, “This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. 4 It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives.”

Isaiah’s prophecy

5 When King Hezekiah’s officials came to Isaiah, 6 Isaiah said to them, “Tell your master, ‘This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.’”

8 When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah. 9 Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush, was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: 10 “Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, ‘Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.’

Hezekiah’s Prayer

14 Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. 15 And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: “LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God. 17 “It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. 18 They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. 19 Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God.”

Isaiah Prophesies Sennacherib’s Fall

20 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria.

21 This is the word that the LORD has spoken against him:
Virgin Daughter Zion despises you and mocks you. Daughter Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee.  
22 Who is it you have ridiculed and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel!  
23 By your messengers you have ridiculed the Lord. And you have said  
"With my many chariots I have ascended the heights of the mountains, the utmost heights of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars, the choicest of its junipers. I have reached its remotest parts, the finest of its forests.  
24 I have dug wells in foreign lands and drunk the water there. With the soles of my feet I have dried up all the streams of Egypt."  
25 "Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone.  
26 Their people, drained of power, are dismayed and put to shame. They are like plants in the field, like tender green shoots, like grass sprouting on the roof, scorched before it grows up.  
27 "But I know where you are and when you come and go and how you rage against me.  
28 Because you rage against me and because your insolence has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will make you return by the way you came.'  
29 "This will be the sign for you, Hezekiah:  
"This year you will eat what grows by itself, and the second year what springs from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
30 Once more a remnant of the kingdom of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above.  
31 For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.  
"The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.  
32 "Therefore this is what the Lord says concerning the king of Assyria:  
"'He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it.  
33 By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city, declares the Lord.  
34 I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.'"

God rescues Jerusalem in 701BC  
2Ki 19 35 That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.  

Assyria falls  
2Ki 19 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.  
37 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.  

- Nineveh – Capital of Assyria  
- This is the beginning of the end of the Assyrian empire  
- Lord Byron (English poet) wrote a poem about this in 1815 – The Destruction of Sennacherib

Hezekiah’s illness – Envoys from Babylon (2Ki 20)  
2Ki 20 1 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not
Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, ^2 “Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

^4 Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: ^5 “Go back and tell Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. ^6 I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.’” ^7 Then Isaiah said, “Prepare a poultice of figs.” They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered.

- Easy to imagine an illness with all the stress that’s happening
- Granted 15 more years of life - 2 major things happen in that 15 years:
  o Plants the seeds for the destruction for the kingdom of Judah
    ▪ Hezekiah plants the seeds for the destruction for the kingdom of Judah by showing everything to the delegates from Babylon
  o Fathers Manasseh
    ▪ Manasseh was 12 when he becomes king – which means that he was conceived in this 15 years
    ▪ The worst king of Judah ever

2Ki 20 ^12 At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah’s illness. ^13 Hezekiah received the envoys and showed them all that was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine olive oil—his armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them. …

15 The prophet asked, “What did they see in your palace?” “They saw everything in my palace,” Hezekiah said. “There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.”

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: ^17 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD, ^18 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” ^19 “The word of the LORD you have spoken is good,” Hezekiah replied. For he thought, “Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?”

- 701 BC – Assyria has been defeated by Jerusalem and it has started its decline
- Babylon is on the rise as the powerhouse empire
  o They hear about what happens to Assyria at Jerusalem – They come to congratulate Hezekiah
    ▪ Hezekiah is honored – He gave them the grand tour
    ▪ He’s showing hospitality to people that came a very long way to visit him from a rising empire
  o Hezekiah has just shown them everything that they need to know to defeat Jerusalem
  o Hezekiah has just planted the seeds for the destruction for the kingdom of Judah
- Babylon will defeat Assyria and get everything down to the gates of Jerusalem
  o Attacks Jerusalem in 605 BC (96 years later)

14. Manasseh (687-642, 55 years) – Very Bad/Repented
2Ki 21 ^1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. ^2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. ^3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. ^4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which
the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem I will put My name.” 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7 He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.” 9 But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 18 So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

- Son of Hezekiah
- 12 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 55 years (687-642)
- When he dies, his son Amon succeeds him

_Secures judgment against Judah_

- Worst king of Judah, ever
  - rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed
  - raised up altars for Baal
  - made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done
  - worshiped all the host of heaven and served them - built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD
  - he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom (2Ch 33:6)
  - practiced soothsaying
  - used witchcraft
  - consulted spiritists and mediums
  - set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of the LORD
  - Manasseh shed very much innocent blood

2Ki 21 10 And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, 11 “Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), 12 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. 13 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. 14 So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, 15 because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.’ ” 16 Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

2Ki 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 And the LORD sent against him [Jehoiakim] raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.
Manasseh Repents

2Ch 33 10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

14 After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city. 16 He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD their God.

15. Amon (642-640, 2 years)

2Ki 21 19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21 So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. 22 He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

23 Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24 But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. 25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 26 And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

- Son of Manasseh
- 22 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 2 years (642-640)
- Assassinated by his officials
- When he dies, his son Josiah succeeds him

16. Josiah (640-608, 31 years) – Very Good

2Ki 22 1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 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.

- Son of Amon
- 8 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 31 years (640-608)
- Died in the Battle at Meggido
- When he dies, his son Jehoahaz succeeds him – From this point, everything spirals downward
**Book of the Law Found (2Ki 22)**

2Ki 22 8 Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 10 Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king.

11 Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded … 13 “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

14 … Huldah the prophetess, … said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Tell the man who sent you to Me, 16 “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read— 17 because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.’ ”’

So they brought back word to the king.

**Temple is restored (2Ki 22)**

2Ki 22 3 Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: 4 “Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5 And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who are in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the damages of the house— to carpenters and builders and masons—and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7 However there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully.” … 9 So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, “Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD.”

**Initiates a revival (2Ki 23)**

- One of the 5 kings of Judah that initiates a revival – Works hand-in-hand with Jeremiah
  - Primary reform had to do with the purity of worship

2Ki 23 1 Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. 2 The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

3 Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. …
25 Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.

The Reforms of Josiah (2Ki 23)

- 2Ki 23:4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.
- 2Ki 23:5 Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven.
- 2Ki 23:6 And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people.
- 2Ki 23:7 Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.
- 2Ki 23:8 And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which were at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were to the left of the city gate. Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.
- 2Ki 23:10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech.
- 2Ki 23:11 Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.
- 2Ki 23:12 The altars that were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.
- 2Ki 23:19 Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. He executed all the priests of the high places who were there, on the altars, and burned men’s bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.
- 2Ki 23:24 Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

Impending Judgment on Judah

2Ki 23:25 Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. And the LORD said, “I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’ ”

Prophecy against Jeroboam fulfilled (2Ki 23)

- 1Ki 13:1 And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, “O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.’ ”... 33 After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places;
whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.

- Josiah becomes King of Judah in about 300 years, and that’s exactly what he does

- 2Ki 23 13 Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. 14 And he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men. 15 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. 16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17 Then he said, “What gravestone is this that I see?” So the men of the city told him, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.” 18 And he said, “Let him alone; let no one move his bones.” So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

Passover Reinstated (2Ki 23, 2Ch 35)

2Ki 23 21 Then the king commanded all the people, saying, “Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.” 22 Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem.

- Detailed description in 2Ch 35

Dies in the Battle of Megiddo (2Ch 35, 2Ki 23)

2Ch 35 20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he [Necho] sent messengers to him, saying, “What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you.” 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

23 And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am severely wounded.” 24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 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.

26 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to what was written in the Law of the LORD, 27 and his deeds from first to last, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

- Megiddo = Greek translation is Armageddon
- Died in a Battle at Meggido against the Egyptian king – it was not a battle that he should have been involved in

17. Jehoahaz (608, 3 months)

2Ki 23 31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD,
according to all that his fathers had done. 33 Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 34 Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh took Jehoa haz and went to Egypt, and he died there.

- Son of Josiah
- 23 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 3 months (608)
- Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah … And Pharaoh took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there.
- Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim (the son of Josiah, brother of Jehoahaz) king – changed his name to Jehoiakim

18. Jehoiakim [Eliakim] (608-597, 11 years)

2Ki 23 35 So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho. 36 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

2Ki 24 5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

2Ch 36 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

- Son of Josiah, step-brother of Jehoahaz (different mothers)
- Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim (the son of Josiah, brother of Jehoahaz) king – changed his name to Jehoiakim
- 25 years old when he became king
- Reigned in Jerusalem 11 years (608-597)
- Egypt
  - 2Ki 23 35 So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Necho.
  - 2Ki 24:7 And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

1st stage of Judah’s exile (605)

2Ki 24 1 In his [Jehoiakim’s] days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 And the LORD sent against him raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

2Ch 36 6 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him [Jehoiakim], and bound him in bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 7 Nebuchadnezzar also carried off some of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon.

- After defeating the Assyrian Empire in 609 B.C. at the Battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon, attacked Judah and Jerusalem in 605 B.C., demanding surrender and tribute.
  - Jehoiakim, king of Judah, paid up, and Judah became a vassal state of Babylon.
2Ki 24 1 In his [Jehoiakim’s] days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years.
   o To ensure that tribute continued to be paid, Nebuchadnezzar took captive to Babylon some of the royal family, including the prophet Daniel.
   ▪ Daniel taken to Babylon

According to the Nebuchadnezzar Chronicle, King Jehoiakim of Judah rebelled against Babylonian rule, but Nebuchadnezzar captured the city and installed Zedekiah as ruler.

**Jeremiah’s prophecy - 70 Years of Desolation (Jer 25)**

Jer 25 1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2 which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: 3 “From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. 4 And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. 5 They said, ‘Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. 6 Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.’ 7 Yet you have not listened to Me,” says the LORD, “that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

8 “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, 9 behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the LORD, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11 And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

• 70 years – This round number (as in Ps 90:10; Isa 23:15) represents the period from 605 to 538/537 B.C., which marked the beginning of Judah’s return from exile

**19. Jehoiachin (597, 3 months)**

2Ki 24 8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother’s name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

2Ch 36 9 Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 10 At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar summoned him and took him to Babylon, with the costly articles from the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah, Jehoiakim’s brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

2Ki 25 27 Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. 30 And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

• Son of Jehoiakim
• 18 years old when he became king
• Reigned in Jerusalem 3 months (597)
Age discrepancy

Question: "What age was Jehoiachin when he began his reign?"

Answer: Second Kings 24:8 declares, “Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to reign,” while 2 Chronicles 36:9 says, “Jehoiachin was 8 years old when he began to reign.” Skeptics and critics are quick to use this apparent contradiction as clear evidence of an error in the Bible. Those who hold to the inerrancy of the Bible vehemently disagree with the conclusion that the Bible is in error. So, why do these two verses have different numbers for Jehoiachin’s age, and which verse is correct?

There are two primary explanations for the apparent contradiction between 2 Kings 24:8 and 2 Chronicles 36:9 in regards to Jehoiachin’s age. The first explanation is that this represents a copyist’s error. As the Old Testament manuscripts were copied by hand, from century to century, small and inconsequential errors found their way into the biblical text. In ancient Hebrew, the numbers 8 and 18 would have been differentiated by a very small mark. No matter how meticulous the scribes were, it would be understandable if one misread the number and recorded the wrong number on the new manuscript.

It is important to remember that the inerrancy of the Bible only applies to the original manuscripts. The Bible is the best-preserved work from ancient times. With literally thousands of ancient manuscripts in existence, the reliability of the biblical text is not in question. No textual variant has any impact whatsoever on any important biblical doctrine. Virtually all of the variations involve numbers, spelling, or the presence of a preposition. Further, due to the sheer number of biblical manuscripts, it is usually easy to determine which reading is correct in the instances of apparent copyist’s errors. Rest assured, the Bible is completely trustworthy.

The second explanation in regards to Jehoiachin’s age in 2 Kings 24:8 and 2 Chronicles 36:9 is that 2 Chronicles records Jehoiachin’s age when he was appointed co-regent with his father, and 2 Kings records Jehoiachin’s age when, after his father’s death, he became king in his own right. Other kings also used co-regents. David appointed Solomon king while David was still alive (1 Kings 1:33-40), and, when Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy, his son Jotham became co-regent (2 Chronicles 26:21). While there is no specific mention of a co-regency in regards to Jehoiachin, this is a plausible explanation for the difference between 2 Kings 24:8 and 2 Chronicles 36:9.

There are other explanations in addition to these two, but they are quite a bit more complicated. Whatever the case, there are biblically plausible explanations for this apparent contradiction. Even if this is indeed a copyist’s error, the presence of such an error does not invalidate the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. God’s Word is infallible even when well-intentioned but flawed scribes make mistakes.

2nd stage of Judah’s exile (597) - The Captivity of Jerusalem

2Ki 24 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12 Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner.

13 And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14 Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. 15 And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king’s mother, the king’s wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all who were strong and fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

- In 601 B.C. Jehoiakim refused to continue paying tribute to Babylon, so Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem again in 597 B.C., laying siege to the city, which quickly fell.
• Jehoiakim died and his successor Jehoiachin, along with much of the royal court (including the prophet Ezekiel), was taken captive to Babylon.
• Nebuchadnezzar appointed Jehoiachin’s uncle, Mattaniah [Zedekiah], as vassal king, and once again Judah paid tribute to Babylon.

20. Zedekiah [Mattaniah] (597-586, 11 years)

2Ki 24:17 Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah. 18 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For because of the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

2Ch 36:11 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD. 13 And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear an oath by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. 14 Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

• Uncle of Jehoiachin
• 21 years old when he became king
• Reigned in Jerusalem 11 years (597-586)
• 2Ki 24:20 … Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Babylon Conquers Judah (2 Kings 18-25)

Assyria
• Assyria attacks in 701 BC
• Sennacherib, king of Assyria (705-681 B.C.), attacks Jerusalem in 701 B.C
• Hezekiah is king (715-686 B.C.) and Isaiah is prophet (740-686 B.C.)
  o Working together, Hezekiah and Isaiah implore the Lord to save Jerusalem and Judah. And He does.
• God vows that “[Sennacherib] will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here” (2 Kings 19: 32).
  o “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh [capital of the Assyrian Empire] and stayed there” (2 Kings 19: 35-36).
• With its defeat at Jerusalem in 701 B.C. Assyria weakens; to its south, Babylon (southern Iraq of today) rises.

Babylon defeats Assyria
• 625 B.C. – the Babylonians assert their independence from Assyria
• 612 – Babylon attacks and destroys Nineveh (the capital of Assyria) (the subject of the prophet Nahum).
• 605 – Nebuchadnezzar, Crown Prince of Babylon defeats Necho II king of Egypt at the Battle of Carchemish
  o Then he attacks Jerusalem.
**Babylon attacks Judah**

- **605** – The Jews wave the white flag and surrender – they become a vassal state to the Babylonian Empire
  - Captives are taken from the royal family back to Babylon to ensure that tribute is paid
    - Includes the prophet Daniel
    - Daniel is part of the royal family
    - He is a boy (10-12 years old) – spends the rest of his life in Babylon
- **597** – Tribute has not been paid. Nebuchadnezzar attacks again and again the Jews wave the white flag and surrender
  - More captives are taken, including the prophet Ezekiel
  - Nebuchadnezzar appoints a Jewish king (Zedekiah) as a vassal king reporting to Nebuchadnezzar
- **588** – Zedekiah (the last king of Judah) finally rebels
  - Zedekiah sends envoys to Egypt to form a coalition with Egypt
  - Nebuchadnezzar gets word of this and launches a full-scale siege against Jerusalem
- The prophet Jeremiah (626-586 B.C.) records his eyewitness account of the events in the Book of Jeremiah and the Book of Lamentations.

**Siege of Jerusalem (588-586)**

- Siege lasts 2 years – Siege of a fortified city is a horrible thing
  - Nothing goes in or out
  - People starve – 2Ki 25:3 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat.
  - People die, but they can’t dispose of the bodies anywhere
  - Disease spreads
  - Jeremiah is in Jerusalem and writes down his eyewitness account of those 2 years in Lamentations
Jerusalem falls on August 14, 586 B.C.

“In the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah’s reign, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and his whole army advanced against Jerusalem, encamped around it, and built siege walls on every side. The siege of the city continued until the eleventh year of Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the month, when famine had gripped the city, and the people of the land had no more food, the city walls were breached . . . Nebuchadnezzar . . . burned the house of the Lord [Solomon’s Temple], the house of the king, and all the houses of Jerusalem . . . tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem . . . and led into exile the last of [those] remaining in the city.” (2Kings 25:1-11)

- Zedekiah is captured
  - 2Ki 25:4 Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night . . . toward the Arabah 5 but the Babylonian army pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, 6 and he was captured.
  - 2Ki 25:7 They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.
- The city and the temple are burnt, and the survivors and everything of value are taken captive to Babylon.
- 2Ki 25:21 …So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.

70 Years

2Ch 36 20 And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

Why does this happen?

- 2Ki 21:11 “Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols. 12 Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. 13 I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all their foes, 15 because they have done evil in my eyes and have provoked me to anger from the day their forefathers came out of Egypt until this day.”
- 2Ki 24:20 It was because of the LORD ’s anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.
- 1Ch 9:1 …The people of Judah were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness.
- Jer 25:1 The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. 2 So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: 3 For twenty–three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

4 And though the LORD has sent all his servants the prophets to you again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention. 5 They said, “Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the LORD gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever. 6 Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me to anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you.”

7 “But you did not listen to me,” declares the LORD, “and you have provoked me with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.”

8 Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: “Because you have not listened to my words, 9 I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring them
against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. 10 I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. 11 This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

- 70 years – This round number (as in Ps 90:10; Isa 23:15) represents the period from 605 to 538/537 B.C., which marked the beginning of Judah’s return from exile

2Ch:36:15 The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.

17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. 18 He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD’s temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19 They set fire to God’s temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. 20 He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

21 The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: 23 “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you—may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.’”

- 36:20-21 The conclusions of the two Biblical histories are interestingly different:
  - (1) The author(s) of Kings had sought to show why the exile occurred and had traced the sad history of Israel’s disobedience to the exile. With the state at an end, the author(s) could still show God’s faithfulness to his promises to David (2Ki 25:27-30) by reporting the favor bestowed on his descendants.
  - (2) The Chronicler, whose vantage point was after the exile, was able to look back on the exile not only as judgment, but also as containing hope for the future. For him the purified remnant had returned to a purified land (vv. 22-23), and a new era of hope was beginning. The exile was not judgment alone, but also blessing, for it allowed the land to catch up on its Sabbath rests (Lev 26:40-45). And God had remembered his covenant (Lev 26:45) and restored his people to the land (see note on vv. 22-23)

What do the Jews think? Psalm 137

- The Babylonian Captivity is catastrophic for the Jews.
- Ps 137 was written by one of the captives in Babylon.
  - Ps 137:1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.
Elijah, Spectacular Entrances and Exits (1 Kings 16-22)

When the kingship and the priesthood become corrupt, God often raises a great prophet to counter them. Ahab reigns over the northern kingdom of Israel (870-853 B.C.) and Asa over the southern kingdom of Judah (910-869 B.C.). Ahab “did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat (worship of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel), but he also married [that vile, loathsome and despicable woman] Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him” (2 Kings 16: 30-31). To counter such massive corruption and idolatry, God raises one of his greatest prophets, Elijah.

- Elijah means “My God is Yahweh”
  - El – God
  - Isha – saves
  - Elisha – My God saves
  - Joshua and Jesus (same name) – the Lord saves

Elijah hides from Ahab – Ravens feed him

1Ki 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.” 2 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: 3 “Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.” … 7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 9 “Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.”

- Elijah confronted Ahab
  - Elijah prayed (James 5:17)
- Elijah leaves and goes into hiding because Ahab is infuriated by the message and unleashes every resource he has to find Elijah, capture him, and have him killed
- Ravens feed him in the Kerith Ravine
- Can only hide in the Kerith Ravine for so long because there will be no rain for over 3 years and the brook will dry up
- Sidon is way up north in Gentile territory

Elijah’s miracles with the Widow at Zarephath

- The widow had absolutely nothing left – 1 handful of flour, then death
  - 1Ki 17:11 …And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” 12 “As surely as the LORD your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”
- People cannot perform miracles – only God can perform miracles through a person
  - Suggests very close intimacy with God
  - Elijah multiplies the bread and raises a dead child that has just died
    - If Elijah is so intimately close to God that God would work these miracles through him, we better listen to what Elijah has to say
- Jesus
  - Jesus does the identical miracles, only more so - then we really better listen to him
  - Elijah sets a pattern that Jesus will deliberately follow, adding to his credibility as Messiah
  - Many of Jesus’s miracles reflect what Elijah and Elisha do, and he’s identified with them, but even greater

Multiplied the bread

1Ki 17:11 …And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” 12 “As surely as the LORD your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.’”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

- Elijah multiplies the bread
- Jesus multiplies the bread and fish
  - Feeding of the 5,000 men (15,000 total)
  - What do the people think? Elijah
- What Jesus did was even greater because Jesus also multiplied fish
- God takes the tiny bit that we’re left with and does miracles with it
- Tithe – God first – make Elijah the bread first, then trust that you will be given what you need

_Raised a dead child_

1Ki 17:17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?”

19 “Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. 20 Then he cried out to the LORD, “O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?” 21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

22 The LORD heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. 23 Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, “Look, your son is alive!”

- 1Ki 17:21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”
  - 3 correlates to Jesus in the grave for 3 days
- Elijah raises a little boy that has just died
- Jesus raises the 12 year old daughter of Jairus in Capernaum who has just died
  - Jesus also resurreccts the widow's son at Nain – adult who has died and being taken to the grave to be buried
  - Jesus also raises Lazarus – adult, has been in the tomb for 4 days and has started rotting
- What do the people think? Elijah
  - What Jesus did was even greater because Jesus raised people who were very dead

_Elijah’s miracles with Ahab at Mount Carmel (1Ki 18)_

**Obadiah**

1Ki 18:3 and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of his palace. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the LORD. 4 While Jezebel was killing off the LORD ’s prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) …

7 As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?”

8 “Yes,” he replied. “Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’”

- Jezebel was killing off the LORD ’s prophets
  - Ahab has an APB out on Elijah
They round up all the other prophets – Elijah has to turn himself in or the prophets will be killed

When Elijah doesn’t show up, they kill the prophets

Obadiah is taking the horses and mules to find water and he runs into Elijah, who has been on the run for 3 years

Obadiah is terrified to tell Ahab that Elijah has returned, but he does

1Ki 18:17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you trouble of Israel?”

You have a lot of nerve walking into here

Elijah challenges the 450 Baal prophets (1Ki 18)

1Ki 18:18 … you and your father’s family have [made trouble]. You have abandoned the LORD’s commands and have followed the Baals. 19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

… 21 Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.

22 Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. 23 Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God.” Then all the people said, “What you say is good.”

25 Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.” 26 So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “O Baal, answer us!” they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. 27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. …

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes … 32 With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed.

33 He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, “Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.” 34 “Do it again,” he said, and they did it again. “Do it a third time,” he ordered, and they did it the third time. 35 The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!”

40 Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.”

Prophets of Baal (450) and Asherah (400) – 850 total
• Waver – word literally means hopping
  o How long will you hopping between two opinions
• Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood – Not an easy task
  o Water jars hold 20-30 gallons (John 2:6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons – Wedding at Cana)
  o Stone water jars – heavy
  o Has been a severe drought – only water is 1000 feet down
  o People are told to do it 3 times – total of 300 gallons of water
• After the ceremony, Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel and prayed for rain

_Elijah brings the rain & outruns the chariots_

1Ki 18:41 And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” 42 So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

43 “Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked. “There is nothing there,” he said. Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

44 The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’”

45 Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. 46 The power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

• 17 miles from Mt. Carmel to the Jezreel Valley
• Had been a famine in the land – Elijah was skin and bones
• tucking his cloak into his belt – to get his legs free

_Elijah on the Run – Escape from Jezebel (1Ki 19)_

1Ki 19: 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.” 3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” 5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

• After Elijah’s dramatic battle with the 450 prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel, Jezebel threatens Elijah’s life
  o Elijah is terrified of Jezebel
  o Elijah runs as fast and as far away as he can – all the way to the Negev

• Utterly exhausted – Sat under a broom tree and prayed for death
  o Fell asleep – The Angel of the Lord touched him – told him to get up and eat, bread & water were beside him
  o Fell back to sleep – The Angel of the Lord touched him again – told him to get up and eat, the journey is too much for you

• Strengthened by the food, he travelled 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai)
  o 40 – can be literal, or can represent a long amount of time, a generation
Probably represents a long amount of time here

**The Lord Appears to Elijah at Mt. Horeb (1Ki 19)**

1Ki 19: 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

10 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

11 The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.
12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.
13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14 He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

15 The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”

- Cave
  - Moses also went into a cave on Mt. Sinai to experience the presence of the Lord

- gentle whisper (a still small voice KJV)
  - What are you doing here, Elijah?
    - The question implies that Elijah had come to Sinai for his own misguided reasons and not because the Lord had sent him.
  - In the symbolism of these occurrences ( vv. 11-12 ) the Lord appears to be telling Elijah that although his servant’s indictment of Israel was a call for God to judge his people with windstorm, earthquake and fire, it was not God’s will to do so now. Elijah must return to continue God’s mission to his people, and Elisha is to carry it on for another generation

- Totally exhausted and spent, God tells Elijah to go back to the desert of Damascus (Syria, north of Israel) and assigns him 3 more tasks to accomplish to complete his job:
  - On the international stage, “anoint Hazael king over Aram [Syria] (capital is Damascus)”
  - On the domestic stage, “anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel” *Elijah does not finish this task*
  - On the personal front, “anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet”

**Elijah taken up to Heaven (2Ki 2)**

- Company of prophets approached Elisha in Bethel and Jericho saying 2Ki 2:3 & 5 “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?”  “Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “but do not speak of it.”

2Ki 2:7 Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.
9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?” “Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied. 10 “You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise not.”

11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

13 He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. “Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

15 The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.”

- Company of prophets – School
  - Where someone who is called to be a prophet could learn to be a prophet
  - Gift of prophecy is the raw material, but you have to develop that gift and put it to use

- Parting of water
  - Red Sea during the Exodus
  - Joshua crosses over the Jordan River to attack Jericho
  - Elijah strikes the Jordan – Elijah and Elisha cross in view of the company of the prophets from Jericho
  - Elisha returns in view of the company of the prophets from Jericho – they know that the power of Elijah is now with Elisha

- Elijah loved a great exit – this is one of the greatest exits of all time
- Elijah’s cloak – mantle of the prophet, cloak of the prophet

Summary

- Oral prophet – just speaks, does not write anything
- One of THE great prophets in the Bible
  - In the New Testament, he is the representative of all the prophets
- Roles in the Bible
  - Introduction in 1st Kings in the time of Ahab
  - Ushering in the coming of the Messiah
  - Appears with Moses and Jesus at the Mt. of Transfiguration
  - Continuing role in the book of Revelation in the end-time events
- Miracles – Only God can perform miracles
  - When He does it through a person, it suggests that person has a very intimate relationship with Him
    - An outstanding miracle, it suggests that this person is really close to God
  - This is why Jesus’ preaching and teaching is accompanied by miracles
    - The miracles validate His authority for what He is saying
    - He is so close to God, that God is working His miracles through Him
Elisha, a Quiet Man (2 Kings 1-13)

- Elisha means ‘My God saves’
  - El – God
  - Isha – saves
  - Elijah – My God is Yahweh
  - Joshua and Jesus (same name) – the Lord saves
- Although their names sound alike, few men in the Bible are more different than Elijah and Elisha.
  - Elijah loves a show; Elisha is shy, mortified by public notice
  - Elijah loves a grand exit; Elisha dies quietly, alone
- In many ways, Elisha is an even greater prophet than Elijah
- Elisha deals with the Arameans (Syrians)
- Israel is not a godly nation at this point
- Oral prophet – just speaks, does not write anything
- Develops a school of prophets around himself
- Miracles – Only God can perform miracles
  - When He does it through a person, it suggests that person has a very intimate relationship with Him
    - An outstanding miracle, it suggests that this person is really close to God
  - This is why Jesus’ preaching and teaching is accompanied by miracles
    - The miracles validate His authority for what He is saying
    - He is so close to God, that God is working His miracles through Him
  - The miracles of Elisha are of an even greater magnitude than Elijah
    - His dead bones raised a dead body
- Elisha is the last of the prophets for Israel

Elisha heals the water of Jericho (2Ki 2)

- Jericho is a very important town strategically for trade
  - On the main linking road (Raba → Jericho → Japa) between the King’s Highway and the Via Maris
- Water is bad and the land is unproductive
  - Jericho is 3-5 miles north of the Dead Sea – salt leaches into the ground and the water is salty
  - Only date trees flourish – City of Palms (date palms)
- Oral prophecy 2Ki 2:19 The men of the city said to Elisha, “Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive.” 20 “Bring me a new bowl,” he said, “and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him.
  - 21 Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, “This is what the LORD says: ‘I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.’” 22 And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.
- Water remained wholesome until the day that 2nd Kings was written – no longer wholesome today

Elisha is jeered (2Ki 2)

2Ki 2:23 From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. “Go on up, you baldhead!” they said. “Go on up, you baldhead!” 24 He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty–two of the youths.

The widow’s oil (2Ki 4)

2Ki 4:1 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.”
2 Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?” “Your servant has nothing there at all,” she said, “except a little oil.” 3 Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don’t ask for just a few. 4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”

5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another one.” But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

7 She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.”

**Shunammite’s Son Restored to Life (2Ki 4)**

- A well-to-do Shunammite woman knew that Elisha was a man of God & built a room for him to stay in while in town
  - Grateful, Elisha wanted to do something to thank her, so he prayer for God to give her a son
  - One day, while helping dad in the fields, the young boy had a bad head ache and died (brain aneurism?)
  - They laid the boy on Elisha’s bed and the mother quickly saddled her donkey and went to find him

2Ki 4:32 When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. 33 He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. 34 Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy’s body grew warm. 35 Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

- Raising the dead
  - Elijah raises a little child that has just died (still warm)
  - Elisha performs an even greater miracle and raises a little boy that has died a while ago (cold)
  - Only God can perform miracles
    - When He does it through a person, it suggests that person has a very intimate relationship with Him
    - An outstanding miracle (raising the dead), it suggests that this person is really close to God
  - What Jesus did was even greater because Jesus raised people who were very dead
    - Raises the 12 year old daughter of Jairus in Capernaum who has just died
    - Jesus also resurrects the widow's son at Nain – adult who has died and being taken to the grave to be buried
    - Jesus also raises Lazarus – adult, has been in the tomb for 4 days and has started rotting

**Feeding of 100 (2Ki 4)**

2Ki 4:42 A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said. 43 “How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked. But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” 44 Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

**Naaman healed of leprosy (2Ki 5)**

- Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram [Syria]. A young girl from Israel served Naaman’s wife.

2Ki 5:3 She [Israeli servant] said to her mistress, “If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” 9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.”

11 But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. … 13 Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’!” 14 So he went down and dipped
himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

- Only God can cure leprosy
- Jesus heals a leper (Luke) – man was in the advanced stage of leprosy (body parts falling off, near death)
  - Jesus touched him – the one thing that you don’t do to a leper
  - Jesus touches his head and said “Be clean” and immediately his skin morphed into that of a newborn baby
- The miracles that Jesus does are not random – they specifically relate back to these stories of Elijah and Elisha and are positioning Jesus as one even greater

- Naaman was upset that God was not doing things the way that he wanted – what God asked him to do didn’t make sense
  - Sometimes God asks us to take steps to prove your faith in Him
  - The moment that he obeyed and gave in to the anger, he was healed

- Gehazi – Claims to want something for the kingdom of God, but really wants wealth for himself
  - Self-deceived – thinks he’s doing what is right
  - He is going to lie, cheat and steal – perpetuates his deception
  - 2 talents – huge amount of money
  - Clothing – deeds for property were often sewn up in the hems of clothing
    - Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants

- Reversal of Naaman and Gehazi
  - Naaman was supposed to be the opposition, but he leaves blessed and God-fearing (saved)
  - Gehazi was supposed to be one of God’s people, but he proves otherwise
  - The result effects both families generations

**Shunammite Woman’s Land Restored (2Ki8)**

Elisha was living among the people – he warned them that a 7-year famine was coming
The Shunammite woman went to live among the Philistines – Enemies
Gehazi was telling the king the story of when Elisha raised the boy from death
At that very moment, the Shunammite woman and the boy come before the king to ask for her land back
Lesson – Trust God, God is sovereign

**Elisha anoints Jehu as King over Israel (2Ki 9)**

- Elijah had not finished this task
  2Ki 9:1 The prophet Elisha summoned a man from the company of the prophets and said to him, “Tuck your cloak into your belt, take this flask of oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2 When you get there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. …
  6 Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu’s head and declared, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anoint you king over the LORD’s people Israel. 7 You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD’s servants shed by Jezebel. 8 The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. 9 I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. 10 As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.”’ Then he opened the door and ran.
Elisha dies and his dead bones raise a dead man

2Ki 13:14 Now Elisha had been suffering from the illness from which he died. … 20 Elisha died and was buried. Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. 21 Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man’s body into Elisha’s tomb. When the body touched Elisha’s bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

1st and 2nd Chronicles (1Ch, 2Ch) – God’s Perspective, Judah only
- 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel, 1st Kings and 2nd Kings
  - Written from the point of view of man / throne regarding the history of the kingship of Israel and Judah
- 1st Chronicles and 2nd Chronicles
  - Retells the story
  - Written from the point of view of God / alter
- Chronicles only focuses on the nation of Judah - ignores Israel all together

**First and Second Chronicles**

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**Emphasis**
- Personal determination
- National deterioration

**History**
- Creation of world to creation of kingdom
- Solomon’s temple to rebuilding of the temple

**Theme**
- The temple — the structural state of the temple corresponds to the spiritual state of the people.

**Key Verses**
- 1 Chronicles 17; 29:10–13; 2 Chronicles 7:12–22; 16:9

**Christ in Chronicles**
- Christ is foretold in the Davidic Covenant (1 Chronicles 17) and prefigured in the idealized kings David and Solomon; also the ark and the temple typify Christ’s power and presence with us.

1st Chronicles Overview

The book of 1st Chronicles is a book of Narrative History, and Genealogies. The author appears to be the prophet Ezra who wrote it circa 430 B.C. It covers the events from 1000 to 960 B.C. Key personalities are King David and Solomon. This book parallels some of 2nd Samuel, and therefore describes similar events. It was written after the exile, its purpose was to encourage the remnant that had come out of the Babylonian captivity. It begins with the ancestry of the nations past, but it is not chronological.

- In chapter 1-9, the book begins with Adam and runs through the genealogies of Israel. It continues through all the 12 tribes of Israel, then King David, and then the Priestly line. The descendants teach the history of the nation, extending
from God’s creation all the way through the exile in Babylon. “Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that You would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from harm that it may not pain me!” And God granted him what he requested” (4:10).

- From chapters 10-29, there is a review from King Saul’s death with the Philistines, through King David’s reign, including the preparation for the building of the new temple, which Solomon would build, “David also told his son Solomon, ‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or terrified. The LORD God, my God, will be with you. He will not abandon you before all the work on the LORD's temple is finished” (28:20). The book ends with Solomon’s reigning as king of Israel.

**2nd Chronicles Overview**

The book of 2nd Chronicles is a Narrative History. The author appears to be the prophet Ezra who wrote it circa 430 B.C. It covers the events from the beginning from King Solomon’s reign in 970 B.C. up to the beginning of the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. The key personalities are King Solomon, the queen of Sheba, Rehoboam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Joash, Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Josiah.

It was written to emphasize the blessings of the righteous kings and to expose the sins of the wicked kings. It parallels some parts of 1st and 2nd Kings. Like 1st Chronicles, it is written from the viewpoint of a priest who spoke from spiritual perspectives, including revivals. It too, was written after the exile and focuses on correct worship to YHWH.

- Chapters 1-9 teach the details of the reign of King Solomon. It covers the wisdom of Solomon, the building and construction of the temple in Jerusalem, which was dedicated to the Lord God. “And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (7:14).

- Chapters 10-36 describe the events in the split of the nation of Israel. The nation split into two kingdoms: North and South. The Northern Kingdom revolted against King Rehoboam, and took a new king; his name was Jeroboam. 2nd Chronicles focuses mainly from here, on the events of the Southern Kingdom. These include 20 kings and are a dynasty from King David. These chapters describe the events all the way up through the Northern Kingdom and its captivity to Babylon. Nevertheless, the mercy of the Lord is seen in the last two verses of this book. Cyrus, King of Persia declares that the remnant of Israel may return to Jerusalem, “in order to fulfill the word of the LORD” (36:22).

**Davidic Covenant**

Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16). The Davidic Covenant amplifies the “seed” aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. The promises to David in this passage are significant. God promised that David's lineage would last forever and that his kingdom would never pass away permanently (verse 16). Obviously, the Davidic throne has not been in place at all times. There will be a time, however, when someone from the line of David will again sit on the throne and rule as king. This future king is Jesus (Luke 1:32-33).

2Sa 7:8 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. 10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

"The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.' "
1Ch17:10 … "I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: 11 When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. 14 I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever." 

2Ch 6:16 "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me according to my law, as you have done.'

- The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David.
  - God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants).
    - 2Sa 7:10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore
  - God then promises that David’s son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this son (Solomon) would build the temple.
    - 2Sa 7:12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name
  - Then the promise continues and expands:
    - 2Sa 7:13 I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
    - 2Sa 7:16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

- What began as a promise that David’s son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple turns into something different—the promise of an everlasting kingdom.
  - Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House.
  - This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.
  - The promise that David’s “house,” “kingdom,” and “throne” will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign.

- The covenant is summarized by the words:
  - “house,” promising a dynasty in the lineage of David
  - “kingdom,” referring to a people who are governed by a king
  - “throne,” emphasizing the authority of the king’s rule
  - “forever,” emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel
Ezra (Ezr) — Return from Captivity — Rebuilding the Temple

10% of the Jews return to Jerusalem
Ezra — Rebuild the Temple
Nehemiah — Rebuild the city (Jerusalem)

Ezra Overview

Ezra is a book of Narrative History and Genealogies. It was written by Ezra at approximately 440 B.C. and records events up to 450 B.C. Key personalities include Cyrus, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Darius I, Artaxerxes I, and Zerubbabel. Ezra’s purpose was to accurately record the events of the return from the Babylonian exile, after a seventy-year period and the events that surround the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. God is faithful in fulfilling His promises and so the Jews return to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon.

- Chapters 1-6 tell the story of the generation who returns to Jerusalem under Cyrus’ decree of 538 B.C. A relatively small number of Jews return to the city of Jerusalem and immediately prepare to construct the new temple. They began the planning, the gathering of materials, and the beginning of construction. The building drags on because the surrounding enemies begin oppressing and frightening them. Twenty years later, it is completed. “The sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the impurity of the nations of the land to join them, to seek the LORD God of Israel, ate the Passover. And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel” (6:21-22). Chapter 6 ends with the celebration of Passover on April 21, 516 B.C. in the newly rebuilt Temple.
In Ezra 7 we jump ahead to Ezra’s arrival in Jerusalem, August 4, 458 B.C. From chapters 7-10, the second group of Jews returns to Israel. Ezra is included in this return. He teaches the Law, but has problems with intermarriage and addresses the pagan women who brought their religious practices with them. “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel”(7:10), what a great example to follow!

**Cyrus the Great (Persian Empire) returns the exiles**

- 540 B.C. – Cyrus the Great, king of Persia (559-530 B.C.—modern-day Iran) conquers Babylon
  - Got everything, including Babylon, Assyria, the entire coastal plain and Egypt

- 539 B.C. – Allows all the people conquered by Assyria and Babylon to return to their homes and rebuild.
  - 2Ch 36:22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing
  - Cyrus not only allowed the Jews to return and rebuild, but he allowed everybody to return and rebuild
    - Persian empire supported it – they paid for it all
    - Within 20 years, Cyrus the Great built the Persian Empire using that strategy
  - Cyrus the Great engineered created the Persian Empire in a matter of 20 years
Where did he get this idea? It had never been done before

• Assyria and Babylon – as conquering empires – would attack, burn, pillage, rape, loot and leave, reshuffle the populations to break the backs of resistance, and that was it

• Ez 1:1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: 2 “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. 3 Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.’”

  o This proclamation was specific to the Jews
  o Cyrus also issued a more general proclamation to allow everyone to return home and rebuild
    ▪ The actual proclamation is on a 10” high clay cylinder in the British Museum in London
    ▪ Why did he do this? Translation says: May all the gods (including the God of Israel) ask my Gods for a long life for me. And may they recommend me to my gods for the things that I have done for them

• Titus Flavius Josephus
  o Jew and a general in the Roman army – His territory was Galilee
  o Historian – lived from AD 37-95 – wrote 2 very important books
    ▪ A History of the Jewish Wars
    ▪ Jewish Antiquities (the History of the Jews)
  o Book 11 – These things Cyrus knew from reading the book of the prophecy of Isaiah 210 years earlier, 140 years before the Temple had even been destroyed. Cyrus wondered at the divine power and was seized with a strong desire and ambition to do what was written.

• Isaiah
  o [This book is] Is 1:1 The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
    ▪ The Temple is destroyed 100 years after Isaiah

Is 44:24 “This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, 25 who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, 26 who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited,’ of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be built,’ and of their ruins, ‘I will restore them,’ 27 who says to the watery deep, ‘Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,’ 28 who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”’

Jews Return to Jerusalem

• Their belongings were returned to them
  o Ez 1: 6 All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings. 7 Moreover, King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god. 8 Cyrus king of Persia had them brought by Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. … 11 In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and of silver.
Only about 10% of the Jews return to Jerusalem – 42,360 people

- Ez 1:5 Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. … 2:64 The whole company numbered 42,360, 65 besides their 7,337 menservants and maidservants; and they also had 200 men and women singers. 66 They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 67 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

- Ez 2:1…(they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, 2 in company with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah
  - Zerubbabel – the one that will lead them back and be their governor when they get there

Why did only about 10% of the Jews return?
- They assimilated into the Assyrian culture – happens within 3 generations

Rebuilding the Temple (538-516 BC)

Rebuild the Alter (Ez 3)

- Step 1 – Rebuild the alter and began to make sacrifices
  - Sacrifice is reinstituted at the time – 538 BC
  - Ez 3:3 Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. … 6 On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

- Celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles
  - Celebrates the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness
  - Appropriate since they have been, in effect, wandering in captivity for 70 years

Rebuild the Foundation (Ez 3)

- Step 2 – Lay the foundation
  - Hired the people of Sidon and Tyre, just like Solomon did (Ez 3:7)
  - In the 2nd month of the 2nd year after their return, they began to lay the foundation (Ez 3:8)

- Celebrated/wept (Ez 3:11-12)
  - The ones that had never seen the original Temple celebrated – we born in Babylon
  - The older ones that remembered the old Temple wept aloud

Rebuild the Temple

- Enemies of Judah and Benjamin oppose the building of the Temple (see below)
  - 538 – Hired lawyers to work against them - Filed lawsuits against the Jews to stop the building
  - 18 years – In 520, the lawsuits are resolved and the Jews are allowed to resume building

- 520 BC – Rebuilding of the Temple resumes
  - Although the Jews aren’t particularly interested in rebuilding the Temple, they are nudged into it by the prophets Haggai and Zachariah

- 516 – Temple is finished and dedicated – it is now up and operating

Opposition (Ez 4) – Building stops for 18 years

Ez 4:1 When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here."
3 But Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us."

4 Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. 5 They hired counselors to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- **Enemies of Judah and Benjamin** – When Assyria conquered Israel (722 BC) and the surrounding lands, they reshuffled the populations of people that survived. The ‘enemies of Judah and Benjamin’ are the peoples from the nations surrounding Judah that were resettled in the areas of Judah and Israel. They have been living there for almost 200 years.

- Although the people were gone, the people believed that the God of Israel was still in the land and they had been worshipping him – and they wanted to help in building the Temple. The Jews refused saying "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God.”

- The ‘enemies’ hired lawyers to work against them
  - The Jews face a lot of opposition – Legal (lawyers), not violence (war)
  - From the reign of Cyrus the king of Persia all the way through Darius king of Persia
  - Filed lawsuits against the Jews to stop the building – and that’s exactly what happened
  - 538-520 (18 years) – In 520, the lawsuits are resolved and the Jews are allowed to resume building, at which time the Jews have totally lost interest and do not want to do it

- **Timeline jumps around** – Ez 4:1-23 A summary of various attempts to thwart the efforts of the Jews.
  - Ez 4:1-5 – Events in the reign of Cyrus (559-530 BC)
  - Ez 4:6 – Reign of Xerxes (486-465 BC) – Lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem
  - Ez 4:7-23 – Reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC) – Letter sent which stopped the building
  - Ez 4:24 – Reverts in to the time of Darius I (522-486 BC), during whose reign the temple was completed

**Rebuilding resumes**

- Rebuilding resumes with the help of Haggai and Zechariah
- After 18 years of legal battles, the lawsuits are settled and the Jews are allowed resume rebuilding in 520 BC
  - The Jews have totally lost interest and do not want to do it
  - Hag 1:2 "These people say, 'The time has not yet come for the LORD's house to be built.' 

**Haggai – A Call to Build the House of the LORD**

Hag 1:3 Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: 4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

7 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. 8 Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the LORD. 9 "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the LORD Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. 10 Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. 11 I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands." 

13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave this message of the LORD to the people: "I am with you," declares the LORD. 14 So the LORD stirred up the spirit … of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the LORD Almighty, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

- The people say that the time is not right because they are busy building their own estates
- The Lord says no, the time is now – get it done!
Zechariah – A Call to Return to the LORD

Zec 1:2 "The LORD was very angry with your forefathers. 3 Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. 4 Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. 5 Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever? 6 But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers?

"Then they repented and said, 'The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.'"

- The people are back in Jerusalem and you’re already going in the same direction that your ancestors did that resulted in the Babylonian captivity

People’s response to the prophets

- The prophets are both saying ‘Get to work!’ How do the people respond?
  - Some took the message to heart and resumed the rebuilding
  - Zechariah was murdered at the temple as it was being built

Mt 23:35And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Tattenai’s Letter to Darius (Ez 5)

- Tattenai – governor of Trans-Euphrates; Darius – king of Persia

Ez 5:8 The king should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great God. The people are building it with large stones and placing the timbers in the walls. The work is being carried on with diligence and is making rapid progress under their direction. …

- Ez 5: 5 But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received.

- King Darius found a memorandum in the Babylonian archives
  - Not a proclamation, but an internal memo
  - Not Persian archives, but the Babylonian archives

Ez 6:3 In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be ninety feet high and ninety feet wide, 4 with three courses of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury. …
  6 Now then … stay away from there. 7 Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site. 8 Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. 9 Whatever is needed…must be given them daily without fail, 10 so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. 11 Furthermore, I decree that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble. 12 May God, who has
caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence.

**Completion, life and destruction of the 2nd Temple**

**Temple completion (March 12, 516 BC)**
- Temple was completed on March 12, 516 BC
- This Temple continues in existence up until 70 AD when it is destroyed for good

Ez 6:14 So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. 15 The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

**King Herod augments the Temple (37 BC)**
See King Herod augments the Temple

**Destruction of the Temple in 70 AD**
- Not destroyed by the Romans, but by the Zealots
- Zealots – Revolutionary party within Judaism who were aggressively attacking the Romans to kick them out
- 68 AD – Zealots capture the Temple platform in and turn it into the headquarters / staging area for raiding the Romans
- Romans obviously have to recapture it and defeat the Zealots
- Titus Flavius Josephus – read the story in History of the Jewish Wars
  - Sadducees (Priests who operated the Temple) were fighting the Zealots
    - The Zealots defeat the Sadducees and put them all to death
  - Roman 10th & 14th legions are brought to Jerusalem to recapture the Temple platform from the Zealots
    - Romans attack to recapture the Temple platform
    - In a fierce battle, the Temple catches fire and the fire spreads to the whole city – it all burns
  - Not a deliberate action by the Romans to destroy the Temple – it was collateral damage in the fight
The book of Nehemiah is Narrative History. Nehemiah authored it at about 430 B.C. Key personalities include Nehemiah, Ezra, Sanballat, and Tobiah. Nehemiah wrote it to record the events of returning to Jerusalem and rebuilding the walls in 445 B.C.

Jerusalem had a temple but there was no protection for the city from further attack. Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem and uses his leadership skill to rally a citywide construction crew. Within a few weeks, the walls around Jerusalem were built and standing tall and their enemies lost their confidence.

- In chapters 1-7, Nehemiah recounts the events of his temporary return to Jerusalem from Persia as governor. Nehemiah leads and directs the project; each family built the section of the wall directly in front of their houses, and with hard work, the wall was astonishingly completed within 52 days. This method allowed the remnant to feel an identity and uniqueness in their part of repairing the walls of Jerusalem. “So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God” (6:15-16).

- From Chapters, 8-13 is a time of Israel finding and reestablishing themselves again as a nation, after the long period of the exile in Babylon. Ezra leads all the Jews in a renewal ceremony. This incorporated a public teaching of the
Law, in which it was read and explained. For example, the recognition of the Sabbath Day was reinstated. “And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel” (8:1). They understood that if they were to survive they must remember and obey God’s Laws. Nehemiah establishes polices and address the issue of mixed marriages then condemns it. One of the main concerns was that the mixed marriage families were not teaching their children the Hebrew language, “the language of Judah” (13:24).

- Meanwhile, Nehemiah, an official in the court of the Persian king, Artaxerxes (465-424 B.C.), returns to Jerusalem shortly after Passover 445 B.C. Working together, Ezra the priest and Nehemiah the layman rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and much of the city itself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>605</td>
<td>70 Years of Captivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>537</td>
<td>Zerubbabel Returns and Temple is Built</td>
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<tr>
<td>516</td>
<td>Ezra Returns and the Law is Taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>458</td>
<td>Nehemiah Returns and the Wall is Built</td>
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<td>445</td>
<td>Malachi is Written</td>
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<tr>
<td>432</td>
<td>Closing Revelation</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 AD</td>
<td>Until John the Baptist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Ezra and Nehemiah return to Jerusalem**

- Ezra and Nehemiah work together to rebuild the city itself
  - Complete opposites
  - Both are needed to get the job done – neither of them could have done it on their own
  - Just like Peter and Paul are both needed to reach the different people
  - Just like today – we all have different talents and abilities, but we are all needed to get the job done

**Ezra**

**Priest**

- Ezra is a priest – a direct descendant of Aaron, the High Priest, brother of Moses
- Born a priest (Levite)
- Jewish tradition holds that Ezra wrote the books of 1st & 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but this is not known with certainty

**Teacher/Rabbi**

- Identified as a teacher
- Patron saint of Bible teachers
- Ez 7:9 …for the gracious hand of his God was on him. 10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.
  - Study the Word of God and understand it – Primary job of a Bible teacher
  - Live/Observe the Word of God – Put what you have learned into practice
  - Teach the Word of God – Imperative if you are called to be a teacher

**Synagogue movement**

- With the Temple gone, how does a Jew remain a Jew?
  - They become a people of the Book – they study the Law
  - Synagogue – House of study
- 10 Jewish men form a minion & they come together & study the Word of God
  - Rabbi – Teacher
- The Synagogue movement came out of the Babylonian captivity

**Artaxerxes Sends Ezra to Jerusalem as an ambassador**

- Ezra is sent by King Artaxerxes to inquire as to how things are going in Jerusalem
  - Same King Artaxerxes that stopped the rebuilding in 485 BC
  - Sent with supplies and finances
- Ez 7:23 Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and of his sons?
  - Like Cyrus, Artaxerxes wants the Jews to pray for him so that their God would commend him to his gods
- Ez 7:25 And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them. 26 Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.
- Fasted to ask for God’s protection on their journey
  - Returns with 1,496 people
  - 4 month journey across the Persian Empire with a lot of riches

  Ez 8:21 There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. 22 I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him." 23 So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

**Ezra arrives in Jerusalem**

- Ezra arrives in Jerusalem on Aug 4, 458 BC
  - 58 years after the Temple was completed
  - 4 month journey across the Persian Empire

**Nehemiah**

**Nehemiah inquires as to how things are going in Jerusalem**

  Neh 1:2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." 4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.
  - 539 – 446 = 93 years after the rebuilding started, the city of Jerusalem is still in ruin
  - Prays a long prayer regarding the city and the restoration of the city

**Cup bearer to King Artaxerxes**

- Very important position in the administration of King Artaxerxes
- Thinks about Jerusalem for 5-6 months
  - Nehemiah is a layman – a man of action – and he has probably developed a plan for how to fix the problem
Ez 2:2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." 6 … It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem

- Nehemiah did not fast and pray for protection like Ezra, he had protection details and letters of introduction
  Neh 2:7 I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. 9 So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.
- Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem in 445 BC (13 years after Ezra)

Intermarriage

- When Ezra and Nehemiah arrive in Jerusalem, they first deal with the problem of intermarriage
  Ez 9:1 … the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices…. 2 They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."

- Why is this a problem?
  o Will lead to worshipping other Gods
  o Going right down the path that lead to the exile in the first place

- Initial reactions
  o Ezra – Ez 9:3 When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled.
  o Nehemiah – Neh 13:25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name

- What did they do?
  o Made a list of all the people that had married foreign wives, confronts them, publically exposes them, and forces them to get rid of the foreign wives

Rebuilding the City

516 BC – Temple is done and rebuilding of the city walls starts
458 BC – Ezra arrives
445 BC – Nehemiah arrives
The Message of Nehemiah’s Twelve Gates of Jerusalem

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Mat. 7:13, 14

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>GATE</th>
<th>SCRIPTURE</th>
<th>APPLICATION</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sheep Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:1, 32; 12:39; Jn. 5:2; 10:7-18; 18:8-11</td>
<td>Jesus is the true Sheep Gate and all must come by trusting in Him to be saved.</td>
<td>Peter led the sheep precious ministry by being occupied with the Lord. It is full of warnings for us who like sheep easily lose our way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Fish Gate</td>
<td>2 Chron. 33:1; Neh. 3:3; 3:12-39; Zeph. 1:1; Mal. 4:19; 13:47; Mk. 16:15; Jn. 2:8-11</td>
<td>The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “follow me and I will make you fishers of men”</td>
<td>Peter in a millennial picture of the remnant who are used to lead the nations to Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Old Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:6; 12:39; Jer. 6:16; Mt. 13:32; Lk.5:36-39</td>
<td>God’s moral ways do not change with dispensations and the old paths are important for us to walk in.</td>
<td>The old covenant – law gives way to the new covenant founded on grace. Also we must guard ourselves. See Prov. 16:32; 25:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Valley Gate</td>
<td>2 Chron. 26:9; Neh. 3:13</td>
<td>This gate led out to the valley of Hinnom and is where Gehenna a type of hell is located.</td>
<td>The valley is looked at in Scripture as one of: Weeping, Decision, and Shadow of death.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dung Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 2:13, 14; 12:31; 1 Jn. 13; Php. 2:8</td>
<td>This gate is where the refuse was taken away.</td>
<td>The things of this world whether good or bad are but dung when compared with the glory of the Lord.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Fountain Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:15; 12:37; Jn. 3:5; 4:14; 9:1-6</td>
<td>This gate was next to the Pool of Siloam.</td>
<td>This gate represents the Holy Spirit which works with the Word to save and calls up within giving energy to the new life in Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Water Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:26; 8:3; 12:37; Eph. 2:10; 5:25; 26; Rev. 19:8</td>
<td>The Gibeonites, who were bearers of water, carried water through this gate for the city.</td>
<td>The Water Gate speaks of the Word of God which saves, cleanses defilement and sanctifies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Horse Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:28; 2 Chron. 23:15; Jer. 31:40; Rev. 19:14</td>
<td>This gate was next to the King’s palace and where the soldiers of the King rode through going in and out to battle.</td>
<td>The Lord Jesus will come out of heaven on a white horse to make battle. We will be with Him but the battle is the Lord’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>East Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:28; Ez. 10:19; 11:1, 40:4; Acts 3:2, 10; Zach. 14:4</td>
<td>This gate is also called Golden or Beautiful.</td>
<td>The Lord will enter Jerusalem through this gate in a future day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Miphkad Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 3:31; 1 Cor. 21:13; Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Mt. 20:31-46</td>
<td>This is the gate of inspection, numbering and gathering.</td>
<td>This may represent both the judgment seat of Christ for the believer and also the judgment of the living nations.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Prison Gate</td>
<td>Neh. 12:39; Acts 12:10; 1 Pet. 3:19</td>
<td>This is where they kept prisoners. Peter is seen in Acts 12 being led of an angel through this gate.</td>
<td>This gate may speak of the judging wickedness in our lives, in the family and also the assembly.</td>
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More Opposition

- Opposition to the rebuilding of the city was just as severe as the rebuilding of the Temple
  - The ‘enemies’ hired lawyers to work against them again

- A letters was sent to the King Artaxerxes (Ez 4)
  - The Jews are rebuilding a fortified city – if this happens, they will become an independent nation again.
  - If they can defend themselves, they will not be part of your kingdom
  - If they do it, everyone around them will do it too, and you will have no one left in the Trans-Euphrates area.
  - The king replied to stop the building

- Timeline
  - 485 BC – Building was ordered to stop by King Artaxerxes until he could investigate the matter
  - 458 BC (30 years later) – Ezra returns to Jerusalem with a letter from King Artaxerxes
  - Issues have apparently been resolved and the Jews are allowed to resume rebuilding the city

- Timeline jumps around – Ez 4:1-23 A summary of various attempts to thwart the efforts of the Jews.
  - Ez 4:1-5 – Events in the reign of Cyrus (559-530 BC)
  - Ez 4:6 – Reign of Xerxes (486-465 BC) – Lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem
  - Ez 4:7-23 – Reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC) – Letter sent which stopped the building
  - Ez 4:24 – Reverts in to the time of Darius I (522-486 BC), during whose reign the temple was completed
Ezra and Nehemiah arrive

- Ezra arrives in Jerusalem in 458 BC
- Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem in 445 BC (13 years after Ezra)

- Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem and rides around the city gates to investigate the magnitude of the work to be done
- He gets the approval of the leaders:
  
  Neh 2:17 Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” 18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

- More opposition
  - Mocked and ridiculed by the Horonite, Ammonites and Arabs
  - Nehemiah responded “The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.”
    - Just as we saw with the Temple – we don’t want your help
    - You may have been here for 200 years, but now we’re back, you can leave

- Everybody is working on the wall
- It gets to be 3’ high
  - Mocking and ridicule continued
  - Nehemiah prays

  Neh 4:4 Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

- It gets to be half its height
  - Mocking and ridicule turn to violence
  - Nehemiah prays and posts guards

  Neh 4:7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. 9 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

- The wall is finished
  - Opposition continues throughout, but finally the wall is built
  - Have a big celebration

Ezra reads the Law

Neh 8:1 They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. 2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

- Stood on a high wooden platform – 1st pulpit
• Bible study protocols
  o Priests were in the audience with groups of people to explain the Word of God after it was ready
  o Bible study now – Read the Word then explicate as we go
  o Ezra is the patron saint of Bible teachers
• First Bible class in Jerusalem – really good attendance (about 42,320 people)
• How do the people react?
  o Neh 8:9 …all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

City is inhabited

• Cast lots – every 10 had to settle in Jerusalem
• All the people help them to rebuild the houses and city itself which was still in ruin
• City is rebuilt during the time of Nehemiah

Esther (Est) – Left Behind

Ester Overview

ESTHER

God’s providence among His people during . . .

Hard Times

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Circumstances

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The genre of the book of Esther is Narrative History. Its author is anonymous however; some believe Mordecai, (Esther’s cousin and guardian), wrote it. It was written approximately 470 B.C. in Persia. Esther became queen in 479 B.C. The key personalities are Esther, Mordecai, King Ahasuerus (or Xerxes), and Haman.

Its purpose is to demonstrate God’s love and sovereignty in all circumstances. It is a post-exile story about Jews who stayed behind after most returned to Jerusalem after captivity. Babylon was conquered by Persia and Esther miraculously becomes the queen of the land, and saves her people.
In chapter 1-2, Esther becomes the queen to Ahasuerus of Persia. She was personally chosen by the King. “The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him” (2:17), probably because of her beauty and intelligence.

Chapters 3-4, Mordecai (Esther’s guardian) refused to bow down and pay homage to Haman a high official of the king. Haman becomes infuriated and plots to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom because of his pride. Mordecai hears of the plot and reports it to his Esther. “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?” (4:14).

From chapters 5-10, Esther outwits Haman and takes her petition to the king and pleas for the protection of her Jewish people from Haman’s wicked stratagem. The king out of anger, has Haman hung on the gallows, which he had built to destroy all the Jews. Esther’s faith and courage saves her people.

**Where is God in Ester?**

1. **Dead Sea Scrolls**
   - Ester is one of the very few books among the Dead Sea Scrolls that was not represented
   - Why? God is never mentioned in the book of Ester – not once
     - No one ever turns to God to ask God for help
     - There is nothing about God intervening on their behalf – nothing at all

2. **Apocryphal or Deuterocanonical books**
   - Expanded canon – Includes full book or parts of books that are not represented in the normal Christian canon
   - Ester was written entirely in Hebrew. After 250 BC, additions were made to Ester in Greek. Why?

3. **How did a book make it into the Christian canon?**
   - Old Testament Canon is defined in AD 90 by the Rabbis at the Council of Jamnia
   - New Testament Canon is defined in AD 393 at the Council of Hippo (called for by St. Augustine)
   - Determined by market forces – how many people wanted copies of these books in their Synagogues
     - Affirmation of what is already common practice
   - Ester was in the gray area – maybe it should be included, maybe not
     - Why not? There’s no mention of God. It doesn’t glorify God in any way
     - Why include it? People liked the story
       - How would they ensure that it is included? Added prayers to God (Greek additions)

4. **God is standing in the shadows throughout the whole story**
   - He is watching and acting from within the shadows
   - Turning point in the entire story – the very point where the plot reverses
     - Est 5:4 let the king, together with Haman, come today
     - Hebrew translation (in English symbols) - ybw’ hmlk whmn bywm
     - Notice the 1st letters YHWH (Yahweh) – It tell us that God is there lurking in the background
     - Subtle, but deliberate and delightful

**End of the linear narrative**

- See Linear Narrative
- Ester is the last book in the linear narrative of the Christian canon
- Overriding lesson of this linear narrative – If you do what God says, all will go well. If you don’t, it won’t
**Historical Background – War with Greece**

The Book of Esther tells the story of those “left behind” in Persia. Esther is a GREAT story, filled with a beauty contest, plenty of sex, palace intrigue, double-dealing and shrewd maneuvering!

- **90%** of the Jews do not return to Jerusalem – about 400,000 people
  - When Cyrus the Great king of Persia allows the Jews to return home and rebuild Jerusalem, only 42,360 do (Ezra 2: 64), about 10% of the population.
  - The rest (90%) stay behind in Assyria, Babylon and Persia. It had been nearly 200 years since the Northern kingdom had been taken captive into Assyria and almost 70 years since the Southern kingdom had been taken captive to Babylon. The Jews had built homes, started businesses and settled into their new lives – they had assimilated into their new culture.

- Xerxes (485-465 BC) rules over all of Persia
  - 127 Provinces
  - Reigned from Susa, just north of the Persian Gulf

- Xerxes is planning to invade Greece.
  - Persia is starting to lose power and Greece is quickly gaining power
  - Xerxes wants to attack before Greece gets to be too powerful
  - Greece reaches its peak during the time of Alexander the Great (330-320 BC)

**Xerxes has a HUGE party**

- Prerequisite for war – support of the people
- Xerxes gathers support for his campaign by throwing a huge party for all the important men of his kingdom
- 180 day party for the important men w/ a 7 day finale for everybody
  - Est 1:4 For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. 5 When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa.
- Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women of the important men

**Xerxes divorces Vashti**

- As the party deteriorates into drunken boasting, Xerxes orders his wife, Vashti, to come in front of all of the drunken men wearing nothing but her royal crown (naked)
- Vashti flat out refuses
- Xerxes divorces her to set an example so the other women do not disrespect their husbands

  Est 1:20 Then when the king's edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest." …22 He sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, proclaiming in each people's tongue that every man should be ruler over his own household.

**War commences**

- He has the support of the people
  - He has shown his leadership and asserted his authority in matters of civil law, domestic affairs, and in international affairs
- He launches his attack on Greece (483-480 B.C.).
  - Defeated thunderously
    - He is beaten and flogged
    - He has lost a lot of his army
The entire navy is sunk
  • He is defeated by a coalition of Greek forces at the Battle of Salamis on September 29, 480 B.C.

**Ester wins the beauty contest and becomes queen**

**Beauty Contest**

- After losing the war, Xerxes is in a funk and misses Vashti
- His retainers suggest a beauty contest to find a new queen to cheer Xerxes up
- There is a beauty contest of virgins throughout all 127 provinces of the Persian Empire
- The winner from each province is brought to the palace at Susa and placed under the care of Hegai
  - They all undergo 12 months of beauty treatments and “education.”
  - Xerxes then spends the night with each
  - The one who pleases the king the most becomes his new queen.
- Hegai interviews each of them and knows that Ester is going to be the one
  - Hegai takes special care of her, because if she becomes queen – and he helped to engineer her rise – he’ll be taken care of too
  - When she is requested by the king, Hegai tells her exactly what to do – and she followed his instructions
- After the night with the king, she has become a concubine, even if she is not selected by the king
  - Even if the king never sees her again, she is not available for anyone else after she sleeps with the king
- Esther wins the contest and becomes queen.
  - He declared a holiday and had a great celebration – he delivered gifts with royal liberalty

**Ester**

- Ester was the most beautiful person in the Persian Empire
  - She was also smart, gracious – all the great things that one would look for in the ideal wife
- Ester did not tell anyone that she was a Jew because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so
  - Today the Jews are 1/10 of 1% of the world’s population
  - Same back then – very small % of the people were Jewish
  - There was just something about the Jews that people didn’t like
  - If you were a Jew in the Persian Empire, you were not going to get ahead
- Why would any girl want to submit herself to a beauty contest for the king?
  - Born into an economic status – only chance for upward mobility is your association with people in power
  - Ensure that their family will be taken care of – If you could have a child to the king, that child would have a guaranteed future

**Mordecai**

- Mordecai is a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin – a descendant of those who were brought into captivity from Babylon
- Mordecai is Esther’s cousin and adoptive father
- Ester could pass for a Persian, so Mordecai instructs her not to let anyone know that she is a Jew
- Monitors the competition – stays at the king’s gate to hear what is going on

**Mordecai uncovers a conspiracy to assassinate King Xerxes**

- As Mordecai is sitting at the king’s gate, he overhears a plot to assassinate the king
- 2 of the king's officers who guarded the doorway had became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes
- Est 2:22 Mordecai … told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai.
- Est 2:23 And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on a gallows.
• Gallows
  o Not a hangman’s noose
  o High platform is built so everyone can see
  o It is a pointy pole, about 5’ high, that people were impaled upon
  o They would be flogged, stripped naked, then hoisted up and pulled onto the pointy pole by the legs and feet
  o Painful but fast
  o This was the precursor to crucifixion on the cross by the Romans
    ▪ How do we make the pain last longer, extend the lesson and make people afraid of breaking the laws?
    ▪ Crucifixion – Painful and slow

Mordecai refuses to bow before Haman

• Xerxes makes Haman Prime Minister / Grand Vizier of the land
  o Elevated him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles

• Est 3:2 All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down & paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this.
  o Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor
    ▪ As a Jew, he would not bow down and prostrate himself before anyone but God
  o The royal officials told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated
    ▪ They also told Haman that the reason he would not do it was because he was a Jew
  o Haman was enraged and plotted to destroy all the Jews living in Persia on the same day

Haman (2nd in command) plots to destroy the Jews

1st Jewish holocaust is planned

• Haman reported to Xerxes that there were people scattered throughout the kingdom that did not follow the king’s laws
  o Still 400,000 Jews in the land. If Mordecai is any indication of their lack of respect for authority in the Persian Empire, then we need to get rid of them
  o Est 3:8 …it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. 9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them
    ▪ 1st planned holocaust
  o Haman offered to 10,000 talents of silver to fund the execution

• Xerxes could clearly see that having ½ million people who would not obey the laws was a bad thing
  o Haman issues the order (law) in the name of the king and that order cannot be repealed

  Est 3:10 So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11 "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please." … 13 Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and little children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

• How is the execution to happen?
  o The date of execution was set by a random casting of lots – March 7, 473 BC
  o If you are the one to kill the Jew and his family, you get all their stuff
    ▪ Lot of incentive by the surrounding people

• Everyone is shocked
  o All prior kings have great respect for all people
    ▪ Cyrus the Great, King Artaxerxes, King Darius – All helped the Jews (and all people)
  o Xerxes is a bad blimp in the line of Persian kings
• Timeline
  o 473 BC – Jews are to be annihilated (Xerxes)
  o 458 BC – Ezra returns to Jerusalem (Artaxerxes)
  o 445 BC – Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem (Artaxerxes)

Why does Haman hate the Jews? Is there a reason?

• Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews (Est 3:10)
  o Haman is a descendant of King Agag, king of the Amalekites

• The Lord tells Saul to exterminate the Amalekites for attacking the Israelites on the way to Mt. Sanai
  o Israelites come up from Egypt in 1446 BC. Saul becomes king in 1050 BC. 400 years have passed.
  o Why does Saul do this? He was afraid of the people
    • 1Sa 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.

The Amalekites Defeated
Ex 17:8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. 9 Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." 10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. 11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. 12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. 13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. 14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

The LORD Rejects Saul as King
1Sa 15:2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. 3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'

7 Then Saul attacked the Amalekites …. 9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed. 10 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel:
11 "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." … 26 …You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!"

• Agag was killed by Samuel, but his family survived – the Agagites
  o 1Sa 15:32 Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites." …33 And Samuel put Agag to death before the LORD at Gilgal.

• Haman is a descendant of King Agag, king of the Amalekites
  o If the Israelites had carried out God’s instructions, regardless of how unpleasant it was, we would not have had the 1st planned holocaust of the Jews under Haman

Ester learns of the planned holocaust

• Mordecai is in mourning – He tore his clothes and put on sackcloth – Ester is told
• She sends out clothes and Mordecai refuses them
• She sends one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why
Est 4:7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

- Mordecai provides documentation of his claims

**Mordecai urges Esther to help**

Est 4:11 "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

- Risking her life by exposing herself as a Jew, Esther decides to intervene with the king
- She was ready to offer her life as a sacrifice for the possible deliverance of her people.

**The plot reversal – Haman is destroyed and Mordecai becomes the 2nd in command**

What happens next is a delicious reversal! Haman is impaled naked on a pointy-pole; Esther becomes the heroine of her people; and Mordecai replaces Haman as Xerxes' number-two man!

**Lunch banquet for Xerxes and Haman**

- Est 5:1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace
  - Xerxes was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter
- Ester invites Xerxes and Haman to a lunch banquet in her private chamber
- After the banquet, Xerxes ask again what her request is – and she invites them to a dinner banquet

**Haman's rage against Mordecai**

- Haman is high in spirits – the queen has just requested him in her private chamber for a banquet
  - He is now on intimate terms with the king and queen
- When he left the palace, he saw Mordecai and was filled with rage
  - But restrained himself and went home
- Est 5:14 His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.
Mordecai is honored

- Est 6:1 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him.
- It was found there that Mordecai had uncovered a plot to assassinate the king and that nothing had been done to honor him for that
- Just then, Haman arrives in the outer court to ask the king about hanging Mordecai and the king calls him in

Est 6:6 When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"
Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" 7 So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, 8 have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. 9 Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!' " 10 "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."
11 So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"
12 Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, 13 and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!" 14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Haman is hanged

Est 7:1 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther, 2 and as they were drinking wine on that second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. …

3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. 4 For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. …

5 King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?" 6 Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman." Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. 7 The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden.

But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. 8 Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?"

As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Hang him on it!" 10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

Est 8:1 That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. 2 The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate.

- Similar to Jesus reclining at the last supper, Queen Ester was reclining at her table
  - Haman lays his head on her lap, his arms around her waist, and begs for mercy right as the king walks in

- Delicious irony
  - Haman has to honor Mordecai whom he despises
Haman is hanged on the pointy pole that he had made for Mordecai
Had Haman killed Ester, he would have gotten her things, but now she kills him and gets his things

**Triumph of the Jews**

- In the end the Jews not only survive, but they kill and plunder the Persians who attempt the holocaust;
- The previous edict ordering the destruction of the Jews cannot be repealed
  - Mordecai, now 2nd in command, writes a new order to all Jews are to assemble and protect themselves, kill and annihilate anyone that attacks them, and plunder their property – exact reversal of the first edict

Est 8:3 Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews....

7 King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows. 8 Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring—for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked." 9 At once the royal secretaries were summoned—on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush. …

10 Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. 11 The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children; and to plunder the property of their enemies. …

17 In every province and in every city, wherever the edict of the king went, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.

- Twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan = June 25, 474 BC
  - Planned holocaust = March 7, 473 BC (about 8 months later)
  - Needed fast horses to get the message to the Jews on time – Persian Empire was huge

Est 9:1 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them.

2 The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those seeking their destruction. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. 3 And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king's administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them. 4 Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.

- The Jews killed many people, including the 10 sons on Haman, but did not take their plunder
- The king asked Ester what more she would like to have done
  - Hang the 10 sons on Haman on the gallows
  - Allow the slaughter to continue for a 2nd day in the Citadel of Susa

**Feast of Purim**

- Named because Haman cast the pur (lot) to determine the date of their destruction
- Celebrated March 8th and 9th
Jews living in Jerusalem celebrate it on March 9th

Rural Jews, those living in villages, celebrate the March 8th as the day of joy (did not get the message about the 2nd day)

Est 9:17 This [assembly] happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. 18 The Jews in Susa, however, had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. 19 That is why rural Jews—those living in villages—observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other.

20 Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, 21 to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar 22 as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor. 23 So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what Mordecai had written to them. …

27 the Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed. 28 These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews, nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants.

• Today Purim is a big festival that mainly involves the children
  o Girls dress up like Queen Ester
  o Boys dress up like Mordecai
**The Wisdom Books**

- The wisdom books represent a major shift in style from the historical books that precede them.

- Genre – The Wisdom Books fall into the genre of Ancient Near East wisdom literature
  - Genre is characterized by sayings of wisdom intended to teach about divinity and about virtue
  - Focuses on existential questions about God, humanity, Creation, and the nature of evil and suffering.
  - The key principles
    - Uses techniques of traditional story-telling or poetry
    - Books offer insight and wisdom about nature and reality.
  - Wisdom literature was produced in several different cultures in the Ancient Near East, but by far the best-known are those that found their way into the Bible: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

- Wisdom literature could take the form of:
  - Short, memorable insights (as in the book of Proverbs)
  - A dialogue (as in the book of Job, where Job, Job’s friends, and God engage in a conversation that teaches and enlightens the reader).

- What is wisdom?
  - Data – the sensory input that comes in, whether we know about it or not
    - Sights, smells, sounds, feels, tastes
  - Information – Organized data
    - Not important – put to the side - dismissed
    - Important data is processed – categorized and organized – so it can be used
  - Knowledge – Information that has been put to use
    - Information that has been applied to a situation
    - Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
  - Wisdom – Applying the knowledge you have in an insightful way
    - The proverbs are for attaining wisdom
    - Pr 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

- Characteristics of Old Testament Wisdom perspectives:
  - Wisdom is concerned with everyday life – how to live well.
    - Issues facing general humanity – the typical & recurring aspects of life that face people daily.
    - The concern is focused on daily living – the mundane aspects of life – such as raising children, providing economic security, finding the appropriate spouse, etc.
    - The focus is on interpersonal relationships, as well as reflective questions about the meaning of life and how to live it.
    - The goal is to live in harmonious relationship with God, others, and the world
  - Wisdom does not address the human condition from the divine perspective, but rather from the perspective of human needs and concerns, and in terms of what people can and should do to address those concerns.
    - Wisdom attempts to give expression to the way things are
      - It is *descriptive* and not *prescriptive*
      - It describes the world and the existing social order.
      - It defines a means to live within it in a productive way.
    - Wisdom thinking grapples with understanding the world
      - Especially the physical and social environment
      - As such, it is reflective, rational, and concerned with knowledge.
    - It is concerned with choosing the proper course of action
      - Learning enough to be able to choose the proper course of action for well-being in life
      - Often expressed metaphorically as the "two ways" or the "two paths" (cf. Psa. 1).
Wisdom's claim to authority lies in tradition and observation
- There is no "thus says the Lord" grounding of authority in wisdom thinking
  - Rather the truth of life is already there in God's creation awaiting discovery.
- Tradition represents the wisdom of experience – both in individuals and in the collective experiences of the community
  - Preference is usually given to age and established and proven ways of doing things.
- Wisdom is grounded in social structures
  - Family
  - "Schools" of the wise elders
  - The king and the royal court.
- Wisdom perspectives do not demand radical change, for example in dealing with social problems.

Israelite Wisdom is rooted in reverence and commitment to God
- The basic world view of Israelite wisdom is that God is Creator, both of his people and the physical world; everything else in wisdom arises from this conviction.
- As Creator, God has imbedded truth in all of creation; another way to say this is that all of creation reflects the wisdom, nature, and character of its creator, and therefore all of creation is a way to learn about God and his purposes for the world; creation is truly a "cosmos."
- Wisdom takes seriously the confession in Genesis that the created world is good; there is no hint of an evil physical world that would emerge later in Greek thinking.
- Human responsibility to God involves finding the truth of God in the world as reflected in how the world operates according to the harmony of its creator, and then living within that harmony of God's order.
- Being wise is to search for and maintain the order of God in the world in order to live well as God has created humanity to live; a "fool" is one who does not recognize God as creator and therefore does not seek to live according to the harmony of God's creation.
- The "way of wisdom" is an ethical system in which humanity is responsible for searching, finding, and doing the things necessary to secure their well being in God's world.

Lady Wisdom – Wisdom has long been personified as a woman
- Deuterocanonical books (books in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox, but not in the Protestant or Jewish Bibles) – one of those books is the book of wisdom, in which wisdom in personified as a female character
  - Very same character – lady wisdom – is speaking here in Proverbs
- Pr 1:20-33 We meet lady wisdom
- Pr 9:1–6 She is depicted as a figure with a home inviting those in need of wisdom to enter
  - She says "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight"
- Pr 8:22–30 Nature of Wisdom
  - "Wisdom speaks of herself as having been created before anything else and as Yahweh's companion and even assistant at the creation of the ordered world"
  - Pr 8:15–21 She not only identifies herself as the divine companion, but also as the source of order in society and success in life.
  - There is debate about the status and place of Woman Wisdom in relation to the divine.
  - Some have interpreted her as a companion to the divine, an abstraction, an extension to the divine, or a Goddess – adds a mythical nature to proverbs.
    - This would line up with the ancient Near Eastern view that every male deity had a female counterpart.
- Pr 31:10 She is personified as the ideal woman for an Israelite man in the section - Ode to a Capable Wife.

Biblical Books
- 5 (Protestant Canon) – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
  - Job – Why do bad things happen to good people?
    - Presented as a drama –very different from the historical narrative presented to that point
• Lesson of the linear narrative – If we do what God says, all will go well; if we don’t, in won’t
  o Job calls this lesson into question
• The book does not offer an easy or simplistic answer to the problem of suffering, but finds solace in God’s sovereignty.

- Psalms – Take us into the heart of David
  - 73 of the 150 were written by David
  - Epithet – Ps 23 “… and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever”
  - Collection of prayers, songs, and poetry that cover the entire range of human emotion - from praise, doubt, repentance, anger and joy.

- Proverbs – Purpose was to teach wisdom to God’s people
  - What does a wisely-lived life look like?
    o Through hundreds of short pieces of insight, the book of Proverbs distinguishes wisdom from foolishness
    o Takes traditional wisdom and states it in a very striking and memorable way
  - Pro 1:2 for attaining wisdom and discipline
  - 1Ki 3:29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.
    o Proverbs has 375 of the 3000 proverbs that Solomon wrote
• Lady Wisdom

- Ecclesiastes – Take us into the heart of Solomon
  - Solomon’s epitaph: Ecc 1:2 “Meaningless, meaningless, everything is meaningless.”
  - It’s an extended reflection on the meaning of life that can feels fatalistic and cynical
  - Its message is ultimately the positive one that living in obedience to God provides a grounding for an otherwise meaningless life

- Song of Songs – Take us into the heart of Solomon
  - The one things that he found meaning in – his love for the beloved – slipped through his fingers
  - Structured as an erotic love poem – celebrating marriage and the gift of sexuality
  - Many Christians also find in it an allegorical message about the love of Christ for His church

- 7 Books – 5 Above + Book of Wisdom and Sirach
  - Apocryphal Books – Roman catholic, Syrian and Orthodox Bibles
  - Book of Wisdom
    - Also known as Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom, or the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon
    - An ancient manuscript fragment known as the Muratorian fragment refers to the Wisdom of Solomon as having been written by “the friends of Solomon in his honor”
    - Dates back to the 1st or 2nd century BC, many centuries after the death of Solomon.
    - Conflicts with Christian beliefs
      o The book refers to Wisdom in terms the Bible reserves only for the Messiah, saying “she [wisdom] is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness” (Wisdom 7:26).
      o is by faith, a gift of God to those whom He calls, justifies and sanctifies (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 8:30).
      o In fact, if man were to depend upon his “wisdom” for salvation, we would be lost forever with no hope because the unredeemed are dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1-4) and their minds are darkened (Ephesians 4:18;1 Corinthians 2:14) and their heart deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).
- **Book of Sirach**
  - Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sirach, is believed to have written this book between 200-175 B.C.
  - Possesses a wealth of varied expressions of wise and foolish behavior reminiscent of the book of Proverbs.
  - Many of its verses have Old Testament antecedents, especially from the book of Proverbs (dozens of related verses) and the Pentateuch, (the first five books of the Bible).
  - Portions of Sirach are used today in Catholic Church liturgy.
  - Conflicts with Christian beliefs
    - While most of this book tracks with long-standing, sound biblical doctrine, there are several tenets which conflict significantly with Christian beliefs.
    - In several places, Sirach implies our actions can bring favor upon ourselves, mitigate our sin in God’s eyes, and anticipate reciprocal responses from those we assist in their time of need (Chapters 3, 7, 12, 17, and 22).
    - This is in stark contrast to being a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7), being saved through faith and not actions/works (Galatians 2:15), and Jesus’ exhorting us to give without expecting anything in return (Matthew 6:3).

- **Was Solomon wise?**
  - Asked for wisdom in administering justice for his people – In that regard he was wise. In all other ways – no
  - Dt 17 – Rules for a king – Solomon breaks all of these rules
    - Dt 17:16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” 17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.
  - He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold
    - Does accumulate large amounts of silver & gold through heavy taxation & trade route control ($55 M/year)
    - Built 1 Temple for the Lord, and 2 for himself
      - Spent 7 years building the Lord’s Temple
      - Spent 13 years to build his temple, then built another summer temple
      - Had another summer palace in the cedar forests of Lebanon
  - Acquires great numbers of horses from Egypt
    - 1Ki 10:26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. … 28 Solomon’s horses were imported from Egypt
  - Must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray

1Ki 11:1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.
Wives were his way of sealing economic trade agreements with the surrounding nations of the Middle East
  - Why should we fight? We can all make money if we’re at peace.
  - Mutual protection agreements – now we’re family and we protect each other

Harem of 1000 women
  - 700 wives of royal birth
  - 300 concubines

Did Solomon love these women?
  - He never met most of them
  - They were just the results of his trade agreements with the surrounding kings and tribal warlords

What was the result?
  - 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods
  - 7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.
    - Right next door to the Temple (hill east of Jerusalem = Mt. of Olives)
    - Chemosh and Molech both required the human sacrifice of children in their worship

Job (Job)
Job Overview

The book of Job is Narrative History. Its author is unknown yet it is possible that Job himself wrote it. It is possible that Job is the oldest of any book of the Bible written approximately 2100-1800 B.C. Key personalities of this book include Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the Buzite.

In Job, we see a man who God allows to be directly attacked by Satan. He is an example of faithfulness as he loses everything important to him yet remains faithful to God. Its purpose is to illustrate God’s sovereignty and faithfulness during a time of great suffering.

- In chapters 1-3, God tests Job’s faithfulness through allowing Satan to attack him. God told Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him” (1:12). Through Job’s trials, all is lost including his health, his wife even tells him to curse God and commit suicide, but he remains strong and faithful, “Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.” (1:22).

- From chapters 4-37, Job’s friends give him plenty of bad advice, in rounds of discussion. They mistakenly blame his sufferings on his personal sins rather than God testing and growing Job. One of them was half-correct in that God wanted to humble him, but this was only a part of God’s test.

- In chapters 38-42, God speaks to Job and restores him. God knows that Job has received incorrect guidance from his friends, “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” God fittingly declares that humans do not know everything. Then He humbles Job by asking a series of questions that could never be answered by anyone other than Almighty God; for example, “Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this”. God then brings him to an understanding that believers don’t always know what God is doing in their lives.

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In the end, Job answers God by saying, “I have declared that which I did not understand”. God then blessed Job with twice as much as he had before his trials began.

What is the problem with Job? He did everything that God asked, but he did them for all the wrong reasons.

“Job” – The name literally means, “Hated.”
• Truly the devil hated this man.
• But God! But God loved Job, so much so, that Satan’s hatred of Job would be no match for the matchless love of God for him.
• So too is this true for us today, actually this is one of the magnificent take aways from this powerful and profound book of Job.

Drama of Job
• Underlying message of the linear narrative – If we do what God says, all will go well; if we don’t, in won’t
  o Therefore, every person’s suffering is indicative of the measure of their guilt in the eyes of God.
  o However, sometimes there are outside forces at work
    ▪ It’s not always just about you and God, there the Satin factor to consider
  o The book does not offer an easy or simplistic answer to the problem of suffering, but finds solace in God’s sovereignty.
• Job is structured as a drama
  o Prologue and epilogue are framing devices to pose the question and bring closure to the drama
  o Introduce and conclude by way of fable
    ▪ Prologue and epilogue are puppet shows, with real characters in between

Prologue (Job 1:1-2)
• Introduces the characters and the conflict, poses the question
  o Job 1:1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. …He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.
  o G. Campbell Morgan writes that the fact that he was blameless and upright … “will save us from the mistake of thinking at any point of those experiences as having their explanation in the man himself. Nor for himself did he suffer. His pains were not penalties for wrongdoing; they were not even chastisements for correction.”

• Job is a great example of a Godly father in the Bible
  o F.B. Meyer wrote, “What a beautiful example is furnished by Job to Christian parents! When your girls are going among strangers, and your boys into the great ways of the world, and you are unable to impose your will upon them, as in the days of childhood, you can yet pray for them, casting over them the shield of intercession, with strong crying’s and tears. They are beyond your reach; but by faith you can move the arm of God on their behalf.”

Job is tested
• God hands Job over to Satan

  Job 1:6 One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. … 8 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

  9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”
12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

- This provides us with very important information about how Satan operates and what Satan will attempt to do to us.
  - Specifically, that of going to and fro, back and forth on the earth stalking us as his prey waiting for an optimum time to attack us.
  - Then, when that time comes, he has to obtain permission from the Lord first, as we'll see next, before he does anything to us.
  - It's interesting to note that Satan went as far as he possibly could within the scope of what God had allowed him to do. The reason I mention this is because it speaks to how evil and merciless our adversary is when it comes to his attacks on us.
  - 1Pe 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.
  - It is important to note that the only time that God will allow Satan permission to touch us is if it brings about God's glory and our good in the end.

- Job has lost everything – his wealth, his children, his health
  - He is seated in an ash heap with nothing – all he has is his torment, trouble and his wife
  - We only hear about Job's wife 2 times
    - Job 2:9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"
    - Job 19:17 My breath is offensive to my wife
    - She enters and exits on stage right, with Satan

**Unspeakable pain and suffering**

One commentator has listed the references that Job makes to his unspeakable pain and suffering:

- Intense itching (to scrape himself; Job 2:8)
- Intense pain (My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest; Job 30:17)
- Peeling and darkened skin (My skin grows black and falls from me; Job 30:30a)
- Pus-filled, erupting sores (My flesh is caked with worms and dust, my skin is cracked and breaks out afresh; Job 7:5b)
- Emaciation (My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh; Job 19:20)
- Fever (My bones burn with fever; Job 30:30b)
- Depression (I loathe my life; I would not live forever; Job 7:16)
- Turmoil (My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; days of affliction confront me. I go about mourning… Job 30:27–28)
- Weeping (My face is flushed with weeping; Job 16:16a)
- Sleeplessness (When I lie down, I say, ‘When shall I arise, and the night be ended?’ Job 7:4)
- Nightmares (Then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions; Job 7:14)
- Putrid breath (My breath is offensive to my wife; Job 19:17)
- Difficulty breathing (He will not allow me to catch my breath; Job 19:18)
- Failing vision (On my eyelids is the shadow of death; Job 16:16b)
- Rotting teeth (I have escaped by the skin of my teeth; Job 19:20)
- Haggard looks (When they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him; Job 2:12)
- Painful swollen sores all over his body (painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; Job 2:7)
- No relief (Oh, that I were as in months past; Job 29:2 and I have been allotted months of futility; Job 7:3)

**Job's wife**

Job 2:9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

- She herself had suffered in the loss of her children and wealth and now seeing Job suffer too.
• While it doesn’t excuse what she says, it does explain what she says in the sense that, she wants God to end Job’s suffering.
• I like how one commentator explained it, “She can’t bear to see her husband suffer like this. Her heart, already crushed by the loss of her ten children, is now without hope. She is saying, ‘Curse God and He’ll strike you dead too. Then you can escape this pain. Death would be better than this.’ ”

Job 2:10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

• It’s interesting to note in the midst of unthinkable and unspeakable pain and suffering on Job’s part, he still ministers to his wife.
• Not only does that, but he passes the test of round two under the banner of accepting both good and adversity.
  o Ec 7:14 When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.

Friends arrive

Job 2:11 When Job's three friends … heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

• Job’s three friends, to their credit, are off to a good start just by being there for him.
  o There’s something to be said of a true friend who is willing to not only be there, but to weep with you and just sit next to you.
  o As it’s been said, sometimes the best thing that can be said is nothing at all, and certainly their tears said what words could not
  o G. Campbell Morgan of Job’s friends had this to say, “While it is true that Job suffered more at the hands of these friends ultimately than by the attacks of the foe, yet some recognition must be made of the goodness of the men.”

Act 1 (Job 3-14)

Job states his complaint

• Job 3:1 After this [7 days of silence], Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth
• Job starts accusing God of wrong-doing
• Now the battle begins in Job’s mind and soul, such that, he is now entering into the arena of expression.
  o Here-to-fore, the battle has been external and as such he has been processing the adversity that’s befallen him.
  o Now, he opens his mouth and gives voice to his utter despair, as he expresses himself and what he thinks about his suffering.
• 5 Stages of grief – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance

The ‘friends’

• The theology of his friends
  o God does not punish an innocent man. You are being punished, therefore you must not be innocent.
  o For these friends, this theology HAS to be true, otherwise the same thing could happen to them
  o They all say the same thing

• Eliphaz the Temanite – Voice of experience
  o G. Campbell Morgan “Eliphaz had no knowledge of those secret councils in heaven, and was making the mistake of attempting to press all things into the compass of his philosophy.”
Of this Eliphaz’s theology, Oswald Chambers writes, “He can tell Job everything about God, but when we come to the facts of the case we find that the man who is criticizing Job is not fit to sit down beside him. ..If the study of the Book of Job is making us reverent with what we don’t understand, we are gaining insight. There is suffering before which you cannot say a word; you cannot preach “the gospel of temperament”; all you can do is to remain dumb and leave room for God to come in as He likes. The point for us is—Do I believe in God apart from my reasoning about Him? Theology is a great thing, so is a man’s creed; but God is greater than either, and the next greatest thing is my relationship to Him.”

Job 22
- G. Campbell Morgan - “Great and wonderful words are these. Had Eliphaz applied them to himself he would have found that his own imperfect acquaintance with God was the reason why he was not able to bring any real comfort to his suffering friend.”
- Adam Clark - “Thus ends Eliphaz the Temanite, who began with a tissue of the bitterest charges, continued with the most cruel insinuations, and ended with common-place exhortations to repentance, and promises of secular blessings in consequence.”

Zophar the Naamathite – Voice of tradition
- Adam Clarke of Zophar wrote, “He is the most inveterate of Job’s accusers, and generally speaks without feeling or pity. In sour godliness he excelled all the rest. This chapter and the twentieth comprehends all that he said. He was too crooked to speak much in measured verse.”

Bildad the Shuhite – Voice of religion
- Job 25
  - Chambers - “Bildad is in touch with nothing, he is courageously heartless; he never thinks when he talks, but simply pours it out. The ‘Bildad’ type is often met with in the pulpit; men roll out phrases and talk the most ponderous stuff with nothing in it.”
  - G. Campbell Morgan - “Without argument, Bildad made it perfectly clear that, in his mind, the guilt of Job was established. …The brevity of this speech of Bildad is in itself suggestive, as it shows that even though Job has not convinced these friends of his that their philosophy does not include his case, he has succeeded in silencing them.”

Words hurt
- Adam Clarke said it best, “Perhaps no evil is more dreadful than the scourge of the tongue: evil-speaking, detraction, backbiting, [defamation], slander, tale-bearing, whispering, and scandalizing, are some of the terms which we use when endeavoring to express the [sinister] influence and effects of that member, which is a world of fire, kindled from the nethermost hell.”
- Charles Spurgeon - “They struck at him with their hard words, as if they were breaking stones on the roadside. We ought to be very careful what we say to those who are suffering affliction and trial, for a word, though it seems to be a very little thing, will often cut far more deeply and wound far more terribly than a razor would.”

Job’s response

Job is disappointed with his friends
- 6:21 Now you too have proved to be of no help; you see something dreadful and are afraid.
- Have I ever asked you for anything? (Job 6:22)

Job asks for something helpful
- Job 6:24 “Teach me, and I will be quiet; show me where I have been wrong. …30 Is there any wickedness on my lips? Can my mouth not discern malice?

Job reproves them for their actions
- Job 6:25 How painful are honest words! But what do your arguments prove? 26 Do you mean to correct what I say, and treat the words of a despairing man as wind? 27 You would even cast lots for the fatherless and barter away your friend.
o Job 7:19 Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant? 20 If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you? 21 Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins?

o Here Job basically says even if there was some secret sin in his life and he forsook the Lord, they should still be kind to him.
  ▪ It’s interesting to note that while Job seems to be responding to Eliphaz specifically, he addresses all three of them collectively. The reason this is interesting is because it would indicate that Job was rightfully discerning their silence meant that they agreed.

• Job asks for something helpful again
  o Job 6:28 "But now be so kind as to look at me. Would I lie to your face? 29 Relent, do not be unjust; reconsider, for my integrity is at stake.

Trust in God

• Oswald Chambers “Job is suffering because God and Satan have made a battleground of his soul, without giving him any warning or any explanation. It is an easy thing to argue from precedent because it makes everything simple, but it is a risky thing to do. Give God “elbow room”; let Him come into His universe as He pleases.
  o Oswald Chambers, “Satan’s aim is to make a man believe that God is cruel and that things are all wrong; but when a man strikes deepest in agony and turns deliberately to the God manifested in Jesus Christ, he will find Him to be the answer to all his problems.”

• Job is speaking to one of our greatest difficulties as Christians, which is when God is silent.
  o Job does not understand why God continues to allow his unspeakable suffering without at least giving him a reason as to why.
    ▪ The problem is that if God were to explain why to Job, it would make everything he’s going through completely null and void.
    ▪ G. Campbell Morgan of Job not being granted his desire, “When the answer does not come, when instead of the release of cutting off, we have the continuity of pain, and a great silence, then let us remember this story: and remain confident that there is some explanation, and that when it comes, we shall thank God that He did not give us our request.”

• Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;
  o This speaks to absolute trust in God when the ways of God and the why’s of God make absolutely no sense.
  o In other words, while I cannot understand why it is that God is dealing with me in the way that He is, I’ll completely trust Him.
  o Oswald Chambers in Baffled to Fight Better of this writes, Job gives expression to the most sublime utterance of faith in the whole of the Old Testament—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” “Though He, whom you are misrepresenting, and whom I cannot state in words—though He slay me, I will trust in the fact that He is full of the integrity I believe Him to be, and I will wait for Him. I will face my own common-sense integrity, and dedicate my instinctive sense of God’s integrity, and in the end I know that both will work out into one.”

• In chapter 14, Job begins giving voice to the frailty of man while at the same time acknowledging the majesty of God.
  o He then pleads with God in his prayer to God to have mercy on him knowing that God could in an instant bring him this relief.
  o This can be one of the hardest things for us when it comes to a crisis of faith in that, we know what God could do but doesn’t.

Act 2 (Job 15-21)

• A crowd starts to gather and listen to the men argue
• Repeat of Act 1
Same sequence of speakers saying the same thing – nothing new, just louder
Job, more stridently, denies wrong-doing
We come to an impasse

5 Stages of grief – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance

Job’s problem defined

Why is God allowing this to happen?
- Chapters 29-31, Job continues his defense and we start to see what the real problem is
- Personal pronouns – I, me, my

What is Job’s problem? Job is doing everything that God wanted him to do, but why?
- Satan was right – of course Job obeys God, because God gives him all this stuff
- When God allows all the stuff to be taken away, Job demands a reason from God
- Job’s life, including his relationship with God, is self-referential. Job is at the center, not God.
  - God serves Job – he gives Job stuff if Job does what God asks.
  - Thomas Merchant – Trappist monk – A self-referential life is a life lived on the doorstep of hell
  - Job does everything that Job does because God has rewarded him for it
- Job has feared this very thing – Stated in his initial complaint
  - Job 3:25 What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.
  - If I don’t do what God wants, He will take away my stuff – it defines his relationship with God
  - God gave it and God will take it away, based on what Job does – if you do what God says, all will go well, if you don’t, it won’t
  - Now it’s all been taken away, and there is no reason for it, unless God is teaching Job a lesson about his relationship with God

My Goel (redeemer) lives (Job 19)

Every book of the Bible points to Jesus

Job 19: 25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. 26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; 27 I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

G. Campbell Morgan

I would change the word ‘Redeemer’ here to Vindicator; not that Redeemer is wrong, but that our use of it does not accurately convey the thought of the Hebrew word, Goel. The business of the Goel was always that of vindication, when the one to be vindicated was unable to vindicate himself. The vindication might be by ransom or revenge.

Now said Job

- “I know that my Goel liveth,” – that is my present conviction;
- “and that He shall stand up at the last” — not, in the latter day, but at the end of this conflict

This was the language of the court of justice. Job was making appeal for vindication, and affirmed his conviction that his Vindicator would stand up at the end upon the dust, that is, as a prevailing Advocate.

Charles Spurgeon

“Remember, too, that it was always considered to be the duty of the Goel, not merely to redeem by price, but where that failed, to redeem by power… There are two redemptions, —redemption by price and redemption by
power, and both of these Christ hath wrought for us; —by price, by his sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary; and by power, by his Divine Spirit coming into our heart, and renewing our soul.”

G. Campbell Morgan

“When Job, amid the desolation, declared that he had a ‘Goel’ living and active, he was uttering a profound truth, the truth that in God, man has is Redeemer in all the fullest senses of that great word. It was a spiritual apprehension of an abiding fact, which fact came into clear shining when God was manifest in flesh.”

F.B. Meyer

“Beyond the heavens Job thought there lived a Kinsman, who saw all his sufferings, and pitied, and would one day appear on earth to vindicate his innocence and avenge his wrongs. He was content to leave the case with Him, sure He would not fail, as his friends had done.”

This changed Job - Adam Clarke made an interesting observation, suggesting that this changed Job as evidenced in the rest of the book.

“It is not at all probable that Job had this confidence any time before the moment in which he uttered it: it was then a direct revelation, nothing of which he ever had before, else he had never dropped those words of impatience and irritation which we find in several of his speeches. And this may be safely inferred from the consideration, that after this time no such words escaped his lips: He bears the rest of his sufferings with great patience and fortitude; and seems to look forward with steady hope to that day in which all tears shall be wiped away from off all faces, and it is fully proved that the Judge of all the earth has done right.”

Saying the right thing, at the wrong time, with the wrong spirit (Job 20)

- “Aspirin is a good and effective medicine. But it is useless against cancer. Similarly, so much of the advice that Eliphaz and the other friends dole out is, in its own right, correct and good and true. But because it is wrongly applied it becomes useless. More than useless, it is a lie.”

- Job 20 is interesting in the sense that Zophar is actually speaking the truth as it relates to the just judgment of God.
  - The problem is he says the right thing at the wrong time with the wrong spirit, and if this weren’t bad enough to the wrong man.
  - Sadly, we can be just as prone to do the same thing as a Zophar in someone else’s life all because of our own spiritual pride.
  - Oswald Chambers - “Zophar speaks with dignity, but dignity is not an indication of discernment. Zophar has listened to Job’s words but not to the spirit of them; he is ashamed of the attitude his former friend has taken.”
  - G. Campbell Morgan - “These closing words were in the nature of a summary of all he had been saying. The sufferings he had described were such as fell to the wicked, and that by Divine appointment. All this was true. But other things were true, of which he seemed to have no knowledge…. The narrowness of Zophar’s philosophy made him unjust to Job.”

Job refutes the theology of his ‘friends’ (Job 21)

- Here in this chapter, Job is arguing there are times when the wicked will prosper as well as the godly.
  - Simply put, they are all wrong in their assessment and even more wrong in their unwillingness to abandon all their falsehoods.

Act 3 (Job 22-42)

- The crowd continues to grow
- Cycle starts over again
Finally Job says that he has nothing more to say – Not one of you has provided an answer to my question

**Job’s relationship with God (Job 23, 27-28)**

- Chapter 23 gives us a closer look at the heart of this righteous man who wants nothing more than his relationship with the Lord.
  - We saw this earlier in that Job never once asks for physical healing or material blessing, rather, he wants to be good with God.
  - The sole desire of Job’s soul his relationship with God being restored. He’s lost everything, but wants God more than anything.
  - Charles Spurgeon - “In Job’s uttermost extremity he cried after the Lord. The longing desire of an afflicted child of God is once more to see his Father’s face. His first prayer is not, ‘Oh that I might be healed of the disease which now festers in every part of my body!’ nor even, ‘Oh that I might see my children restored from the jaws of the grave, and my property once more brought from the hand of the spoiler!’ but the first and uppermost cry is, ‘Oh that I knew where I might find HIM—who is my God! that I might come even to his seat!’ ”

- Job, fully convinced that God is against him, still trusts Him (Job 27)
  - In other words, in a profound paradox, the God who has vexed and embittered his soul is the same God Who will restore him.
  - This speaks to how Job has not lost all hope in spite of all that has come upon him, and with very little faith trusts God
  - Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon on this text, appropriately titled, “A Vexed Soul Comforted.”
    - Kindly allow me to share some of what he had to say, as I think it will bless and encourage you as much as it did me, especially those who are going through a very difficult and painful trial.
    - “Child of God, are you vexed and embittered in soul? Then, bravely accept the trial as coming from your Father, and say, ‘The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?’ ‘Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’ Press on through the cloud which now lowers directly in your pathway: it may be with you as it was with the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, ‘they feared as they entered the cloud,’ yet in the cloud they saw their Master’s glory, and they found it good to be there.” …“If it be the Almighty who has troubled us, surely he can also comfort us. He that is strong to sink is also strong to save. If he be almighty to embitter, he must also be almighty to sweeten. Oh, yes, that word ‘Almighty’ cuts both ways! It makes us tremble, and so it kills our pride; but it also makes us hope, and so it slays our despair.”

- Job is falling back on what he knows (Job 28)
  - This is one of the best things to do when we don’t know; we can fall back on and rely upon that which we do know about God.
  - Such is the case here, Job is absolutely dumbfounded and does not know what God is doing so he goes to what he does know

**Why do the evil prosper (Job 24)**

- Job is lamenting about how the wicked seem to get away with their evil and as such continue with impunity.
  - Basically, Job is asking the question of why God delays in bringing about a just and righteous judgment on those who do evil.

- 5 Stages of grief – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance

- Ps 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. 3 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. … 16 When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me 17 till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.
• Charles Spurgeon - “Job challenges all men to contradict what he affirms,—that the righteous may be greater sufferers, and the wicked may for awhile prosper, but that God will, in the end, overthrow the ungodly, and establish the righteous.”

Reminiscing (Job 29)

• What Job does in this chapter is reminisce about what his life was like before all this.
  o He’s not so much remembering all that he had, as much as it is about remembering how that God had him.
  o I would suggest Job is remembering with great sorrow those times in the past when he had such intimate closeness with God

• Charles Spurgeon - “It is a great thing for a man to be near to God; it is a very choice privilege to be admitted into the inner circle of communion, and to become God’s familiar friend. Great as the privilege is, so great is the loss of it. No darkness is so dark as that which falls on eyes accustomed to the light.”

• Oswald Chambers - Never ignore the things that cannot be explained, put them on one side, but remember they are there and have to be reckoned with. There is a gap and a wildness in things and if God does not step in and adjust it, there is no hope; but God has stepped in by the Redemption, and our part is to trust confidently in Him

• 5 Stages of grief – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance

• misrepresenting and mischaracterizing what someone says in order to demonize, antagonize and criticize them. - Dare I say that this ugly reality is alive and well today a thousand times a day when it comes to those who have a critical spirit.

Acceptance (Job 30)

• In Job 30, you almost get the sense that Job has somehow come to the place of accepting this as is.
  o He’s resigning himself to the reality that this is his new norm & will continue to be until the day of his death.
  o It’s almost as if his whole life is flashing before him as he reflects on his life in the past, now in the present, and even yet future

• 5 Stages of grief – Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance

• Charles Spurgeon - I know that You will bring me to death: “Under depression of spirit he felt sure that he must very soon die; he feared that God would not relax the blows of his hand until his body became a ruin, and then he would have rest. But he did not die at that time. He was fully recovered, and God gave him twice as much as he had before. A life of usefulness, and happiness, and honor lay before him; and yet he had set up his own tombstone, and reckoned himself a dead man.”

Job calls for God’s judgment (Job 31)

• In this chapter, Job calls upon an ancient defense in the sense that he’s calling down God’s judgment.
  o He is maintaining his innocence by an oath of clearance – by inviting judgment were he not innocent
  o One would call down a curse upon oneself were he truly guilty of the crime he is accused of committing

• Oswald Chambers – Job examines the statements of the creed and its moral findings, and then disputes it from his own experience—“Do you think I am trying to make out before God that I am what I have not been? Would I talk to God with what would be blatant insolence if I had not the facts to back me up? The inference from the facts of my life is that I have been beyond reproach, and in my approach to God I will not say I have been guilty of what I know I have not been. I stand clear before God on every one of these lines, and though I do not see Him or know Him, I will stick to it that He is other than you say, and that when I do see Him He will not say that I deceived myself when I spoke the truth.”
• Adam Clarke - “Job is so conscious of his own innocence, that he is willing it should be put to the utmost proof; and if found guilty, that he may be exposed to the most distressing and humiliating punishment, even to that of being deprived of his goods, bereaved of his children, his wife made a slave, and subjected to all indignities in that state.”

• Job 31:35 Here is my mark
  o It carries with it the idea of, “Here is my signature,” or “Here is my taw.”
  o One commentator noted it this way. “Some versions translate this, ‘Here is my signature,’ since taw, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, could be used like our letter ‘X’ to denote a person’s ‘mark’ or ‘signature.’ Yet even more interesting is the fact that in the ancient Hebrew script used by the author of Job, this letter taw was a cross-shaped mark. In a sense, therefore, what Job was saying is, ‘Here is my cross.’ ”

• G. Campbell Morgan - “This whole chapter is occupied with Job’s solemn oath of innocence. It was his final and explicit answer to the line of argument adopted by his three friends. …At this point, then, we have reached the end of Job’s expressions of pain. The end is silence. That is God’s opportunity for speech. He often waits until we have said everything: and then, in the silence prepared for such speech, He answers.”

_Elihu speaks (Job 32-37)_

• Elihu steps forward (Job 32)
  o Young man – hasn’t spoken yet out of respect for his elders
  o Finally speaks up and rebukes all of them
    ▪ Job for justifying himself rather than God
    ▪ 3 friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him. They have simply stated their opinion, which has nothing to do with the question
    ▪ Has to speak over an oncoming storm – he is starting to get to the answer to the question

• Elihu will go on and on – and in so doing speak longer than anyone else, even more than God Himself.
  o None of the so-called friends, or even Job, can get a word in edgewise. It’s not until God finally intervenes that he’s silenced.
  o G. Campbell Morgan - “Job never had opportunity to answer him. God took no notice of him except to interrupt him.”

• Elihu’s argument is very interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that he is sort of right (Job 32)
  o God often times deems it necessary to allow suffering into our lives for the purpose of bringing us to a repentance.
  o The problem with Elihu’s argument is that he couldn’t be more wrong concerning the suffering that God allowed into Job’s life.

• Why it is that God does allow suffering into the life of someone who belongs to Him. (Job 33)
  o Simple explanation – God allows suffering to correct us, protect us, direct us, and perfect us, all of which ultimately bring us close to Him in the end.
  o Charles Spurgeon said it ever so eloquently as it relates to God allowing pain and suffering to redirect us back to Him when we’ve strayed, as we’re sometimes prone to do, “The chastisement of sickness and the flagellation of pain whip the sinner back to Him who alone can save him. These are the black dogs of the Great Shepherd wherewith he brings back wandering sheep till they come again under his crook, and he leads them into green pastures.”

• Misrepresenting and mischaracterizing what someone says in order to demonize, antagonize and criticize them (Job 34-35)
  o Elihu puts words in Job’s mouth in his gross misrepresentation of all that Job had spoken prior
  o This ugly reality is alive and well today
  o Oswald Chambers of Elihu’s mischaracterizing and criticizing of Job wrote, “This kind of view presents a conception not really based on facts, but which easily melts down any opposition by its sentimental presentation.”
• Elihu even goes as far as to suggest that God would not listen to Job were he to actually repent of sin
  ▪ I would suggest Elihu has painted himself into a corner from which he will never escape and is condemned by his own words.
• Proverbs 10:19 - In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
• Ecclesiastes 5:2 - Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.

• Danger of wrong assumptions (Job 36-37)
  - In Job 36, Elihu is making assumptions about Job and they’re absolutely wrong
    ▪ Like with the many chapters before, I think we need to ask and answer the question of why we have this chapter in our Bibles – I would suggest that one of the reasons for God including this in scripture, is that it speaks to the danger of wrong assumptions.
    ▪ One commentator said it this way, “It seems as if Elihu is giving himself such a certificate of genius, as if the brash young man is all unaware of its astounding presumption.”
  - In Job 37, we again have a case of right advice applied in a wrong way, and to the wrong man, all because of wrong assumptions.
    ▪ Namely, that of falsely accusing and wrongly condemning Job for his wickedness to his hypocrisy and everything in between.
    ▪ As such it seems Elihu is trying to convince Job to abandon the notion that God owes him anything as he’s done this to himself.

• Thankfully, Elihu falsely accusing Job of being defiant in silencing his friends will now give way to God Himself silencing everyone. In so doing, He will silence and calm both the storm and Job’s heart.
  - As one commentator so eloquently said it, “In the story of Job, too, the Lord has apparently been sound asleep until now, peacefully curled up in the stern of the boat while Job has been struggling all alone with the wind and the waves…. in the case of Job He let the storm rage for 37 chapters, until finally He calmed not the storm itself, but Job’s heart.”

God speaks (Job 38-41)

• The next chapters are packed full of so much concerning God’s line of questioning.
  - It’s interesting to note the progression of how He starts with the foundations of the earth then goes to the creations on the earth – To me, this speaks to the magnificence of how an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent God is mindful of us as mere man.
  - Conspicuously absent from these final chapters in the book of Job is any explanation on God’s part as to why Job is suffering.
    ▪ Lest one think that God is ignoring Job in not answering his questions, let me hasten to say that God is in fact answering Job – God’s answer to all of Job’s questions is found in God Himself, which is why God reminds Job Who He is

• Storm hits and God speaks from the storm
  - Job 38 – God answers Job
  - God doesn’t answer Job so much as bludgeon him into silence

• God is not going to placate Job
  - Job 38:2 "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.
  - God answered Job by bludgeoning him into silence – God is God, and is to be feared

• God is in no way being harsh or angry with Job.
  - Rather, He is revealing Himself to Job in such a way so as to have him realize who he really is in light of Who God really is.
  - God has brought Job face to face with the reality of his own humanity and the reality of God’s own supremacy over all.
Oswald Chambers - There is nothing cringing in Job’s attitude, it is the bowing down of a man strangely stirred in humiliation by the realization that he is face to face with that which is superior to himself.

Charles Spurgeon - “Job said, ‘Behold, I am vile.’ That word ‘behold’ implies that he was astonished. The discovery was unexpected. There are special times with the Lord’s people, when they learn by experience that they are vile.”

G. Campbell Morgan - “Satan may be typified here by behemoth and leviathan. Be that as it may, the question left with Job was this: ‘Canst thou?’ Thus he was called to the recognition of his own impotence in many directions, and at the same time to a remembrance of the power of God.”

**Job’s response (Job 42)**

Job 42:1 Then Job replied to the LORD: 2 “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. …Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. …5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

- The book of Job can be summed up in Job 42 – God has the final word concerning everything and everyone.
  - No matter how bad it is, it can never change Who or how God is in spite of adversity.
  - Charles Spurgeon - “Our sorrows shall have an end when God has gotten his end in them. The ends in the case of Job were these, that Satan might be defeated, foiled with his own weapons, blasted in his hopes when he had everything his own way.”
  - Adam Clarke - “The greatest, the most important purposes were accomplished by this trial. Job became a much better man than he ever was before; the dispensations of God’s providence were illustrated and justified; Satan’s devices unmasked; patience crowned and rewarded; and the church of God greatly enriched by having bequeathed to it the vast treasury of divine truth which is found in the BOOK OF JOB.”
  - G. Campbell Morgan - “In this great Book there is no solution of problems. There is a great revelation. It is that God may call men into fellowship with Himself through suffering; and that the strength of the human soul is ever that of the knowledge of God.”

- Job gets his answer, he understands why this has happened
  - Job acknowledges his own impotence as in light of God’s omnipotence
  - I thought that I knew you, but now that I understand that I know nothing
  - There is a gaping chasm between the majesty of God and the pride of Job

- Job 42:6 Therefore I take back everything that I said and I am content being dust
  - Stephen Mitchell translation
  - Sticking parallel with Ps 103: 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.
  - God knows how small and frail we are, and He has compassion on us for that reason
  - Job now understands the difference between God and Job

- **Job’s relationship with God should not be based on what God gives him, but on who God is.**
  - Job recognizes that God is SO big, SO magnificent, SO beyond human understanding and that Job himself is a tiny tiny little creature.
  - We should worship God for who He is, not what He gives us
  - Now that Job understands that, he retracts everything that he said

**Epilogue (Job 42)**

- Brings closure to the drama
- God reprimands the 3 friends
Job 42: 7 After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

- Referring to the correct answer by Job – Job 42: 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.
- What you have said is wrong

**Problem of pain and suffering**

- The book of Job deals head on with the problem of pain, and the mystery of man’s suffering.
  - I say mystery because; God’s ways are mysterious, especially in the way that he deals with us when it comes to our suffering.
  - I should probably forewarn you ahead of time, that the answers to the why’s and ways of God won’t be found within this book.

- Oswald Chambers in “Baffled to Fight Better,” which is a writing on Job and the problem of suffering, of this says, “It is in such a book as Job that many suffering souls will find consolation and sustaining, and this because no attempt is made to explain the why of suffering, but rather an expression is given to suffering which leaves one with the inspiration of an explanation in the final issue. The problem in connection with suffering arises from the fact that there is seemingly no explanation of it.”

- In another devotional I’m going through right now titled, “Let go” the author writes, “I am amazed at the power that comes to us through suffering: we are worth nothing without the cross. Of course, I tremble and agonize while it lasts, and all my words about the beneficial effects of suffering vanish under the torture. But when it is all over, I look back on the experience with deep appreciation, and am ashamed that I bore it with so much bitterness. I am learning a great deal from my own foolishness.”

- One of the greatest struggles we have when it comes to suffering is that we seek a peace that comes via understanding.
  - The problem with this is that a true peace will never come in that way and even if it does it will only be fleeting and it won’t last.
  - What the book of Job reveals to us is we can actually have a true and lasting peace, absent our understanding of the suffering.
  - Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
  - Ph 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

**Despair**

- Oswald Chambers in Baffled to Fight Better
  - “Facing facts as they are produces despair, not frenzy, but real downright despair, and God never blames a man for despair. The man who thinks must be pessimistic; thinking can never produce optimism. The wisest man that ever lived said that “he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” The basis of things is not reasonable, but wild and tragic, and to face things as they are brings a man to the ordeal of despair.”

  - “Up till now we have seen Job as a sane pessimist, but now we find him on the frontiers of despair. A man may get to the point of despair in a hundred and one different ways, but when he does get there, there is no horizon. In everything else there is hope that a dawn may come, but in despair there is no hope of anything brighter, it is the most hopeless frontier a human mind can enter without becoming insane. An insane person
is never despairing, he is either immensely melancholy or immensely exalted. Despair is the hopelessness that overtakes a sane mind when it is pushed to the extreme in grief.”

- Do unto others . . .
  - Job 16:1 Then Job replied: 2 “I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all! 3 Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing? 4 I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. 5 But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.
  - If the tables were turned and the shoe was on the other foot, Job would seek to strengthen them.
  - This speaks to how hardship and affliction have a way of softening us and making us more compassionate to others.

- There is a cry of Job’s heart in pouring out his heart pleading for a mediator
  - Job 16:20 My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; 21 on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.
  - Truly, the cry of Job’s heart will be answered in and through the person of Jesus Christ as the Mediator between God and men.
  - 1Ti 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

- While Job has given into despair, he’s taken comfort in this being his end.
  - In other words, he has come to the end of himself, and as such, he has resigned himself to what he perceives to be inevitable.
  - But God, as he will yet see, has in store for him that which he could have never imagined though he thinks God is against him.

**Timeframe – Job is set at the time of Abraham**

- The story of Job is set during the time of Abraham—the beginning of our linear narrative
  - Job 42:16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so he died, old and full of years.
    - When the story takes place, Job is a mature man – 40s or 50s
    - After the story is over, he lives another 140 years
    - Died at about 180-200 years old

  - Graph the ages that are provided – Ge 5
    - Adam lived 930 years
    - Seth lived 912 years
    - Enosh lived 905 years
    - Kenan lived 910 years
    - Mahalalel lived 895 years
    - Jared lived 962 years
    - Enoch lived 365 years
    - Methuselah lived 969 years
    - Lamech lived 777 years

  - After flood
    - Abraham 175
    - Isaac 180
    - Jacob 147
    - Joseph 110
    - Moses – Ps 90 – the span of a man’s years are 70 or 80 for those that are strong
• Calls into question the lesson of the linear narrative
  o Book is placed at the end, but it takes place at the very beginning, beginning of the redemption story

• Of all the books of the Bible, Job is the most difficult book to translate from the Hebrew
  o Hebrew itself is a very antiquated form of Hebrew
    ▪ Job may have been written in the time of Abraham
    ▪ Job may have been written at the time of Ester and set at the time of Abraham
  o Manuscripts of Job are very spotty
    ▪ Best translations – Original Jerusalem Bible (1966) – JRR Tolkien
    ▪ Most insightful – Stephen Mitchell – Translated as a drama
      • Peter Coyote (audio version of Stephen Mitchell’s translation)

**Position in the Bible – Questions the lesson of the historical narrative**
• See Linear Narrative
• Genesis → Ester creates the linear narrative of the Christian canon
• Overriding lesson of this linear narrative – If we do what God says, all will go well; if we don’t, in won’t.
  o Job deliberately calls this lesson into question
  o Job is placed immediately after that because it calls into question this overriding lesson early in the story
  o Job’s question – why do terrible things happen to a good, upright, righteous man?

**Why bad things happen to good people**
• There are only 3 options:
  o God has done this to Job
  o God has allowed this to happen to Job
- God doesn’t care

- Job demands an answer from God.
  - Job demands that God stands before him and justify His actions.
  - Job’s life, including his relationship with God, is self-referential. Job is at the center, not God.
    - God serves Job – he gives Job stuff if Job does what God asks.
    - Job does everything that Job does because God has rewarded him for it
  - Job’s relationship with God should not be based on what God gives him, but on who God is.

- The answer
  - What God wants is a relationship with Him based on the reality of who God is and who we are
  - God is to be loved for who He is, not what He gives us

- Why it is that God does allow suffering into the life of someone who belongs to Him.
  - Simple explanation – God allows suffering to correct us, protect us, direct us, and perfect us, all of which ultimately bring us close to Him in the end.
  - Charles Spurgeon said it ever so eloquently as it relates to God allowing pain and suffering to redirect us back to Him when we’ve strayed, as we’re sometimes prone to do, “The chastisement of sickness and the flagellation of pain whip the sinner back to Him who alone can save him. These are the black dogs of the Great Shepherd wherewith he brings back wandering sheep till they come again under his crook, and he leads them into green pastures.”

**Patience of Job**

- Job is the least patient person on the face of the planet
- Comes from the King James version of James 5:11

  Ja 5:11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.

- King James version mistranslates perseverance as patience
- Job definitely perseveres – come hell or high water, he wants an answer from God – but he is not patient

**Why God deemed it necessary to include this lengthy dialogue in the scriptures?**

- Man cannot and should not speak for God or try to explain the ways of God
  - Oswald Chambers “Job is suffering because God and Satan have made a battleground of his soul, without giving him any warning or any explanation. It is an easy thing to argue from precedent because it makes everything simple, but it is a risky thing to do. Give God “elbow room”; let Him come into His universe as He pleases.
- It speaks to a prevalent problem in the church – a lack of love.
  - D.L. Moody identifies the problem this way. “The church has become very jealous about men being unsound in the faith. If a man becomes unsound in the faith, they draw their ecclesiastical swords and cut at him. But he may be ever so unsound in love, and they don’t say anything.”
The genre of Psalms is Songs and Poetry of all kinds. It is written by multiple authors; David wrote 73, Asaph wrote 12, the sons of Korah wrote 9, Solomon wrote 3, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one (Ps. 90), and 51 of the Psalms are anonymous. They were written over the span of approximately 900 years (Beginning at the time of Moses 1440 B.C. and through the captivity in 586 B.C.).

The Psalms include praises of joy, laments, blessings, and thanksgivings. They are directed at God and they help us to express and communicate ourselves to Him. We read about the Psalmist’s emotions from one extreme to another, from praising, delighting in and worshiping God with fervor, to repentance and crying out to Him in despair.

Psalms sits at the very center of the Bible. The major themes found in Psalms are Praise, God’s Power, Forgiveness, Thankfulness and Trust. “My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever” (145:21).

- The book of Psalms was originally divided into five books:
  1. Book 1 consisted of chapters 1-41.
  2. Book 2 corresponds to chapters 42-72.
  3. Book 3 is chapters 73-89.
  4. Book 4 included chapters 90-106.
  5. Book 5 is compiled with chapters 107-150.

Mainly, the Psalms were written to help us deliver praise to God who is worthy of such. As psalms 150:6 reads, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.”

How do we know what God wants for us in our lives? “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (119:105). The answer is found in reading His Word, studying it, and applying its unchanging truths to your life.

**A Journey through the Poetry of Experience**

See Introduction to the Psalms
The Psalms have been the prayer book of the Church for the past two thousand years and the prayer book of Judaism for nearly three thousand years. Countless people have found encouragement, solace and comfort in this remarkable collection of poems and songs.

In the Psalms we encounter every possible response one can have to God, from profound love to deep disappointment, from great joy to heartbreaking sorrow, from soaring praise to quiet adoration.

In the Psalms we probe the depths of our own hearts as we seek to understand both God and ourselves. In the Psalms we look into a mirror and we see reflected back the very depths of our own souls. To understand the psalms we must understand their narrative context, as well as the mechanics of the poetry itself, lest we indulge in a purely subjective reading.

Seventy-three of the 150 psalms are traditionally ascribed to David. As we read the “Davidic Psalms,” we see deeply into David’s heart as he struggles with God, with others and with himself. These psalms are deeply moving and often, brutally honest.

This is the function of reading and study. But to experience the Psalms we must engage them from the heart through prayer.

David
• Fantastically in love with God
• Angry
• Fed up – with friends like you, who needs enemies!
• Intimate relationships have all these emotions

Introduction to the Psalms

In depth study of each psalm
• Kids laptop: C:\Users\Denise\OneDrive\Documents\Religion\Logos Bible Study\Psalms Analyzed
• My laptop:

David’s Faith in God
• Heb 11
• David’s Relationship with God – Ps 23
  o David was a shepherd and recognized God’s role as his shepherd
  o Ps 34:8
  o Ps 103:13-14
  o Ps 143:10
  o Ps 145:5-7
• David’s faith in prayer – Ps 11:1-7 – I put my trust in the Lord
  o 2Ti 1:7
  o Ps 68:1
• David’s faith in battle
  o 1Sam 17 Goliath
• Life applications
  o Be bold enough to act in faith
    ▪ If you feed your fear, your faith will starve; If you feed your faith, your feed will starve
    ▪ Fear – Focused on the negative consequences of failure
    ▪ Faith – Focused on positive consequences of obedience
    ▪ Mt 14:28-30
  o Be mindful of your protective spiritual covering at all times
- 1Sa 17:26
- Ge 12:3 Those who bless you will be blessed; those who curse you will be cursed
- God is always with you – 1Sa 17:45-48
  - Be ready to weed out the doubters and naysayers respectfully
    - Satan has a lot of people to introduce doubt into your mind
    - Surround yourself by prayerful people of faith

**Psalm 51**

Ps 51 David’s great penitential psalm
- Opening prayer for mercy and pardon (1-2)
  - 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
  - The verb used here means “to be appeased/reconciled”.
  - Note the piling up of synonyms: mercy, unfailing love, great compassion; blot out, wash, cleanse; transgressions, iniquity, sin
- Confession of sin (3-6)
  - 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.
  - There was probably never a night that David did not see Uriah’s smiling face before him
- Renewed prayer for pardon (7-9)
- Prayer for purity (10-12)
  - For a pure heart, a steadfast spirit of faithfulness and a willing spirit of service
  - These can be his only if God does not reject him and take his Holy Spirit from him.
  - If granted, the joy of God’s salvation will return to gladden his troubled soul.
- Vow to praise (13-17)
- Prayer for Zion (18-19)

**Proverbs (Pr)**

**Proverbs Overview**

### PROVERBS

**Prologue to Wise Living**
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (1:7)
  - **CHAPTERS**
    - 1–9

**Principles for Wise Living**
- The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, / And before honor comes humility. (15:33)
  - **CHAPTERS**
    - 10:1–31:9

**Personification of Wise Living**
- Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, / But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. (31:30)
  - **CHAPTER**
    - 31:10–31

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The genre of Proverbs is mainly “Proverbs” as the name describes, there are also some Parables and Poetry. This book was written mainly by Solomon, the wisest king ever to rule, however some of the later sections are written by Lemuel and Agur. It was written during Solomon’s reign 970-930 B.C. He asked God for wisdom to rule God’s nation and He granted the request.

The main purpose of this book is to teach wisdom to God’s people. Proverbs are short clever explanations, which are easy to remember. They contain truisms. These are things which are typically true however, not always. For example, "He who till his land will have plenty of bread" (12:11), it is typically true that one who works his land will have bread but it is not a guarantee to always be true. They deal with life, principles, good judgment, and perception. They often draw distinctions between a wise man and a foolish man with parable type examples.

- In chapters 1-9, Solomon writes about wisdom for younger people. He speaks of details of Godly living and heeding a parent’s advice, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (1:7). Salvation is through faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone and Proverbs directly teaches us to, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight” (3:5-6).

- In chapters 10-24, there is wisdom that applies to average people covering various topics. Many of these parables contrast a righteous man and a wicked man, and urges us to commit our way to God, “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (14:12).

- Chapters 25-31, give wisdom to leaders. It was these very proverbs that were transcribed by King Hezekiah’s people, and for good reason (25:1). They contain many warnings and instructions to assist in walking and seeking a Godly life. As would be understood by a leader of an army, Solomon writes in 27:17, “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

**Proverbs – Advise to a Son**

- Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs take us inside the heart of Solomon.
  - Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs (1Ki 4:32) – In the book of Proverbs we have 375 of them
  - Not unique to Solomon

- Proverb – Takes traditional wisdom and states it in a very striking and concise way
  - Typically in 2 lines – A statement, then a 2nd statement that amplifies the 1st either in like or contrast
    - Augments it by stepping it up
    - Highlights the 1st line by contrasting it with the 2nd
  - Often said in a very clever and surprising way to make it memorable
    - Sometimes very subtle in their psychology (See Pro 10 below)
  - Pro 1:2 for attaining wisdom and discipline

**Wisdom**

**What is wisdom**

- Data – the sensory input that comes in, whether we know about it or not
  - Sights, smells, sounds, feels, tastes

- Information – Organized data
  - Not important – put to the side - dismissed
  - Important data is processed – categorized and organized – so it can be used

- Knowledge – Information that has been put to use
  - Information that has been applied to a situation
  - Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
Wisdom – Applying the knowledge you have in an insightful way
  • The proverbs are for attaining wisdom
  • Pr 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Lady Wisdom
• Wisdom has long been personified as a woman
  • Deuterocanonical books (books in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox, but not in the Protestant or Jewish Bibles) – one of those books is the book of wisdom, in which wisdom in personified as a female character
  • Very same character – lady wisdom – is speaking here
    • Pr 1:20-33 We meet lady wisdom
• Our wisdom is referred to as a lady because we are the bride

Structure
• 1 – 9 Introduction to the book of Proverbs
• 10 – 22:16 Proverbs of Solomon, Part 1
• 22:17 – 24 Sayings of the Wise
  • Not necessarily in the 2-line format
• 25 – 29 Proverbs of Solomon, Part 2
• 30 – Sayings of Agur
  • Traditional wise man of the time
  • Someone like Ethan or Heman from 1st Ki 4 – Benchmarks of wisdom in their day
• 31:1-9 Sayings of King Lemuel
  • Don’t know who he is – May be a nickname for Solomon
• 31:10-31 Epilogue – Wife of noble character
  • Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines
  • He bashed them pretty good in the book of Proverbs
    • There are a lot of proverbs that are not particularly kind towards wives and women
    • Pro 21:9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.
    • Pro 27:15 A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day;
    • This is there to balance that out

Advice to a Son
• Falls into the classical genre of “advice to a son” literature
  • Offers sound advice for a young person going out into the world for the first time
  • Other examples – Shakespeare’s Hamlet, the character of Polonius
  • Much of that advice falls into three categories:
    • Choose your friends carefully
    • Manage your finances carefully
    • Don’t get involved with someone else’s wife!

Choose your friends carefully
• Be careful of the friends that you choose, because they will determine the course of your life
  • You will adopt the values of the peer group that you are with
    • If you fall in with a good group of people, you will become like them
    • If you fall in with a bad group of people, you will become like them
  • You will be known by the company that you keep
• Good friends will lead you in good directions, bad friends will lead you in bad directions
  • Be wise enough to discern the difference
Manage your finances carefully

• Rehoboam would have inherited Solomon’s fortune
• You can get into really big trouble, really fast, if you don’t do it correctly

Don’t get involved with someone else’s wife!

• Don’t get involved with someone else’s wife, because if you do, in the end, it will break your heart
• Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines
• Introduction to this - Pr 7:6

Introduction

• Purpose – To give instruction, for attaining wisdom
  ▪ Pro 1:2 for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight;
    3 for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;
    4 for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young-
  ▪ Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.
    ▪ Fear – Often thought of as awe and reverence, but also real fear
      ▪ Job – God answered Job by bludgeoning him into silence – God is God, and is to be feared
      ▪ Recognizing that we are dust and God is God almighty, creator of the universe, is the 1st step toward
        knowledge – not wisdom, but knowledge
        ▪ If you want to come into a right relationship with God – if you want to understand God – then
          you need to recognize the difference between God and you – Step 1.
        ▪ Pr 22:4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.
  ▪ Pr 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

• Audience – His son(s)
  ▪ Pro 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
  ▪ Assuming that this was written to Rehoboam, but the pronouns become plural later, so more sons
  ▪ Applies to any young person going out into the world for the first time

• Pr 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes
  ▪ A person who is wise in his own eyes, is seldom wise in anyone else’s
  ▪ It is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open it and remove all doubt

• Proverbs gives guidance on how to live a good vs bad life
  ▪ Shows how to live a good, moral life

Our Character

Our Relationships

• Pro 13:20 TPT If you want to grow in wisdom, spend time with the wise. Walk with the wicked and you’ll eventually
  become just like them.
• Pro 14:21 NLT It is a sin to belittle one’s neighbor; blessed are those who help the poor.
• Pro 16:7 NLT When people’s lives please the Lord, even their enemies are at peace with them.
• Pro 18:19 TPT It is easier to conquer a strong city than to win back a friend whom you’ve offended. Their walls go
  up, making it nearly impossible to win them back.
• Pro 27:6 NLT Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.
**Our Attitudes**

Truth and grace

- Pro 3:34 NLT The Lord mocks the mockers but is gracious to the humble.
- Pro 6:16-19 TPT There are six evils God truly hates and a seventh that is an abomination to him:
  - putting others down while considering yourself superior,
  - spreading lies and rumors,
  - spilling the blood of the innocent,
  - plotting evil in your heart toward another,
  - gloating over doing what’s plainly wrong,
  - spouting lies in false testimony,
  - and stirring up strife between friends. These are entirely despicable to God!
- Pro 6:16 Here are six things the Lord hates—no, seven things he detests:
  17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent,
  18 a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong,
  19 a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family.
- Pro 11:2 NKJV When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.
- Pro 20:6 NLT Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?
- Pro 22:4 NKJV By humility and the fear of the Lord Are riches and honor and life.

**Our Words**

- Pro 4:24 NKJV Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.
- Pro 8:6-8 NKJV Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, And from the opening of my lips will come right things; 7 For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
  8 All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse is in them.
- Pro 10:11 NKJV The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
- Pro 10:18 NKJV Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, And whoever spreads slander is a fool.
- Pro 10:19 NKJV In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.
- Pro 18:13 NKJV He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.
- Pro 15:28 NKJV The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.
- Pro 16:24 NKJV Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.
- Pro 18:21 NKJV Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

**Relate – the Narrow Gate**

Mt 7:13-14 TPT Come to God through the narrow gate, because the wide gate and broad path is the way that leads to destruction—nearly everyone chooses that crowded road!

**Relate to what is difficult vs popular**

**Authority**

Pro 1:8-9 NKJV My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck.

Pro 3:1-2 NKJV My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you.
You influence
Pro 1:15 NKJV My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your foot from their path;
Pro 4:14 NLT Don’t do as the wicked do, and don’t follow the path of evildoers.

Be bold in your faith
Pro 1:20-21 TPT Wisdom’s praises are sung in the streets and celebrated far and wide. Yet wisdom’s song is not always heard in the halls of higher learning. But in the hustle and bustle of everyday life its lyrics can always be heard above the din of the crowd. You will hear wisdom’s warning as she preaches courageously to those who stop to listen:

Pro 1:23 NLT Come back to your senses and be restored to reality. Don’t even think about refusing my rebuke! Don’t you know that I’m ready to pour out my spirit of wisdom upon you and bring to you the revelation of my words that will make your heart wise?

Favor
Pro 3:3-4 NKJV Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man.

Trust
Pro 3:5-7 NKJV Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.

Stewardship
Pro 3:9-10 NKJV Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

Discipline
Pro 3:11-12 TPT My child, when the Lord God speaks to you, never take his words lightly, and never be upset when he corrects you. For the Father’s discipline comes only from his passionate love and pleasure for you. Even when it seems like his correction is harsh, it’s still better than any father on earth gives to his child.

Be Intentional
Pro 4:23-27 NLT Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
24 Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech.
25 Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you.
26 Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path.
27 Don’t get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

Immorality
Pro 5:3-6 NLT For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil.
4 But in the end she is as bitter as poison, as dangerous as a double-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.
6 For she cares nothing about the path to life. She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn’t realize it.

Debt
Pro 6:1-3 NKJV My son, if you become surety for your friend, If you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger,
2 You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth.
So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; For you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend.

**God’s Word**

Pro 6:20-23 TPT My son, obey your father’s godly instruction and follow your mother’s life-giving teaching.
21 Fill your heart with their advice and let your life be shaped by what they’ve taught you.
22 Their wisdom will guide you wherever you go and keep you from bringing harm to yourself. Their instruction will whisper to you at every sunrise and direct you through a brand-new day.
23 For truth is a bright beam of light shining into every area of your life, instructing and correcting you to discover the ways to godly living.

**Relate to the road of life vs destruction**

Pro 2:10-12 NKJV When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
11 Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you,
12 To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things,

**Relate to the Lord**

Pro 3:20 NKJV By His knowledge the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew.

Pro 3:22-26 NKJV So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck.
23 Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble.
24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
26 For the Lord will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.

Pro 2:6-9 TPT Wisdom is a gift from a generous God, and every word he speaks is full of revelation and becomes a fountain of understanding within you. For the Lord has a hidden storehouse of wisdom made accessible to his godly lovers. He becomes your personal bodyguard as you follow his ways, protecting and guarding you as you choose what is right. Then you will discover all that is just, proper, and fair, and be empowered to make the right decisions as you walk into your destiny.

**Earn (Prosperity, Favor, Blessing)**

**Prosperity**

Lk 16:10 TPT “The one who manages the little he has been given with faithfulness and integrity will be promoted and trusted with greater responsibilities. But those who cheat with the little they have been given will not be considered trustworthy to receive more.

2Co 5:21 NKJV For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Righteousness – means that we are right with God
  - We are righteous because of Christ and nothing can change that
- Accounting term – our sin was put into Christ’s account and He paid for it; His righteousness was put into our account
- I am righteous – because Christ has paid for my sin

Pro 11:28 NKJV He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like foliage.
Pro 13:22 NKJV A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

Pro 13:25 NLT The godly eat to their hearts’ content, but the belly of the wicked goes hungry.

Pro 14:11 TPT The household of the wicked is soon torn apart, while the family of the righteous flourishes.

Pro 15:6 TPT There is power in the house of the righteous, but the house of the wicked is filled with trouble, no matter how much money they have.

Pro 16:8 NLT Better to have little, with godliness, than to be rich and dishonest.

Favor
A life of mercy and truth towards others

Pro 1:33 NKJV But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil.  
Pro 8:17 NKJV I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me.  
Pro 10:30 TPT God’s lover can never be greatly shaken. But the wicked will never inherit the covenant blessings.  
Pro 12:13 NLT The wicked are trapped by their own words, but the godly escape such trouble.  
Pro 14:26 TPT Confidence and strength flood the hearts of the lovers of God who live in awe of him, and their devotion provides their children with a place of shelter and security.  
Pro 15:29 NKJV The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.  
Pro 18:10 NKJV The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are [a]safe.  
Pro 18:22 NLT The man who finds a wife finds a treasure, and he receives favor from the Lord.

Blessing
Pro 9:11 NKJV For by me your days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you.  
Pro 10:6 NKJV Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.  
Pro 10:7 NKJV The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.  
Pro 20:7 NKJV The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him.  
Pro 28:20 NKJV A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.  
Pro 28:27 NKJV He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

Lead
I’ve always believed great leaders don’t ask others to do what they are not willing to do – Mike Huckabee

Leading through wisdom
A man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd – Max Lucado

Pro 1:2-5 NLT 2 Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.  
3 Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.  
4 These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young.  
5 Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance
Pro 4:5-9 NLT 5 Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don’t forget my words or turn away from them. 6 Don’t turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. 7 Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment. 8 If you prize wisdom, she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will honor you. 9 She will place a lovely wreath on your head; she will present you with a beautiful crown.”

Pro 24:3 NKJV Through wisdom a house is built. And by understanding it is established;

Leading through mercy
Pro 3:3 NKJV Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, Pro 16:6 NKJV In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil. Pro 20:22 NKJV Do not say, “I will recompense evil”; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you.
It’s not about you getting it all right
Pro 20:28 NKJV Mercy and truth preserve the king, And by loving kindness he upholds his throne.

Leading through following Christ
Absolute reverence of Jesus as the leader of our lives
Pro 9:10 NKJV “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Holy One is Jesus
Pro 19:23 NKJV The fear of the Lord leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.
Pro 20:24 NKJV A man’s steps are of the Lord; How then can a man understand his own way?
Pro 30:5 NKJV Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Proverb 10
Pro 10:1 A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.
• When a son does something good, dad puffs up with pride
• When a son does something foolish
  o Does he bring grief to his father? No - dad says ‘Moron’ and moves on
  o Mom stays up at night worrying about him and crying
• Very subtle distinction

Proverb 26

Proverbs 26:4-5 NIV 4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

Proverbs 26:4-5 NLT 4 When arguing with fools, don’t answer their foolish arguments, or you will become as foolish as they are. 5 When arguing with fools, be sure to answer their foolish arguments, or they will become wise in their own estimation.

If you are a critic of the evangelical doctrine of the inerrancy of scripture, this would be a great proof text. In fact, I have seen this text used as a club intended to bludgeon those of us who do take scripture to be the very Word of God written, fully inspired, authoritative, and free of contradiction or error.

On the surface this is a rank contradiction! Proverbs 26:4 gives an admonition, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly.” Proverbs 26:5 (the very next verse) gives exactly the opposite admonition, “Answer a fool according to his folly.”
Should I answer a fool according to his folly, or should I not answer a fool according to his folly? The bible tells me to do and to not do (and this in consecutive verses!) and I am left to puzzle.

Well, before you despair, throw away your bible, and abandon the faith…consider for a minute. Is this really a contradiction? Does the author of Proverbs (Solomon for this portion of Proverbs) simply not recognize the basic rules of logic? Is it likely that Solomon is an irrationalist? Or that he is oblivious to what he has just stated? We would have to discredit all the clear thinking we have seen on display throughout the rest of this remarkable book. The contradiction is only apparent.

There is no contradiction. The key to the whole thing is to look at the entirety of both verses and to contrast them. The two verses are meant to highlight two different senses of “answering a fool according to his folly” and focus upon two entirely different applications.

Let’s consider Proverbs 26:4, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.” The second half of the verse gives us some idea of what is warned against in the first half of the verse. “Don’t answer a fool according to his folly” or “you will be like him yourself.” The warning here regards a spiritual danger for a wise man who finds himself in the midst of a debate with a foolish man. If he is not careful he can find himself being drug into much nonsense himself (“according to his folly” here meaning in keeping with his confused perspective). He needs to be conscious of the path of wisdom, of the very different worldview of the foolish man, of the likelihood that the fool will do greater harm to him than he is likely to do good for the fool. For this reason care must be taken when engaging a foolish man – think twice, check your own heart and mind, make sure that you are not led astray by the folly of your dialogue partner. Exercise spiritual discernment as regards yourself!

Now let’s consider Proverbs 26:5, “Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.” Here we are admonished that we should, in fact, answer said fool. But as in the last verse, the second half of the verse offers us much insight, “or he will be wise in his own eyes.” In other words we should look carefully at the person with whom we are dealing, and we should exercise spiritual discernment. This fellow is trapped in a flawed worldview; he’s confused, mixed up. If I don’t answer him “according to his folly” (here meaning faulting his wrongheadedness) he will think himself wise (though a fool!) and much harm will ensue. I must exercise spiritual discernment as regards my neighbor! I must answer him wisely for his sake.

Proverbs 26:4 and 26:5, then, are not contradictory, but rather complementary. The first verse calls for the exercise of self-awareness when engaging with one trapped in folly, lest we fall ourselves from the path of wisdom. The second verse calls for spiritual discernment of our neighbor’s need and the desire to do him good through a word of admonition, lest he persist in the deluded view of his own wisdom.

Should I answer or not answer? Look hard at yourself first, then look hard at your neighbor. Discern your spiritual condition, then discern the spiritual condition of your neighbor. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom that you might both not cause great damage to yourself, nor allow one that you love to continue to walk a path that leads to his own harm.
Ecclesiastes Overview

The book of Ecclesiastes contains Proverbs, maxims, sayings, and is largely an autobiographical story. Solomon wrote it late in his life, approximately 935 B.C. He had become aware of the mistakes that he made throughout his life and began to document them. The purpose of Ecclesiastes is to spare future generations the suffering and misery of seeking after foolish, meaningless, materialistic emptiness, and to offer wisdom by discovering truth in seeking after God.

It appears that Solomon once again, wants to teach the reader wisdom, "I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with" (1:13).

• Chapter 1-2, deal with Solomon’s personal experiences throughout his life. He describes that everything he sought was selfish pleasure and meant nothing eternally. Generally, he speaks concerning the meaning of life, "I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after the wind." (1:14). Solomon, the man whom God gave the most wisdom; sought after, researched, and tried everything in an attempt to find lasting happiness, and came to this conclusion: “All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after the wind and there was no profit under the sun.” (2:10-11).

• In chapters 3-5, Solomon gives common explanations and observations. One in particular is 5:15, “As he had come naked from his mother’s womb, so will he return...”, speaking of everyone who dies takes nothing with him; possessions, in the end, are ultimately useless. As tough as it is, our sinful nature naturally gravitates toward materialism.
• Chapters 6-8, Solomon gives advice for having a meaningful life, “Consider the work of God, for who is able to straighten what He has bent?” (7:13).

• In chapters 9-12, Solomon writes a conclusion that clears up the entire book, everyone will eventually die and all the deeds of man are vanity (useless) without God; our obedience must be to Him. “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: Fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.” (12:13).

Everything is meaningless

As we may read Psalm 23 as David’s epitaph: “. . . and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever”; so may we read Ecclesiastes as Solomon’s epitaph: “Meaningless, meaningless, everything is meaningless.” Ecclesiastes offers a grim summary of all Solomon learned in his long and storied life.

• Written toward the end of Solomon’s life
  o Very depressing book
  o It’s an extended reflection on the meaning of life that can feels fatalistic and cynical
  o Its message is ultimately the positive one that living in obedience to God provides a grounding for an otherwise meaningless life

• Solomon had a greater opportunity than anyone that ever lived to get a knowledge of God out to the world
  o Inherited the united monarchy from David
  o Inherited the potential to create great wealth and do great things for his people
  o In the end, what did he do with this great potential
    ▪ Became corrupted by his wealth
    ▪ Became corrupted by his wives

• What was the meaning of Solomon’s life? Everything is meaningless
  o Ecclesiastes is a summary evaluation of his own life
  o Ecc 1:2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."
    ▪ Wisdom, pleasures, work, advancement, riches – all meaningless
    ▪ Everything under the sun – on Earth – is meaningless
  o There’s a time for everything
    ▪ It’s all cyclical – there’s nothing new under the sun
    ▪ Everyone dies the same death

• Very different relationship with God than David had
  o Solomon is, in effect, saying that God is monstrous
  o God created all things beautiful, He has given us a desire for eternity, and then he has not enabled us to achieve it

• Ecc 12 – Remember God when you are young, healthy, vibrant, and alive. Because when you get old, sick, weary and grouchy, you will find no pleasure in Him. Note of humor:
  o when the keepers of the house tremble – Legs shake
  o and the strong men stoop – Shoulder area all bent over
  o when the grinders cease because they are few – Only have 3 teeth left
  o and those looking through the windows grow dim – Cataracts, and you’re squinting to see
  o when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades – You can’t hear very well anymore
  o when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint – You get up in the middle of the night to pee, then wake up with the birds in the morning
  o when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets – Brave men of the military are now afraid of a step ladder or getting mugged
  o when the almond tree blossoms – Hair gets white
  o and the grasshopper drags himself along – Holding onto the walker and shuffling along
  o and desire no longer is stirred – You see a pretty girl and nothing happens

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Epilogue – Conclusion
  o Ecc 12:13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
    **Fear God and keep his commandments**, for this is the whole duty of man.
    14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

**Song Of Songs (SS)**

**Song of Songs Overview**

**SONG OF SOLOMON**

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<td>Foreshadows the bridegroom relationship of Christ with His church</td>
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The book of Song of Solomon is a large love poem filled with smaller poems of different kinds. Solomon is the author and he wrote it sometime during his reign 970-930 B.C. It is a story of a bridegroom who is in love with his bride. Key personalities are King Solomon, the Shulammite girl, and friends.

The story greatly emphasizes the sanctity of marriage and that it is designed, blessed and consecrated in the eyes of the Lord. The purpose of “Song of Songs”, as it is also called, is a picture of God’s love for His people. Although there is explicit sexual content, it is a book in which we can learn the depths of God’s authentic love for us and what should be in the sacredness of marriage.

- In chapters 1-3, Solomon writes of the courtship and engagement of the Beloved (Solomon) and the Lover (Shulammite girl), “My beloved responded and said to me, ‘Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along’” (2:10).

- Chapters 3-4, we read of the marriage ceremony of the bride to the bridegroom, “Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon with the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding” (3:11).
Chapters 5-8, are the relationship between the husband and wife and the power of their love, “Many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it; if a man were to give all the riches of his house for love, it would be utterly despised”(8:7).

**Erotic Love Poem**

- 1Ki 4:32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.
  - Like David, Solomon had musical talent
- In the genre of erotic love poetry
  - Speaks of fiery romantic love and crushing loss
  - As an allegory, it may also speak of God’s love for Israel and of Christ’s love for the Church.
- Love song, written by Solomon toward the end of his life, remembering his first love – Abishag, the Shunammite
The Prophets

Introduction to the Prophets

The Old Testament is as important today as it was centuries ago. This collection of thirty-nine books written over a span of 1,500 years not only reveals the nature and character of the one true God but also chronicles his involvement in human history. The word testament means covenant and refers to God's agreement with his people. God chose Abraham and promised to bless his descendants and make them a special people through whom he would bless all the nations of the world (Genesis 12:1-3).

These books record significant promises that God made. The foundational promise especially relevant to us is "the new covenant" (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36-37). Central to this covenant would be a decisive activity on part to deal with the problem of human sinfulness and to provide the gift of his Spirit in the lives of all his people. The Old Testament portrays God as earnestly seeking to have a relationship with his people, motivated by his great love. He is constrained, however, by the problem of human sinfulness—an affront to his holiness and purity.

- As we move through the Bible, we encounter both oral and writing prophets.
  - Elijah and Elisha, for example, are oral prophets, neither one writes anything that we know of. We simply have their stories in 1 & 2 Kings, stories about what they said and did.
  - Writing prophets, on the other hand, write books. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve Minor Prophets commit what they have to say to writing, sometimes in long books like Isaiah (66 chapters), and other times in short books like Obadiah (1 chapter).

- Prophets are not fortunetellers
  - Dt 18:21 “…How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken.
    - Happens within a reasonably short amount of time – within a lifetime
  - Whether oral or writing, major or minor, prophets are not fortunetellers who look down the long corridor of history and predict things.
  - Rather, a prophet always speaks or writes into his own historical context: what he says will always have an immediate application during the time in which he lives.

- When you have a particularly bad king, God will raise up a particularly strong prophet to counter that king
  - Almost always, when you have a corrupt king, you also have a corrupt priesthood
  - By definition, these prophets have an adversarial job – they are saying things that nobody wants to hear
  - There will be conflict between the two.

- 2 Types of prophets
  - Oral
    - Speak – Don’t write anything that we know of
    - We simply have their stories in 1 & 2 Kings, stories about what they said and did.
    - Ex. Elijah and Elisha
  - Written
    - Write books
    - Ex. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve Minor Prophets

- Types of messages
  - Isaiah – Begins as a drama of a court-room
  - Jeremiah – Begins by pleas with God not to be chosen as a prophet
  - Ezekiel – Begins with visions
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Events: Assyria defeats Israel, 722 B.C.;  
Assyria attacks Jerusalem, 701 B.C. |
| Jeremiah | Period: 626 – 586 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Babylon attacks Jerusalem: 605, 597, 586-588 B.C.;  
Jerusalem falls, August 14, 586 B.C. |
| Ezekiel  | Period: 592 – 572 B.C. (set in Babylon)  
Events: Babylon subjects Judah and Jerusalem |
| Daniel   | Period: 605 – 539 B.C. (set in Babylon)  
(Although written c. 165 B.C., the story is set during 605-539 B.C.)  
Events: Daniel in the court of the king of Babylon during the Babylonian captivity. |
| **Minor prophets** | |
Events: Assyria defeats Israel, 722 B.C.;  
Assyria attacks Jerusalem, 701 B.C. |
| Joel     | Period: Not dated (9th century – post exilic)  
Events: Not explicit |
| Amos     | Period: 767-753 B.C. (set in Israel)  
Events: Corrupt Israel, prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. |
| Obadiah  | Period: After 586 B.C. (Set in Judah)  
Events: Edom collaborates with Babylon, 586 B.C. |
| Jonah    | Period: Before 793 B.C. (set in Assyria)  
Events: Jonah is prophet in the generation before Jereboam II, king of Israel, 793-752 B.C (2 Kings 14: 23-25)  
Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh repents and is spared. |
| Micah    | Period: 739 - 686 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Corrupt Israel, prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. |
| Nahum    | Period: Before 612 B.C. (set in Israel)  
Events: Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh falls to Babylon in 612 B.C. |
| Habakkuk | Period: c. 626 – 586 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem |
| Zephaniah| Period: 640 – 609 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem |
| Haggai   | Period: 520 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Post-exilic rebuilding of Jerusalem |
| Zechariah| Period: 520 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Post-exilic rebuilding of Jerusalem |
| Malachi  | Period: c. 430 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Prophecy against post-exilic Jerusalem |
The last twelve books of the Old Testament are known as the Minor Prophets. This is an unfortunate name, as for us the term “minor” sometimes means “less important.” They aren’t minor in that they are less important; they are minor in the sense that they are shorter. None of these books is nearly as long as their “major” counterparts. In fact, in the Hebrew Bible the twelve form one book: The Book of the Twelve. They are short, but they are full of lots of great and important truths, truths that matter for how you live. Join us for Sunday School. Let the Minor Prophets become a major part of your spiritual journey.

Hosea (Un)faithfulness
Joel Locust Tongues
Amos Woe!
Obadiah Citizens of Misadelphia....
Jonah Second Chances and Sour Pusses
Micah No one is Like the Lord!
Nahum Kick Some Assyria!
Habakkuk Caution to Complainers
Zephaniah A Dark Day
Haggai Put a Ring on it
Zechariah Donkey Riding and Deliverance
Malachi Authenticity

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**Isaiah (Isa) — The Thundering Prophet (Salvation of the Lord)**
Name means Salvation of the Lord

**Isaiah Overview**

Isaiah is the longest book of prophecy in the Bible. God gave Isaiah a clearer vision of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ than any other of the Old Testament prophets.
ISAIAH

The book of Isaiah is Narrative History, Prophetic Oracle, and even a Parable (chapter 5). The prophet Isaiah wrote it at approximately 700 B.C. (Chapters 40-66, written later in his life approx. 681 B.C.). Isaiah is the first book in the section called Major Prophets. They are called Major Prophets because of the large amount of material they wrote not because their message was more important than any other prophet’s was. Key personalities are Isaiah, his two sons, Shearjashub and Maher-shalal-jash-baz.

Isaiah contains some of the most incredible prophecies of any book. It contains foreknowledge, in incredible details about the Messiah, and the future reign of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the book of Isaiah was to call God’s nation, the nation of Judah, back to faithfulness and to declare the coming Messiah “Immanuel”. God calls and commissions His prophet to declare to Judah and Israel condemnation, conviction, and ultimately great hope.

- In Chapters 1-39, Isaiah points out the sins of both North and South Kingdoms. He then declares severe punishment to them and all the neighboring nations around them, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight Cease to do evil” (1:16). He proclaims great hope of the coming Savior, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel” (7:14), this passage was fulfilled in Matthew 1:22-24, in the New Testament.

- Chapters 40-55, speak of the return and restoration after the exile from Babylon. Isaiah repeatedly claims the premise, “There is no God beside Me” (44:6,8; 45:5,6,14,18,21). There is also another foretelling of the Messiah, who will come...
and bring new life through His death, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearsers, So He did not open His mouth” (53:7).

- In chapters 56-66, Isaiah writes of the new Heavens and Earth. This is that great reward for all those who trust and obey God. He proclaims the hope for the afflicted and judgment for the evil. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind” (65:17).

Position in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Bible the book of Isaiah initiates a division called the Latter Prophets (for the Former Prophets see Introduction to Joshua: Title and Theological Theme), including also Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets (so called because of their small size by comparison with the major prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and not at all suggesting that they are of minor importance; see essay, p. 1341). Thus Isaiah occupies pride of place among the Latter Prophets. This is fitting since he is sometimes referred to as the prince of the prophets.

Author

- Isaiah, son of Amoz, is often thought of as the greatest of the writing prophets.
- His name means "The Lord saves."
- He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah, beginning his ministry in 740 b.c., the year King Uzziah died (see note on 6:1). According to an unsubstantiated Jewish tradition (The Ascension of Isaiah), he was sawed in half during the reign of Manasseh (cf. Heb 11:37).
- Isaiah was married and had at least two sons, Shear-Jashub (7:3) and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3). He probably spent most of his life in Jerusalem, enjoying his greatest influence under King Hezekiah (see 37:1-2). Isaiah is also credited with writing a history of the reign of King Uzziah (2Ch 26:22).

Many scholars today challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book that bears his name. Yet his is the only name attached to it (see 1:1; 2:1; 13:1). The strongest argument for the unity of Isaiah is the expression "the Holy One of Israel," a title for God that occurs 12 times in chs. 1 - 39 and 14 times in chs. 40 - 66. Outside Isaiah it appears in the OT only 6 times. There are other striking verbal parallels between chs. 1 - 39 and chs. 40 - 66. Compare the following verses:

| 1:2 | 66:24 |
| 1:5-6 | 53:4-5 |
| 5:27 | 40:30 |
| 6:1 | 52:13; 57:15 |
| 6:11-12 | 62:4 |
| 11:1 | 53:2 |
| 11:6-9 | 65:25 |
| 11:12 | 49:22 |
| 35:10 | 51:11 |

Altogether, there are at least 25 Hebrew words or forms found in Isaiah (i.e., in both major divisions of the book) that occur in no other prophetic writing.

Isaiah's use of fire as a figure of punishment (see 1:31; 10:17; 26:11; 33:11-14; 34:9-10; 66:24), his references to the "holy mountain" of Jerusalem (see note on 2:2-4) and his mention of the highway to Jerusalem (see note on 11:16) are themes that recur throughout the book.

The structure of Isaiah also argues for its unity. Chs. 36-39 constitute a historical interlude, which concludes chs. 1 - 35 and introduces chs. 40 - 66 (see note on 36:1).

Several NT verses refer to the prophet Isaiah in connection with various parts of the book: Mt 12:17-21 ( Isa 42:1-4); Mt 3:3 and Lk 3:4 ( Isa 40:3); Ro 10:16,20 ( Isa 53:1; 65:1); see especially Jn 12:38-41 ( Isa 53:1; 6:10).
Date

Most of the events referred to in chs. 1 - 39 occurred during Isaiah's ministry (see 6:1; 14:28; 36:1), so these chapters may have been completed not long after 701 b.c., the year the Assyrian army was destroyed (see note on 10:16). The prophet lived until at least 681 (see note on 37:38) and may have written chs. 40 - 66 during his later years. In his message to the exiles of the sixth century b.c., Isaiah was projected into the future, just as Ezekiel was in Eze 40-48.

Background

Isaiah wrote during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel. Under King Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 b.c.) the Assyrians swept westward into Aram (Syria) and Canaan. About 733 the kings of Aram and Israel tried to pressure Ahaz king of Judah into joining a coalition against Assyria. Ahaz chose instead to ask Tiglath-Pileser for help, a decision condemned by Isaiah (see note on 7:1). Assyria did assist Judah and conquered the northern kingdom in 722-721. This made Judah even more vulnerable, and in 701 King Sennacherib of Assyria threatened Jerusalem itself (see 36:1 and note). The godly King Hezekiah prayed earnestly, and Isaiah predicted that God would force the Assyrians to withdraw from the city (37:6-7).

Nevertheless Isaiah warned Judah that her sin would bring captivity at the hands of Babylon. The visit of the Babylonian king's envoys to Hezekiah set the stage for this prediction (see 39:1,6 and notes). Although the fall of Jerusalem would not take place until 586 b.c., Isaiah assumes the destruction of Judah and proceeds to predict the restoration of the people from captivity (see 40:2-3 and notes). God would redeem his people from Babylon just as he rescued them from Egypt (see notes on 35:9; 41:14). Isaiah predicts the rise of Cyrus the Persian, who would unite the Medes and Persians and conquer Babylon in 539 (see 41:2 and note). The decree of Cyrus would allow the Jews to return home in 538/537, a deliverance that prefigured the greater salvation from sin through Christ (see 52:7 and note).

Themes and Theology

- Isaiah is a book that unveils the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation.
- God is "the Holy One of Israel" (see 1:4; 6:1 and notes) who must punish his rebellious people (1:2) but will afterward redeem them (41:14,16). He is the "Sovereign Lord" (see note on 25:8), far above all nations and rulers (40:15-24).
- Israel is a nation blind and deaf (6:9-10; 42:7), a vineyard that will be trampled (5:1-7), a people devoid of justice or righteousness (5:7; 10:1-2).
- Judgement – Day of the Lord
  - The awful judgment that will be unleashed upon Israel and all the nations that defy God
  - Although Israel has a foretaste of that day (5:30; 42:25), the nations bear its full power (see 2:11,17,20 and note).
  - It is a day associated in the NT with Christ's second coming and the accompanying judgment (see 24:1,21; 34:1-2 and notes).
  - Throughout the book, God's judgment is referred to as "fire" (see 1:31; 30:33 and notes).
- Grace – Yet God will have compassion on his people (14:1-2) and will rescue them from both political and spiritual oppression.
  - Their restoration is like a new exodus (43:2,16-19; 52:10-12) as God redeems them (see 35:9; 41:14 and notes) and saves them (see 43:3; 49:8 and notes).
  - Israel's mighty Creator (40:21-22; 48:13) will make streams spring up in the desert (32:2) as he graciously leads them home. The theme of a highway for the return of exiles is a prominent one (see 11:16; 40:3 and notes) in both major parts of the book. The Lord raises a banner to summon the nations to bring Israel home (see 5:26 and note).
- Peace and safety mark this new Messianic age (11:6-9).
  - A king descended from David will reign in righteousness (9:7; 32:1), and all nations will stream to the holy mountain of Jerusalem (see 2:2-4 and note).
• God's people will no longer be oppressed by wicked rulers (11:14; 45:14), and Jerusalem will truly be the "City of the Lord" (60:14).

• Servant – The Lord calls the Messianic King "my servant" in chs. 42-53, a term also applied to Israel as a nation (see 41:8-9; 42:1 and notes).

  o It is through the suffering of the servant that salvation in its fullest sense is achieved.

  o Cyrus was God's instrument to deliver Israel from Babylon (41:2), but Christ delivered humankind from the prison of sin (52:13 -- 53:12). He became a "light for the Gentiles" (42:6), so that those nations that faced judgment (chs. 13 - 23) could find salvation (55:4-5). These Gentiles also became "servants of the Lord" (see 54:17 and note).

The Lord's kingdom on earth, with its righteous Ruler and his righteous subjects, is the goal toward which the book of Isaiah steadily moves. The restored earth and the restored people will then conform to the divine ideal, and all will result in the praise and glory of the Holy One of Israel for what he has accomplished.

**Literary Features**

Isaiah contains both prose and poetry; the beauty of its poetry is unsurpassed in the OT. The main prose material is found in chs. 36-39, the historical interlude that unites the two parts of the book (see Author). The poetic material includes a series of oracles in chs. 13 - 23. A taunting song against the king of Babylon is found in 14:4-23. Chs. 24-27 comprise an apocalyptic section stressing the last days (see note on 24:1 -- 27:13). A wisdom poem is found in 28:23-29 (also cf. 32:5-8). The song of the vineyard (5:1-7) begins as a love song as Isaiah describes God's relationship with Israel. Hymns of praise are given in 12:1-6 and 38:10-20, and a national lament occurs in 63:7 -- 64:12. The poetry is indeed rich and varied, as is the prophet's vocabulary (he uses a larger vocabulary of Hebrew words than any other OT writer).

One of Isaiah's favorite techniques is personification. The sun and moon are ashamed (24:23), while the desert and parched land rejoice (see 35:1 and note) and the mountains and forests burst into song (44:23). The trees "clap their hands" (55:12). A favorite figure is the vineyard, which represents Israel (5:7). Treading the winepress is a picture of judgment (see 63:3 and note), and to drink God's "cup of wrath" is to stagger under his punishment (see 51:17 and note). Isaiah uses the name "Rock" to describe God (17:10), and animals such as Leviathan and Rahab represent nations (see 27:1; 30:7; 51:9).

The power of Isaiah's imagery is seen in 30:27-33, and he makes full use of sarcasm in his denunciation of idols in 44:9-20. A forceful example of wordplay appears in 5:7 (see note there), and one finds inversion in 6:10 (see note there; see also note on 16:7) and alliteration and assonance in 24:16-17 (see note there). The "overwhelming scourge" of 28:15,18 is an illustration of mixed metaphor.

Isaiah often alludes to earlier events in Israel's history, especially the exodus from Egypt. The crossing of the Red Sea forms the background for 11:15 and 43:2,16-17, and other allusions occur in 4:5-6; 31:5; 37:36 (see notes on these verses). The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah is referred to in 1:9, and Gideon's victory over Midian is mentioned in 9:4; 10:26 (see also 28:21). Several times Isaiah draws upon the song of Moses in Dt 32 (compare 1:2 with Dt 32:1; 30:17 with Dt 32:30; and 43:11,13 with Dt 32:39). Isaiah, like Moses, called the nation to repentance and to faith in a holy, all-powerful God. See also note on 49:8.

The refrain in 48:22 and 57:21 divides the last 27 chapters into three sections of nine chapters each (40-48; 49-57; 58-66; see Outline).

**Outline**

Chapters/Summaries
1-12. Call & warnings to Judah
13-23. Message to nations
24-35. Future & Judah / Assyrian invasion
36-39. Hezekiah, Assyria/Babylon
40-48. Future prophecy - about 200 years later
56-66. Warnings to Judah & future

Isaiah was educated. Most prophets were from an agricultural setting. Isaiah called to be a prophet at the same time that Rome came to power

1st Isaiah (1–39)
- Immediate historical context for what Isaiah has to say

2nd Isaiah (40–55)
- Comprise and refer to events after the Babylonian exile (586–539 B.C.)
- Events that take place during the time of Cyrus, King of Persia, who defeats the Babylonian empire and allows the Jews to return home to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple

3rd Isaiah (56–66)
- Composed between 530–510 B.C.
- Speaks of the moral and ethical imperatives demanded by a divinely restored kingdom


I. Messages of Rebuke and Promise (chs. 1-6)
- Introduction: Charges against Judah for Breaking the Covenant (ch. 1)
  A. The Future Discipline and Glory of Judah and Jerusalem (chs. 2-4)
    1. Jerusalem's future blessings (2:1-5)
    2. The Lord's discipline of Judah (2:6; 4:1)
    3. The restoration of Zion (4:2-6)
  B. The Nation's Judgment and Exile (ch. 5)
  C. Isaiah's Unique Commission (ch. 6)

II. Prophecies Occasioned by the Aramean and Israelite Threat against Judah (chs. 7-12)
- Ahaz Warned Not to Fear the Aramean and Israelite Alliance (ch. 7)
  A. Isaiah's Son and David's Son (8:1; 9:7)
  B. Judgment against Israel (9:8; 10:4)
  C. The Assyrian Empire and the Davidic Kingdom (10:5; 12:6)
    1. The destruction of Assyria (10:5-34)
    2. The establishment of the Davidic king and his kingdom (ch. 11)
    3. Songs of joy for deliverance (ch. 12)

III. Judgment against the Nations (chs. 13-23)
- Against Assyria and Its Ruler (13:1; 14:27)
  A. Against Philistia (14:28-32)
  B. Against Moab (chs. 15-16)
  C. Against Aram and Israel (ch. 17)
  D. Against Cush (ch. 18)
  E. Against Egypt and Cush (chs. 19-20)
  F. Against Babylon (21:1-10)
  G. Against Dumah (Edom) (21:11-12)
  H. Against Arabia (21:13-17)
  I. Against the Valley of Vision (Jerusalem) (ch. 22)
  J. Against Tyre (ch. 23)

IV. Judgment and Promise (the Lord's Kingdom) (chs. 24-27)
- Universal Judgments for Universal Sin (ch. 24)
  A. Deliverance and Blessing (ch. 25)
  B. Praise for the Lord's Sovereign Care (ch. 26)
  C. Israel's Enemies Punished but Israel's Remnant Restored (ch. 27)

V. Six Woes: Five on the Unfaithful in Israel and One on Assyria (chs. 28-33)
- Woe to Ephraim (Samaria) -- and to Judah (ch. 28)
  A. Woe to David's City, Jerusalem (29:1-14)
B. Woe to Those Who Rely on Foreign Alliances (29:15-24)  
C. Woe to the Obstinate Nation (ch. 30)  
D. Woe to Those Who Rely on Egypt (chs. 31-32)  
E. Woe to Assyria -- but Blessing for God's People (ch. 33)  
VI. More Prophecies of Judgment and Promise (chs. 34-35)  
A. The Future Blessings of Restored Zion (ch. 35)  
VII. A Historical Transition from the Assyrian Threat to the Babylonian Exile (chs. 36-39)  
A. Jerusalem Preserved from the Assyrian Threat (chs. 36-37)  
1. The siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib and the Assyrian army (ch. 36)  
2. The Lord's deliverance of Jerusalem (ch. 37)  
B. The Babylonian Exile Predicted (ch. 39)  
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Part 2: The Book of Comfort (chs. 40-66)  

VIII. The Deliverance and Restoration of Israel (chs. 40-48)  
A. Unfailing Strength for the Weary Exiles (40:27-31)  
B. The Lord of History (41:1; 42:9)  
C. Praise and Exhortation (42:10-25)  
D. The Regathering and Renewal of Israel (43:1; 44:5)  
E. The Only God (44:6; 45:25)  
F. The Lord's Superiority over Babylon's Gods (ch. 46)  
G. The Fall of Babylon (ch. 47)  
H. The Lord's Exhortations to His People (ch. 48)  
IX. The Servant's Ministry and Israel's Restoration (chs. 49-57)  
A. The Repopulation of Zion (49:14-26)  
B. Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience (ch. 50)  
C. The Remnant Comforted Because of Their Glorious Prospect (51:1; 52:12)  
D. The Sufferings and Glories of the Lord's Righteous Servant (52:13; 53:12)  
E. The Future Glory of Zion (ch. 54)  
F. The Lord's Call to Salvation and Covenant Blessings (55:1; 56:8)  
G. The Condemnation of the Wicked in Israel (56:9; 57:21)  
X. Everlasting Deliverance and Everlasting Judgment (chs. 58-66)  
A. Zion's Confession and Redemption (ch. 59)  
B. Zion's Peace and Prosperity (ch. 60)  
C. The Lord's Favor (ch. 61)  
D. Zion's Restoration and Glory (62:1; 63:6)  
E. Prayer for Divine Deliverance (63:7; 64:12)  
F. The Lord's Answer: Mercy and Judgment (ch. 65)  
G. Judgment for False Worshipers and Blessing for True Worshipers (ch. 66)  

From a literary perspective, Isaiah may be divided into three parts:  
- Part 1 (chapters 1-35) is written in dramatic form, and its theme is judgment;  
- Part 2 (chapters 36-39) is written in narrative form, and it serves as an historical interlude;  
- Part 3 (chapters 40-66) is written in poetic form and its theme is grace.
In Part 1 we encounter a courtroom scene in which God sits as judge—with Israel in the defendant’s seat—as witnesses come forth and accuse Israel of sin and unfaithfulness: the verdict, guilty; the punishment, exile.

- Isaiah was raised up to counter several bad kings
  - Isaiah 1:1 The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
  - Becomes a prophet in the last year of King Uzziah (740 BC)
  - Continues as a prophet through the final years of Hezekiah who dies in 686 BC
  - 740-686 – 722 Assyria takes Israel
  - Jotham, Ahaz – Also very bad kings in Judah
  - Isaiah and Hezekiah will work together to initiate a revival
Prophecies Concerning Judah and Jerusalem (Isa 1-12)

ISAIAH 1: Indictment and Invitation

A. God states His case and offers a cure.

1. (1) Introduction: The vision of Isaiah, son of Amoz.

1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

- Isaiah, son of Amoz:
  - The name Isaiah means Salvation is of the LORD.
  - There are at least seven men by the name of Isaiah in the Bible, but only one is Isaiah, the son of Amoz.
  - Some have thought that Amoz and the prophet Amos were the same person, but this seems unlikely.
    - Some ancient Jewish traditions say that Amoz was a brother of king Amaziah, but there is no biblical way to prove this.
  - We know more about Isaiah than we do many other of the prophets.
    - Isaiah was married and was the father of at least two sons (Isaiah 7:3 and 8:3).
    - He lived in Jerusalem (Isaiah 7:3, 22:1, 37:2, 38:5, and 39:3).
  - There is “a strong Judeo-Christian tradition that holds that Isaiah also outlived Hezekiah and was sawn asunder by his successor Manasseh with a wooden saw after the prophet had hidden himself in a hollow tree from the angry king.” (Bultema)
    - Many think Hebrews 11:37 (they were sawn in two) is a reference to the martyrdom of Isaiah.
  - Most of all, Isaiah was a great man of God.
    - Isaiah “has the courage of a Daniel, the sensitivity of a Jeremiah, the pathos of a Hosea, and the raging anger of an Amos
    - Moreover, he leaves all of them far behind them in the unique art of holy mockery.
    - His courage is of such a nature that he never, not even for a moment, shows himself to be weak or timid.” (Bultema)
  - Many modern scholars think that there was more than one author to the book of Isaiah.
    - They throw about terms like “Deutero-Isaiah” and “Trito-Isaiah” or the “Isaianic School.”
    - The New Testament quotes Isaiah by name more than all the other writing prophets combined.
    - In John 12:37-41, John quotes from both the “first” part of Isaiah and the “second” part of Isaiah – the parts supposedly written by two or more different Isaiahs – and specifically says it is the same Isaiah.

- In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah:
  - Sets the historical timeframe – Isaiah ministered from about 740 to 680 B.C.
  - For about 20 years, he spoke to both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.
    - After Israel’s fall to the Assyrians in 722 B.C., Isaiah continued to prophesy to Judah.
  - This period of Israel’s history is told in 2Kings 15-21 and 2Chronicles 26-33.
    - 2 Chronicles 26-32 gives historical background of Isaiah’s prophecies.
  - Isaiah was a contemporary of the prophets Hosea and Micah.
    - By the time of Isaiah, the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Amos had already completed their ministry.
  - By this time, Israel had been in the Promised Land for almost 700 years.
    - For their first 400 years in Canaan, judges ruled Israel. These were spiritual, military, and political leaders whom God raised up as the occasion demanded.
Then, for about 120 years, three kings reigned over all Israel: Saul, David, and Solomon.

But in 917 B.C. Israel had a civil war, and remained divided into two nations, Israel (to the north) and Judah (to the south) up until the time of Isaiah.

- Up until the time of Isaiah, the northern nation of Israel had some 18 kings – all of them bad, and rebellious against the LORD. The southern nation of Judah had some 11 kings before Isaiah’s ministry, some good and some bad.

- In the time of Isaiah, Israel was a little nation often caught in the middle of the wars between three superpowers: Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.

- As Isaiah’s ministry began, there was a national crisis in the northern nation of Israel.
  - The superpower of Assyria was about to engulf the nation of Israel.
  - During the span of his ministry as a prophet, the southern nation of Judah was faced with repeated threats from the larger surrounding nations.

- The prophecy of Chapter 1 probably took place in the time of Ahaz, king of Judah (2Kings 16 and 2Chronicles 28).
  - Ahaz was an evil king who was invaded many times by surrounding nations.
2. (2-4) The complaint of the LORD against Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken:
   “I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me;
3 The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider.”
4 Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters!
   They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel,
   They have turned away backward.

- **Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth:**
  - Man is no longer listening to the Word of God.
  - God called heaven and earth as witnesses against Judah.
  - The leaders and people of Judah had resisted His will, and God now stated His case against them.
    - We might think of heaven and earth as a “jury” that God presented the case before.
  - Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.
    - Creation is waiting for the deliverance that will come when the Messiah rules directly over all creation. When God’s people disobey, we might say there is a sense in which they “delay” that resolution of all things. So, heaven and earth have an interest in our obedience.

- **I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me:**
  - God gives His indictment against Judah – His own children have rebelled against Him.
  - The leaders and people of Judah were like rebellious children, who never appreciated all that their parents did for them. As parents, we can appreciate how frustrating and galling it is for our children to disregard and disobey us. It fills us with righteous indignation, and we think, “After all I have done for them, they treat me like this?” But we have treated God even worse than any child has treated their parents.

- **The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know:**
  - The people don't consider God's provision for them – They are worse than animals, who at least know their master.
  - The leaders and people of Judah were not like dumb animals, such as the ox or the donkey. They were dumber than dumb animals. The ox at least knows its owner, but Judah didn’t know who owned them. The donkey knows who takes care of him, but Judah didn’t know who took care of them.
  - No animal has ever offended or resisted or rejected or disobeyed God the way every human being has. Any animal is a more faithful servant of God than the best human.

- **Alas, sinful nation:**
  - The nation is sinful and backslidden from God.
  - God clearly and strongly exposed their sin. They were laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, and they had provoked the LORD to anger.
3. (5-9) **The desperate condition of Judah.**

5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick. And the whole heart faints.

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, *There is no soundness in it,*

*But* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

7 *Your country is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire;* Strangers devour your land in your presence; And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city.

9 Unless the **LORD of hosts** Had left to us a very small remnant,

We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.

- **Why should you be stricken again:**
  - Despite their sin, God did not wish evil upon Judah. Instead He longed for them to repent and to make it easy on themselves.
  - The **nation of Israel has been battered.** God had chastised Judah, and they did not respond., They would continue to be stricken as long as they rebelled.

- **Sick… the whole heart faints… no soundness… wounds and bruises and putrefying sores:**
  - Because of their rebellion against God, Judah was in a bad place. This is where their disobedience and lack of submission brought them.

- **Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence:**
  - As a result of their sin, the nation and land has suffered.
  - During the reign of Ahaz, the kingdom of Judah was attacked and pillaged by Israel, Syria, Edom, the Philistines, and Assyria (2 Chronicles 28). It was written of this period, *For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD.* (2 Chronicles 28:19)
  - For all this, Judah would not repent. Their sin brought them great trouble, but they still preferred their sin, with all of its trouble, than submitting to the LORD God. In fact, 2 Chronicles 28:22 says, *Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD.*

- **Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah:**
  - As bad as Judah’s state was because of their sin, it could have been worse. It was only by the mercy of God that they survived at all.
  - **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** were both totally destroyed, with not even a very small remnant to carry on.
  - Even in the midst of judgment, God showed His mercy to Judah.
God hates their empty religious ceremonies.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah:

11 “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats.

12 “When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from you R hand, To trample My courts?

13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbath, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.

14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

- You rulers of Sodom… you people of Gomorrah:
  - God was obviously trying to get the attention of the leaders and people of Judah. He did this by associating them with two cities synonymous with sin and judgment.

- To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me:
  - God is tired of the religious ceremony and ritual.
    - Even in the midst of their rebellion, Judah continued its religious ceremony and ritual. They continued the sacrifices, they continued the burnt offerings, they continued offering the fat of fed cattle, they continued burning incense, they continued their assemblies and their sacred meetings — and God was sick of them all!
    - See how the LORD describes His reaction to these: I have had enough… bring no more futile sacrifices… an abomination to Me… I cannot endure… My soul hates… they are a trouble to Me… I am weary of bearing them.
      - This is a sobering thought. We can offer God all kinds of religious rituals and ceremonies, all kinds of religious service, and He may hate it and consider it an abomination!
      - Perhaps, in the midst of all their calamity (described in Isaiah 1:5-9), Judah thought the answer was in religious ceremonies, in their ancient version of “church attendance” and a few dollars in the offering. But if their heart wasn’t changed, and humbled, and surrendered to the LORD it made no difference. Without the right heart, God hated their religious ceremony and service.

- The attitude of heart is more important to God than the outward religious exercises
  - Ps. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.
  - God wearies of the religious form if our heart is not in it. God declares He will not listen to their prayers because of iniquity.
    - Ps. 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.
    - Is. 59:1 Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.

  - “When sinners are under the judgments of God they will more easily be brought to fly to their devotions than to forsake their sins and reform their lives.” (Matthew Henry)
When you spread out your hands:

- This was the posture of prayer in that ancient culture. Instead of praying with heads bowed and hands folded, they would pray with the face turned towards heaven and the hands spread out to heaven.

- When they prayed, the LORD says, “I will hide my eyes from you… I will not hear.”

- We may be certain, that in the midst of all this religious ceremony, there were many fine prayers offered. Many eloquent, stirring, and emotional prayers were said. But they were empty, hollow, useless prayers, because God looked at Judah and said, “Your hands are full of blood.”
5. (16-20) The LORD offers a cure.

16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, 
17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the opppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

18 “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean… Learn to do good, seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow:
  - The corruption of Judah’s leaders and people was shown in their bad treatment of one another. God was concerned that they seek an honest judgment.
  - Many centuries later, the apostle John repeated Isaiah’s message: If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)
  - The leaders and people of Judah wanted to say they loved God by their religious ceremonies, but the LORD cared more about how they treated other people, especially the weak (the fatherless… the widow).

- “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD:
  - The Lord GOD invites His people to come reason with Him. What He offers us isn’t just offered because He is greater than us and has the right to dictate whatever terms please Him. God’s direction for us is reasonable. It is smart. It is the best way to live.
  - It is madness to reject and resist a God of infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite grace, and infinite power. True reason will drive any honest man to the humblest adoration and submission towards God.
  - The angels surrounding the throne of God are covered with eyes, which speaks of their great ability to perceive and know (Revelation 4:6-8). These are perhaps the most intelligent, rational beings God ever created, and they spend every moment of their existence lost in total praise, total adoration, and total surrender to God. This is where the highest reason will drive us.
  - It is just plain reasonable to follow God. Have you ever once heard of an old Christian, on their deathbed, gathering their children and friends around, and saying: “Now friends, watch out for that Christianity! I’ve followed Jesus my whole life and I’m so sorry I did! What a waste that was!” What nonsense! Quite the contrary, we find that Christians on their deathbed are trusting and loving God more than ever. It’s just plain reasonable!
  - God calls Israel to repent and begin to live right. The Lord wants to reason with them. He does not want us to experience a non-reasoned religious experience, but He becomes our reason and our base.
    - Prophecy is one of His ways of providing us with evidence of who He is, so we have a basis for faith and not blind faith.
    - Even though the sins have permeated the very fiber of our being. God freely offers His grace.

- Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool:
  - The LORD offered a repentant, humbled Judah true and complete cleansing from sin. Their condition of sin can be transformed from deeply stained to completely white.
  - In this passage, Isaiah says nothing about how this cleansing comes. But we know that it comes because Jesus took upon Himself our stain of sin, and God judged sin perfectly and completely in Jesus, so we can be accounted white as snow and as white as wool.

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• What tremendous hope there is in God’s forgiveness! We really can be clean from the stain of sin.
  ▪ Our good works can’t clean the stain.
  ▪ Our best intentions or promises can’t clean the stain.
  ▪ Our suffering or pain can’t clean the stain.
  ▪ Time can’t clean the stain.
  ▪ Death can’t clean the stain.
  ▪ Only the work of Jesus can make us white as snow! We really can have a break with the past, and a new beginning in Jesus Christ. The power of sin, the shame of sin, the guilt of sin, the domination of sin, the terror of sin, and the pain of sin can all be taken away in Jesus.

• “The Lord does not deny the truth of what the sinner has confessed, but he says to him, ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, I meet you on that ground. You need not try to diminish the extent of your sin, or seek to make it appear to be less than it really is. No; whatever you say it is, it is all that, and probably far more. Your deepest sense of your sinfulness does not come up to the truth concerning your real condition; certainly, you do not exaggerate in the least. Your sins are scarlet, and crimson; it seems as though you have put on the imperial robe of sin, and made yourself a monarch of the realm of evil.’ That is how a man’s guilt appears before the searching eye of God.” (Spurgeon)

• You may be “a wicked old wretch who has taken his degrees in Satan’s college, has become a Master of Belial, a prince and chief of sinners – a Goliath amongst the Philistines – yet, to such a man, is this word sent today. Your hands are bloody with the souls of the young, you have kept a hellhouse; you have grit up public entertainments which have debauched and depraved the young; you have gold in your pocket to-day, which you have earned by the blood of souls; you have the fool’s pence, and the drunkard’s shillings, which have really come into your hands from the hearts of poor women, you have heard the cries of the starving children, and you have tempted their husbands to take the drink, and ruined their bodies and their souls. You have kept a place where the entertainment was so low, so grovelling, that you awoke the slumbering passions of evil in the minds of either young or old, and so you shall sink to hell with the blood of others on your head, as well as your own damnation, not with one millstone about your neck, but with many.” (Spurgeon) Yet you can still be white as snow!

**Come now:**

• When we consider the greatness of God’s cleansing and pardon, it is all the more reason for us to come now. God wants the separation between you and He to be gone now. He doesn’t want you to continue in your destructive path another moment. He wants the best for us now!

• “Come now, no season can be better. If ye tardy till you’re better, ye will never come at all. Come now; you may never have another warning; the heart may never be so tender as it is to-day. Come now; no other eyes may ever weep over you; no other heart may ever agonize for your salvation. Come now, now, now, for tomorrow you may never know in this world. Death may have sealed your fate, and the once filthy may remain filthy still. Come now; for to-morrow thy heart may become harder than stone, and God may give thee up. Come now; it is God’s time; to-morrow is the devil’s time. ‘To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me and proved me in the wilderness and saw my works.’ Come now. Why delay to be happy? Would you put off your wedding-day? Will you postpone the hour when you are pardoned and delivered? Come now: the bowels of Jehovah yearn for you. The eye of your father sees you afar off, and he runs to meet you. Come now; the church is praying for you; these are revival times; ministers are more in earnest.” (Spurgeon)

**If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword:**

• Here God offered Judah a choice – The key to change is by our choice. They could find hope in the midst of their chastisement, relief from empty religious ritual, and cleansing from their sin. But they had to surrender their heart before God, and not refuse and rebel. Instead, they had to be willing and obedient.

• No one perfectly matches either phrase, but which phrase better describes your life? Is it willing and obedient or refuse and rebel? There is a consequence for either course: eat of the good of the land or be devoured by the sword. No wonder the LORD said, “Come now, let us reason together!”
B. A promise of redemption – with justice.

1. (21-23) The unjust leaders of Judah.

21 How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.
22 Your silver has become dross, Your wine mixed with water.
23 Your princes are rebellious, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards.
They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

- Jerusalem has become a harlot spiritually and her judicial system corrupt.
- The faithful city has become a harlot:
  - The faithful city is Jerusalem, the city once known for its faithfulness to the LORD.
  - Now, Jerusalem has become a harlot – spiritually speaking, they have forsaken their “marriage” to the LORD and are committing spiritual adultery with their idolatry.
- It was full of justice:
  - The days of justice and righteousness are long past in Jerusalem.
    - Jerusalem was filled with murderers, political corruption (Your princes are rebellious), thieves, fraud (Your silver has become dross, your wine is mixed with water), bribes, and favoritism against the weak (They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them).
  - The LORD’s accusation against Jerusalem shows, by contrast, what God values among political and civil leaders.
    - God expects them to keep the peace (against murderers), have integrity (instead of being rebellious and the companion of thieves), and to defend the weak (the fatherless and widows).
  - Your wine mixed with water:
    - “The Lord Jesus made water into wine; sinners make wine into water.” (Bultema)
  - The spiritual adultery of Judah showed itself in this kind of sin. In a sense, the corruption among the leaders of Judah was a symptom of an even deeper spiritual problem.

2. (24-31) The LORD’s plan of redemption with justice

24 Therefore the Lord says, The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,
   “Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, And take vengeance on My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you, And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy.
26 I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning.
   Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”
27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness.
28 The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together,
And those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
29 For they shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens Which you have chosen.
30 For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, And as a garden that has no water.
31 The strong shall be as tinder, And the work of it as a spark;
Both will burn together, And no one shall quench them.

- God will restore the city unto Himself and the people will repent of their cultic past.
- The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel:
  - God now addresses Judah, introducing Himself with titles showing His power and majesty.
    - He is the LORD of hosts, “hosts” referring to the armies of heaven.
- He is the **Mighty One of Israel**, whom it is futile to oppose. The title itself is a wake-up call.
  - Bulterma on the **LORD of hosts**: “Describes Him as the Warrior who has all the angels as mighty soldiers at His disposal in the battle against the wicked. This is God’s battle name and as a rule it signifies little good when He uses it in reference to His people, as is the case here. It usually implies that He considers and deals with His people as His enemies.”

- **I will rid Myself of My adversaries:**
  - The problem with the leaders and people of Judah was that they had set themselves as **adversaries** of the LORD. They were acting like His **enemies**. They were putting themselves in the path of judgment. They would find the hand of the LORD **against** them, instead of for them.

- **And thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy:**
  - **dross** and **alloy** are impurities in metal.
  - God promises to “turn up the heat” and refine Judah, taking away their impurities. His goal is not to destroy; instead He says, “I will restore.” God will purify Jerusalem, to the point where **Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.**

- **Zion shall be redeemed with justice:**
  - God’s redemption and restoration are always done with **justice** and **righteousness**. He never saves or redeems at the expense of His justice and righteousness.

- **They shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees which you have desired:**
  - **terebinth trees** were sites of pagan worship which idol-loving Judah kept among them. When Zion is **redeemed with justice**, they will be **ashamed** of their former idolatries.
  - It is good to be **ashamed** and **embarrassed** over sin. There is something wrong with us when we are **shameless** or beyond embarrassment. God promised He would give Judah the gift of shame and embarrassment over sin again.
  - “Sacred trees played an important part in the Canaanite fertility cult… for deciduous trees like the oak or terebinth may well have symbolized the death and rebirth of the god. The ‘gardens’ may be groves of these trees, or, alternatively, places of sacred springs or wells.” (Grogan)

- **As a terebinth tree whose leaf fades… as a garden that has no water… the strong shall be as tinder… both will burn together:**
  - The LORD here speaks of the spiritual **dryness** of Judah. Though they continued their religious ritual and ceremony, they were still spiritually dry. And as dry trees, dry gardens, and dry tinder are ready to burn, so is an unrepentant Judah ready to feel the fires of God’s refining judgment.
A. The hope of the Messiah’s reign.

1. (1) A word concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

   The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

   - The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw:
     - This was revealed to Isaiah in some kind of vision, because this was a **word** that he **saw**.

   - Concerning Judah and Jerusalem:
     - This prophecy (continuing on through Isaiah 4) is directed towards the southern kingdom Judah and its capital Jerusalem.

2. (2-3) The exaltation of Judah and Jerusalem.

   Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.”
   For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

   - In the latter days:
     - In context, the term **latter days** refers to the “time of the Messiah,” when the Anointed of the LORD reigns over the earth. This speaks of the time many refer to as the **millennium**, the thousand-year reign of Jesus on this earth (Psalm 72, Isaiah 11:4-9, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Luke 1:32-33 and 19:12-27, Matthew 5:18).

     - The mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it:
       - During the millennium, Israel will be the “superpower” of the world.
       - It will be the leading nation in all the earth, and the center of Israel will be the mountain of the LORD’s house – the temple mount, which will be the “capital” of the government of the Messiah.
       - All nations shall flow to the “capital” of the government of Jesus.

   - Come, let us go to the mountain of the LORD… He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths:
     - During the millennium, the citizens of earth will acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus. It will be a time of perfectly administrated enforced righteousness on this earth.

     - In the Kingdom Age, Jesus Christ will establish His throne on Mt. Zion. We will also go there to be taught by Him. (Rev.1:6, 3:21, 19:15, 5:9-10.)

3. (4) The peaceful nature of the Messiah’s reign.

   He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

   - When Jesus reigns in the Kingdom Age no one will have to fear war anymore.

   - They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks:
     - During the reign of the Messiah, there will be no more war.
There will still be conflicts between nations and individuals, but they will be justly and decisively resolved by the Messiah and those who reign with Him (He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people).

It isn’t the reign of the Messiah itself that will change the heart of man. Citizens of earth will still need to trust in Jesus and His work on their behalf for their personal salvation during the millennium. But war and armed conflict will not be tolerated.

• Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore:
  o It is important to see that this is not the peace of capitulation. This is the peace of enforced righteousness.
  o There is no more war, and no more need for swords and spears, so why not make them into plowshares and pruning hooks?
  o But there is no more war because there is a new ruler on earth, Jesus Christ. Psalm 2:9 tells us what the Messiah will do to the disobedient in that day: You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.
  o We long for the day when there is no more need for a military budget, when the money that goes for weapons and armies can go to schools and parks. But we are only safe doing that when the Messiah reigns among us!
  o “Men yearn for peace, but they will not acknowledge the hopelessness of their own efforts to achieve it. It is only when the word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem, when He Himself is reigning over the nations, that lasting peace will come.” (Martin)

Isaiah 2:1-3 is repeated in Micah 4:1-3.
  o Mic 4:1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
    That the mountain of the Lord’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
    And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it.
    2 Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
    To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.”
    For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
    3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off;
    They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks;
    Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.
  o Since Isaiah and Micah were contemporary prophets, it isn’t surprising that the same Spirit of the LORD could give these two prophets the same word, to establish and emphasize His word.

B. The threat of coming judgment.

1. (5) A plea to walk in the light of the LORD.
   O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD.

• Oh house of Jacob:
  o After painting the picture of the glory of the Messiah’s reign, Isaiah then challenges Judah (house of Jacob) to live in the Messiah’s reign right now.

• Walk in the light of the LORD:
  o This means to order your life after God’s truth and God’s ways.
    ▪ The ultimate reign of the Messiah may be many years away, but Jesus can reign in our lives, in our minds, and in our hearts right now. We don’t have to wait for the enforced righteousness of the millennium to have the blessing of Jesus’ righteousness in our lives right now.
  
  o This means you enjoy the blessings of the Messiah’s reign right now.
    ▪ You don’t have to live a dark, depressing, discouraged Christian life. You can walk in the light of the LORD!
What is it that gets you down, that brings darkness into your life? What can it compare to the light of the LORD? Is the darkness of spiritual attack, of unfaithful friends, of bad circumstances, of shame, of guilt, of anything greater than the light of the LORD? We think not!

“...You know that, if you were to go to Australia in a good sound ship, you would get there even if you were always to lie down in the hold among the luggage and the rats; but I should like to go in a first-class cabin, and I do not see why you and I, if we are going to heaven, should not go first-class.” (Spurgeon)

2. (6-9) The sins that prevent Judah from walking in the light of the LORD.

For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with eastern ways; They are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they are pleased with the children of foreigners. Their land is also full of silver and gold, And there is no end to their treasures; Their land is also full of horses, And there is no end to their chariots. Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, That which their own fingers have made. People bow down, And each man humbles himself; Therefore do not forgive them.

• An apt description of present-day humanism. Man worships the creature rather than the Creator.
• They are filled with eastern ways... they are soothsayers like the Philistines... they are pleased with the children of foreigners:
  o Judah had allowed the false gods of foreigners to captivate their attention.
  o This was not an anti-immigrant statement. God is not against the cultures and customs of other peoples, except where those customs and cultures honor and worship false gods.
  o Perhaps in the name of “diversity,” the leaders and people of Judah were allowing the worship of false gods.
• Their land is also full of silver and gold:
  o Judah had allowed the false gods of wealth and materialism to captivate their attention.
  o Because Judah was in a time of economic prosperity (full of silver and gold... no end to their treasures... full of horses... no end to their chariots), they were far more prone to economic idolatry.
  o This was not an anti-wealth statement. God is not against wealth and riches and may choose to bless some with significant resources. This is a rebuke of the love of riches, and any trust in wealth.
• Their land is also full of idols:
  o Judah had allowed idols to captivate their attention.
  o Because everyone has an innate tendency to worship themselves (the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made), we are tempted to worship what we have made and accomplished instead of worshipping the One who made us.
  o This was not an anti-work statement. God wants us to work hard, and show forth the work of our own hands, and to see the accomplishments that our own fingers have made. This is a rebuke of the worship of what we have made and what we have done.
• People bow down, and each man humbles himself:
  o There was plenty of worship (bow down) in Judah, and plenty of people humbling themselves. They were simply worshipping the wrong things and humbling themselves before the wrong things!
  o We know how to bow down, we know how to humble ourselves; we just don’t find it easy to direct it properly towards the LORD. We are more than happy to bow down and humble ourselves for something of our choosing, but often find it difficult to do it for the LORD.
The application is sobering: **Therefore do not forgive them.**

- Their worship of foreign gods, of riches, and of idols was sincere. It may have been ennobling or helpful to society. But it rejected the LORD God and was therefore unforgivable.


Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up—And it shall be brought low—

Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan;

Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills that are lifted up; Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall; Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops.

The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, But the idols He shall utterly abolish.

They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold, Which they made, each for himself to worship, To the moles and bats, To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks,

From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

Sever yourselves from such a man, Whose breath is in his nostrils; For of what account is he?

- The Lord will bring down the proud and shake the earth. (Rev.6:12-17; Heb. 12:26.)
  - **Rev 6 Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances** – 12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”
  - **Heb 12:26** whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.”

- From the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty:
  - The beginning of the chapter described the glory of the Messiah’s reign (Isaiah 2:1-4).
  - The second part of the chapter described the current corruption of Judah (Isaiah 2:6-9).
  - How will the earth be transformed from its current corruption to the glory of the Messiah’s reign?
    - It will happen by the victory of the Messiah in the **day of the LORD of hosts**.
  - The term **day of the LORD** (used more than 25 times in the Bible) does not necessarily refer to one specific day. It speaks of “God’s time.”
    - The idea is that now is the **day of man**, but the day of man will not last forever.
    - One day, the Messiah will end the day of man and bring forth the **day of the LORD**.

- The **day of the LORD of hosts shall come**:
  - In the **day of the LORD**, men will be terrified:
    - **Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, from the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty.**
In the day of the LORD, men will be humbled:

- The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
- The high tower, the fortified wall, the ships of Tarshish and the beautiful sloops all are expressions of the loftiness of man and the haughtiness of men.
- In the day of the LORD, every proud, arrogant achievement of man will be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
- “Man in all matters of religion, and in all his dealings with God, is proud. It is wonderful how apparently humble men will be when they worship false gods. They will cut themselves with knives, and roll themselves in the mire. We have known some votaries to kneel before the representation of the Virgin Mary and lick the very pavement with their tongues by way of penance, and perform the most degrading rites in honor of their false gods. Man seems to be humble enough in his dealings with his own idol, but as soon as ever he comes to deal with the true God, the first things that have to be got out of him are his pride, his high looks, his haughtiness.” (Spurgeon)

In that day, there will be no more idolatry:

- the LORD alone shall be exalted.
- In that day, God will be glorified, and all will see the terror of the LORD and the glory of His majesty.

Sever yourselves from such a man:

- Because the days of idols and human pride are numbered, why associate with those who cling to what will certainly be defeated? We should see that such men are of no account, and walk in the light of the LORD instead.

For of what account is he:

- If men are only men, why do we give so much attention to the opinions of men? Why rise so high on the praise of men, and get so low at their disapproval? We have something – Someone – better to live for.
- What strange sin in us, to make us give more account to men who can only hold as much breath as their nostrils will contain – who depend on every breath for life – than to the LORD God who will shake the earth mightily! It simply makes sense for us to honor and obey God than to follow men into sin.
- “But they say.’ What do they say? Let them say. It will not hurt you if you can only gird up the loins of your mind, and cease from man. ‘Oh, but they have accused me of this and that.’ Is it true? ‘No, sir, it is not true, and that is why it grieves me.’ That is why it should not grieve you. If it were true it ought to trouble you; but if it is not true let it alone. If an enemy has said anything against your character it will not always be worth while to answer him. Silence has both dignity and argument in it.” (Spurgeon)
- “Brethren in Christ, let us think more of God and less of man. Come, let the Lord our God fill the whole horizon of our thoughts. Let our love go forth to him; let us delight ourselves in him. Let us trust in him that liveth for ever, in him whose promise never faileth, in him who will be with us in life, and in death, and through eternity. Oh that we lived more in the society of Jesus, more in the sight of God! Let man go behind our back, and Satan too. We cannot spend our lives in seeking the smiles of men, for pleasing God is the one object we pursue. Our hands, and our heads, and our hearts, and all that we have and are, find full occupation for the Lord, and therefore we must ‘Cease from man.’” (Spurgeon)
ISAIAH 3: Disintegration of Jerusalem Through Sin (THE SINS OF JUDAH)

A. Profile of a society under judgment.

1. (1-7) Shortages of food, water, and competent leaders.
   For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, Takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah
   The stock and the store, The whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water;
   The mighty man and the man of war, The judge and the prophet,
   And the diviner and the elder; The captain of fifty and the honorable man,
   The counselor and the skillful artisan, And the expert enchanter.
   “I will give children to be their princes, And babes shall rule over them.

   The people will be oppressed, Every one by another and every one by his neighbor;
   The child will be insolent toward the elder,
   And the base toward the honorable.”

   When a man takes hold of his brother In the house of his father,
   saying, “You have clothing; you be our ruler,
   And let these ruins be under your power,”

   In that day he will protest, saying, “I cannot cure your ills,
   For in my house is neither food nor clothing; Do not make me a ruler of the people.”

   • v.1-4 God is speaking of a present rather than future situation.

   • For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store:
     o God’s judgment on Judah, at this point, includes taking away their food (stock and the store) and water.
     o Isaiah 3:1 is a good example of the way two Hebrew words may be used, each translated Lord.
       ▪ In this verse, the first time Lord is used, it translates the Hebrew word adonai, which means “master, owner, sovereign.” It is a broad word that can be applied to a human master as well as the Lord GOD, the ultimate Master.
       ▪ The second time LORD is used, and is printed in small capitals, it translates the Hebrew word Yahweh, which is the sacred name of the Triune God.
       ▪ So, it may be that the Hebrew Bible could use the phrase adonai Yahweh, which could be translated into English as Lord LORD, but actually means “Master Yahweh.” That phrase appears more than 300 times in the Old Testament. Most of the time, the phrase is translated Lord GOD in the New King James Version.
       ▪ It emphasizes the majesty and power of God because the idea behind LORD of hosts is that God is “Commander in Chief” of heaven’s armies.
     o So when it is “The Master of All, Yahweh of Heaven’s Armies” (the Lord, the LORD of hosts) who has taken food and water from Jerusalem and from Judah, they do well to repent and get right with Him.
       ▪ “This is also the reason why he calls God the Lord and Jehovah of hosts, that the majesty of God may terrify their drowsy and sluggish minds; for God has no need of titles, but our ignorance and stupidity must be aroused by perceiving his glory.” (Calvin)

   • The mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet:
     o The judgment is worse than just taking away food and water. God also brought judgment on Jerusalem and Judah by depriving them of godly, competent leaders on every level: the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder; the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter. Instead of wise, competent leaders, God will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.
The eventual fulfillment of this prophecy is found in 2 Kings 24:14: Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

But this principle of God’s judgment endures to this day. One way God may bring judgment on a nation is to curse them with incompetent, ungodly leaders. Often, this is the simplest avenue of judgment: giving people what their wicked hearts desire. This crisis of leadership can happen even in economically prosperous times (Isaiah 2:7 is part of this same prophecy). The terrible effect of this judgment of God, the granting of incompetent and ungodly leaders, may not be immediately seen, but it will be certainly seen, apart from the repentance of a nation and the mercy of God.

- **The people will be oppressed:**
  - This comes from the ungodly, incompetent leadership, and there will be a breakdown of order in society (The child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable).
  - “For there is hardly any conduct more offensive, or more fitted to disturb our minds, than when the worst examples of every sort are publicly exhibited by magistrates, while no man utters a syllable against them, but almost all give their approbation.” (Calvin)

- **You have clothing, you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your hand:**
  - Things will become so bad, that in the minds of the people, the smallest achievements will qualify a man for leadership. Yet, even such a man will not want to lead: In that day, he will protest, saying, “I cannot cure your ills… do not make me a ruler of the people.”
  - “It is astonishing how realistically the prophet is here able to describe the consequences of a total collapse of the state. Anyone who remembers the months that followed May 1945 in Germany will have the sensation in reading this passage of being carried right back to these days.” (Kaiser, cited in Grogan)

2. (8-12) Why Judah is ripe for judgment.

For Jerusalem stumbled, And Judah is fallen, Because their tongue and their doings Are against the LORD. To provoke the eyes of His glory. The look on their countenance witnesses against them, And they declare their sin as Sodom; They do not hide it. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves. “Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, For the reward of his hands shall be given him. As for My people, children are their oppressors, And women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, And destroy the way of your paths.”

- **Their tongues and their doings are against the LORD:**
  - Jerusalem and Judah have sinned in what they say and in what they do. In fact, what they say and what they do provoke the eyes of His glory.
  - It is much easier to think that what we do is offensive to God, than to think that what we say can provoke the eyes of His glory. But we are commanded to glorify God by what we say just as much as by what we do. Jesus said, For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:36-37)

- **The look on their countenance witnesses against them:**
  - The very look on their faces is evidence of their guilt. Either they have smirk of the reprobate, or the downcast gaze of those under conviction.
"Impure propensities are particularly legible in the eyes: whoever has beheld the face of a debauchee or a prostitute knows this; of these it may be said, they wish to appear what they really are. They glory in their iniquity. This is the highest pitch of ungodliness." (Clarke)

- **And they declare their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it:**
  - Their sin is openly displayed, and there is no sense of shame. The cultural dynamic in Isaiah’s day was probably much the same as in our time. In the name of “frankness” and “honesty” and “let’s not be hypocrites,” all kinds of sin is approved, and no one is “allowed” to proclaim a standard unless they live up to it perfectly.
  - Outward decency is important. It is important to not talk about many sins, even though they exist, and sometimes touch the church. It is through these means that God’s people declare a standard, even though they or the world do not perfectly measure up to a standard. Ephesians 5:12 matters here: *For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.*
  - One of the most destructive lies of our time is that it is wrong or hypocritical to have a standard that we don’t live up to.
    - No one has always told the truth, yet it is right and good to teach our children, “Don’t lie.” It would be wrong, and destructive, for someone to answer, “You can’t tell your child not to lie. You have lied in the past. You are a hypocrite.”
      - The charge of hypocrisy is false. It is not hypocritical to promote a standard you don’t perfectly meet. Hypocrisy is when you pretend to keep the standard when you do not, or think it is fine for you to not keep the standard, when you think others should.
    - This attitude in our society translates into a certain result: a wholesale lowering of standards.
      - “The maintenance of external decency is at least some evidence of a conscience not altogether seared.” (Jennings)

- **Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves:**
  - God did not have to do anything unique or special to bring this judgment on Jerusalem and Judah. All He had to do was leave them alone and allow them to have brought evil upon themselves.
  - When the LORD gives a nation the leadership they desire and deserve, it can be either a blessing or a curse. In Judah’s case in the time of Isaiah, it was a curse.

- **Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings:**
  - He comforts the righteous only.
  - Even in the midst of judgment, God knows how to bless and protect His people. Sometimes this is only seen in the perspective of eternity, but God assures us that the righteous will never share the same fate as the wicked.
  - Abraham knew this principle well when he said to the LORD, *Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (Genesis 18:25)

- **They shall eat the fruit of their doings… for the reward of his hands shall be given him:**
  - God will give both the righteous and the wicked the reward they deserve. For the righteous, this is a comfort, for the wicked, it is a curse.
  - Spurgeon on Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him: “It shall be ill with the wicked, and let no present appearance lead you to doubt it… The eyes that never weep for sin here will weep in awful anguish for ever… It will be a profitable thing for thee to feel the wrath of God heavy on thy spirit now, for if not, it will crush thee, crush thee down and down without hope, world without end. It shall be ill with you.”

- **As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them:**
Again, the LORD both declares and bemoans His judgment on Judah, that they have been given incompetent and ungodly leadership. **Those who lead you cause you err, and destroy the way of your paths.**

- **Women rule over them:**
  - This was seen as a curse, not a blessing. Certainly, God may raise up particular women at particular times to be leaders in different spheres. Deborah (*Judges* 4-5) and Esther are examples of this. But this entirely different than a society where, in general, **women rule over them.** Such a society is cursed, not blessed.
B. God’s case against Judah.

   The LORD stands up to plead, And stands to judge the people.
   The LORD will enter into judgment With the elders of His people And His princes:
   “For you have eaten up the vineyard; The plunder of the poor is in your houses.
   What do you mean by crushing My people And grinding the faces of the poor?”
   Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

   • The LORD stands up to plead, and stands to judge the people:
     o Here, the LORD is both a prosecutor (stands up to plead) and a judge against Judah. When you are in court, and the prosecutor and the judge are the same person, you know you are going to be found guilty!

   • The plunder of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people, and grinding the faces of the poor:
     o God’s charge against the elders and the princes of Israel is not that they have failed to help the poor. That would be bad in itself. But far worse than that, they have robbed the poor, and taken advantage of their poverty to enrich themselves.

2. (16-23) The sinful women of Judah, and the judgment of the LORD against them.
   Moreover the LORD says: “Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
   And walk with outstretched necks And wanton eyes,
   Walking and mincing as they go, Making a jingling with their feet,
   Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
   And the LORD will uncover their secret parts.”

   In that day the Lord will take away the finery: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;
   The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands;
   The perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; The nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles;
   The outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors;
   The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

   • v.16-26 They did not take God into consideration in their lives God describes His judgment for their iniquity and materialistic lifestyle.

   • The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks:
     o The women of Judah were proud. They were taken with themselves and loved to consider themselves better than others (are haughty).
     o This proud heart was the basis for the rest of the sin among the daughters of Zion.
       ▪ “To meet their unfounded accusations, he lays open the inward disease, which is manifested in the whole of their outward dress.” (Calvin)
     o In contrast, women of God are called to in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself (Philippians 2:3).

   • Wanton eyes:
     o The women of Judah were sexually seductive and promiscuous. They wanted to behold and attract what was sexually impure.
“What he adds about wandering eyes denotes shameless lust, which for the most part is expressed by the eyes; for unchaste eyes are the heralds of an unchaste heart; but the eyes of chaste women are sedate, and not wandering or unsteady.” (Calvin)

In contrast, women of God are called to be discreet and chaste (Titus 2:5).

**Walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet:**

- The women of Judah were obsessed with finery, luxury, and “accessories.” They devoted far too much of their lives to their appearance and their image.

- For emphasis, the prophet declares a list of the “accessories” and luxury items the women of Judah longed for and devoted too much of their lives to: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; the nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes. Sounds like they had some pretty good malls in Jerusalem!

- This love of finery, luxury, and the obtaining of it all is not unique to women. Many men have a problem with it also. But it is definitely a problem among many women. A 1992 story in the Los Angeles Times told about Michelle, a successful writer and editor, who feared the day her husband might discover her secret stash of credit cards, her secret post office box or the other tricks she used to hide how much money she spent shopping for herself. “I make as much money as my husband… If I want a $500 suit from Ann Taylor, I deserve it and don’t want to be hassled about it. So the easiest thing to do is lie,” she explained. Last year, when her husband forced her to destroy one of her credit cards, Michelle went out and got a new one without telling him. “I do live in fear. If he discovers this new VISA, he’ll kill me.”

- In the same article, a school teacher explained more: “Men just don’t understand that shopping is our drug of choice,” she joked, even while admitting that some months her salary goes exclusively to paying the minimum balance on her credit cards. “Walking through the door of South Coast Plaza is like walking though the gates of heaven. God made car trunks for women to hide shopping bags in.”

- A young professional named Mary explained: “Shopping is my recreation. It’s my way of pampering myself. When you walk into [a mall] and you see all the stores, it’s like something takes over and you get caught up in it.”

- “It is worthy of notice that the Prophet had good reason for reproving, with so great earnestness and vehemence, the luxury of women; for while they are chargeable with many vices, they are most of all inflamed with mad eagerness to have fine clothes. Covetous as they naturally are, still they spare no expense for dressing in a showy manner, and even use spare diet, and deprive themselves of what nature requires, that their clothes may be more costly and elegant. So grievously are they corrupted by this vice, that it goes beyond every other.” (Calvin)

- “Nothing can exceed the curiosity which dwells in woman. Indeed there is no end to those contrivances; and it was not without reason that the ancients called the collection of a woman’s ornaments a world; for if they were collected into one heap, they would be almost as numerous as the parts of the world.” (Calvin)

- In contrast, women of God are commanded: Do not let your adornment be merely outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Peter 3:3-4)

- Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will uncover their secret parts:

  - Their obsession with their appearance, their love of luxury, and their promiscuity made the daughters of Zion ripe for judgment. Their “crown” will be a scab, and instead of being beautifully adorned, they will be exposed and humiliated. Also, the Lord will take away the finery.

  - In Isaiah’s time, these judgments were connected with the coming invasions. Because of scarcity and disease, the haughty daughters of Zion would be sick and diseased. They would be raped and humiliated. And all their wonderful “accessories” would be taken away.
Because of their role in the nurture of children, it is important that women of God live and think like women of God. When the women of a culture become degenerate, then the hope for the next generation is gone. But when the women of a culture turn to the LORD and His ways, there is great hope for the future.

“In short, both men and women are instructed to make a sober use of the gifts of God, both in food and in clothing, and in the whole conduct of life. For the Lord cannot endure extravagance, and absolutely must inflict severe punishment on account of it; for it cannot be restrained by a lighter chastisement.” (Calvin)

3. (24-26) More of the judgment of the LORD on the sinful daughters of Zion.

And so it shall be: Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench; Instead of a sash, a rope; Instead of well-set hair, baldness; Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; And branding instead of beauty.

Your men shall fall by the sword, And your mighty in the war.

Her gates shall lament and mourn, And she being desolate shall sit on the ground.

• Instead of… Instead of… Instead of… Instead of… instead of:
  o The LORD will replace their finery with the marks of captivity and humiliation. They will live the stench, the baldness, the branding and the general deprivation of captivity.
  o Do we realize how quickly God can take it all away? How much more reason to honor God with what we have, instead of indulging ourselves.
  o “Now there cannot befall us anything worse than that we should be hardened against chastisements, and not perceive that God chastiseth us. When we labour under such stupidity, our case is almost hopeless.” (Calvin)

• Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty in the war:
  o Without doubt, one reason the daughters of Zion loved all the luxury and finery was because it made them more attractive to men. They felt they could “get” men that way. But their ungodly love of luxury and finery resulted in the loss of their men.

• She being desolate shall sit on the ground:
  o A Roman medal, struck after Jerusalem’s fall, shows a Jewish woman being desolate, sitting under a palm tree next to a Roman soldier.
ISAIAH 4: Vision of the Coming Kingdom (THE MESSIAH’S COMMUNITY)

- Speaking of Jesus' righteous reign upon the earth in the future

A. Judgment on the daughters of Zion and a glorious hope.

1. (1) The desperate condition of the daughters of Zion.

   And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
   “We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel;
   Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach.”

- And in that day:
  - As a result of the judgments of the LORD detailed in Isaiah 3:16-26, the daughters of Zion will have few men to choose from as husbands.

- Seven women shall take hold of one man:
  - So many men shall fall by the sword (Isaiah 3:25), that seven women would chase after one man. They would be so desperate for marriage that will not expect their husbands to provide for them at all (We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel).

- Only let us be called by your name:
  - Instead, it would be enough to simply take the name of a husband, so that it would take away the reproach of being unmarried and childless.

- In a broader sense, this shows that it is not good for women to be too desperate for marriage. They may marry unwisely, and for the wrong reasons. It is also bad when women do not expect their husbands to provide for the household.

2. (2) The glorious hope of the Branch of the LORD.

   In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious;
   And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing For those of Israel who have escaped.

- In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious:
  - The Branch of the LORD is a Messianic title, speaking of Jesus Christ.
  - This image is repeated in Isaiah 11:1: There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
    - It is repeated in Jeremiah 23:5: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.”
    - It is repeated in Jeremiah 33:15: In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
    - It is repeated in Zechariah 3:8: For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.
  - The ideas behind the title Branch of the LORD are those of fruitfulness and life. Jesus used the same image when He said that John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- In that day:
  - This does not mean that the Messiah would appear when these judgments were taking place on the daughters of Zion. It means that the promise of the Messiah would be all the more beautiful and glorious to them in the midst of their suffering.
• And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped:
  o For the remnant preserved through judgment, the promise of the Messiah would be all the more beautiful, dear, and life-giving.
  o Fruit would come forth from the Branch of the LORD, even as they simply trusted in the promise of the Messiah before He came.

B. Zion under the government of the Branch of the LORD.

1. (3) Holiness marks the society where the Branch of the LORD reigns.
   And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

• Shall be called holy:
  o In the days of the sinful daughters of Zion, they were called beautiful, they were called delicate, they were called attractive, they were called fashionable, and they were called sexy. But they were not called holy.
  o “Christ’s holiness shall be both imputed and imparted unto them: he shall both expiate their sins and heal their natures, pay their debts, and give them a stock of grace and holiness, so that men shall call them a ‘holy people.’” (Trapp)

• Everyone who is recorded:
  o But in the days when the Branch of the LORD reigns, the distinguishing mark of all, including the daughters of Zion, is that they shall be called holy.
  o Holy does not mean “super-spiritual.” It does not mean sinless perfection. It does not mean spiritually superior and obnoxious. It means a life, a heart, a mind, and a body that is genuinely separated unto the LORD. It is a life lived apart from the thinking and heart of this world, this flesh, and the devil, and lived apart to the LORD.

2. (4-6) More characteristics of the society where the Branch of the LORD reigns.
   When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering. And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.

• The Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion:
  o When the Branch of the LORD reigns, there will be cleansing. The cleansing will not come easily; it will come by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. But it will be worth it.
  o “Sin is the excrement of the soul, the superfluity or garbage of naughtiness, the devil’s vomit. From this abominable filth Christ hath ‘loved and washed his with his own blood, that he may make them kings and priests unto God and his Father.’” (Trapp)
  o “He not only washeth his people from their sins, but taketh away their swinish natures, whereby they would else return to their former wallowing in the mire.” (Trapp)

• A cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night:
  o When the Branch of the LORD reigns, there will be the tangible presence of the LORD. Just as in the days of the Exodus, God will be as real as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22).
And there will be a tabernacle for shade... a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm:

- When *the Branch of the LORD* reigns, there will be protection that comes from the LORD. The LORD’s people will be safe and secure, washed, and in the abiding presence of the LORD.

- “Nothing is more necessary than that we follow our calling, and perform our duty faithfully. It belongs equally to the condition of the good and of the bad that they suffer many incoveniencies; but bad men have no refuge, no place of concealment in which they may hide themselves, and they must be utterly overwhelmed. But blessed is the condition of the godly; for although they endure heat and cold, still they have a safe refuge in God.” (Calvin)

- If we are really born again, we *want* to be washed, have the presence of the LORD, and enjoy His protection. Many people only want the LORD’s constant presence and protection. But He doesn’t grant those apart from His cleansing.
ISAIAH 5: God’s Vineyard and Israel’s Six Woes (THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD)

• The Lord likens Judah or Israel unto a vineyard.
  o v.1-7 God was looking for good fruit to come out of Israel, as He had provided and done all He could for it. (Jesus wants us to bear fruit. Jn. 15:1-10; Gal. 5:22.)
  o He will forsake Judah, as it did not bear fruit.

A. The parable of the vineyard.

“For exquisite beauty of language and consummate skill in effective communication, this parable is virtually peerless. One difficulty of a literary masterpiece is that a would-be translator who is not the literary equal of the author faces an impossible task.... It is in fact an outstanding example of the way the inspiring Spirit employed human language to convey the divine message.” (Grogan)

1. (1-2) The unproductive vineyard.

Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:
My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill.
He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it;
So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes.

• Now let me sing:
  o The story is about a vineyard that had many advantages.
    ▪ It belonged to a loving person (my Well-beloved).
    ▪ It was planted on a very fruitful hill. The ground was carefully prepared (dug it up and cleared out its stones).
    ▪ It was planted with good stock (planted it with the choicest vine).
    ▪ It was protected (a tower in its midst).
    ▪ Provision was made for the fruit to be processed (made a winepress in it).
  o “No possession is dearer to a man than a vineyard, and there is none that demands more constant and persevering toil. Not only, therefore, does the Lord declare that we are his beloved inheritance, but at the same time points out his care and anxiety about us.” (Calvin)
  o “I have been thinking of the advantages of my own position towards the Lord, and lamenting with great shamefacedness that I am not bringing forth such fruit to him as my position demands. Considering our privileges, advantages, and opportunities, I fear that many of us have need to feel great searchings of the heart.” (Spurgeon)
• He expected it to bring forth good grapes but instead it brought forth wild grapes:
  o This is not surprising, considering all the advantages the vineyard had. What else would be expected?
  o Wild grapes: “We are dealing here with something worse than unfruitfulness. The New Testament also speaks of a faith that brings forth fruit, but the fruit is dead works, which pollute the air like a cadaver. The wolfsbane, or wild vine (2 Kings 4:39), does bear beautiful berries, but they are bitter, foul-smelling and poisonous in nature. This is a precise description of the self-willed and false religion of the unfaithful covenant people.” (Bultema)
  o Clarke on wild grapes: “Poisonous berries... not merely useless, unprofitable grapes, such as wild grapes; but grapes offensive to the smell, noxious, poisonous.”
  o Wild grapes means that the vineyard produced just what you would expect it to produce if nothing had been done to it. All the love, care, time, work, and investment resulted had no result.
2. (3-4) Consider the story of the vineyard.

“And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes?”

- **Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard:**
  - The question is simple. Who is to blame for the harvest of only *wild grapes*? Is it the fault of the owner of the vineyard, or is it the fault of the vineyard itself?
  - We know, and they knew, that farming is a matter of cause and effect. Literally, one could never “blame” a vineyard for lack of production. But in the LORD’s vineyard, the will of man is a factor.

- **What more could have been done to My vineyard:**
  - In the story, there was nothing left undone by the owner of the vineyard. He did all he could do. In the same way, God cannot be blamed at all for the *wild grapes* Israel brought forth. God did all He could do, apart from making men robots, acting apart from or against their wills.
  - The fault lies with man, not God. “It will be seen then… that every soul of man had the chance of becoming a fruitful vineyard; and if it became the reverse, it was due to no failure in either the wisdom or grace of God.” (Meyer)
  - “O you that profess to be his people, what more could Christ have done for you? What more could the Holy Spirit have done? What richer promises, what wiser precepts, what kinder providences, what more gracious patience?” (Spurgeon)

- **Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes:**
  - It is possible for God to do a work in His people, but for His people to receive that work *in vain*. Paul warned, *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.* (2 Corinthians 6:1)
  - Of course, a literal vineyard doesn’t “do” anything. But we, as God’s vineyard, are called to work with the grace of God, so that grace is not received in vain. Grace isn’t given because of any works, past, present or promised; yet it is given to *encourage* work, not to say work is unnecessary. God doesn’t want us to receive His grace and become passive. Paul knew that God gives His grace, we work hard, and the work of God is done.
  - Jesus used this same image in His parable of the wicked tenants and the vineyard (*Matthew 21:33-46*).
  - “Has it been so with us? Have we rewarded the Wellbeloved thus ungratefully for all his pains? Have we given him hardness of heart, instead of repentance; unbelief, instead of faith; indifference, instead of love; idleness, instead of holy industry; impurity, instead of holiness?” (Spurgeon)
3. (5-7) God’s judgment on the unproductive vineyard.

“And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard:
I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;
And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But there shall come up briers and thorns.
I will also command the clouds That they rain no rain on it.”
For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.
He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.

• I will take away its hedge:

  o All the owner of the vineyard must do is stop providing special protection to the vineyard, and it shall be burned… it shall be trampled down.

  o In a limited sense, God has given the responsibility of “taking away hedges” to the church. When a Christian is stubbornly unrepentant, it may be the job of the church to “turn them over” to Satan, so they will feel the pain of their sin and repent (1 Timothy 1:20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5). The church does this by putting such ones outside the spiritual protection found among God’s people.

• I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug:

  o The vineyard will receive nothing from the LORD. The vineyard resisted and protested the “pruning” and “digging” and “watering” the owner did. So now, the owner says, “Fine. No more pruning or digging or watering. You will see for yourself if that is better.”

  o Many discouraged children of God wish the LORD would stop pruning, stop digging, stop watering. Those things may be hard, but it is even worse when the LORD stops doing them!

• He looked for justice, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold, weeping:

  o The prophet plays on words here. In the Hebrew, he wrote “He looked for mishpat, but behold mispat; fortsedaqua, but behold tseaqua.”
B. **6 Woes to the nation ripe for judgment.**

1. **(8-10) Woe to the accumulation of wealth (Never having enough).**

   Woe to those who join house to house; They add field to field,
   Till there is no place Where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land!
   In my hearing the LORD of hosts said,
   “Truly, many houses shall be desolate, Great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant.
   For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, And a homer of seed shall yield one ephah.”

   - **Woe to those who join house to house:**
     - The picture is of greedy real estate buying and development.
     - “For it cannot be condemned as a thing in itself wrong, if a man add field to field and house to house; but he looked at the disposition of mind, which cannot at all be satisfied, when it is once inflamed by the desire of gain. Accordingly, he describes the feelings of those who never have enough, and whom no wealth can satisfy.” (Calvin)
     - “Covetous persons are of the dragon’s temper, who, they say, is so thirsty, that no water can quench his thirst. Covetousness is a dry drunkenness, saith one, an insatiable dropsy, and like hell itself.” (Trapp)
   - **Many houses shall be desolate, great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant:**
     - In judgment, their real estate deals will not be successful, and they will have many vacant and unsold houses.
     - “When men are covetous after the things of this world, God has a way of making them to be filled with disappointment and with bitterness.” (Spurgeon)

2. **(11-17) Woe to those who party endlessly and celebrate everything but God.**

   Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink;
   Who continue until night, till wine inflames them!
   The harp and the strings, The tambourine and flute, And wine are in their feasts;
   But they do not regard the work of the LORD, Nor consider the operation of His hands.
   Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge;
   Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.
   Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself And opened its mouth beyond measure;
   Their glory and their multitude and their pomp, And he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.
   People shall be brought down, Each man shall be humbled, And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.
   But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness.
   Then the lambs shall feed in their pasture, And in the waste places of the fat ones strangers shall eat.

   - **Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink:**
     - The picture is of those who “work hard” to party and endlessly celebrate. Their lives are filled with substance abuse & music – **But they do not regard the work of the LORD, nor consider the operation of His hands.**
     - What is wrong with the partying and addicted to entertainment lifestyle? Simply put, it forgets about God. Though they may claim to remember Him in some way, they do not **regard the work of the LORD, nor consider the operation of His hands.** Anyone who really does **regard the work of the LORD,** and really does **consider the operation of His hands,** will live as if God is real and as if there is much more to life than partying and entertainment.
   - **Therefore My people have gone into captivity:**
     - Those who forget about God because of their partying and entertainment will be judged by a captivity that:
       - Will end the laughs (**he who is jubilant, shall descend into it**)
       - Exalt the LORD (**the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment**)
       - And reward the meek (**the lambs shall feed in their pasture**).

Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, And sin as if with a cart rope; That say, “Let Him make speed and hasten His work, That we may see it; And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, That we may know it.”

- Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity: They pull their sin to themselves with ropes of emptiness!
  - “They flatter themselves by imagining that what is sin is not sin, or by some excuse or idle pretence they lessen its enormity. These, then, are cords, wicked ropes, by which they draw iniquity.” (Calvin)
  - “That are not only drawn to sin by the allurements of the world, or by the persuasions of wicked men, being surprised and overtaken by sin, as sometimes good men are… but are active and industrious in drawing sin to themselves, or themselves to sin; that greedily and steadily pursue sin, and the occasions of it, and are not at rest until they have overtaken it; that sin wilfully, and resolvedly, and industriously.” (Poole)
  - “With vain and deceitful arguments and pretences, whereby sinners generally draw themselves to sin.” (Poole)

- Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, that we may know it:
  - In saying these empty words, they showed their arrogant contempt of the LORD. It is as if they said, “Go ahead, God. We are ready for your judgment.”
  - “He either cannot or will not do us any harm: we do not fear him, let him do his worst; let him begin as soon as he pleaseth. Not that any of the Israelites were so impudent as to use these expressions; but this was the plain language of their actions; they lived as if they were of this opinion; their presumption and security showing their desperate contempt of God, and of all his judgments.” (Poole)

4. (20) Woe to those who confuse moral issues.

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil:
  - Using clever and deceptive words, they blur moral issues and excuse their sin. They look at their own evil and call it good, and they look at the good of others and call it evil. Isaiah is describing a deep state of moral confusion.
  - Men that stand for righteousness are ridiculed while the perverse are built up.
  - “They were the Nietzscheans of that day with their Unwertung aller Werten, the devaluation of all values, the overturning of all values and basic concepts.” (Bultema)

5. (21) Woe to those who think that they know better than God does.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!

- Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes:
  - They were full of pride and rejected the wisdom and standards of God. “The Bible? It’s so judgmental. Judge not lest you be judged. It’s all how you interpret it. You have your interpretation and I have mine.” All this thinking exalts the wisdom of man over the Word of God.
  - Woe unto them that judge by their own standards and not God’s.
6. (22-23) Woe to the corrupt, who place greater value on drinking than on fairness and justice.

Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!

- Woe to the men mighty at drinking:
  - These were men of accomplishment, of high achievement – in sin! Woe to the judges and men in the government who are alcoholics.
  - Pro 31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Nor for princes intoxicating drink; 5 Lest they drink and forget the law, And pervert the justice of all the afflicted.
  - “The prophet inveighth against this vice a second time, because it was grown so common. Drunkards also are a sottish kind of creatures, and had therefore more than need to be double dealt with… Many of these sots take it for a great glory that they are mighty to drink wine.” (Trapp)
  - “When one was commended to King Alphonsus for a great drinker, and able to bear it, he answered that that was a good praise in a sponge, but not in a prince.” (Trapp)
  - “Nothing is more base or disgraceful than for a man to make trial of his strength in swallowing food or in guzzling wine, and this struggling with himself so as to cram down as much as his belly can hold. Such men keep no rule of life, and do not know why God gives them nourishment; for we eat and drink to support the body, and not to destroy it.” (Calvin)

- Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away justice from the righteous man:
  - These are men who care only for their own pleasure and entertainment, and care nothing for others.
1. (24-30) The LORD promises a sure and complete judgment.

There is a sure and complete judgment. The LORD promises a judgment that will be sure and complete. The fire will devour the stubble, and the flame will consume the chaff. Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust. Because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore the anger of the LORD is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them, and the hills trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still. He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth; surely they shall come with speed, swiftly. No one will be weary or stumble among them, no one will slumber or sleep; nor will the belt on their loins be loosed, nor the strap of their sandals be broken; whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses’ hooves will seem like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind. Their roaring will be like a lion, they will roar like young lions; yes, they will roar and lay hold of the prey; they will carry it away safely, and no one will deliver. In that day they will roar against them like the roaring of the sea. And if one looks to the land, behold, darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened by the clouds.

- As the fire devours the stubble, as the flame consumes the chaff:
  - Stubble and chaff are both very flammable. God is warning of sudden, complete, and severe judgment.

- Because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel:
  - Every one of Judah’s sins could be traced back to a rejection and despising of what God says. Man’s opinion was far more important to them than God’s word.

- He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth:
  - God will call foreign nations to come and invade Judah, making them instruments of His judgment upon them.

- They shall come with speed, swiftly… no one will be weary or stumble among them… nor will the belt on their loins be loosed… whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent:
  - The armies God will call against Judah are all business. They are totally focused, prepared, and readied – with the strong men of Judah use their strength for drinking contests! This would be a great mismatch, and a soft, drunk, and flabby Judah will certainly fall against such dedicated enemies.

- Behold, darkness and sorrow; and the light is darkened by the clouds:
  - This is a distressing place. Why would the LORD put Judah in such a place? Because He loves them. These words are harsh, but merciful; the words are a slap in the face to prevent total and eternal destruction. The only question is, “Will we listen to God’s warning?”
  - “God’s woes are better than the devil’s welcomes.” (Spurgeon)
ISAIAH: Isaiah’s Commission (ISAIAH’S CONVICTION, CLEANSING AND CALL)

A. The conviction of the prophet.

1. (1-2) What Isaiah saw.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

- In the year that King Uzziah died:
  - 740 BC
  - King Uzziah of Judah had a long and distinguished reign, described in 2 Chronicles 26 and in 2 Kings 15:1-7 (Uzziah is called Azariah in 2 Kings 15).
    - Uzziah began his reign when he was only 16 years old, and he reigned 52 years.
    - Overall, he was a good king.
      - 2 Kings 15:3 says, he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.
      - 2 Chronicles 26:5 says, He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.
    - Uzziah also led Israel in military victories over the Philistines and other neighboring nations, and he was a strong king. Uzziah was an energetic builder, planner, and general.
      - 2 Chronicles 26:8 says, His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he strengthened himself exceedingly.
  - But Uzziah’s life ended tragically.
    - 2 Chronicles 26:16 says, But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.
    - In response, God struck Uzziah with leprosy, and he was an isolated leper until his death.
  - So, to say in the year King Uzziah died is to say a lot.
    - It is to say, “In the year a great and wise king died.”
    - But it is also to say, “In the year a great and wise king who had a tragic end died.”
  - Isaiah had great reason to be discouraged and disillusioned at the death of King Uzziah, because a great king had passed away, and because his life ended tragically. Where was the LORD in all this?
I saw the LORD sitting on a throne:

- Description of the throne of God and His holiness. (Rev.4,5; Ez. 1,10.)
- Where was the LORD in all this? The LORD was sitting on a throne! God was still enthroned in heaven and was still in charge of all creation.
- There is a throne in heaven, and the LORD God sits upon it as the sovereign ruler of the universe!
  - This is central fact of heaven; that there is an occupied throne in heaven. God does not sit on a chair in heaven. Anyone might sit on a chair. But sovereign kings sit on thrones. Judges sit on thrones. Those with proper authority and sovereignty sit on thrones.
- Isaiah was not alone in seeing God’s throne. Almost everyone in the Bible who had a vision of heaven, was taken to heaven, or wrote about heaven spoke of God’s throne.
  - The prophet Michaiah saw God’s throne (1 Kings 22:19).
  - Job saw God’s throne (Job 26:9).
  - David saw God’s throne (Psalm 9:4 and 9:7, 11:4)
  - The Sons of Korah saw God’s throne (Psalm 45:6, 47:8).
  - Ethan the Ezrahite saw God’s throne (Psalm 89:14).
  - Jeremiah saw God’s throne (Lamentations 5:19)
  - Ezekiel saw God’s throne (Ezekiel 1:26, 10:1).
  - Daniel saw God’s throne (Daniel 7:9).
  - In fact, the book of Revelation may as well be called “the book of God’s throne,” because God’s throne is specifically mentioned more than 35 times in that book!
- The bottom line of atheism or materialism is that they believe there is no throne; there is no seat of authority or power all the universe must answer to. The bottom of humanism is that there is a throne – but man sits upon it. But the Bible makes it clear that there is a throne in heaven, and no fallen man sits on the throne, but the Lord GOD is enthroned in heaven.
- Isaiah may have been depressed or discouraged because a great leader of Judah was no longer on the throne. God in heaven now shows Isaiah, “Don’t worry about it, Isaiah. Uzziah may not be on his throne, but I am on My throne.”
- At Uzziah’s death the people were now led to look to the Lord and recognize that He is on the throne, as previously they had been trusting in a man.

High and lifted up:

- The throne was exalted and majestic.
- The throne set its Occupant in a superior position.

The train of His robe filled the temple:

- Kings of that time would wear robes with long trains, because they were difficult to maneuver and work in.
- Wearing a long train meant, “I am important enough that I don’t have to work. I am a person of honor and dignity. Others must serve me and wait upon me.”
  - Essentially, the same is said when a bride wears a dress with a long train today.
- God is so honored, so important, so dignified, that the train of His robe filled the temple. That’s a long train!
• Above it stood seraphim:
  o Surrounding the throne of God are angels known here as **seraphim**.
  o In many other passages, these angels are known as **cherubim** (Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 37:16; Ezekiel 10:3) or as the **living creatures** of Revelation 4:6-11. This is the only chapter in the Bible where these creatures are named **seraphim**.
    - Some deny that **cherubim** and **seraphim** refer to the same beings. But the name **seraphim** means, “burning ones.” Ezekiel 1:13 describes cherubim (see also Ezekiel 10:15) this way: *their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.* That certainly seems to describe burning ones!

• Each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew:
  o In Revelation 4:8, the Apostle John also mentions their **six wings**.
    - **Rev 4:8** The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within.
  o The **seraphim** used four of their wings to express their humility and used two of their wings to express their willingness and ability to serve God. This is the proper balance.
    - with two he covered his face (to show they are too lowly to look upon the LORD)
      - The LORD said to Moses, *“You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live”* (Exodus 33:20). Apparently the same is true even for angels, so the **seraphim** cover their faces.
    - with two he covered his feet (to hide this “humble” area of the body, so nothing even possibly deficient is seen in the LORD’s presence)
    - with two he flew
      - “The two wings with which the angels fly mean nothing else than their ready and cheerful performance of the commandments of God… The two wings with which they cover their face show plainly enough that even angels cannot endure God’s brightness, and that they are dazzled by it in the same manner as when we attempt to gaze upon the radiance of the sun.” (Calvin)
  o “For the seraph remembers that even though sinless he is yet a creature, and therefore he conceals himself in token of his nothingness and unworthiness in the presence of the thrice Holy One.” (Spurgeon)
  o “Thus they have **four wings for adoration and two for active energy**; four to conceal themselves, and two with which to occupy themselves in service; and we may learn from them that we shall serve God best when we are most deeply reverend and humbled in his presence. Veneration must be in larger proportion than vigor, adoration must exceed activity. As Mary at Jesus’ feet was preferred to Martha and her much serving, so must sacred reverence take the first place, and energetic service follow in due course.” (Spurgeon)
2. (3-4) What Isaiah heard.

And one cried to another and said:
“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”
And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

- One cried to another and said:
  - The seraphim are not even directly addressing the LORD God here. They are proclaiming His glorious nature and character to one another, in the presence of the LORD.

- Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts:
  - Why do they repeat “holy” three times? Wasn’t it enough to simply say that the LORD was “holy” once?
    - It wasn’t enough. In the Hebrew language, intensity is communicated by repetition. To say the LORD is holy says something. To say the LORD is holy, holy says far more. To say, holy, holy, holy is the LORD is to declare His holiness in the highest possible degree.
    - What does it mean that God is holy, and holy in the highest possible sense?
      - Holiness, at its root, has the idea of apartness. It describes someone, or something, which is set apart from other people or things. An object can be holy if it is set apart for sacred service. A person is holy if they are set apart for God’s will and purpose.
  - What is the LORD set apart from?
    - He is set apart from creation, in that the Lord GOD is not a creature, and He exists outside of all creation. If all creation were to dissolve, the Lord GOD would remain.
    - He is set apart from humanity, in that His “nature” or “essence” is Divine, not human. God is not a super-man or the ultimate man. God is not merely smarter than any man, stronger than any man, older than any man, or better than any man. You can’t measure God on man’s chart at all. He is Divine, and we are human.
  - Yet, because we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), humanity is compatible with Divinity. They are different, but they do not automatically oppose each other. This is how Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, could add humanity to His deity when He became a man. Unfallen humanity is not deity, but it is compatible with it.
  - God’s holiness is a part of everything He is and does. God’s power is a holy power. God’s love is a holy love. God’s wisdom is a holy wisdom. Holiness is not an aspect of God’s personality; it is one characteristic of His entire Being.
    - They say it three times because there are Three Persons in the One God.
      - Calvin didn’t think that this was the best verse to prove the Trinity, but he still saw the truth of the Trinity here. “The ancients quoted this passage when the wished to prove that there are three persons in one essence of the Godhead… I have no doubt that the angels here describe One God in Three Persons.”

- The whole earth is full of His glory:
  - The seraphim surrounding the throne of God could see this probably more clearly than Isaiah could. We are often blind to the obvious glory of God all around us.
• **The posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out:**
  o The *seraphim* are majestic beings, and their voice carries *weight*. When they speak, the door posts of God’s throne room shake! The idea may be that Isaiah was watching from the doorway, and when the *seraphim* cried out, he could feel the door posts shake.
  o Yet these high, majestic beings – perhaps the highest beings in all of God’s creation – have *one occupation*. Their existence is given over to the praise and worship and honor of the LORD God who is enthroned in heaven. What could we possibly do that is a higher calling than that?
  o They sang so powerfully the door posts were shaken! Shouldn’t we sing with the same passion, the same heart, the same intensity? Do those angels have more to thank and praise God for than we do?

• **The house was filled with smoke:**
  o This *smoke* reminds us of:
    • the pillar of cloud that represented the presence of God (*Exodus* 13:21-22),
    • the smoke on Mount Sinai (*Exodus* 19:18),
    • the cloud of God’s Shekinah glory that filled the temple (*1 Kings* 8:10-12).
  o A cloud of glory often marks the presence of the LORD.


So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

• Truly seeing God in His holiness humbles us and helps us see ourselves and condition in a true light (*Mt. 5*:3-4).

• **Woe is me, for I am undone:**
  o What made Isaiah feel like he was coming apart? Two things.
    • First, the sight and sound of the *seraphim*.
    • Second, the vision of the Lord GOD.
  o When Isaiah saw the angels, in all their holy humility, obedience, and praise to God, he realized not only that he was unlike the Lord GOD, he was also unlike the angels.
    • They could cry out *Holy, holy, holy* and praise God so beautifully, but he could not because he was a *man of unclean lips*.
    • “I am a man of unclean lips; I cannot say, Holy, holy, holy! which the seraphs exclaim. They are holy; I am not so: they see God and live; I have seen him, and must die, because I am unholy.”
      (Clarke)
  o When Isaiah saw the LORD, he knew what kind of man he was.
    • As poorly as he compared to the *seraphim*, that was nothing in relation to how he compared to the LORD. This vision (or actual experience) of the throne of God did not immediately make Isaiah feel *good*. The more clearly he saw the LORD, the more clearly he saw how bad his state was.
  o Isaiah’s deep sense of depravity is consistent with the experience of other godly men in the presence of the LORD.
    • *Job* 42:5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.
     6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”
    • *Dan* 10:15 *When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, “My lord, because of the vision my
sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me.”

- Luke 5:6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

- Rev 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

I am undone is not a bad place to be.

“God will never do anything with us till he has first of all undone us.” (Spurgeon)

- Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:
  - Isaiah saw his sinfulness, and the sinfulness of his people, mainly in terms of sinful speech.
  - By nature, our lips are full of flattery and false intent: With flattering lips and a double heart they speak (Psalm 12:2).
  - By nature, our lips lie and are proud: Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous (Psalm 31:18).
  - By nature, our lips deceive: Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit (Psalm 34:13).
  - By nature, our lips are violent: Swords are in their lips (Psalm 59:7).
  - By nature, our lips bring death to others: The poison of asps is under their lips (Psalm 140:3).
  - Isaiah did not think for a moment that this was his only sin, but he saw that this was an example of the great and incurable disease of sin in him and his people.

- For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts:
  - Isaiah was a righteous, godly man by all outward appearance. Yet when he saw the enthroned King, the LORD of hosts, he saw how sinful he was in comparison.
  - Isaiah’s life may have been as brilliant as a diamond. But when you lay a diamond against a perfectly black background, and have the right light upon it, you can see every flaw and imperfection – flaws that were invisible before. Even so, when Isaiah’s righteous life lay against the background of God’s perfection, it looked different.
B. The cleansing of the prophet.

- All God asks is that we recognize our condition and confess it. He will cleanse us the moment we do this
  - 1 Jn. 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. (6) A seraphim brings a coal from the altar.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.

- One of the seraphim flew to me:
  - These angelic beings, surrounding the throne of God, ministered to Isaiah. One flew to Isaiah with a live coal – which means the coal was still hot and burning. It was so hot that even an angel had to use the tongs from the altar.

- The altar:
  - This must be heaven’s version of the altar of incense that was set before the holy of holies in the tabernacle of God (Exodus 30:1-10). We know that the earthly tabernacle God instructed Moses to build was made after the pattern of a heavenly reality (Exodus 25:9).
  - The throne is for God; that is where He rules and reigns. The altar is for us; that is where we find cleansing and purging from sin. We should never confuse the two!
  - “The fire was taken from the altar, to intimate that it was divine or heavenly; for the law forbade any strange fire to be brought to it, because in sacred things every human mixture is absolute profanation. By this figure, therefore, Isaiah was taught that all purity flows from God alone.” (Calvin)

2. (7) A coal from the altar cleanses Isaiah’s lips.

And he touched my mouth with it, and said:
“Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.”

- And he touched my mouth with it:
  - This must have been painful; a burning hot coal applied to the lips, one of the more sensitive areas of the body. Yet, nothing is written that Isaiah reacted in pain. Either there was no pain, because of a special blessing by God, or the pain did not matter because of the majesty of the surroundings and the goodness of the cleansing.
  - Isaiah knew he did not serve the LORD like these seraphim, the burning ones. So God said, “I will light a fire in you, also!” That is why a burning coal was used to purify Isaiah. “Jehovah, who is a consuming fire, can only fitly be served by those who are on fire, whether they be angels or men.” (Spurgeon)
  - Isaiah cried out, Woe is me, for I am undone! (Isaiah 6:5) We might think that a burning coal to the lips would be more painful than a vision of the holy God. But for Isaiah, it was more disturbing to see the holiness of God, and to see his lack of holiness, than it was have a burning coal applied to his lips.

- Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged:
  - Isaiah’s sin had to be burned away; the fire of judgment was applied in his place of sin.
  - This was obviously a spiritual transaction. If one has a sinful mouth, it will do nothing to place a burning hot coal on their lips. That will not take away or purge their sin.
  - Yet, the same principle works on our behalf in regard to Jesus’ work on Calvary. Our sin was place upon Him, and He was burned with the fire of God’s judgment. Yet because He was holy and righteous Himself, the fire of God’s judgment did not harm Him; it only burned away the sin, our sin.
  - Once Isaiah had met with the LORD, been convicted of his sin, and cleansed from its guilt, then he was ready to serve God. “The effect of that live coal will be to fire the lip with heavenly flame. ‘Oh,’ says one man, ‘a flaming coal will burn the lip so that the man cannot speak at all.’ That is just how God works with us; it is by
consuming the fleshly power that he inspires the heavenly might. Oh let the lip be burnt, let the fleshly power of eloquence be destroyed, but oh for that live coal to make the tongue eloquent with heaven’s flame; the true divine power which urged the Apostles forward, and made them conquerors of the whole world.” (Spurgeon)

C. The commission of the prophet.

- Isaiah’s commission is described. After God touched his life, he became an available instrument.
- The nation Israel will appear to be dead, but God promises to bring the people back from captivity.

1. (8) God calls, and Isaiah responds.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:
“Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”
Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

- Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us:
  - God looked for someone to send. He wanted someone to go.
  - How strange it is for God to ask a question at all! What does God wonder about? What questions would He have? What does God not know? But God was asking for a person because God wants to reach the world, and He wants to reach it through willing people. It isn’t that God doesn’t know who these people are. It is that God is waiting for ready hearts to reveal themselves.
  - How strange it is that this God of majesty, sovereignty, and power asks for volunteers! He could easily create robots to do His work, or command angels to carry out His will. But God wants willing, surrendered servants. Have you been waiting for God to force you to serve Him? He looks for volunteers!

- “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”:
  - This means that the missionary, the Christian worker, the witness of Jesus Christ, is sent. This is a divine commission. Who will go for Us means that the missionary, the Christian worker, the witness of Jesus Christ, has decided to go. Here we see a cooperation of the divine sent and the human will go.
  - Here we see another subtle reference to the Trinity.
    - Who is sending? I or Us? It seems to be the same Person speaking in both the singular and the plural. It is the same Person!
    - “The change of the number, I and us, is very remarkable; and both being meant of one and the same Lord, do sufficiently intimate a plurality of the persons in the Godhead.” (Poole)

- Here am I! Send me:
  - Isaiah emphatically answered God’s call. He did not hesitate. Isaiah wanted to be the answer to God’s question.
  - What created this kind of heart in Isaiah?
    - He had a heart that had been in the presence of God.
    - He had a heart that knew its own sinfulness.
    - He had a heart that knew the need among the people, the need for God’s word.
    - He had a heart that had been touched by God’s cleansing fire.
    - And he had a heart that heard God’s heart to reach the nations.

- Send me:
  - This meant Isaiah was submitted to the LORD in all his service. He didn’t even say, “Here I am, I will go.” Isaiah would not go at all unless he knew he was sent by the LORD. Many are quick to say, “Here I am, I will go” but never wait for the LORD to send them.
2. (9-10) His mission described.

And He said, “Go, and tell this people:
‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’
Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.”

- **And He said, “Go”**:
  - When we say, “Here am I! Send me” to the LORD, we should expect that He will say “Go.” He may say, “Go and serve Me here” or “Go and serve me there” or “Go and be prepared for future service,” but God always has a “Go” for us!

- **Go and tell these people, “Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing but do not perceive”**:
  - God told Isaiah to go and preach to a people who wouldn’t respond, so that their guilt would be certain.
  - As Trapp wrote, Isaiah would “Preach them to hell.”

- **The heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes**:
  - This is an unsatisfying audience and ministry for any preacher. Isaiah might not be satisfied with this ministry. The people might not be satisfied with it. But God would be satisfied with it.

- **And understand with their heart, and return and be healed**:
  - This shows what the word of God \textit{can} accomplish when it is received with open eyes, ears, and heart.
  - It brings \textit{understanding} to our heart, it makes us \textit{return}, and it brings \textit{healing} to our lives.
  - If you are under the word of God and these things \textit{aren’t} happening to you, ask God to work with your eyes, ears, and heart!
3. (11-13) Isaiah is told how long he must prophecy this way.

Then I said, “Lord, how long?”
And He answered: “Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate,
The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.
But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump.”

- Lord, how long:
  - This is a logical question from anyone who is given such a difficult commission. “I have to preach to those who won’t hear, and their rejection of my message will ultimately seal their doom? How long will I have to serve in that kind of ministry?”

- Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant:
  - This answered the question of how long Isaiah was to preach.
  - He should preach until destruction comes.
  - He should preach in hope of the restoration of a remnant (yet a tenth will be in it, and will return).
  - Even though Isaiah’s ministry was difficult, it was not without hope.

- And be for consuming:
  - The remnant will indeed return, but even the remnant will eventually be judged. Israel was not done being disobedient when they returned from the Babylonian captivity, and God was not done bringing His judgment on a disobedient Israel.
  - “The devastation, great as it was to be, would not be total; but even its survivors would have to submit to further judgment. The illustration from nature, however, introduces an element of hope.” (Grogan)
  - We would expect this dramatic call of Isaiah to open the book. But the Bible clearly states that the message is more important that the messenger. Isaiah’s message was more important than Isaiah the messenger.
  - When Isaiah saw the LORD, who did he see?
    - He saw God in the Second Person of the Trinity, he saw Jesus before He added humanity to His deity.
    - We know this because the Apostle John quotes Isaiah 6:10, and under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, adds: These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him (John 12:41).
      - Jn 12:36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. ” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. 37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:
        - “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
      - 39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:
        - 40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes,
          Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”
      - 41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.
ISAIAH 7: Confederacy, the Sign of the Virgin's Son, and Invasion of Judah (SHEAR-JASHUB AND IMMANUEL)

- Isaiah contains two-fold prophecies that have an immediate and distant fulfillment.

A. The sign of Shear-Jashub (Immediate)

- God promises Judah will not be ruined by the alliance of Syria (Rezin) and Israel (Pekah).
- Shear-Jashub means
  - a remnant shall escape or return (i.e., to God)
  - a symbolical name which the prophet Isaiah gave to his son (Isaiah 7:3), perhaps his eldest son.

1. (1-2) The northern nation of Israel and Syria combine to attack Judah.

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin, king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told to the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

- In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah:
  - Ahaz reigned from 732-716 BC
  - Ahaz was a wicked king of Judah, worshipping other gods and even sacrificing his son to Molech (2 Kings 16:1-4). The only good thing Ahaz seemed to do was father Hezekiah, who became a good king of Judah.
  - “He was a cowardly, superstitious and hypocritical ruler, one of the worst kings Judah ever had.” (Bultema)
  - Isaiah is the prophet raised up to counter Jotham and Ahaz

- Rezin Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel:
  - The alliance between Syria and Israel and their unsuccessful attack on Jerusalem is described in 2 Kings 16.
  - The attack on Jerusalem was ultimately unsuccessful, but the war against Judah took a great toll against the southern kingdom.
    - 2 Chronicles 28:6 documents the damage: For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.
    - 2 Chronicles 28:5 says that the Syrian army carried away a great multitude of them as captives.
    - The king of Israel also captured 200,000 men, women and children as captives, but sent them back to Judah at the command of the prophet Oded (2 Chronicles 28:8-15).
  - All in all, when the events of this chapter unfold, the nation of Judah had faced terrible calamity, and was devastated. As the combined armies of Israel and Syria approached Jerusalem, it looked like everything would be lost. Ahaz was challenged to trust God when things were bad, and it looked like soon, all would be lost.

- Went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it:
  - How was Ahaz saved from this attack? Because he entered into an ungodly alliance with Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and even gave Tiglath-Pileser silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD as a present to win his favor and protection (2 Kings 16:7-9).
  - When Ahaz went to meet Tiglath-Pileser, his new master, in Damascus, he saw the pagan altars and places of sacrifice. He copied these designs and remodeled the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem after the pattern of the pagan temple and altars in Damascus. Ahaz is a powerful, extreme example of someone who enters into an ungodly alliance for “good” reasons and is thoroughly corrupted thereby (2 Kings 16:10-18).
  - It is important to understand that the events of this chapter happened before Ahaz made his final decision to put his trust in Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria. Though we are told the end result of the attack in Isaiah 7:2 (could not prevail against it), Isaiah is telling us the end result before he describes his prophecy to Ahaz.
2. (3-9) The word of the LORD to Ahaz through Isaiah.

Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field, and say to him: ‘Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, “Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel”—thus says the Lord GOD:

“It shall not stand, Nor shall it come to pass.
For the head of Syria is Damascus, And the head of Damascus is Rezin.
Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, So that it will not be a people.
The head of Ephraim is Samaria, And the head of Samaria is Remaliah’s son.
If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.”’”

• **You and Shear-Jashub your son:** Isaiah was told to take his son, named Shear-Jashub, and bring a word from the LORD to Ahaz. He brought his son as a walking object lesson because the name Shear-Jashub means, “A Remnant Shall Return.”

• **At the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field:** These seemingly irrelevant details make an important point. All this happened to real people at a real time and in real places. This isn’t make believe or fairy tales. This is real.

• **Take heed, and be quiet:** Seemingly, Ahaz needed to pay attention (take heed) and stop his talking about the problem (be quiet). He needed to trust God and take courage in the LORD (do not fear or be fainthearted).

• **Do not fear or be fainthearted:** It was hard for Ahaz to do this because he didn’t see the situation the way the LORD did. Ahaz looked at Israel and Syria and saw a terrible threat. God looked at Israel and Syria and saw two stubs of smoking firebrands. To the LORD, they were all smoke and no fire!

• **It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass:** Certainly, the king of Israel and the king of Syria had their plans—they have taken evil counsel against you. They wanted to attack Jerusalem, defeat the capital of Judah (make a gap in its wall), then depose Ahaz and set up their own king. But God was not worried about their plans. They looked like a big, flaming threat to Ahaz, but God looked and saw two stubs of smoking firebrands, and simply said, “It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass.”
• Their plans will not succeed because the nations are led by ungodly men (Rezin and Remaliah’s son), and not by the LORD. This is God’s promise, and Isaiah calls Ahaz to trust in the LORD and in His promise.

• **If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established:** Here is the challenge to Ahaz. God has promised, now the king of Judah must believe. If he will not believe, it will not affect the outcome of the attack against Jerusalem. God has already decreed that their attack would not succeed. But it would affect the course of Ahaz’s life and reign as king (surely you shall not be established).
  
  o As it happened, Ahaz did not believe. He did not put his trust in the LORD. He put his trust in carnal methods and the king of Assyria. Jerusalem was spared, and Ahaz no doubt believed he was successful, and his plan worked. But if he would have just trusted in the LORD, Jerusalem would have been spared, and Ahaz would have been blessed.

  o Isaiah brought his son Shear-Jashub (Isaiah 7:3) because his name meant A Remnant Shall Return, and God wanted Ahaz to know that because of the kind of ungodly trust he put in the king of Assyria, Judah would eventually be taken into captivity, and only a remnant would return.

**B. The sign of Immanuel (future)**

1. **(10-12) Ahaz will not ask for a sign.**

   Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!”

• **Ask a sign for yourself:** Through the prophet Isaiah, God invites Ahaz to ask for a sign. God has just challenged Ahaz to believe and be blessed, and now God offers to give Ahaz a basis for belief – a sign for yourself.

• **But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD”**: This sounds very spiritual from Ahaz. He almost seems to say what Jesus said in Matthew 4:7: “You shall not tempt the LORD your God.” Though the words are similar, the hearts are far apart. Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, because when God fulfilled the sign, he would be “obligated” to believe.

  o This was not tempting or testing God in wrong way. It is never testing God to do as He says, and if the LORD invites us to test Him, we should. For example, in Malachi 3:10, the LORD invited Israel to give as He commanded, and thereby to prove Me now in this.

  o Again, perhaps Ahaz was bitter against the LORD, because of all the disaster Judah had already been through at the hands of Israel and Syria. Perhaps his mind is, “I want nothing to do with the God who allowed it to get this bad.”

  o Haven’t we, in some way, to some degree, been where Ahaz was? Haven’t we rejected the gracious, free gifts of God for silly and strange reasons? “Here let us each descend and dive into his own conscience, to see whether we also have not matched Ahaz in his madness, or at leastwise coasted too near upon his unkind usage of the Lord, by rejecting his sweet offers of grace and motions of mercy, by slighting his holy sacraments, those signs and seals of the righteousness that is by faith.” (Trapp)

2. **(13-16) The LORD’s sign to Ahaz: the sign of Immanuel.**

   Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.”

• v.13-14 Isaiah wrote of things he did not understand, but he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit interprets (in Mt. 1:23) this to be the prophecy fulfilled through the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.
• **Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also:** The rulers of Judah treated other people poorly, but they treated the LORD even more poorly. If many of us expressed the same distrust we have towards the LORD towards other people, we might get a punch in the nose!
  
  o “How heartily angry is the prophet, how blessedly blown up in this case to so great dishonor done to God! We should be so too.” (Trapp)
  
  o Spurgeon speaks well to this point: “Did I not hear some one say, ‘Ah, sir, I have been trying to believe for years.’ Terrible words! They make the case still worse. Imagine that after I had made a statement, a man should declare that he did not believe me, in fact, he could not believe me though he would like to do so. I should feel aggrieved certainly; but it would make matters worse if he added, ‘In fact I have been for years trying to believe you, and I cannot do it.’ What does he mean by that? What can he mean but that I am so incorrigibly false, and such a confirmed liar, that though he would like to give me some credit, he really cannot do it? With all the effort he can make in my favour, he finds it quite beyond his power to believe me? Now, a man who says, ‘I have been trying to believe in God,’ in reality says just that with regard to the Most High.”
  
• **Therefore the Lord Himself will give you as sign:** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. This is one of the most famous prophecies regarding the birth of Jesus the Messiah in the Bible. It also illustrates a principle of prophecy, that prophecy may have both a near fulfillment and a far fulfillment.
  
  o Spurgeon said of this passage, that it is said to be “One of the most difficult in all the Word of God. It may be so; I certainly did not think it was until I saw what the commentators had to say about it, and I rose up from reading them perfectly confused.”
  
  o “It is characteristic of predictive prophecy that it often mingles different times together in one composite picture” (Martin)
  
• **For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings:** The near fulfillment of this prophecy centered around Ahaz, Jerusalem, and the attack from Israel and Syria. For Ahaz, the sign centered on this time span. Simply put, God would give Ahaz a sign that within a few years, both Israel and Syria would be crushed. This was a sign of deliverance to Ahaz.
  
  o Many commentators think that this was immediately fulfilled when a young woman in the royal household shortly married, conceived a son, and unknowingly naming him “Immanuel.” Before this boy came to eat solid food, Israel and Syria were defeat. It is also possible that God is just referring in a figurative way to a year or two period of time.
  
  o “The name ‘Immanuel’ was a rebuke to Ahaz. If ‘God is with us,’ then why should he have feared the enemy?” (Wolf)
  
  o “The ‘sign’ of the child, therefore, constitutes an indication that the all-sovereign and all-knowing God has the situation completely in hand, and it rebukes the king’s lack of faith in him.” (Grogan)
  
• **Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son:** The far or ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy goes far beyond Ahaz, to announce the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus Christ.
  
  o We know this passage speaks of Jesus because the Holy Spirit says so through Matthew: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)
  
  o We know this passage speaks of Jesus because the prophecy is addressed not only to Ahaz, but also to David’s entire house (O house of David!).
  
  o We know this passage speaks of Jesus because it says the virgin shall conceive, and that conception would be a sign to David’s entire house. Those who deny the virgin birth of Jesus like to point out that the Hebrew word translated virgin (almah) can also be translated as “young woman.” The idea is that Isaiah was simply saying that a “young woman” would give birth, not a virgin. While the near fulfillment may have reference to a young woman giving birth, the far or ultimate fulfillment clearly points to a woman miraculously conceiving and giving birth. This is especially clear because the Old Testament never uses the word in a context other than virgin and because the Septuagint translates it categorically virgin (parthenos).

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3. (17-25) Assyria, the nation Ahaz trusted, will also bring ruin to Judah.

“The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father’s house—days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.”

And it shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will whistle for the fly
That is in the farthest part of the rivers of Egypt, And for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. They will come, and all of them will rest In the desolate valleys and in the clefts of the rocks, And on all thorns and in all pastures.

In the same day the Lord will shave with a hired razor, With those from beyond the River, with the king of Assyria, The head and the hair of the legs, And will also remove the beard. It shall be in that day That a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep; So it shall be, from the abundance of milk they give, That he will eat curds; For curds and honey everyone will eat who is left in the land. It shall happen in that day, That wherever there could be a thousand vines
Worth a thousand shekels of silver, It will be for briers and thorns. With arrows and bows men will come there, Because all the land will become briers and thorns. And to any hill which could be dug with the hoe, You will not go there for fear of briers and thorns; But it will become a range for oxen And a place for sheep to roam.

v.17-20 God will raise up another kingdom, Assyria, to invade and destroy Syria.

The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you: This was bad news to Ahaz, who had been foolishly trusting in Assyria instead of the LORD. It is as if the LORD is saying, “It will seem to you like trusting in Assyria is a clever move, because the armies of Syria and Israel will be defeated. But the Assyrians will end up defeating you also.”

“Thou mightest have remained at home and at ease, and mightest have received the assistance of God; but thou choosest rather to call in the Assyrians. Thou shalt find them to be worse than thine own enemies.” (Calvin)

If Ahaz understood and believed what the LORD said, it would have terrified him. The Assyrians were well known for their sheer cruelty, especially over the nations they conquered. They delighted in the torture and humiliation (shave with a hired razor… the head and the hair of the legs).

“To shave off the beard of an Oriental was an unbearable shame to him and was a sign of great sadness and mourning as well as despicable slavery.” (Bultema) We see this principle illustrated by the actions of David in 2 Samuel 10:4-5.
The LORD will whistle for the fly that is the farthest part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that in the land of Assyria. They will come: Judah will not only be attacked by the Assyrians, they would also be invaded by the Egyptians. God would pinch Judah between these mighty nations to the north and south.

- These invasions would bring Judah low, so that they could not farm as normally, and instead **curds and honey everyone will eat who is left in the land.** Normal agriculture would be devastated (**wherever there could be a thousand vines… it will be for briars and thorns**). Former farms will be suitable only for grazing (**it will become a range for oxen and place for sheep to roam**).
**ISAIAH 8: THE SIGN OF MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ – Overtrow and Remnant**

- Continued description of Assyrian invasion.
- v.7-8 Likens Assyria figuratively to a flood.
- v.11-13 Mt. 10:28.
- v.14-15 Prophecy concerning Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:23).
- v.19 People were looking to the dead for guidance rather than to the living God.

**A. The coming Assyrian invasion against Syria and Israel.**

1. (1-4) **The invasion is announced by the naming of Isaiah's son.**

   Moreover the LORD said to me, “Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man’s pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.” Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; for before the child shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ and ‘My mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.”

- **Moreover the LORD said to me:** This prophecy continues from Isaiah 7, where God assured Ahaz, king of Judah, that he would not be overthrown by the combined forces of Syria and Israel. God announced judgment against Syria and Israel, saying of their attack against Judah: *It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass... Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, so that it will not be a people.* Here, God gives Isaiah a sign to explain more about how soon the defeat of Syria and Israel will come.

- **Take a large scroll:** It isn’t often that the prophets are commanded to write, but here is one instance. Isaiah will write concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means *speed to the spoil, hurry to the plunder.*

- **Write on it with a man’s pen:** Isaiah’s message was meant to be public, and at a level any man could read and understand.
  - Calvin on with a man’s pen: It “denotes any many of ordinary rank; and the meaning is, that not even the most ignorant and uneducated persons may be unable to read the writing.”

- **I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record:** The LORD appointed two witnesses, so the validity of this word would be established. *By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.* (Deuteronomy 19:15)

- **Then I went to the prophetess:** This refers to Isaiah’s wife. She is called a prophetess, though it could be in the sense of simply being the wife of the prophet. However, she clearly brought forth prophecy on at least one occasion. The birth and naming of her son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz was a word from God, so she certainly “brought forth” that prophecy!
  - There are many examples of prophetesses in the Bible: Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip’s four daughters (Acts 21:8-9). So, it may be that the wife of Isaiah had a prophetic ministry in her own right. But it may also be that she was simply the wife of the prophet, and her “prophecy” was giving birth to Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.

- **For before the child shall have knowledge to cry “My father” and “My mother”:** Through the birth and naming of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, the LORD gives a time frame for the invasion of Assyria that will punish Syria and Israel.
  - This is essentially the same as the near meaning of the Immanuel sign of Isaiah 7:10-17, but this sign was more public and plainer.
2. (5-10) Judah will be afflicted also.

The LORD also spoke to me again, saying: “Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of Shiloah that flow softly, And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah’s son;
Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them
The waters of the River, strong and mighty—The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels And go over all his banks.
He will pass through Judah, He will overflow and pass over, He will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings Will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.
“Be shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces! Give ear, all you from far countries.
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces; Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.
Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; Speak the word, but it will not stand,
For God is with us.”

- These people refused the waters of Shiloah that flow softly: The people of northern kingdom of Israel did not appreciate their humble streams (the waters of Shiloah). Instead, they rejoiced in wicked leaders (in Rezin and Remaliah’s son). So, God will give them a different kind of river – the waters of the River, strong and mighty.
  - “The little stream of Shiloah sprung from Mount Zion on the southwesterly side of Jerusalem. It flowed as softly as oil without any murmur. Jerusalem’s existence and continuation depended on it.” (Bultema)
  - The capital of the Assyrian Empire was Nineveh, and the city of Nineveh was founded on a great river: the Tigris. The Assyrian Empire was also centered across another mighty river: the Euphrates. The whole land of Israel simply did not have a river like the Euphrates or the Tigris. God is using the difference between the small, humble, yet adequate waters of Israel and the mighty, yet uncontrolled rivers of Assyria to make a point. It is as if God is saying, “You don’t like what I have given you? You persist in rejecting what I give you? Then I will give you something different, but you won’t like it either.”
  - “The small and gentle waters should be more highly valued by us than the large and rapid rivers of all the nations, and we ought not to envy the great power of the ungodly.” (Calvin)

- He will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks: Like a large river in a flood, the Assyrian army will not stay confined to its “banks.” Instead, they will “flow over” their attack on Israel and Syria, and “flood” Judah with violence and destruction (He will pass through Judah).

- He will reach up to the neck: Assyria would completely conquer the northern nation of Israel. The ten northern tribes would cease to be a nation after the Assyrians conquered them. But the Assyrians would not conquer the southern nation of Judah. They would “flood” them (fill the breadth of Your land), and reach up to the neck, but not over their heads. Judah would survive the Assyrian invasion but suffer much destruction from the Assyrians.
  - Indeed, 2 Kings 18:13 describes the extent of the Assyrian invasion against Judah: And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Yet, Hezekiah was able to keep the king of Assyria away from Jerusalem, and barely able to survive, by buying his favor with riches from the temple – even stripping gold from the temple doors to appease the pagan king!
  - “The sacred history assures us that these things were fulfilled… for the Assyrians, whom the Jews called to their assistance, destroyed them. This was the just punishment of their distrust; and we see in it a striking instance of the wicked greediness of men, who cannot be satisfied with the promise and assistance of God.” (Calvin)

- Your land, O Immanuel: This refers back to the “Immanuel” prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. The land the Assyrians will invade doesn’t really belong to Judah or to King Ahaz. It belongs to the LORD God, to the coming Messiah, to Immanuel.

- Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces… speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us: The victims of this Assyrian invasion (Syria, Israel, and Judah) could prepare for the invasion all they wanted (gird yourselves). But all their preparation would not protect them (but be broken in pieces). They could take counsel together, but it
will come to nothing. All their plans and words and ideas will not stand, for God is with us. God’s will was going to be done, despite all the plans and preparations Syria, Israel, and Judah might make against it.

- Who is the us of God is with us? In one sense the us is the Assyrian army, because they were the instruments of God’s judgment against Syria, Israel, and Judah. Nothing could stop the Assyrian army, because even if they did not know it, or even if their own hearts were wrong in the matter, God was using them. But the us is also the prophet himself. As a messenger of God, his word would come to pass no matter what the three nations did to prepare against it.

- God is with us also alludes to the Immanuel prophecy, because Immanuel means “God is with us.”

B. How Judah can prepare for this invasion.

1. (11-15) Prepare by fearing God, not Assyria.

For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying: “Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’ Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken.”

- Do not say, “A conspiracy” … nor be afraid of their threats: Isaiah, and all the people of Judah, were tempted to give into fear and panic, knowing the dangerous place they were in. At the time of this prophecy, the combined armies of Israel and Syria had destroyed much of Judah. Their armies either encircled Jerusalem or were on the way. They planned to depose King Ahaz of Judah and set their own man on the throne (Isaiah 7:6). Now, Isaiah’s prophecy declared the armies of Syria and Israel would not succeed in conquering Judah, but the Assyrians (who they trusted to help them) would attack them and do much damage. In the midst of all this, it would be easy to let your heart or mind settle on conspiracies and threats. But God tells them not to.

- The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear: Instead of fearing conspiracies and threats, fear God. Don’t see yourself at the mercy of opposing armies; you are in God’s hands. Worry about your place with the LORD instead of your enemies!

- He will be as a sanctuary: The LORD will be our sacred place, and our place of protection. He will keep us safe from our enemies.

- But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense: For those who trust Him, the LORD will be as a sanctuary. But for those who don’t, He will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Instead of finding protection from the LORD, they will “trip” over Him, falling to destruction. Indeed, many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken.

  - We love to sing the song, “What A Friend We Have In Jesus,” and every line of the song is true. But for those who reject the LORD, they could sing, “What An Enemy I Have In God.” Instead of being as a sanctuary, He will be a trap and a snare. Instead of being protected, they shall fall and be broken. No wonder Psalm 2:12 says, Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

  - We know that Jesus is this stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (1 Peter 2:6-8). This is a strong statement of the deity of Jesus, because clearly in Isaiah 8:13-14, the LORD of hosts is the stone, and clearly in 1 Peter 2:6-8, Jesus Christ is the stone.

  - This is the same idea behind the statement of Simeon when he held the child Jesus, as recorded in Luke 2:34: Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against.
2. (16-18) Prepare by waiting on the LORD.

Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples.
And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him.
Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me!
We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.

- And I will wait on the LORD: Waiting on the LORD is not passive inactivity. It means to wait on the LORD as a waiter would wait on a table. It means to be totally attentive to the LORD, focused on His every move, and responsive to His every desire. At times it means inactivity, but even that is an “active inactivity,” where we stand before the LORD, totally focused on Him, waiting for what He wants next.
  - At the time Isaiah spoke, the leaders and the people of Judah were waiting on the armies of Israel and Syria, because they were under attack. As they heard of the danger from the Assyrians, they would be tempted to put their focus on them. But their focus was on these armies, not on the LORD. Isaiah says, “Battle against Syria and Israel by setting your focus on the LORD. Prepare for the coming attack from Assyria by waiting on the LORD instead of your enemies.”

- Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples: Waiting on the LORD is connected with His word. We can wait on the LORD by waiting on His word.

- Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel: Isaiah had been called to prophesy, and to use his children in his prophetic messages (Isaiah 7:3, 8:3). So, he declared, Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! It is as if he is said, “Look at us! We are the message!”
  - The name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz means, “Speed to the spoil, hurry to the plunder.” This spoke of the coming attack on Syria, Israel, and Judah by Assyria. The name Shear-Jashub means, “A Remnant Shall Return.” This spoke of the restoration God would eventually bring. The name Isaiah means, “Salvation is of the LORD.” This spoke of the attitude and hope Judah needed to have.
  - We are also the children of God, and we are His message. Hebrews 2:11-13 quotes this passage to communicate this truth: For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying... “Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.” Just as much as Isaiah’s children were living witnesses of the truth of God’s word, so are we as God’s children.

3. (19-22) Prepare by seeking His light and word, not the darkness of the occult.

And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. They will pass through it hard pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.

- Seek those who are mediums and wizards: In the present danger from Syria and Israel, and in the coming danger from Assyria, Judah will be tempted to seek guidance and comfort from those who are mediums and wizards. Isaiah exposes the foolishness of this, when he says, “Should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?”
  - When you are in trouble, shouldn’t you seek your God? If you can’t rely on your God when you are in trouble, then what good is your God?
  - What sense does it make to seek the dead on behalf of the living? The dead are the dead, the living are the living. The living God speaks through His living Word and His living people to guide us. There is no reason to seek the dead.
  - This passage also exposes the foolishness of praying to the saints. The exact same question should be asked: Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?
To the law and to the testimony: Forget about mediums and wizards and the dead. Instead of all that deception and foolishness, To the law and to the testimony! Go to God’s Word!

- Law and testimony each refer to God’s Word. We might say that law refers to God’s holy commands, and testimony refers to His dealings with His people as recorded in His Word. But that may be slicing it too thin, because often similar terms for God’s Word are repeated, not for the sake of distinction, but for the sake of emphasis.

- How it needs to be proclaimed to our pulpits today: To the law and to the testimony! Enough with your over-use of anecdotes and jokes! Enough with your emphasis on entertainment and sappy stories! Enough with your catering to itching ears! Enough with your hobbyhorses and pet peeves! To the law and to the testimony!

- “Let us remember, as ministers of the Gospel, what M’Cheyne beautifully said; ‘Depend upon it,’ said he, ‘it is God’s Word not man’s comment upon God’s Word, that saves souls;’ and I have marked, that if ever we have a conversion at any time, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the conversion is rather traceable to the text, or to some Scripture quoted in the sermon, than to any trite or original saying by the preacher. It is God’s Word that breaks the fetters and sets the prisoner free, it is God’s Word instrumentally that saves souls, and therefore let us bring everything to the touchstone.” (Spurgeon)

If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them: If there is a disagreement between God’s word and the word of the messenger, it isn’t hard to figure out who is wrong. The messenger is wrong. The word judges the messenger; the messenger doesn’t judge the word.

They will be driven into darkness: When they forsake God’s word and trust in mediums and wizards and the dead, they are courting darkness, not light.
ISAIAH 9: UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN – The Divine Child and God’s Continued Judgment

- v.2 Prophecy describing the present-day position.
- v.6-7 Prophecy of Jesus Christ's birth and ministry.
- The disciples were confused regarding Jesus' death. They knew this prophecy, but felt His reign and kingdom on earth would be set up immediately (Mt. 16:21-23).
- v.8-12 Despite the enemy's attack, the people's hearts are hard toward God.
- v.16 Description of spiritual "hype" in today's world (Mt. 15:14).
- v.17 God's hand is outstretched in judgment, but Israel still doesn't accept it.

A. Hope for Israel.

1. (1-2) A day of light for the northern tribes.
   Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed
   The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her,
   By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.
   The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light;
   Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

- Nevertheless the gloom: The gloom carries over from Isaiah 8, where Isaiah warned Judah about the coming invasion from Assyria. Isaiah 8:22 said, Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness. The invasion of the Assyrians would be terrible for the Jewish people, especially for the northern regions of the Promised Land, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali.

- The gloom will not be upon her who is distressed: In this context, the promise of Isaiah 9:1 is all the more precious. The northern regions of the Promised Land – around the Sea of Galilee (Galilee of the Gentiles) – were most severely ravaged when the Assyrians invaded from the north. The promise is that this land, once seemingly lightly esteemed by the LORD, will one day have a special blessing.

- The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light… upon them a light has shined: The northern tribes were the first to suffer from the Assyrian invasions, so in God’s mercy, they will be the first to see the light of the Messiah.
   - Matthew 4:13-16 quotes this passage as clearly fulfilled in the Galilean ministry of Jesus. Since the majority of Jesus’ ministry took place in this northern area of Israel, around the Sea of Galilee, God certainly did have a special blessing for this once lightly esteemed land!

2. (3-5) Joy in the Messiah’s deliverance and victory.
   You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy;
   They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
   For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder,
   The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.
   For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood,
   Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.

- You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy: The ministry of the Messiah would bring joy and gladness to Israel. Jesus said His ministry was like having a wedding party (Matthew 9:14-15). They will rejoice according to the time of harvest, the time when the hard work has paid off and the bounty comes off. They will rejoice as men rejoice when they divide the spoil, with a celebration of victory, as in the locker room of a championship team.

- As in the day of Midian: This refers to Gideon’s great victory over Midian in Judges 7. As wonderfully complete, joyous, and victorious as Gideon’s victory over Midian was, this is the same kind of victory the Messiah will enjoy and give.
   - And the victory is complete. The reference to every warrior’s sandal… garments rolled in blood, will be used for burning and fuel of fire means that the battle is over. This is what you did when the battle was finished, and you had won.
• **You have broken the yoke of his burden**: Each of these promises – the reference to great joy, the breaking of the yoke of his burden and the rod of his oppressor, and the complete victory over all enemies has spiritual application to Jesus’ work in our lives. These things are ours in Jesus!
  
  o When is Jesus sad or worried or afraid? When does Jesus groan under the yoke of his burden? When does Jesus feel the sting of the rod of his oppressor? When is Jesus’ victory incomplete? The risen, glorified, ascended Jesus experiences none of these things, and He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). As we are in Jesus Christ, we share in His victory! We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37).

3. **(6) The glory of the Messiah who will reign.**

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

• **For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given**: Most straightforwardly, Isaiah is using the Hebrew literary tool of repetition to emphasize the point. The Child is born, the Son is given. At the same time, we recognize the hand of the Holy Spirit in the specific wording.

• **For unto us a Child is born**: This glorious prophecy of the birth of Messiah reminds Israel that the victory-bringing Messiah would be a man. Theoretically, the Messiah could have been an angel. Or, the Messiah could have been God without humanity. But in reality, neither of those options would have qualified the Messiah to be our Savior and High Priest as Jesus was. The Child had to be born.
  
  o What amazing mystery! There is nothing weaker, more helpless, more dependent than a child. Theoretically, the Messiah could have come as a fully-grown man, created as an adult even as Adam was created. But for Jesus to fully identify with humanity, and to display in His life the servant nature that is in God, made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7).

• **Unto us a Son is given**: This Child would be a man, but more than a man. He is also the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Godhead. Theoretically, the Messiah didn’t have to be God. He might have been a sinless angel, or merely a perfect man like Adam. But in reality, neither of those options would have qualified the Messiah to be our Saviour and High Priest as Jesus was. The Son had to be given.
  
  o What glorious truth! We needed a perfect, infinite Being to offer a perfect, infinite atonement for our sins. We needed Immanuel, God is with us (Isaiah 7:14).
  
  o The Child could be born, because the humanity of Jesus had a starting point. There was a time when humanity was not added to His deity. The Son had to be given, because the Second Person of the Trinity is eternal, and existed forever as the Son, even before adding humanity to His deity.
  
  o While Isaiah may have intended the repetition merely for the sake of emphasis, we rejoice in the Holy Spirit’s guidance in every word! Jesus, the Messiah, is fully God and fully man. There was a time when the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, added humanity to His deity. He never became less God, but He added a human nature to His divine nature, and so became one person with two distinct natures, functioning together in perfect harmony.
  
  o That Jesus is both God and man tells us that man really is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and that perfect humanity is more compatible with deity than we imagine. It says that our problem is not our humanity, but our fallenness. To say “I’m only human” is wrong because Jesus was fully human yet perfect. It is more accurate to say, “I’m only fallen.” But remember that the humanity that Jesus added to His Divine nature was not the sinful humanity we commonly know, but the perfect humanity of Adam and Eve before the fall.
  
  o Jesus remains a man eternally (Acts 7:55-56, 1 Timothy 2:5). He did not relinquish His humanity on His ascension; but He is now a man in a resurrection body, as we will one day have.
  
  o If Jesus were not fully man, He could not stand in the place of sinful man and be a substitute for the punishment man deserves. If He were not fully God, His sacrifice would be insufficient. If Jesus is not fully God and fully man, we are lost in sin.
• **And the government will be upon His shoulder:** Ultimately, this will be fulfilled in the Millennium, when Jesus Christ will rule the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 20:4-6, Psalm 72, Isaiah 2:4, Isaiah 66:1, Isaiah 65:17-25, Zechariah 14:6-21).

  o This ultimate fulfillment of this promise is still waiting. But we can still see the government... upon His shoulder in many ways. Gayle Erwin writes about the government God promises, both ultimately and right now:

    ▪ What might such a government look like? First of all, it would look like its king. Politicians of this day look for what they can get from you. Jesus looks for what He can do for you.
    ▪ Leaders of this day surround themselves with servants. Jesus surrounds us with His servanthood.
    ▪ Leaders of this day use their power to build their empire. Jesus uses his power to wash our feet and make us clean and comfortable.
    ▪ Leaders of this day trade their influence for money. God so loved that he gave...
    ▪ Generals of this day need regular wars to keep their weapons and skills up to date and insure their own advancement. Jesus brings peace and rest to hearts.
    ▪ The higher the plane of importance one reaches in this world, the more inaccessible he becomes. Jesus was Emanuel, “God with us.”
    ▪ Leaders of this day are desperate to be seen and heard. Jesus sought anonymity so He could be useful.
    ▪ Obviously, Jesus is not in charge of the halls of Washington, London, Moscow, Baghdad, Paris or Bonn. So, how can we ever believe the “government will be upon His shoulders”?  
    ▪ Actually, His government shows its workings in wonderful ways. Whenever I see someone who miraculously leaves a life of drugs or alcohol and is restored to his family and work, I can see that he is now governed by God.
    ▪ Whenever I see loving Christians gently caring for orphans and those rejected by family, I know I am watching people governed by God.
    ▪ Whenever I see people eagerly learning the Bible and joyously praising, I know who the governor is.
    ▪ Whenever I see people give up lucrative careers simply to go and share the Good News of Jesus, I know they are governed by God.
    ▪ When I see pastors carefully teach and lead the flock God has given them, I know they are getting signals from the great King.
    ▪ When I see people leave family to live and teach in distant lands because they love the people who have not heard, I know they are governed by God.
    ▪ So, indeed, the government is alive and working. Often silently, mostly unseen. We can be and are, by choice, governed by God. Hope and joy and peace and rest cover its subjects. Justice, mercy and grace, amazingly coexist. I like this Kingdom. The borders are open. Come on in.

• **His name will be called:** The idea isn’t that these will be the literal names of the Messiah. Instead, these are aspects of His character, they describe who He is and what He has come to do.

  o “In Semitic thought, a name does not just identify or distinguish a person, it expresses the very nature of his being.” (Longenecker)
  o Calvin, on the greatness of these titles: “This ought to be the more carefully considered, because the greater part of men are satisfied with his mere name, and do not observe his power and energy, though that ought to be chiefly regarded.”

• The Messiah is **Wonderful:** The glory of who He is and what He has done for us should fill us with wonder. You can never really look at Jesus, really know Him, and be bored. He is Wonderful and will fill your heart and mind with amazement!
As well, this is a reference to the deity of Jesus; “The word ‘wonderful’ has overtones of deity” (Grogan) (See also Judges 13:18)

- The Messiah is our Counselor: Jesus is the One fit to guide our lives and should be the Christian’s immediate resource as a counselor. Jesus can help you with your problems. He may use the presence and the words of another Christian to do it, but Jesus is our Counselor.

- How we need Jesus as our Counselor! “It was by a Counsellor that this world was ruined. Did not Satan mask himself in the serpent, and counsel the woman with exceeding craftiness, that she should take unto herself of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the hope that thereby she should be as God? Was it not that evil counsel which provoked our mother to rebel against her Maker, and did it not as the effect of sin, bring death into this world with all its train of woe? Ah! beloved, it was meet that the world should have a Counsellor to restore it, if it had a Counsellor to destroy it.” (Spurgeon)

- Jesus is our Counselor in the sense that He sits in the High Counsel of the Godhead and takes council with the Father and the Holy Spirit for our good. The High Counsel of the Godhead brought forth our salvation. “Hence you read in the book of Zechariah, if you turn to the sixth chapter and the thirteenth verse, this passage — ‘The council of peace shall be between them both.’ The Son of God with his Father and the Spirit, ordained the council of peace. Thus was it arranged. The Son must suffer, he must be the substitute, must bear his people’s sins and be punished in their stead; the Father must accept the Son’s substitution and allow his people to go free, because Christ had paid their debts. The Spirit of the living God must then cleanse the people whom the blood had pardoned, and so they must be accepted before the presence of God, even the Father. That was the result of the great council.” (Spurgeon)

- The High Counsel of the Godhead guides our lives. “Remember, there is nothing that happens in your daily life, but what was first of all devised in eternity, and counselled by Jesus Christ for your good and in your behalf, that all things might work together for your lasting benefit and profit… Oh, how strange providence seems to you and to me! Does it not look like a zig-zag line, this way and that way, backward and forward, like the journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness? Ah! my brethren, but to God it is a straight line. Directly, God always goes to his object. And yet to us, he often seems to go round about… Let us learn to leave providence in the hand of the Counsellor.” (Spurgeon)

- Jesus’ counsel is necessary counsel. Jesus’ counsel is faithful counsel, without any self-interest. Jesus’ counsel is hearty counsel. It isn’t detached and unemotional. Jesus’ counsel is sweet counsel. “Christian, do you know what sweet counsel is? You have gone to your Master in the day of trouble, and in the secret of your chamber you have poured out your heart before him. You have laid your case before him, with all its difficulties, as Hezekiah did Rabshakeh’s letter, and you have felt, that though Christ was not there in flesh and blood, yet he was there in spirit, and he counselled you. You felt that his was counsel that came from the very heart. But he was something better than that. There was such a sweetness coming with his counsel, such a radiance of love, such a fullness of fellowship, that you said, ‘Oh that I were in trouble every day, if I might have such sweet counsel as this!’ Christ is the Counsellor whom I desire to consult every hour, and I would that I could sit in his secret chamber all day and all night long, because to counsel with him is to have sweet counsel, hearty counsel, and wise counsel, all at the same time.” (Spurgeon)

- “Why, you may have a friend that talks very sweetly with you, and you will say, ‘Well, he is a kind, good soul, but I really cannot trust his judgment.’ You have another friend, who has a good deal of judgment, and yet you say of him, ‘Certainly, he is a man of prudence above a great many, but I cannot find out his sympathy; I never get at his heart, if he were ever so rough and untutored, I would sooner have his heart without his prudence, than his prudence without his heart,’ But we go to Christ, and we get wisdom; we get love, we get sympathy, we get everything that can possibly be wanted in a Counsellor.” (Spurgeon)

- The Messiah is Mighty God: The God of all creation and glory, the LORD who reigns in heaven, the One worthy of our worship and praise.

- Can there be a more straightforward declaration of the deity of the Messiah? Yet some groups (such as Jehovah’s Witnesses) try to make a distinction between Mighty God and Almighty God. Scripturally, there is no distinction, because both titles are used of Jesus and Yahweh specifically (Almighty is applied to Jesus in Revelation 1:8).
• In Isaiah 10:21, the prophet uses the exact same phrase to refer to Yahweh: The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. Therefore, this is a clear statement of absolute deity.

• “And indeed, if Christ had not been God, it would have been unlawful to glory in him; for it is written, Cursed be he that trusteth in man. (Jeremiah 17:5)” (Calvin)

• “We extend the right hand of fellowship to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth; but we cannot exchange our Christian greetings with those who deny him to be ‘very God of very God.’ And the reason is sometimes asked; for say our opponents, ‘We are ready to give the right hand of fellowship to you, why don’t you do so to us?’ Our reply shall be given thus briefly: ‘You have no right to complain of us, seeing that in this matter we stand on the defensive. When you declare yourselves to believe that Christ is not the Son of God, you may not be conscious of it, but you have charged us with one of the blackest sins in the entire catalogue of crime.’ The Unitarians must, to be existent, charge the whole of us, who worship Christ, with being idolaters. Now idolatry is a sin of the most heinous character; it is not an offense against men it is true, but it is an intolerable offense against the majesty of God.” (Spurgeon)

• “If Christ were not the Son of God, his death, so far from being a satisfaction for sin, was a death most richly and righteously deserved. The Sanhedrin before which He was tried was the recognized and authorized legislature of the country. He was brought before that Sanhedrin, charged with blasphemy, and it was upon that charge that they condemned him to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” (Spurgeon)

• The Messiah is the Everlasting Father: The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is the source or author of all eternity, that He is the Creator Himself. It does not mean that Jesus Himself is the Person of the Father in the Trinity.

- The Messiah is the Prince of Peace: He is the One who makes peace, especially between God and man.
  - “Whenever, in short, it appears to us that everything is in a ruinous condition, let us recall to our remembrance that Christ is called Wonderful, because he has inconceivable methods of assisting us, and because his power is far beyond what we are able to conceive. When we need counsel, let us remember that he is the Counselor. When we need strength, let us remember that he is Mighty and Strong. When new terrors spring up suddenly every instant, and when many deaths threaten us from various quarters, let us rely on that eternity of which he is with good reason called the Father, and by the same comfort let us learn to soothe all temporal distresses. When we are inwardly tossed by various tempests, and when Satan attempts to disturb our consciences, let us remember that Christ is The Prince of Peace, and that it is easy for him quickly to allay all our uneasy feelings. Thus will these titles confirm us more and more in the faith of Christ, and fortify us against Satan and against hell itself.” (Calvin)

4. (7) The glory of the Messiah’s reign.

Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom.
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

- Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end... even forever: The reign of the Messiah will not last merely 1,000 years, though the millennium is a special aspect of His reign. There will be no end to the reign of the Messiah, and He will rule for all eternity.
  - Handel had it right in the Hallelujah chorus of Messiah: “And He shall reign forever and ever.”

- Upon the throne of David: Jesus will rule on David’s throne, and over his kingdom (that is, David’s kingdom – Israel). This is a fulfillment of God’s great covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7.

- The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this: All this may sound too good to be true, but it will be done. God – the LORD of all heavenly armies – has promised to accomplish this word, and part of it has been accomplished already.
  - Jesus can be Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace for everyone now. One day, these offices will be imposed upon the world. For now, they are real for those who receive Jesus and submit to Him.
B. Coming judgment on the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

This section (Isaiah 9:8-10:4) is in four parts, each part concluding with “For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand (of judgment) is stretched out still.” Some have called this section, “The Speech of the Outstretched Hand.”

1. (8-12) Because of their unholy pride, Israel will be defeated by her enemies.

The LORD sent a word against Jacob, And it has fallen on Israel. All the people will know—Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—Who say in pride and arrogance of heart: “The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with hewn stones; The sycamores are cut down, But we will replace them with cedars.” Therefore the LORD shall set up The adversaries of Rezin against him, And spur his enemies on, The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still.

- The LORD sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel: The idea is that the LORD brought a word against all His people (against Jacob) and the word has scored a “direct hit” against the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

- Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria: The tribe of Ephraim was the largest and most influential tribe in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. So, often the LORD refers to the Kingdom of Israel by the name Ephraim. Samaria was the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. There isn’t any doubt whom this prophecy is directed to.

- Who say in pride and arrogance of heart: “The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars”: In their pride, the leaders and the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel said, “Who cares if God judges us? Whatever is torn down, we will rebuild with something better. We have nothing to fear from what God can bring against us.”
  - “Instead of humbling themselves before the face of God on account of the many calamities that had already descended on them, they still entertained a lighthearted optimism regarding the future. This optimism manifested itself in the slogans that were current in that day and apparently on everybody’s lips.” (Bultema)
  - “What a brief but deeply psychological picture this is of an unfaithful generation that keeps dreaming of better times to come and lightheartedly ignores the severe judgments of God.” (Bultema)

- Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries: Because they believed they would be able to weather the storm of attack and then rebuild, God would send successive waves of enemies against Israel (The Syrians before and the Philistines behind). The destruction of Israel would be complete, and their proud promise to rebuild would be unfulfilled.

- For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still: For the first time, the chorus is said. The judgment against Israel’s pride was not enough. There was still sin to judge, and God wasn’t ready to stop His work of judgment.
  - Calvin could say of his day, more than 300 years ago: “How many are the distresses with which Europe has been afflicted for thirty or forty years? How many are the chastisements by which she has been called to repentance? And yet it does not appear that those numerous chastishments have done any good. On the contrary, luxury increases every day, lawless passions are inflamed, and men go on in crimes and profligacy more shamelessly than ever. In short, those very calamities appear to have been so many excitements to luxury and splendour. What then should we expect but to be bruised with heavier blows?”

2. (13-17) Because they refuse to repent, there will be an overthrow of leadership.

For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel, Palm branch and bulrush in one day. The elder and honorable, he is the head; The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err, And those who are led by them are destroyed. Therefore the LORD will have no joy in their young men,
Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; For everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, And every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still.

- For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them: Each episode of judgment was followed by Israel’s refusal to turn to the LORD. They were like dumb animals that resist even more when they are beaten.

- Therefore the LORD will cut off the head and tail from Israel: Those who lead in Israel (the elder and honorable… the prophet who teaches lies… the leaders of this people) will be cut off, which often means to be killed.
  
  o “The expression branch and rush indicates the same thing as head and tail. A branch grows upward and hence refers to the high and important people of the population; the rush grows in muddy marshes and refers to the lowest element of the population, the scum.” (Bultema)

- For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still: This chorus is repeated. The judgment against Israel’s impenitence was not enough. There was still sin to judge, and God wasn’t ready to stop His work of judgment.

3. (18-21) Because of prevailing wickedness they will attack their own brothers.

  For wickedness burns as the fire; It shall devour the briers and thorns, And kindle in the thickets of the forest; They shall mount up like rising smoke. Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts The land is burned up, And the people shall be as fuel for the fire; No man shall spare his brother. And he shall snatch on the right hand And be hungry; He shall devour on the left hand And not be satisfied; Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. Manasseh shall devour Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh; Together they shall be against Judah. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still.

  - For wickedness burns as the fire: The prophet sees the wickedness of Israel as a raging wildfire, unstoppable, swift, uncontrolled, and devouring everything it touches.

  - And the people shall be fuel for the fire: This wildfire of God’s judgment is fueled by the people, in two senses. First, their wickedness gives supplies fuel to the fire of God’s judgment. If the wickedness was taken away, the fire would have no more fuel. Second, they are burnt up and destroyed by the fire.

  - No man shall spare his brother: In gruesome detail, the prophet speaks of the carnage that one Israelite will inflict on another. The wildfire of God’s judgment burns, but God merely let the evil, hateful passions of men burn wild among themselves. God did not need to start the fire or fan the flames; He simply took away the “fire retardant” that had held the evil, hate-filled passions of men in check.

  - For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still: A third time the chorus is presented. The judgment against Israel’s wickedness was not enough. There was still sin to judge, and God wasn’t ready to stop His work of judgment.

4. (Is 10:1-4) Because of social injustice, they will be exiled and slain.

  “Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, Who write misfortune, Which they have prescribed To rob the needy of justice, And to take what is right from the poor of My people, That widows may be their prey, And that they may rob the fatherless. What will you do in the day of punishment, And in the desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory? Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners, And they shall fall among the slain.” For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still.
• **Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees... rob the needy of justice... take what is right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey:** The leaders and people of Israel were simply *unfair* to others and preyed on the weak.

• **What will you do in the day of punishment... To whom will you flee for help:** The idea is, “When you have forsaken others in their time of need, who will you go to for help when you are in need?”

• **Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners, and they shall fall among the slain:** All God needs to do to bring extreme judgment on Israel is to *withdraw His protection*. The LORD declared that **“Without Me you have no hope before your enemies.”**

  o “As the people had hitherto lived *without God* in worship and obedience; so they should now be *without* his help, and should perish in their transgressions.” (Clarke)

• **Without Me they shall bow down:** When the Assyrians conquered other nations, it wasn’t enough for them to just win a military victory. They had a perverse pleasure in humiliating and subjugating their conquered foes. They would do everything they could to bring them low. Here, God said, “You have rejected Me, so **without Me you shall bow down** in humiliation and degradation before your enemies.”

  o One of the Hebrew words commonly translated *worship* in the Old Testament is *shachah*. It means to bow down, to reverently bow or stoop, to pay homage. But this is another word for **bow down**, the Hebrew word *kara*. It isn’t a good word; it means to sink, to drop, to bring low, or to subdue. We might say that we will either **bow down** to the LORD in worship, or it will be said of us, **without Me they shall bow down** in suffering and humiliation. Which will it be?

• **For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still:** Once again, this chorus is heard. The judgment against Israel’s injustice was not enough. There was still sin to judge, and God wasn’t ready to stop His work of judgment.

  o The repetition of the phrase reminds us that God’s judgment is *persistent*. It moves from phase to phase until it finds repentance. This means that it makes sense for us to repent *now*, because God’s judgment is persistent for all eternity. “If even physical death does not satisfy the fierce anger of this holy God, what dread and punishment lies beyond the grave?” (Grogan)

  o It makes perfect sense for this message of coming judgment to follow the announcement of the Messiah. His coming was announced, but the people were not ready for Him, and the predicted judgment would come before they were ready.
**ISAIAH 10: ASSYRIA JUDGED – Defeat of Assyria**

- v.1-3 God will deal with the false leaders. Second Peter 2 describes how to recognize a false prophet.
- v.5-11 God uses Assyria as His instrument of judgment to destroy Samaria. The Assyrians, in turn, are judged, as they became proud and didn’t recognize that God was using them.
- v.12-14 The Assyrians believe their idols are more powerful than the Lord, and He punishes them for their pride and exalting themselves before God.
- v.15 The instrument by itself can do nothing. We cannot take credit for anything God has wrought, as in and of ourselves we can do nothing.
- v.20 Regarding the future when God preserves the remnant during the Great Tribulation. These Jews will turn to the Lord in revival and not to the Antichrist.
- v.28-34 The gathering of nations for Battle of Armageddon.

*Since Isaiah 10:1-4 connects with Isaiah 9, it is examined in the previous chapter.*

**A. God’s judgment on arrogant Assyria.**

1. (5-7) Assyria, the unintentional instrument in the hand of the LORD.

   “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.
   I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath
   I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
   And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
   Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so;
   But it is in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations.

- **Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger:** In the previous section (Isaiah 7:1 through 10:4), the LORD revealed that He would use Assyria as an instrument of judgment against Syria, Israel, and Judah. But what about Assyria? Weren’t they even more wicked than Syria, Israel, or Judah? Yes, the Assyrians were wicked; yet the LORD could use them as the rod of My anger. At the same time, none of it excused Assyria, so the LORD says, “woe to Assyria.”
  - “A similar shift in the object of divine judgment occurred in the case of the Babylonians. God raised up the Babylonian armies between 605 and 686 B.C. to punish Judah (Hab. 1:6-11), and then He announced judgment on Babylon (Hab 2:6-17; Isa. 14:5).” (Wolf)

- **The rod of My anger… the staff in whose hand is My indignation:** The rod and the staff were sticks used by shepherds to guide and correct their sheep. God is saying that Assyria was like a stick in His hand, used to correct Syria, Israel, and Judah.

- **I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath:** In this sense, Assyria was on a mission from God. They were doing the LORD’s will, running His errands when they came against Syria, Israel, and Judah. God gave them permission (I will give them charge) to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like mire of the streets.

- **Yet he does not mean so, nor does his heart think so:** Since Assyria was an instrument in God’s hand, since they were doing the will of the LORD, does this excuse their attack on Syria, Israel, and Judah? Not at all! Though they were instruments in God’s hand, they did not mean so, nor does his heart think so. They didn’t care about the will or glory of God; they wanted to destroy and cut off many nations.
  - Psalm 76:10 says Surely the wrath of man shall praise You. God can use the wickedness and carnality of man to further His will, without ever approving of the wickedness or carnality. In fact, God is totally justified in judging the very wickedness and carnality that He used!
  - The pattern is repeated over and over through the Scriptures. Joseph’s brothers sinned against Joseph, but God used it for His purpose, and disciplined Joseph’s brothers. Saul sinned against David, but God used it for His purpose, and judged Saul. Judas sinned against Jesus, but God used it for His purpose, and judged Judas.
This should help with questions that trouble many people. The first is “How can God bring any good through this evil that was done to me?” We can’t often know in advance exactly how God will bring the good, but we can trust that He will as we continue to yield to Him and seek Him. The second is “Doesn’t God care about what they did to me?” He does care, and He will bring His correction or judgment according to His perfect will and timing.

2. (8-14) The arrogance of Assyria.


As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria,
As I have done to Samaria and her idols, Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?”

Therefore it shall come to pass, when the LORD has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.”

For he says: “By the strength of my hand I have done it, And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
Also I have removed the boundaries of the people, And have robbed their treasuries;
So I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man.
My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people,
And as one gathers eggs that are left, I have gathered all the earth;
And there was no one who moved his wing. Nor opened his mouth with even a peep.”

- Are not my princes altogether kings: Assyria had such an inflated view of themselves that they regarded their princes to be on the level of the kings of other nations.

- As I have done to Samaria and her idols, shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols: Here, the LORD describes the proud, arrogant heart of the Assyrians. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, which was given over to gross idolatry. Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah, which still maintained some worship of the Lord God. In their pride, they thought the Lord God nothing more than one of the idols that they had conquered in Samaria or in many other cities. The Assyrians were in for a rude wake-up call!
  - “The cities mentioned in verses 9 and 10 came under Assyrian control between 740 and 721 B.C., and none of the gods of these areas had provided the slightest help.” (Wolf)

- I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks: The pride of Assyria and her king was found in his arrogant heart and exposed by his haughty looks. How much pride can be revealed by a haughty look?
  - The Bible describes God’s opinion of haughty looks: A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin. (Proverbs 21:4) The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, him I will not endure. (Psalm 101:5) For You will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks. (Psalm 18:27)

- By the strength of my hand I have done it: Again, the LORD is revealing the heart of Assyria. They glory in their own strength and wisdom (by my wisdom, for I am prudent). They exaggerate their power (I have gathered all the earth).
  - Julius Caesar had this heart of pride when he said of his military conquests: Veni, vidi, vici (“I came, I saw, I conquered”). Charles V had a better heart when he said of his military conquests, Veni, vidi, sed Christus vicit (“I came, I saw, but Christ conquered”).


Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it?
Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?
As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up,
Or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood!
Therefore the Lord, the Lord of hosts, Will send leanness among his fat ones;
And under his glory He will kindle a burning Like the burning of a fire.
So the Light of Israel will be for a fire, And his Holy One for a flame;
It will burn and devour His thorns and his briers in one day.
And it will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, Both soul and body;
And they will be as when a sick man wastes away.
Then the rest of the trees of his forest Will be so few in number That a child may write them.

- **Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it:** The LORD uses the pictures of an ax, a saw, a rod, and a staff to make the point that the instrument should never take credit for what the worker does with the instrument.
  - If it is easy for an unknowing instrument of God to become proud, it is also easy for a willing instrument of God to become proud. Jesus said we should have a different attitude: *So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, “We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.”* (Luke 17:10) As wonderful as it is to be an instrument in the hand of God, the instrument deserves no special glory.

- **Therefore the Lord… will send leanness among his fat ones:** Assyria sat “fat and sassy” at the time, but God would send leanness to them. His judgment will be like the burning of a fire among them, and it will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field. The Lord will leave Assyria just a shadow of its former self.
  - Bulterma on both soul and body: “Calvin warned against inferring from this that the soul is not immortal. What is meant, according to this keen expositor, is that the soul of this tyrant will have to pay for his wicked deeds on earth after the destruction of His body.”

**B. Despite the coming attack of the Assyrians, God will preserve a remnant of Israel.**

1. (20-27) **Do not be afraid of the Assyrian.**
   And it shall come to pass in that day That the remnant of Israel,
   And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, Will never again depend on him who defeated them,
   But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
   The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God.
   For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return;
   The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.
   For the Lord GOD of hosts Will make a determined end In the midst of all the land.

   Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: “O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction.” And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

   It shall come to pass in that day That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder,
   And his yoke from your neck, And the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.

- **It shall come to pass in that day:** The LORD told Judah to not trust in Assyria as their deliverer when the threat from Syria and Israel came (Isaiah 7). The LORD promised that He would deliver them from Syria and Israel, and that they did not have to trust in Assyria. But Ahaz, king of Judah, did not take God’s counsel and trusted in Assyria. The LORD would then use Assyria to defeat Syria and Israel as He had promised, but He would also use Assyria to judge Judah. Now, the LORD wants to prepare Judah for the attack from Assyria, reminding them that He is still in charge and they can still trust Him.
• This shows the remarkable grace and longsuffering of God. We would not criticize the LORD if He said, “You want to trust in the Assyrians and not in Me? Fine. You are now on your own. Good luck!” But even in the midst of the judgment they deserved, brought through the Assyrians, God wants to comfort His people and bring them hope.

• **The remnant of Israel... will never again depend on him who defeated them, but will depend on the LORD.** The LORD promises His people, “You are going through this now because you will not trust Me. But I am going to change you so that you trust Me again, and you will once again depend on the LORD.”

• **Yet a remnant of them will return:** The suffering of God’s people at the hands of the Assyrians and others would make them feel as if they would certainly be destroyed. God assures them that this is not the case. He will always preserve His remnant.

• **The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness:** When God allows destruction – whether in outright judgment or loving correction – it is always righteous, and never unfair. In fact, His judgment overflows with righteousness!

• **For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a determined end:** An end of what? An end of Judah’s trust in nations like Assyria. They will never again depend on him who defeated him.

• **Therefore... do not be afraid of the Assyrian:** The LORD is telling His people, “Judgment and correction are coming, and it will hurt. But I have a plan, so don’t be afraid.” This is a hard word to believe because judgment and correction, by their very nature, hurt! Yet we can decide to not be afraid and trust in the LORD, even when it hurts.

  o **He shall strike you with a rod,** yet do not be afraid. He will lift up his staff against you, but do not be afraid. Why shouldn’t they fear? Because the Assyrians are not in charge, the LORD is. In a very little while... the indignation will cease, as will My anger. We can always be comforted by the fact that God will never leave His people to the mercy of their enemies. Even when He uses the Assyrians to bring judgment and correction, He is still in charge.

• **And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian:** Judah should trust the LORD because He will indeed take care of the Assyrians. He will take care of them like He took care of Midian at the rock of Oreb. The LORD will strike Assyria as His rod was upon the sea.

• Judges 7:25 describes Gideon’s victory over the Midianites at the rock of Oreb. As miraculous and complete as Gideon’s victory was, that is how miraculous and complete God’s judgment on Assyria would be. As it happened, this was exactly the case. 2 Kings 19:35 describes how God simply sent the angel of the LORD and killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. When the people woke up, there were 185,000 dead Assyrian soldiers.

  o **Exodus 14:16** describes how the LORD used the rod of Moses to divide the Red Sea. In the same way, He would do something totally miraculous against Assyria.

  o The LORD even took care of the king of the Assyrians according to His justice. 2 Kings 19:36-37 describes how when the king of the Assyrians returned home after attacking Judah, that he was murdered by his own sons as he worshipped in the temple of Nisroch his god.

• **It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck:** Assyria would indeed trouble and oppress Judah, but not forever. Instead, the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil. Because of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit among Judah (represented by the anointing oil), the yoke of bondage would be destroyed.

• Bultema thinks that because of the anointing oil should really be seen as because of the anointed one, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the source of our victory and freedom from the yoke of bondage!
2. (28-32) A prophetic description of the arrival of the army of the Assyrians.

   He has come to Aiath, He has passed Migron;
   At Michmash he has attended to his equipment.
   They have gone along the ridge, They have taken up lodging at Geba.
   Ramah is afraid, Gibeah of Saul has fled.
   Lift up your voice, O daughter of Gallim!
   Cause it to be heard as far as Laish—O poor Anathoth!
   Madmenah has fled, The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
   As yet he will remain at Nob that day;
   He will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, The hill of Jerusalem.

- **He has come to Aiath:** Because of the word of comfort and encouragement in the previous section, Judah might think that God wouldn’t send judgment among them at all. This section, with the specific mention of many cities of Judah, is meant to show that God will indeed allow the invasion of the Assyrians, even though He will restore after the attack.

- **Aiath… Migron… Michmash… Geba:** The listing of cities flows from the north to the south, describing the course of the Assyrian invasion. **Nob** is right on the outskirts of Jerusalem. This is as far as the army of the Assyrians came against Judah. They were stopped here when the LORD killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night.
  
  o “With a deft poetic touch, Isaiah told how the enemy moved through twelve different locations, coming ever closer to the capital.” (Wolf)

3. (33-34) The LORD humbles the proud among the people of Judah.

   Behold, the Lord, The LORD of hosts, Will lop off the bough with terror;
   Those of high stature will be hewn down, And the haughty will be humbled.
   He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.

- **Those of high stature will be hewn down:** The LORD promises that His judgment will extend even against **those of high stature**. A mighty forest seems invincible and seems as if it will stand forever, but the LORD can cut it down. Even so, the LORD will cut down the proud and **those of high stature** among Judah. All that will be left in a once-mighty forest will be stumps.

- **And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One:** The forests of Lebanon were known for their large, mighty cedar trees. God will judge the proud among Judah – and all the nations for that matter – and leave a once mighty forest of **those of high stature** as if they were just stumps. The bigger they are, the harder they fall down.


**ISAIAH 11: THE BRANCH AND ROOT OF JESSE – Davidic Kingdom Set Up by Christ**

- Speaking of the time after the Battle of Armageddon.
- v.1 Picture of the nations being leveled as a forest; the "stem" arising is Jesus Christ. Prophecy regarding Jesus Christ coming from David's line.
- v.2-4 Refers to the second coming of Jesus Christ. He is coming to judge the earth (Mt. 25).
- v.6-9 The earth and animal kingdom will no longer suffer from man's rebellion against God.
- v.10 This is what the disciples had expected Jesus to do immediately, and why they were confused at His death.
- v.11 God will gather Israel together a second time when Jesus Christ comes again.
- v.12 The "elect" are not the church but the outcasts of Judah (Mt. 24:31).

**A. The character of the King.**

1. (1) **A stem sprouts forth from the stump of Jesse.**

   There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

   - **There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse:** Isaiah 10:33-34 left with the idea of the LORD chopping down the proud as if they were mighty trees. Now, the LORD is looking over the stumps, and causes a Branch to grow out of one of them, the root of the family of Jesse, David’s father.
     - Indeed, Jesus did come from the stump of Jesse. The royal authority of the house of David had lain dormant for 600 years when Jesus came as King and Messiah. When Jesus came forth, it was like a new green Branch coming from an apparently dead stump.
     - The LORD wanted Judah to know that even though the Assyrians and others would come and bring judgment, God would still use them and bring forth life from them. Even if they looked like a long-dead stump, God can bring forth life.
     - “We see a bare, withered tree stump, robbed of its trunk and top, and it looks as though the stump will never bear any fruit any more. But, a small shoot sprouts from the root of this dry stump which is the Davidic dynasty. Because of its unsightliness and misery, it is not named after David but after his father. When Christ was born, there was nothing royal about that dynasty. But a new shoot sprang from this old stem.” (Bultema)

   - **A Rod from the stem of Jesse:** In using this title, the LORD emphasized the humble nature of the Messiah. Jesse was the much less famous father of King David. It is far humbler to say, “from Jesse” than to say, “from King David.”

2. (2) **The spiritual empowerment of the Messiah.**

   - The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

   - **The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him:** The Branch that comes from the apparently dead stump isn’t just barely alive. It is full of life, and full of the Spirit of the LORD. The Messiah has seven – the number of fullness and completion – aspects of the Spirit of the LORD.
     - He has the Spirit of the LORD. It is not a false spirit or a deceiving spirit or even the spirit of a man. The Spirit of the LORD God of Israel rests upon the Messiah. Once Jesus rebuked the disciples saying, You do not know what manner of spirit you are of (Luke 9:55). Jesus was of the Spirit of the LORD, and He knew it.
     - The Spirit of wisdom is upon the Messiah. Jesus is perfectly wise in all things. He showed it among us during his earthly ministry, and He shows it now in His ministry towards us in heaven. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says that Jesus became for us wisdom from God. It isn’t just that Jesus has wisdom; He is wisdom!
     - The Spirit of understanding is upon Him. Jesus understands all things, and He understands us perfectly. He is perfectly suited to be our sympathetic High Priest in heaven (Hebrews 4:15-16). Understanding in Hebrew has the idea of a sharp sense of smell. Trapp says it describes Jesus’ “Sharpness of judgment in
smelling out a hypocrite… His sharp nose easily discerneth and is offended with the stinking breath of the hypocrite’s rotten lungs, though his words be never so scented and perfumed with shows of holiness.”

- The **Spirit of counsel** is upon Jesus. He has perfect **counsel** to give us at all times. He has both the **wisdom** and the **understanding** to be a perfect counselor!
- The **Spirit of… might** is upon Jesus. He has the power to do what He desires to do. Many would help us if they could, but are powerless. Others may have the power to help us, but don’t care about us. Jesus has both the love and the **might** to help us.
- The **Spirit of knowledge** is upon Jesus. He knows everything. He knows our hearts, He knows all the facts. Many times we have made decisions that seemed strange or wrong to others because they didn’t have the **knowledge** that we have. Jesus has **knowledge** that we don’t have, so it shouldn’t surprise us that sometimes His decisions seem strange or wrong to others.
- The **Spirit of… the fear of the LORD** is upon Jesus. He willingly kept Himself in a place of submission, respect, and honor to God the Father.

- **The Spirit of the LORD… of wisdom and understanding… of counsel and might… of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD**: These seven aspects of the Spirit of God are not the only characteristics of the Holy Spirit. But they are grouped together in a “seven” to show the fullness and perfection of the Holy Spirit.
  - This passage is behind the term the **sevenfold Spirit of God** used in Revelation 1:4, 3:1, 4:5 and 5:6. It isn’t that there are seven different spirits of God, rather the Spirit of the LORD has these characteristics, and He has them all in fullness and perfection.
  - The seven-branched lampstand that held the oil lamps for the tabernacle is also an illustration of the seven aspects of the Holy Spirit. “This candelstick had one stem in the center from which protruded three branches to the right and three to the left. Similarly, in this text, three pairs of the names of the Spirit are grouped around the central stem.” (Bultema)

- **Shall rest upon Him**: Jesus lived and ministered as a man filled with the Spirit of God. The **wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and fear of the LORD** Jesus displayed in His ministry flowed not from His “own” deity, but from His reliance on the Spirit of the LORD who filled Him.
  - In His “own” deity, Jesus had all these attributes from eternity. But when He emptied Himself at the incarnation, He allowed the Holy Spirit to fill Him as a man, being an eternal example to us and a sympathizer with us.
  - Jesus displayed the fruit of the Spirit to the uttermost, because He was a perfect vessel. Jesus received the Spirit without measure (John 3:34).
  - There seems to have been times when Jesus did operate beyond what a Spirit-filled man could do, such as when He was transfigured or when He performed some of His miracles over nature. But certainly, Jesus fought all His battles as a man filled with the Holy Spirit.

- **The Spirit of the LORD**: These seven characteristics describe the nature of the **Spirit of the LORD**. They also describe the nature of Jesus. There is no difference between the nature of Jesus and the nature of the Holy Spirit. When we see Jesus, we see the Father (John 14:9). When we see the Spirit of the LORD at work, it should look like the ministry and the nature of Jesus.

3. **(3-5) The perfect character of the Messiah.**

   - His delight is in the fear of the LORD,
   - And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
   - But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
   - He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
   - And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.
   - Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

- **His delight is in the fear of the LORD**: Nothing pleased Jesus more than doing the will of His Father. *My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.* (John 4:34)
• **With righteousness He shall judge**: Jesus did not rely on outward appearance, or by the mere words that someone said. He judged with **righteousness**. He didn’t cheat the poor justice, and if the poor and the weak are given justice, then all will be.

• **He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth**: The mere words of Jesus have the power to judge the wicked. He only has to announce a judgment and it is done.
  
  o Bultema quotes Dr. V. Hepp on **with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked**: “From of old, the Rabbis have adhered to the first interpretation and seen in this wicked (one)... the Jewish Antichrist... this prediction of the wicked (one) may be unhesitatingly applied to the Antichrist.” Dr. V. Hepp makes this remark in light of 2 Thessalonians 2:8: And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

• **Righteousness and justice** are so close to Jesus they are like belts around His waist. Everything He does is touched by His **righteousness** and **justice**.

**B. The glorious reign of the King.**

1. **(6-9) The new ecology of the reign of the Messiah.**

   “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

• **The wolf also dwell with the lamb**: When the Messiah reigns, nature will be transformed. No longer will there be predators among the animals, and seemingly all animals will be only herbivores (**the cow and the bear shall graze**... **the lion shall eat straw like the ox**).
  
  o Romans 8:19-22 says: The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Nature is waiting for the transformation that will come when the Messiah reigns and believers are glorified.

• **And a little child shall lead them**: Not only will the way animals relate to each other be changed, but the way they relate to humans will be changed. A **little child** will be safe and able to lead a **wolf** or a **leopard** or a **young lion** or a **bear**. Even the danger of predators like cobras and vipers will be gone.
  
  o In Genesis 9:2-3, the LORD gave Noah, and all mankind after him, the permission to eat meat. At the same time, the LORD put the **dread** of man in animals, so they would not be effortless prey for humans. Now, in the reign of the Messiah, that is reversed. For this reason, many think that in the reign of the Messiah, the Millennium, humans will return to being vegetarians, as it seems they were before Genesis 9:2-3.

• **For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea**: The **knowledge of the LORD** – in a relational sense, not merely an intellectual sense – will cover the entire earth. The Millennial reign of the Messiah will be glorious!

2. **(10-12) The new Exodus of the Millennial reign of the Messiah.**

   “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.”

   It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.
He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

- **For the Gentiles will seek Him**: The glory of the reign of the Messiah will be not only for the Jew, but for the Gentile also. He **shall stand as a banner to the people**, lifted high to draw all peoples to Him.
  - The banner was used before to call the nations to judgment against Israel (Isaiah 5:26). Now the banner calls the nations to the blessings of the Messiah.

- **The second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left**: In the reign of the Messiah, there will be another Exodus of the Jewish people, delivering them not only from Egypt, but from all nations where they have been dispersed.

3. (13-16) **The peace of the reign of the Messiah.**

Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.
But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder the people of the East;
They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; And the people of Ammon shall obey them.
The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River,
And strike it in the seven streams, And make men cross over dryshod.
There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

- **Ephraim shall not envy Judah… Judah shall not harass Ephraim**: In the reign of the Messiah, the nations will not go to war any more. Conflicts will be justly and swiftly settled by the Messiah and His government. Disobedient nations (here, described as the Philistines and Edom and Moab and the people of Ammon, traditional enemies of Israel) will be punished.

- **There will be a highway for the remnant of His people**: Any obstacle to the gathering of those dispersed among the nations will be taken away. Nothing can oppose the government of the Messiah!
ISAIAH 12: WORDS FROM A WORSHIPPER – Thanksgiving in the Kingdom

- v.1 The declaration of Israel: Jesus is the true Messiah (Zech. 12:10; Rev.17).
- v.2 "God" here means Joshua or Jesus. 'Jehovah is salvation' is the literal meaning of the name 'Jesus.'
- v.3 Jn. 4:10, 14, 7:37-38; Rev.21:6.
- v.4-5 In that day they will exalt and praise God's name. Contains near and distant prophetic fulfillment.

A. The worshipper speaks to the LORD.

1. (1) Praise to the LORD after His anger has passed.

And in that day you will say: “O LORD, I will praise You;
Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.

- And in that day you will say: Isaiah chapter 11 spoke powerfully of the reign of the Messiah as king over all the earth. This brief chapter of praise comes from the heart of the one that has surrendered to the Messiah as king and enjoys the benefits of His reign.

- O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me: The worshipper decides to praise the LORD, even though he has felt the LORD’s anger against him.

  - Under the New Covenant, does God get angry with us? There is a sense in which all the anger and wrath of God against us was poured out upon the Son of God on the cross. In this sense, there is no more anger from God towards us because His anger has been “exhausted.” But there is also a sense in which we receive chastening or discipline from the LORD, which certainly feels like His anger. This chastening feels unpleasant (Hebrews 11:11), but it really shows the fatherly love of God instead of His hatred.

- Your anger is turned away: How glorious when the anger of God is turned away! In the larger sense, His anger is turned away because of what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus put Himself in between us and the anger of the LORD, and receiving that anger in Himself, He turned away God’s anger!

  - In the sense of God’s chastening or discipline in our lives, how wonderful it is when His anger is turned away, and “spanking” stops!

- And You comfort me: God disciplines us as a perfect parent, knowing perfectly how to comfort us after we have been chastened. Sometimes, like rebellious children, we refuse the comfort of God after discipline, but that is always our fault, not His.

  - “Satan also tempts us by all methods, and employs every expedient to compel us to despair. We ought, therefore, to be fortified by this doctrine, that, though we feel the anger of the Lord, we may know that it is of short duration, and that we shall be comforted as soon as he has chastened us.” (Calvin)

2. (2) A declaration of thanks and confidence in the LORD.

Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid:
‘For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.’”

- Behold: The worshipper wants others to see what he says is true. He is excited about what God has done in his life and invites all to behold the work of the LORD.

- God is my salvation: This is salvation! To say God is my salvation is also to say, “I am not my salvation. My good works, my good intentions, my good thoughts do not save me. God is my salvation.”

  - Many don’t ever feel the need for salvation. Instead, they think their lives are fine, and come to God for a little help when they feel they need it. But they never see themselves as drowning men in need of rescue or see themselves as hell destined sinners in need of salvation.

  - The worshipper is so immersed in this idea that he repeats it in the same verse: God is my salvation… He also has become my salvation.
• **I will trust and not be afraid**: This peace and security comes from knowing that **God is my salvation**. When we are our own salvation, it is hard to **trust and not be afraid** in ourselves. But when God is our salvation, we can **trust and not be afraid**.
  
  o Paul repeats the same idea when he writes in **Romans 5:1**: *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. The place of peace and trust and “no fear” comes only from seeing our salvation in God, and not in ourselves.

• **I will trust and not be afraid**: This is a confident statement reflecting the **will** of the worshipper. He is **deciding to trust and not be afraid**. There are **feelings of trust**, but that is different than the **decision to trust**. We can say to our **will**, “**I will trust and not be afraid.**”
  
  o “**Hearken, O unbeliever, you have said, 'I cannot believe,' but it would be more honest if you had said, 'I will not believe.'** The mischief lies there. Your unbelief is your fault, not your misfortune. It is a disease, but it is also a crime: it is a terrible source of misery to you, but it is justly so, for it is an atrocious offense against the God of truth.” (Spurgeon)
  
  o “**The talk about trying to believe is a mere pretence. But whether pretence or no, let me remind you that there is no text in the Bible which says, 'Try and believe,' but it says 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.' He is the Son of God, he has proved it by his miracles, he died to save sinners, therefore trust him; he deserves implicit trust and child-like confidence. Will you refuse him these? Then you have maligned his character and given him the lie.”** (Spurgeon)

• **For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and my song**: The **LORD** is not only the worshipper’s salvation, He is also his **strength and song**. Some find it easier to consider the **LORD** their salvation in a distant “bye-and-bye” sense than to take Him today as their **strength** and **song**.
  
  o When the **LORD** is our **strength**, it means that He is our resource, He is our refuge. We look to Him for our needs and are never unsatisfied. “**Nor is he here called a part or an aid of our strength, but our complete strength; for we are strong, so far as he supplies us with strength.”** (Calvin)
  
  o When the **LORD** is our **song**, it means that He is our joy, He is our happiness. We find our purpose and life in Him, and He never disappoints.
  
  o “**The word Yah read here is probably a mistake; and arose originally from the custom of the Jewish scribes, who, when they found a line too short for the word, wrote as many letters as filled it, and then began the next line with the whole word.”** (Clarke)

3. (3) **The result of the salvation of the LORD**.

  Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation.

• **You will draw water from the wells of salvation**: Jesus promised us **whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.** (John 4:14) We can come to Jesus and **draw water from the wells of salvation**!
  
  o When we remember the semi-arid climate of Israel, we see what a beautiful picture the **wells of salvation** paint. When water is rare, a well is life. To have a place where you can continually come and draw forth to meet your need is a precious gift.
  
  o The **LORD**’s resource is not limited. There is not one **well of salvation**. There are many **wells of salvation**. This doesn’t mean that there are many ways to be saved. All of the wells draw forth from the same reservoir of salvation, Jesus Christ. But many wells can bring water from the same water table.

• **You will draw water**: This means there is something for us to do. God’s doesn’t meet our needs as we sit in passive inactivity. We must reach out and draw forth what He has provided. At the same time, it is His **water**, His **well**, His **rope**, and His **bucket** that we draw with!

• **Therefore with joy**: Because it is all of the **LORD**, we draw from the wells of salvation **with joy**. There should be no somber faces at the **LORD**’s well of salvation. We draw water **with joy**!
o “Joy is the just man’s portion, and Christ is the never-failing fountain whence by a lively faith he may infallibly fetch it.” (Trapp)

o “Be of good courage, you very, very timid ones, and alter your tone. Try to put a ‘Selah’ into your life, as David often did in his Psalms. Frequently, he put in a ‘Selah,’ and then he changed the key directly. In like manner, change the key of your singing; you are a great deal too low. Let the harp-strings be screwed up a bit, and let us have no more of these fiat, mournful notes. Give us some other key, please, and begin to say, with the prophet Isaiah, ‘O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid.’” (Spurgeon)

B. The worshipper declares the greatness of God to everyone.

1. (4) Exalting God among the peoples.

And in that day you will say: “Praise the LORD, call upon His name; Declare His deeds among the peoples, Make mention that His name is exalted.”

- Praise the LORD, call upon His name: This is an exhortation to praise, and an encouragement to worship the LORD and trust in Him. The worshipper has received from the wells of salvation, and now that living water is flowing out of him, encouraging others to worship and trust in the LORD.

  o It is as if the job of praising God is too big for this worshipper, and he needs to call in others to help him. “The saints are unsatisfiable in praising God for the great work of their redemption, and do therefore call in help, all that may be.” (Trapp)

- Declare His deeds... Make mention that His name is exalted: The worshipper can’t stop talking about God’s greatness and the great things He has done.

2. (5-6) Singing praise to the LORD.

“Sing to the LORD, For He has done excellent things; This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”

- Sing to the LORD: First, the LORD was the song of the worships (Isaiah 12:2). Now, he sings this song of the LORD to whoever will listen! If the LORD has become your song, then sing it!

- Cry out and shout: This is excited praise! We should all abhor the artificial, “Let’s-whip-them-up-into-a-manufactured-enthusiasm” kind of worship. But if our worship will never cry and shout, there is something lacking in it.

  o “We ought not to worship God in a half-hearted sort of way; as if it were now our duty to bless God, but we felt it to be a weary business, and we would get it through as quickly as we could, and have done with it; and the sooner the better. No, no; ‘All that is within me, bless his holy name.’ Come, my heart, wake up, and summon all the powers which wait upon thee! Mechanical worship is easy, but worthless. Come rouse yourself, my brother! Rouse thyself, O my own soul!” (Spurgeon)

- For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst: This gives two reasons for great praise. First, because of who God is: the Holy One of Israel. Second, because of where God is: in your midst. Each of these gives everyone reason to praise God!
PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE NATIONS ( Isa 13-27)

Isaiah 13 begins a section ending at Isaiah 23:18 where he prophesies against the nations. It is fitting for judgment to begin at the house of God, so the LORD has first spoken to Israel and Judah. But now, the LORD speaks against the nations, beginning with Babylon.

ISAIAH 13: THE BURDEN AGAINST BABYLON – Prophecy of Last Days

- Punishment will be visited upon the nations, and Israel shall pass through the Great Tribulation. (Rev. 17 and 18: ecclesiastical Babylon and commercial Babylon.)
- v.1-4 Prophecy regarding Babylon in these end times. Worldwide wars are one of the signs of Jesus’ second coming.
- v.5-10 Description of Great Tribulation period (Mt. 24). This punishment is against the iniquity of the evil world, not the church (Rom. 2:5; 1 Thess. 5:9).
- v.13 (See Scripture reference Isa. 2:9-21.) The shaking of the earth could be one of the ways God restores it to its original state.
- v.14 The Babylonian invasion (near prophetic fulfillment).
- v.17-19 Isaiah predicts the Medes' destruction of the Babylonian kingdom before the Medes even became a strong nation.

A. Judgment upon Babylon.

1. (1) The burden against Babylon.

The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

- Burden: In the prophets, a burden is a “heavy” message of weighty importance, heavy in the sense that it produces sorrow or grief.
  - “Massa comes from the verb ‘to lift up’ (nasa), and so it can mean ‘to carry’ or ‘to lift up the voice.’ From the first meaning comes the translation ‘burden,’ or ‘load’; and from the second meaning we get the translation ‘oracle,’ or ‘utterance.’” (Wolf) Grammatically, we may be able to say “oracle.” But since these are heavy oracles, we are justified in calling them burdens!

- Against Babylon: Isaiah finished his prophetic career in 685 B.C., almost 100 years before Judah finally fell before the Babylonian Empire (586 B.C.). At the time of this prophecy, Babylon was a significant nation, but they were definitely behind the Assyrian Empire in status. Yet the LORD who knows the end of all things can speak of the judgment on the pride of Babylon hundreds of years before the judgment comes.
  - This burden against Babylon will last until the end of Isaiah 14. Clarke says of this passage, “The former part of this prophecy is one of the most beautiful examples of that can be given of the elegance of composition, variety of imagery, and sublimity or sentiment and diction, in the prophetic style; and the later part consists of an ode of supreme and singular excellence.”
  - Why did God speak to Babylon? This prophecy was probably never published in Babylon, so it wasn’t really given as a warning to them. Instead, the reason was for the help of the people of God. First, by showing them that God was indeed just, and would judge the wicked nations around them. Israel and Judah were feeling the sting of God’s discipline, and in those times we wonder if God is unfairly singling us out. This is assurance to them that He isn’t. Second, Babylon (and other nations in this section) were nations that had come against Israel and Judah, and God showed His love to His people by announcing His vengeance against their enemies.

2. (2-8) An army comes against Babylon.

“Lift up a banner on the high mountain, Raise your voice to them; Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles. I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones for My anger—Those who rejoice in My exaltation.”

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The LORD of hosts musters The army for battle.
They come from a far country, From the end of heaven—
The LORD and His weapons of indignation, To destroy the whole land.
Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.
Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man’s heart will melt, And they will be afraid.
Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.

- The LORD of hosts musters the army for battle: This is an army of judgment against the Babylonian Empire, prophesied decades before they were even a superpower. This powerful army is described vividly, with sights and sounds of battle presented.

- They will be amazed at one another: When Babylon fell suddenly by a clever, surprise attack by Cyrus, the citizens of the city were completely shocked (Daniel 5).

3. (9-16) The terrors of judgment upon Babylon.

Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.
For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.
“I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will hale the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.
Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.
It shall be as the hunted gazelle, And as a sheep that no man takes up;
Every man will turn to his own people, And everyone will flee to his own land.
Everyone who is found will be thrust through, And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.
Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; Their houses will be plundered
And their wives ravished.”

- The day of the LORD comes: Isaiah now speaks in the “prophetic tense,” having in mind both a near fulfillment (the day of judgment against the Babylonian Empire), and an ultimate fulfillment (the final day of judgment at the return of Jesus).
  o The day of the LORD is an important phrase, used some 26 times in the Bible. It speaks of not a single day of judgment, but of the season of judgment when the LORD sets things right. It is as if today is man’s day, but the LORD’s day is coming!

- The stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened: Several prophetic passages describe the cosmic disturbances that will precede and surround the return of Jesus (Joel 2:10, Revelation 6:12-14, Isaiah 34:4). In fact, Jesus was probably quoting or paraphrasing this passage from Isaiah in Matthew 24:29: Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
  o In the near fulfillment of the judgment of Babylon, they felt like the whole world was coming apart. In the ultimate fulfillment connected with the return of Jesus, the whole world will be falling apart.

- I will punish the world for its evil: This prophetic identification of Babylon with the world, ripe for ultimate judgment, is consistent through the Scriptures. We aren’t surprised that Isaiah has prophetically combined the vision of Babylon’s judgment with the judgment of the whole world for its evil.
  o Babylon is mentioned 287 times in the Scriptures, more than any other city except Jerusalem. Babylon was a literal city on the Euphrates river; right after the flood (Genesis 11:1-10), Babylon “Was the seat of the civilization that expressed organized hostility to God.” (Tenney, Interpreting Revelation). Babylon was later the capitol of the empire that cruelly conquered Judah. “Babylon, to them (the Jews), was the essence of all evil, the embodiment of cruelty, the foe of God’s people, and the lasting type of sin, carnality, lust and greed.” (Tenney) To those familiar with the Old Testament, the name Babylon is associated with organized idolatry,
blaspemv and the persecution of God’s people. In the New Testament, the world's system of the last days is characterized both religiously and commercially as Babylon (Revelation 17 and 18). Therefore, Babylon is a “Suitable representation… of the idolatrous, pagan world-system in opposition to God.” (Martin)

- **Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place:** Haggai 2:6 and Hebrews 12:25-28 echo this same thought. Since God can shake the heavens and move the earth, and since God Himself is unshakable, it makes a lot more sense to trust in God than even the ground we stand on and the air we breathe.

- **It shall be as the hunted gazelle:** The picture of God’s judgment, upon both Babylon and the world in general, is unrelenting. It is like one of the nature movies where the hunted gazelle is overtaken by the lion, and it utterly consumed. There is no escape from God’s unrelenting judgment.
  - If you take comfort in Jesus, remember that this is the same unrelenting judgment that was poured out upon Him on the cross. In this picture from Isaiah, **Jesus was the hunted gazelle**, and willingly made Himself so!

**B. Desolate Babylon.**

1. (17-22) **Babylon is laid waste.**

   “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver; And as for gold, they will not delight in it. Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; Their eye will not spare children.
   And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
   It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
   But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there.
   The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
   Her time is near to come, And her days will not be prolonged.”

- **I will stir up the Medes against them:** If this prophecy was made decades before the Babylonian Empire defeated the Assyrian Empire and became a superpower, it was even more before the time when the Medes came against the Babylonians, conquering them as instruments of God’s judgments.
  - It is specifically worded passages like this that drive skeptics of the Bible crazy, pushing them to regard the Isaiah as written after the events prophesied. But doesn’t God know the future, and know it specifically?

- **Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah:** “The phrase ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ suggests not only complete destruction but also its moral cause.” (Grogan)

- **It will never be inhabited:** The ancient city of Babylon, once conquered, will never be inhabited again. “When Cyrus conquered Babylon, he did not devastate the city. The walls were left standing until 518 B.C., and general desolation did not set in until the third century B.C. Babylon gradually fell into decay, and the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. Babylon became completely depopulated by the time of the Muslim conquest in the seventh century A.D., and to this day it lies deserted.” (Wolf)
  - This is also true in its ultimate fulfillment. When Jesus returns in glory and conquers the world system, He will rule the earth for 1,000 years. As He does, there will be no more “world system” in opposition to God as we know it. In this sense, the world system in opposition to God will never be inhabited again.

- **Owls… ostriches… wild goats… hyenas:** The animals mentioned here are impossible to identify precisely. The picture is of the darkness and confusion surrounding the fall of Babylon.
  - “The ‘wild goats’ (v. 21) are sometimes associated with demons in goat form that are called ‘satyrs’ (Lev. 17:7; 2 Chron. 11:15).” (Wolf)
  - What good is this to us? Calvin’s note applies a chapter like this: “Whenever therefore we behold the destruction of cities, the calamities of nations, and the overturning of kingdoms, let us call those predictions to
remembrance, that we may be humbled under God’s chastisements, may learn to gather wisdom from the affliction of others, and may pray for an alleviation of our own grief.”

**ISAIAH 14: BABYLON AND LUCIFER – Christ's Kingdom on Earth with Israel Restored**

- v.1-8 At the end of the age Israel will be restored and exalted.
- v.9-11 Satan will end up in Hell, and when you see him you will be amazed.
- v.12-14 Lucifer's five "I wills"—the beginning of sin and rebellion in the universe, as he opposed God's will (Ez. 28:12-14).
- By the Holy Spirit God will conform us back to our original state, by making us again into the image of Jesus Christ.
- v.15-17 Satan's end is destruction.
- v.24-27 The awesome sovereignty of God—His purpose and plans are always accomplished.

**A. The fall of the King of Babylon.**

1. (1-2) Judgment on Babylon means mercy on Israel.

   For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

   - **For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob**: Isaiah 13 ended with the desolation and gloom that would come upon Babylon. Since Babylon was Judah’s great enemy, any judgment on Babylon was an expression of mercy on Israel. So, Isaiah follows the pronouncement of judgment on Babylon with **the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel**.
     - **Will still choose Israel**: Sometimes we feel that God chose us, but if He had to choose again, He would change His choice! We almost feel that God is “stuck” with us now and would choose differently if He could. Here, the LORD reminds His children that He does still choose us and would choose us all over again!

   - **And settle them in their own land**: The promise of restoration to their own land was also important. The Babylonians had forcibly exiled most of the population of Judah, so the promise of return was precious.
     - “This promise had a measure of fulfillment when Israel was brought back from Babylon; and still is it true that, when God's people come to their worst, there is always something better before them. On the other hand, it is equally sure that, when sinners come to their best, there is always something terrible awaiting them.” (Spurgeon)

   - **The strangers will be joined with them**: The invitation to Gentiles was precious. The regathered and restored Israel would invite Gentiles to receive the goodness of God with them.

   - **They will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors**: In inviting the strangers to come and be joined with them, Israel eliminates their enemies. The ultimate way to conquer an enemy is to make them your friend!

2. (3-8) The joy of the earth at the fall of the king of Babylon.

   It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

   “How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased!
   The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers;
   He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke,
   He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders.
The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing.
Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, And the cedars of Lebanon,
Saying, ‘Since you were cut down, No woodsmen has come up against us.’

- In the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve: The LORD announces a day when He will give real rest to believing Israel. They will have rest from sorrow, from fear, and from their hard bondage.
  - This rest is the birthright of every believer in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28). Do you have rest from sorrow? Do you have rest from fear? Do you have rest from hard bondage?

- That you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon: In the day of restoration, the defeat and weakness of the king of Babylon will be exposed, and Israel will rejoice.
  - As this prophecy continues from the context of Isaiah 13, it is important that we remember that Isaiah has two aspects of prophetic fulfillment in mind. First, there is the immediate and partial fulfillment regarding the empire of Babylon and its king. Second, there is the distant and ultimate fulfillment regarding the spiritual empire of Babylon – the world system – and its king, Satan.
  - Some strongly disagree, and see this passage as only referring to the king of literal Babylon and having no reference to Satan at all. “The exposition of this passage, which some have given, as if it referred to Satan, has arisen from ignorance; for the context plainly shows that these statements must be understood in reference to the king of the Babylonians. But when passages of Scripture are taken up at random, and no attention is paid to the context, we need to wonder that mistakes of this kind frequently arise… But as these inventions have no probability whatever, let us pass by them as useless fables.” (Calvin) “But the truth is, the text speaks nothing at all concerning Satan nor his fall, nor the occasion of that fall, which many divines have with great confidence deduced from this text… This chapter speaks not of the ambition and fall of Satan, but of the pride, arrogance, and fall of Nebuchadnezzar.” (Clarke) But we disagree, knowing well that prophecy often has both a near and a distant fulfillment.
  - So, this proverb against the king of Babylon was, in a partial sense, in the mouth of the returning exiles when Babylon was finally conquered, and the people of Judah could return to the Promised Land. But in an ultimate sense, this proverb against the king of Babylon will be the mouth of God’s people when the world system and her king, Satan, are each conquered and destroyed.
  - Why does God tell His people – either in an immediate or an ultimate sense – the destiny of Babylon and her king? So that we can think and live now, knowing the ultimate fate of the world system and Satan. We often have said, “If I only knew then what I know now” once we see how things turn out. Here, God is allowing us the opportunity to know now what we will see then, and to allow it to affect our thinking and our actions.
  - The literary form of this passage is important. “Its form is really that of the funeral dirge, with the characteristic limping rhythm of a Hebrew lament, so plaintive and yet ominous to the sensitive ear… There is a considerable element of irony, so that the whole song becomes a taunt in the guise of a lament.” (Grogan)
    This is a funeral song that mocks and taunts the dead, who in fact receives no burial.

- How the oppressor has ceased: God want us to know now that the king of spiritual Babylon – Satan – that his days are numbered. There will come a day when his oppression has ceased, and when the LORD will break the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers.
  - Sometimes we get so weary and discouraged from Satan’s attack, it is almost as if we think his day will last forever. If we remember that one reason he works so hard is because even he knows his time is short, it is an encouragement to us. We can hang in there! We can out-last him!

- He who struck the people in wrath… who ruled the nations in anger: Both the king of literal Babylon and the king of spiritual Babylon were mighty, oppressive rulers over the people and the nations. But now, the one who once persecuted is himself persecuted and no one hinders, and as a result, the whole earth is at rest and quiet, and they even break forth into singing!
  - “The whole Near East rejoiced over Babylon’s fall because her rule was harsh and oppressive.” (Wolf)
Even the trees rejoice over the fall of the king of Babylon. This is true of the king of literal Babylon because the attacking kings cut down thousands of trees for both fuel and lumber, leaving Israel and Lebanon deforested. “Since the twelfth century B.C. the kings of Mesopotamia had imported lumber from Lebanon. Nebuchadnezzar used large supplies of such choice timers in his extensive building efforts in Babylon after 605 B.C.” (Wolf)

The trees also rejoice at the fall of the king of spiritual Babylon, because *the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* (Romans 8:21)

3. (9-11) Hell receives the fallen king of Babylon.

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’”


“…you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.”

Some debate if *Lucifer* is a name or a title; the word means morning star or day star.
referring to a brightly shining object in the heavens. Whether it is a title, or a name makes little difference; this once brightly shining king of Babylon is now **fallen from heaven**.

- The prophetic habit of speaking to both a near and a distant fulfillment, the prophet will sometimes speak _more_ to the near or _more_ to the distant. Here is a good example of Isaiah speaking _more_ to the distant, ultimate fulfillment. It is true that the king of literal Babylon shined brightly among the men of his day and fell as hard and as completely as if a man were to fall from heaven. But there was a far more brightly shining being who inhabited heaven and fell even more dramatically – the king of spiritual Babylon, Satan.

- **Fallen from heaven**: In fact, there are four falls of Satan, and this refers to his final, fourth fall.
  - Satan fell from glorified to profane (Ezekiel 28:14-16). This is what Jesus spoke of in Luke 10:18 when He says He _saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven_. This is the only fall of Satan that has already happened.
  - Satan will fall from having access to heaven (Job 1:12, 1 Kings 22:21, Zechariah 3:1) to restriction on the earth (Revelation 12:9).
  - Satan will fall from his place on the earth to bondage in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3).
  - Finally, as mentioned here in Isaiah 14:12, Satan will fall from the bottomless pit to the lake of fire, which we commonly know as _hell_ (Revelation 20:10).

- **Son of the morning**: This is a title of glory, beauty, and honor, which fit Lucifer well before his fall. The morning is glorious, and in Hebrew thinking, the _son of “x”_ is characterized by “x.” So, before his fall, Lucifer was characterized by the _glory of the morning_.
  - Jesus Himself is called the _Bright and Morning Star_ (Revelation 22:16). Satan, though a created being, had some of these glorious qualities in himself. No wonder that _Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light_ (2 Corinthians 11:14), deceiving many with his apparent glory, beauty, and goodness.

- **How you are cut down to the ground**: What a contrast! This being, once so high, once so shining, once so bright, is now _cut down to the ground_.

- **For you have said in your heart**: Here, God tells us the reason behind the fall of the king of Babylon, both literal and spiritual. The fall was prompted by something he _said_, even though he may have never said it with his lips – it was enough that he _said_ it in his _heart_.

- **I will**: The pride, the grasping selfish ambition, the self-will of the king of Babylon is powerfully expressed in five _I will_ statements. This is the essence of the self-focused and self-obsessed life.
  - _I will ascend into heaven_: “Heaven will be my home and my place of honor.”
  - _I will exalt my throne above the stars of God_: “I will be enthroned and will be exalted above all other angelic beings.”
  - _I will also sit on the mount of the congregation_: “I will sit in the place of glory and honor and attention.”
  - _I will ascend above the heights_: “I will continue to rise, even in heaven, until all see me in my bright shining glory.”
  - _I will be like the Most High_: “I will be glorious, and be set equal to God, far above all other created beings.”
  - We see in these statements not so much a desire to exalt one’s self above God, but the desire to exalt one’s self above one’s _peers_. From this passage, it seems that Satan’s desire was not so much to be above God, but to be honored and regarded as the highest _angel, above the [other] stars of God_, receiving the glory and attention one would receive being next to God, equal with God, _like the Most High_. We don’t have to want to be exalted higher than God to be like Satan. It is enough to want to be exalted above other people!
  - Lucifer was certainly a glorious angel (_day star, son of the morning_, and also called _the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty… the anointed cherub who covers_ in Ezekiel 28:12 and 14). Yet, there came a time when despite all his beauty and glory, he departed from the heart of God by wanting to exalt himself above his peers. Instead, the heart of Jesus says, “The status of equality with God is not something to hang on to. I will let it go. I will give up My reputation, be a servant, live humbly among men, and even
die an excruciating and humiliating death.” (Philippians 2:5-8) When Lucifer departed from this heart, he fell from glory.

- **I will be like the Most High**: What prompted Satan’s desire to exalt himself above all other creatures? What prompted the five I will statements?
  - Why did Lucifer rebel? Perhaps because he rejected God’s plan to create an order of being made in His image (Genesis 1:26), who would be beneath the angels in dignity (Hebrews 2:6-7a; 2 Peter 2:11) yet would be served by angels in the present (Hebrews 1:14; 2:7-8; Psalm 91:11-12) and would one day be lifted in honor and status above the angels (1 Corinthians 6:3; 1 John 3:2). Satan wanted to be the highest among all creatures, equal to God in glory and honor, and the plan to create man would eventually put men above angels. He was apparently able to persuade one-third of the angelic beings to join him in his rebellion (Revelation 12:3-4, 7, and 9).
  - If this is the case, it explains well Satan’s present strategy against man: to obscure the image of God in man through encouraging sin and rebellion, to cause man to serve him, and to prevent the ultimate glorification of man.

- **Yet you shall be brought down**: Despite Satan’s desire to exalt himself, he will not be exalted at all. Certainly, there is a sense in which he is exalted right now, but this is but an eye-blink in the scope of eternity. Satan, like all those who desire to exalt themselves, shall be brought down.
  - 1 Peter 5:6 expresses the true path to being exalted: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. In Mark 9:35, Jesus said If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.

**5. (16-17) The nations are amazed at the fall of the king of Babylon.**

“They who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying:
‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,
Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’

- Those who see you will gaze at you… “Is this the man who made the earth tremble… Who did not open the house of his prisoners”: When the king of literal Babylon fell, his weakness was exposed, and others were amazed that he once had so much power, and so many feared him. The same will happen when the king of spiritual Babylon falls. People will see him for what he really is and be amazed at how much power he actually had.

**6. (18-23) The amazing and bloody destruction of Babylon.**

“All the kings of the nations. All of them, sleep in glory. Everyone in his own house;
But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
You will not be joined with them in burial,
Because you have destroyed your land And slain your people.
The brood of evildoers shall never be named.
Prepare slaughter for his children Because of the iniquity of their fathers,
Lest they rise up and possess the land, And fill the face of the world with cities.”
“For I will rise up against them,” says the LORD of hosts,
“And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, And offspring and posterity,” says the LORD.
“I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, And marshes of muddy water;
I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,” says the LORD of hosts.
• **All the kings of the nations:** In this brief section, Isaiah brings his focus back more upon the king of literal Babylon. He notes the comfort and ease the other kings of the earth enjoy, but not the fallen king of Babylon, who is instead **cast out of your grave like an abominable branch.**
  
  - “But now a terrible thing has happened; he was not given the honorable burial deemed so important for monarchs. Even the common man regarded proper burial as essential.” (Wolf) Instead of a proper burial, the king of Babylon gets a bed of maggots and a blanket of worms! (Isaiah 14:11)
  - “The corpse of the king of Babylon would be thrown out like a rejected branch (neser). What a contrast to the Branch from the stump of Jesse that would bear abundant fruit! (Isaiah 11:1)” (Wolf)

• **I will sweep it with the broom of destruction:** The destruction of Babylon – both literal and spiritual – will be complete. The LORD will **cut off from Babylon the name and remnant.** There will not even be a **remnant** of Babylon left.
  
  - “Rubbish fit only for the broom of judgment – this was God’s verdict on mighty Babylon!” (Grogan)
  - “If God’s enemies have a bright day or two, it shall soon be showery weather with them. They may for the moment exult over God’s people, but he knows that their day of reckoning is coming.” (Spurgeon)

**B. Judgment to come on Assyria and the Philistines.**

1. (24-27) **The coming judgment on Assyria.**
   
   The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,
   
   “Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand:
   That I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot.
   Then his yoke shall be removed from them, And his burden removed from their shoulders.
   This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth,
   And this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.
   For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it?
   His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?”

• **Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass:** God’s thoughts are as good as actions. All God has to do is think a thought, and worlds can be created. What a comfort to know that God thinks good thoughts towards His people: *I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.* (Jeremiah 29:11)

• **I will break the Assyrian in My land:** God did this powerfully when the Assyrians invaded Judah. 2 Kings 19:35 describes how God simply sent the angel of the LORD and killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. When the people woke up, there were 185,000 dead Assyrian soldiers.

• **For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it:** God always accomplishes His purpose! His plan is never frustrated! Even when we have no trust at all in our own plan, we can fully trust God’s purpose!

2. (28-31) **The coming judgment on the Philistines.**
   
   This is the burden which came in the year that King Ahaz died.
   
   “Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, Because the rod that struck you is broken;
   For out of the serpent’s roots will come forth a viper, And its offspring will be a fiery flying serpent.
   The firstborn of the poor will feed, And the needy will lie down in safety;
   I will kill your roots with famine, And it will slay your remnant.
   Wail, O gate! Cry, O city! All you of Philistia are dissolved;
   For smoke will come from the north, And no one will be alone in his appointed times.”

• **Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia, because the rod that struck you is broken:** There was constant warfare between Israel and the Philistines, and so on many occasions, Israel was the **rod that struck** the Philistines. Now, when Israel and Judah are humbled, God does not want the Philistines to glory in it.
• **All you of Philista are dissolved**: God’s judgment will come against the Philistines also. They should not think that just because God was judging the Israelites, that they had somehow escaped.

• **All you of Philista are dissolved**: Some see in this a future judgment for “modern Philistines,” that is, Palestinians. The name “Palestine” is a Latin name from the name Philista, and this may be a prophetic warning to the Palestinians: do not rejoice in the suffering or downfall of Israel, because worse judgment will befall you.

3. (32) **A word for the messengers of the nation.**

What will they answer the messengers of the nation?

That the LORD has founded Zion, And the poor of His people shall take refuge in it.

• **What will one then answer the messengers of the nation**: In the midst of the judgment of the nations, what does God have to say to His people and to all the nations, when nations are being judged?

  o “No doubt the ‘envoys’ were Philistine diplomats sent to Jerusalem to encourage solidarity against the common Assyrian foe. As elsewhere, Isaiah’s message encouraged trust in God, not in alliances.” (Grogan)

• **The LORD has founded Zion**: This was God’s simple answer. When judgment comes, what is founded on the LORD is made evident. The storm comes and beats against the house and tests its foundation. When **the LORD has founded** something, it is evident to everyone in the midst of judgment.

• **The poor of His people shall take refuge in it**: This was the second part of God’s answer. God’s place of security is not for the rich and self-sufficient. It is for the **poor of His people**. It is the poor in spirit who find refuge in God’s city.
ISAIAH 15: THE BURDEN AGAINST MOAB – God’s Judgment Against Moab

• v.2 A song of great mourning. (Moab today is Jordan.)

A. A night invasion against Moab.

1. (1a) The burden against Moab.
   The burden against Moab.

   • Moab: The founder of the people of Moab was the son born of the incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters, when his daughters made Lot drunk, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:30-38). The Moabites settled in the plains to the south-east of Israel, in what is modern-day Jordan.

   • Moab: At times, the Moabites were great enemies of Israel. It was the Balak, king of Moab, who hired Balaam the prophet, hoping that he could curse Israel (Numbers 22-25). It was Eglon, king of Moab, who oppressed Israel in the days of the Judges (Judges 3:12-30). During the time of Saul and David, Israel established a firm control over Moab, but later kings of Israel were not always able to keep them under Israeli dominance.

   • Moab: At the same time, there was a Moabite connection with Israel. First, they were related to Israel because Lot was Abraham’s nephew. Because of this, God told Israel in Deuteronomy 2:9 that they were not to destroy Moab and take their land. As well, David, Israel’s greatest king, was one-quarter Moabite. His paternal grandmother Ruth was from Moab, and David entrusted his father and mother to the protection of the king of Moab when he was a fugitive from Saul (1 Samuel 22:3-4). For these reasons, there is a great deal of sadness and empathy on Isaiah’s part as he describes the coming judgment on Moab.

2. (1b-4) The cities and soldiers of Moab fall under a night attack.
   Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste And destroyed,  
   Because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste And destroyed,  
   He has gone up to the temple and Dibon, To the high places to weep.  
   Moab will wail over Nebo and over Medeba;  
   On all their heads will be baldness, And every beard cut off.  
   In their streets they will clothe themselves with sackcloth;  
   On the tops of their houses And in their streets Everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.  
   Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out, Their voice shall be heard as far as Jahaz;  
   Therefore the armed soldiers of Moab will cry out; His life will be burdensome to him.

   • Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste and destroyed… Kir of Moab… Heshbon and Elealeh: God announces coming judgment on Moab, against these cities.
     o “Most of these sites were originally part of Israel’s territory when Moses and Joshua defeated Sihon, King of the Amorites. All the cities north of the Arnon River… once belonged to the tribe of Reuben. Throughout the years, however, the Moabites had persistently pushed the Israelites out of these regions.” (Wolf)

   • He has gone up to the temple: The picture is of a Moabite man fleeing the destruction of his city, running to his temple and his pagan gods for protection and mourning (To the high places to weep).

   • They will clothe themselves with sackcloth… everyone will wail, weeping bitterly: At this invasion, and as a result of it, there will be great distress and mourning in Moab.
     o Jeremiah 48:1-13 also prophesies the judgment of Moab, and also gives the reason why. “Moab has been at ease from his youth; he has settled on his dregs, and has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into captivity. Therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent has not changed. Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I shall send him wine-workers who will tip him over and empty his vessels and break the bottles.” When we are at ease and are never “poured” from vessel to vessel, we “settle on the dregs” and are never refined. God uses the “pouring” process to refine us.
B. Refugees flee Moab.

1. (5-7) The flight of the refugees from Moab.
   “My heart will cry out for Moab; His fugitives shall flee to Zoar, Like a three-year-old heifer. For by the Ascent of Luhith They will go up with weeping; For in the way of Horonaim They will raise up a cry of destruction, For the waters of Nimrim will be desolate, For the green grass has withered away; The grass fails, there is nothing green. Therefore the abundance they have gained, And what they have laid up, They will carry away to the Brook of the Willows.”

- **His fugitives shall flee to Zoar**: The connection is interesting, because Zoar was the city Lot and his daughters escaped from, hiding in the mountains, before Lot’s daughters committed incest with their father, and brought forth the child Moab, the father of the Moabites.
  - Bultema on Zoar: “This town is called a heifer of three years old, apparently to indicate that it had never been under the yoke of strangers.”

- **The green grass has withered away**: The beautiful plains of Moab were wonderful grazing land. But now, under the hand of God’s judgment, the green grass has withered away.

- **Therefore the abundance they have gained… they will carry away to the Brook of the Willows**: The picture is of fleeing refugees, carrying with them all their possessions.

2. (8-9) The cry of the refugees from Moab.
   “For the cry has gone all around the borders of Moab, Its wailing to Eglaim And its wailing to Beer Elim. For the waters of Dimon will be full of blood; Because I will bring more upon Dimon, Lions upon him who escapes from Moab, And on the remnant of the land.”

- **The cry has gone all around the borders of Moab**: Their pain in the midst of judgment is evident to all. Everyone around the borders of Moab sees God’s judgment against them.

- **Lions upon him who escapes from Moab**: If the judgment of the night attack did not complete the work of judgment, God would send lions upon him who escapes. God will finish His work of judgment!
Background: Assyria has been arising as a strong, powerful military force. Isaiah is speaking to the nations that will be in battle with the Assyrians.

v.1-4 Far fulfillment: Prophetically God has one more 7-year cycle to fulfill in the history of the nation of Israel. The 69 seven-year cycles were fulfilled from the time of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of Jesus Christ: March 14, 445 BC to April 6, 32 AD, Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24-26).

Far fulfillment of prophecy unfolds at the point of Israel’s fleeing, as Jesus said in Mt. 24:15-16. According to Jesus, when the Antichrist demands worship as God, then flee Jerusalem. In Revelation God tells how He gives Israel the wings of an eagle, to be carried into the wilderness where she is to be nourished 3 1/2 years (Rev.12:14). This prophecy will unfold when they flee to Petra.

v.5 The outcome: Jesus comes and sits on the throne and judges righteously-1,290 days from the day the Antichrist comes and declares he is God (Daniel 12:11).

v.6-12 Immediate condition of Moab is pride. Their vineyards are to be destroyed by conquering armies.

v.13-14 Within three years Assyria conquered Moab.

A. Counsel to Moab.

1. (1-2) Send the lamb...

   Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, From Sela to the wilderness,  
   To the mount of the daughter of Zion.  
   For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest;  
   So shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.

   Send the lamb to the ruler of the land: The idea behind this is that Moab should resume their bringing of tribute to Jerusalem, thereby submitting themselves to God again. This kind of tribute is described in 2 Kings 3:4-5, where Mesha, King of Moab, who once paid tribute to Israel, stopped doing so when King Ahab of Israel died. Here, Isaiah counsels Moab to resume this payment of tribute.

   As a wandering bird thrown out of the nest: Isaiah paints a powerful picture of the helpless, confused state of Moab under the hand of God’s judgment. They are like a wandering bird thrown out of the nest, confused, weak, and vulnerable. Their only recourse is to submit themselves to Jerusalem and its King again.

2. (3) Isaiah’s word to Judah as she observes Moab under judgment.

   “Take counsel, execute judgment; Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day;  
   Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes.

   Hide the outcasts: Here, in the compassion of his prophecy, Isaiah pleads with the rulers of Judah to hide the outcasts of Moab. Again, his great sympathies are probably due to the connection between Moab and the royal house of David.

   Do not betray him who escapes: Isaiah wanted Judah to be a place of refuge and protection for Moab under judgment. This is exactly what the church should be, when people are under the strong hand of the LORD in the world. We should be a place that will hide the outcasts and receive him who escapes, never to betray them.

3. (4-5) A plea for refuge among Moab in the day of the righteous King.

   “Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler.  
   For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land.  
   In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David,  
   Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness.”

   Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab: This is a sudden and curious change of focus. In Isaiah 16:3, Judah was counseled to receive the outcasts of Moab. Now, Moab is asked to receive the outcasts of Judah. Bultema thinks that Isaiah 16:4-5 is an end-times prophecy of how Moab will be a place of refuge for Jews escaping the fury of the Antichrist after the abomination of desolation.
B. The pain of the prophet.

1. (6-8) The pain in Moab at the judgment of God.

We have heard of the pride of Moab—He is very proud—Of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath; But his lies shall not be so. Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab; Everyone shall wail. For the foundations of Kir Hareseth you shall mourn; Surely they are stricken. For the fields of Heshbon languish, And the vine of Sibmah; The lords of the nations have broken down its choice plants, Which have reached to Jazer And wandered through the wilderness. Her branches are stretched out. They are gone over the sea.

• We have heard of the pride of Moab: Here is the only place where the sin of Moab is detailed. It is significant that Moab’s sin was pride, because they were a fairly small and insignificant nation. We can easily understand how the empires of Babylon or Assyria might fall through pride, but we may be slower to see pride in smaller things. But the small can be just as consumed with pride as the great!
  o “Like Assyria and Babylon, Moab was extremely proud. Isaiah piled term upon term to show that the nation’s relative insignificance did not make it immune to pride.” (Wolf)

• The pride of Moab: This pride is also referred to in the prophecy of judgment found in Jeremiah 48:1-13. God would judge the proud nation, so that Moab shall wail for Moab. The Moabites took great pride in their vineyards, but God used the lords of the nations to break them down and to destroy everything Moab took pride in.
  o “Even though Moab had been advised to seek help from Zion’s King, the seer foresaw at the same time the futility of this advice on account of Moab’s pride. Whenever pride is not broken by humility, it will have to be broken by justice.” (Bultema)

2. (9-12) Isaiah’s sorrow of heart for Moab.

Therefore I will bewail the vine of Sibmah, With the weeping of Jazer; I will drench you with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh; For battle cries have fallen Over your summer fruits and your harvest. Gladness is taken away, And joy from the plentiful field; In the vineyards there will be no singing, Nor will there be shouting; No treaders will tread out wine in the presses; I have made their shouting cease. Therefore my heart shall resound like a harp for Moab, And my inner being for Kir Heres. And it shall come to pass, When it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, That he will come to his sanctuary to pray; But he will not prevail.

• I will bewail the vine of Sibmah... I will drench you with my tears: As Isaiah prophesied of the judgment coming upon Moab, he wasn’t happy. He was not pleased that judgment was coming upon a rival nation. As far as he was concerned, Gladness is taken away, and joy from the plentiful field. In fact, Isaiah would not even let others be happy at a time like this: I have made their shouting cease. He hurts so badly for Moab that he says, “my heart shall resound like a harp for Moab.”

• When it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he will come to his sanctuary and pray; but he will not prevail: At the same time, Isaiah knew that Moab looked in the wrong places for answers. The prophet knew the pain of seeing calamity come, and watching people turn to the wrong places in the midst of the destruction.
o This was the same attitude Jesus had when He wept for Jerusalem: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”* (Matthew 23:37-39) When Jesus saw the desolation to come upon the city that rejected Him, He did not rejoice. Jesus also knew that in the midst of their calamity, they would turn to themselves instead of the LORD.

3. (13-14) Three years until judgment comes on Moab.

This is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning Moab since that time. But now the LORD has spoken, saying, “Within three years, as the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant will be very small and feeble.”

- **Within three years**: Isaiah, speaking for the LORD, announces that judgment will come upon Moab in this time period. The judgment will humble Moab: **The glory of Moab will be despised.**

- **Within three years**: Since we don’t know the exact date of Isaiah’s prophecy, it is impossible to independently verify the accuracy of the **within three years** prediction. But in the phrasing **this is the word of which the LORD has spoken concerning Moab since that time**, we gather that most of Isaiah 15-16 was given at an earlier time, and the **within three years** aspect was added at the right time, at a later date.
  
  o “Apparently King Sargon of Assyria conducted a major operation against the Arabians in 715 B.C., and he may have devastated Moab en route to encountering those tribes.” (Wolf)
  
  o God announced the time frame for His judgment to be a **warning** to Moab and an invitation for their humble repentance (it wasn’t unthinkable that this prophecy would get to the Moabites somehow). It was a **lesson** for God’s people on how the LORD judges the proud. Finally, it **assured** God’s people that the LORD would deal with other, worse, nations as He also dealt with Israel.
**ISAIAH 17: THE BURDEN AGAINST SYRIA AND ISRAEL – Damascus and Her Allies Fall**

- **v. 1-7** All the inhabitants are destroyed by Assyria, but those who remain turn to God.
- **v. 8-11** Because the Israelites had forgotten God and gone after false idols, God allowed Assyria to be used as His tool to punish them.
- **v. 12-14** Foreshadow of God's judgment against Assyria.

**A. A prophecy of doom upon Syria and Israel.**

**1. (1-6) The LORD speaks to Damascus and Ephraim.**

The burden against Damascus.

“Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, And it will be a ruinous heap.
The cities of Aroer are forsaken;
They will be for flocks Which lie down, and no one will make them afraid.
The fortress also will cease from Ephraim, The kingdom from Damascus, And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of the children of Israel,” Says the LORD of hosts.

“In that day it shall come to pass That the glory of Jacob will wane,
And the fatness of his flesh grow lean.
It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain, And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers heads of grain In the Valley of Rephaim.
Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it, Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two or three olives at the top of the uppermost bough, Four or five in its most fruitful branches,”
Says the LORD God of Israel.

- **Damascus:** This is one of the great cities of the ancient world, and the capital of the ancient nation of Syria. Syria is positioned to the immediate north-east of Israel, and the northern tribes, around the Sea of Galilee, had constant contact and interaction with Syria.

- **Behold, Damascus will cease from being a city, and it will be an ruinous heap:** Damascus was one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world, but the coming Assyrian judgment would reduce it to a heap of ruins.

- **The fortress will also cease from Ephraim:** As is often the case, the northern kingdom of Israel is referred to by its dominate tribe, Ephraim. At this time, Israel and Syria were closely aligned against Judah. Since they are such close friends, God will announce His judgment against Ephraim, against Israel, at the same time He speaks to Syria! 2 Kings 15:29 and 16:9 describe the fulfillment of this prophecy.

  - Israel’s modern interaction with Syria is interesting, and a potential hot-spot for future conflict. When Syria occupied the Golan Heights, a strategically crucial high plateau above the whole region of Galilee, Israel was under constant threat of invasion and shelling from Syrian placements on the Golan. But when Syria eventually made a full-on invasion of Israel from the Golan, Israel miraculously beat them back and captured the Golan Heights. Now, Syria insists that this strategically crucial region is theirs and must be given back. The Israelis are adamant that they will never give back land that belongs to them and is necessary for their security. In the meantime, Syria fights Israel through terrorism and their support of militia groups in Lebanon. The dream of a “Greater Syria,” encompassing Syria, Lebanon, and parts of northern Israel is a powerful influence in the Syrian leadership.

**2. (7-9) The humble response to the judgment of the LORD.**

In that day a man will look to his Maker, And his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel.
He will not look to the altars, The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his fingers have made, Nor the wooden images nor the incense altars.
In that day his strong cities will be as a forsaken bough And an uppermost branch,
Which they left because of the children of Israel; And there will be desolation.

- **In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel:** In the midst of such severe judgment, some will respond as they should, with humble respect for God.
• **He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands:** One of God’s purposes in judgment is to turn our focus away from our idols and the things we have trusted in instead of Him. This speaks of this purpose being fulfilled.

• **His strong cities will be as a forsaken bough:** In judgment, God would strip away from Israel every wrong thing they might have trusted in – pagan altars, wooden images, incense altars, and even their strong cities would give no protection. Their only hope was in the LORD.
  
  o “When the Israelites came into the land of Canaan many years before, the strong cities of the land were abandoned to them… However, the situation has changed, and the same cities will be abandoned by the Israelites themselves as they are under the judging hand of God.” (Grogan)

3. **(10-11) God’s judgment will bring man’s work to nothing.**

   Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation,
   And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold,
   Therefore you will plant pleasant plants And set out foreign seedlings;
   In the day you will make your plant to grow, And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish;
   But the harvest will be a heap of ruins In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.

• **You will plant pleasant plants… you will make your seed to flourish; but the harvest will be a heap of ruins.**

   One aspect of the LORD’s judgment against Israel will be to bring their hard work to nothing. They will work hard to plant and grow crops (both literally and figuratively), but the harvest will be a heap of ruins.

   o This can be one of the most devastating aspects of the LORD’s judgment. Haggai 1:6 speaks of this work of the LORD: *You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.* How much better it is to be listening to Jesus, and to have our service directed and blessed by Him (Luke 5:1-10).

• **Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation:** This was why the LORD brought this judgment on Israel. In one way, this does not seem like a “great” sin. After all, why does God need us to remember Him? Why can’t we just leave Him alone, and He leave us alone? It is a sin to forget the God of your salvation because He created you, and because He is the God of your salvation. If you forget Him, you can forget about your salvation.

   o Satan does not need to make us bank robbers or murderers to destroy us. It is quite enough to simply make us forget. We can forget because of sleepiness, we can forget because of a lack of attention, we can forget because we are distracted. Satan doesn’t care much about how he does it, but he does want us to forget the God of our salvation.

   o “We are thus reminded that we ought not to be so impatient in enduring chastisements, which cure us of the fearfully dangerous disease of apostasy.” (Calvin)

B. **God will destroy the nation that brings the doom upon Syria and Israel.**

1. **(12-13a) The rush of the nations against Syria and Israel.**

   Woe to the multitude of many people Who make a noise like the roar of the seas,
   And to the rushing of nations That make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!
   The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters.

• **The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters:** God will use other nations to bring judgment against Syria and Israel. They will come against them like a flash flood that can’t be stopped.

2. **(13b-14) God’s judgment against the nations that rush against Israel.**

   But God will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
   And be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
   Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
   Then behold, at eventide, trouble! And before the morning, he is no more,
   This is the portion of those who plunder us, And the lot of those who rob us.
• **God will rebuke them:** When God brings the rush of nations against Israel, it doesn’t mean that the nations He uses to judge will be walking right with Him and exempt from judgment. Instead, **God will rebuke them and they will flee far away.** God can use one sinner to judge another, and then judge the sinner He just used!

• **This is the portion of those who plunder us:** This is a comforting principle: Even in the midst of judgment, God shows mercy. As bad as it was going to be for Israel, it could have been worse. Instead, God will allow it for a time, then He would rebuke those attacking Israel. Israel was not at the mercy of circumstances or their enemies; they were at the mercy of God.
ISAIAH 18: CONCERNING ETHIOPIA – Woe to Ethiopia

“To us, this brief chapter is the most difficult one of all the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah” (Bultema).
“Although the prophecy is a short one, it probably ranks as the most obscure chapter in this entire section” (Wolf).
“This is one of the most obscure prophecies in the whole Book of Isaiah” (Clarke).

- v.1-2 Ethiopia had come to Jerusalem to make a confederacy against Assyria. God did not want this confederacy.
- v.3-7 Isaiah is saying that God will cut down Assyria. There is no need to have a confederacy.

A. No need to make an alliance with Ethiopia.

1. (1-2) A word directed to Ethiopia.

Woe to the land shadowed with buzzing wings, Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, Which sends ambassadors by sea, Even in vessels of reed on the waters, saying, “Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth of skin, To a people terrible from their beginning onward, A nation powerful and treading down, Whose land the rivers divide.”

- Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia: In the days of Isaiah, Ethiopia was a major world power, ruling Egypt and a chief rival to Assyria. Since Judah was caught in the middle between this conflict, it might make sense for Judah to align herself with Ethiopia against Assyria.
  - “In 715 B.C. an Ethiopian named Shabako gained control of Egypt as founder of the twenty-fifth dynasty. Ethiopian domination continued until 633 B.C. when a native Egyptian regained the throne.” (Wolf)
  - “The term designates a much larger area than present-day Ethiopia – an area including the Sudan and Somalia.” (Grogan)

- Shadowed with buzzing wings: The Nile Valley is famous for its many whirring insects.

- Which sends ambassadors by sea: The scene pictures Ethiopian ambassadors who come to make an alliance with Judah and the other nations of the region against Assyria.

- Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth of skin: As the Ethiopian ambassadors invite Judah to rebel against the Assyrians, they ask Judah to send swift messengers back to Ethiopia (to a nation tall and smooth of skin... a nation powerful), and the Ethiopians would hope to hear that Judah has rebelled against Assyria and aligned itself with Ethiopia and Egypt.

2. (3-6) The LORD rejects the offer of help from the Ethiopians.

All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth: When he lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see it; And when he blows a trumpet, you hear it. For so the LORD said to me, “I will take My rest, And I will look from My dwelling place Like clear heat in sunshine, Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.” For before the harvest, when the bud is perfect And the sour grape is ripening in the flower, He will both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks And take away and cut down the branches. They will be left together for the mountain birds of prey And for the beasts of the earth; The birds of prey will summer on them, And all the beasts of the earth will winter on them.

- The LORD said to me, “I will take My rest”: The LORD God rejects the alliance with Ethiopia, because He is more than able to deal with the Assyrians Himself. He can take His rest without the help of the Ethiopians. If God wanted to muster an army against Assyria, He would have raised a banner or sounded a trumpet. He is fully able to do it and would do it when the time is right.
Significantly, there is no rebuke or judgment against Ethiopia announced in this chapter. It wasn’t as if God was going to judge Ethiopia for their offer of an alliance. Perhaps the idea is that it is a well-intentioned but unnecessary offer. Instead, Judah was to trust in the LORD!

- **He will both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks and take away and cut the branches:** God can “prune” Assyria all by Himself. He will destroy the Assyrian army so completely that *they will be left together for the mountain birds of prey.*

**B. Ethiopians come and worship God.**

1. *(7) The Ethiopians come to Mount Zion.*

   In that time a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts
   From a people tall and smooth of skin, And from a people terrible from their beginning onward,
   A nation powerful and treading down, Whose land the rivers divide—
   To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, To Mount Zion.

- **A present will be brought to the LORD of hosts:** Isaiah announces a day when Ethiopians will come and worship the LORD and bring gifts to Him *to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, to Mount Zion.*

- **To the place of the name of the LORD:** Instead of Israelite messengers bringing news to Ethiopia of an alliance against the Assyria, the day will come when Ethiopians will come and worship at **Mount Zion.**

   - This may have been fulfilled in some way close to Isaiah’s time. But we know it was fulfilled in Acts 8:26-40, when an Ethiopian came to worship the LORD at Jerusalem, and then trusted in Jesus at the preaching of Philip. It was also fulfilled in the strong Ethiopian church the first few centuries, and the enduring Ethiopian church today.
ISAIAH 19: THE BURDEN AGAINST EGYPT – Egypt’s Decline and Collapse

- v.1-5 Civil war in Egypt.
- v.6-11 Prediction of Aswan Dam and the ecological disasters created by the damming of the Nile River.
- v.21-22 Egypt will become a religious center for the worship of the Lord.
- v.24-25 In the day of the Lord, Egypt, Assyria (modern-day Iraq), and Israel will be joined together in harmony.

A. God strikes Egypt.

1. (1-4) The LORD strikes Egypt by giving them over to civil war and submission to a cruel master.

The burden against Egypt.
Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, And will come into Egypt;
The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.
“I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; Everyone will fight against his brother,
And everyone against his neighbor, City against city, kingdom against kingdom.
The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst;
And they will consult the idols and the charmers, The mediums and the sorcerers.
And the Egyptians I will give Into the hand of a cruel master.
And a fierce king will rule over them,” Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

- The LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt: Egypt was one of the great powers of the ancient world, and being situated immediately to the south of Israel, it was an empire that Israel constantly had to reckon with. Many times, Egypt had been the enemy of Israel, at times Egypt had been a refuge for Israel, and sometimes Egypt offered a tempting but ungodly alliance to Israel. In this chapter, the LORD presents both a prophecy against and for Egypt.

- The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence: Egypt was known for its worship of many, many different gods. Through His hand of judgment, the LORD will “knock over” these many different gods.
  - “In Isaiah’s day there was no other nation on earth that was so much in the grip of superstition and filthy idolatry as Egypt. Apes, cats, frogs, crocodiles, lizards – everything was venerated by them.” (Bultema)
  - At the time of the Exodus, when the Pharaoh of Egypt would not release the children of Israel from their captivity, the LORD also made the idols of Egypt to totter at His presence. He directed each of the plagues against a particular idol of Egypt.
    - He knocked over the god Khnum, the guardian of the Nile, the god Hapi, the spirit of the Nile, and the god Osiris (who had the Nile as his bloodstream), when the waters were turned to blood.
    - He knocked over the goddess Heqt, the frog-goddess of fertility, with the plague of frogs.
    - He knocked over the goddess Hathor, a cow-like mother goddess, with the plague on livestock.
    - He knocked over the god Imhotep, the god of medicine, with the plague of boils.
    - He knocked over the god Nut, the sky goddess, with the plague of hail.
    - He knocked over the whole system of Egyptian worship of their gods with loathsome lice and swarms of insects.
    - He knocked over the god Seth, thought to be the protector of crops, with the plague of locusts.
    - He knocked over the god Ra, thought to be the sun god, with the plague of darkness.
    - He knocked over Osiris, the Egyptian god thought to be the giver of life, and the supposed deity of Pharaoh himself, with the plague against the firstborn. God made all the idols of Egypt to totter at His presence before, and Isaiah tells us He will do it again.

- I will set Egyptians against Egyptians: Isaiah prophesies a coming civil war in Egypt, which was indirectly the hand of God’s judgment against them. “Not many years after this time it was divided into twelve several kingdoms, between whom there were many and cruel wars, as is related by the historians of those times.” (Poole)
• **I will destroy their counsel, and they will consult the idols and the charmers:** When a nation is under the judgment of God, He often seems to “remove” sound counsel and wisdom from their leaders, and they turn to vain, pagan things for wisdom instead (idioms and the charmers).
  
  o “Egypt was renowned for her class of wise men (1 Kings 4:30), but they would not be able to cope with this judgment from the Lord.” (Wolf)

• **The Egyptians I will give into the hand of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them:** God may judge a nation through their leadership in two ways. First, by removing competent leadership (I will destroy their counsel). Second, by giving them cruel and oppressive rulers. This is a curse and a judgment to any people!

2. (5-10) **The LORD strikes Egypt by drying up the Nile, thus wrecking their economy.**

The waters will fail from the sea, And the river will be wasted and dried up.
The rivers will turn foul; The brooks of defense will be emptied and dried up;
The reeds and rushes will wither.
The papyrus reeds by the River, by the mouth of the River, And everything sown by the River, 
Will wither, be driven away, and be no more. 
The fishermen also will mourn; All those will lament who cast hooks into the River, 
And they will languish who spread nets on the waters. 
Moreover those who work in fine flax And those who weave fine fabric will be ashamed; 
And its foundations will be broken. All who make wages will be troubled of soul.

• **The river will be wasted and dried up:** The Nile River was the key to Egypt’s agriculture and economy. For it to suffer a severe drought or lowering would have a devastating effect on the lives of Egyptians. God promises this will happen as a judgment against Egypt.

• **The rivers will turn foul:** Because of this ecological disaster, the workers of Egypt would cry out. The fishermen also will mourn... they will languish who spread nets on the waters... those who weave fine fabric will be ashamed... all who make wages will be troubled of soul.

3. (11-15) **The LORD strikes Egypt by sending them with foolish counsel.**

Surely the princes of Zoan are fools; Pharaoh’s wise counselors give foolish counsel. 
How do you say to Pharaoh, “I am the son of the wise, The son of ancient kings?”
Where are they? Where are your wise men?
Let them tell you now, And let them know what the LORD of hosts has purposed against Egypt. 
The princes of Zoan have become fools; The princes of Noph are deceived; 
They have also deluded Egypt, Those who are the mainstay of its tribes. 
The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.
Neither will there be any work for Egypt, Which the head or tail, 
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.

• **Surely the princes of Zoan are fools; Pharaoh’s wise counselors give foolish counsel:** As the LORD strikes Egypt, not only does He give them cruel rulers, but He also gives those cruel rulers foolish counsel.

• **Where are your wise men? Let them tell you now, and let them know what the LORD of hosts has purposed against Egypt:** Here, the LORD reminds us of what true wisdom is. It is knowing what the LORD of hosts has purposed. True wisdom isn’t knowing all kind of facts and plans and strategies. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10).

4. (16-17) **When God strikes Egypt, there will be terror among the people.**

In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it. And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it.
• **Because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts:** All the LORD will need to do is to wave His hand, and the people of Egypt will respond in terror, they will be afraid and fear.

• **The land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt:** This is a switch! For thousands of years, the land of Judah lay submissively in the shadow of the great Egyptian Empire. The LORD prophesies a day when Judah will be more mighty than Egypt, and **the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt.** Of course, this is fulfilled today, when Israel has military superiority over Egypt.

**B. God saves Egypt**

1. **(18-22) Egypt turns to the LORD.**

   In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

• **Five cities in the land of Egypt** will become more identified with the LORD than with Egypt. A better translation of the phrase **City of Destruction** may be, **City of the Sun,** which was a well-known Egyptian city known as **Heliopolis.**

• Egypt will worship the LORD, with **an altar to the LORD,** and will memorialize God’s great works with a **pillar to the LORD.** When Egypt is brought under this oppression, they will **cry to the LORD because of the oppressors,** and then **He will send them a Savior and a Mighty one, and He will deliver them.**

   o **In the time of the Maccabees,** the high priest Onias IV was forced to flee to Egypt, and there he built a temple that was similar to the one in Jerusalem. Some commentators relate the ‘altar’ of verse 19 to this structure.” (Wolf) This may relate to the **City of the Sun** prophecy, because the temple Onias IV built was in the province of Heliopolis.

   o **He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One:** “The text says the Savior is a great one. Oh! I wanted a great Savior. A little Savior would not have answered my turn, for great sin wanted a great atonement, and my hard heart wanted great grace to soften it down.” (Spurgeon)

• **The Egyptians will know the LORD in that day:** There did come to be a widespread knowledge of the LORD in Egypt. In the days of Jesus, more than a million Jews lived in Egypt. In the early days of Christianity, there was a strong, vital church in Egypt for more than 600 years.

   o This prophecy may have additional fulfillment during the Millennium, but it certainly has been fulfilled in history. In the fourth century, the great theologian Athanasius, wrote this from Egypt: “The thing is happening before our very eyes, here in Egypt; and thereby another prophecy is fulfilled, for at no other time have the Egyptians ceased from their false worship save when the Lord of all, riding as on a cloud, came down here in the body and brought the error of idols to nothing and won over everybody to Himself and through Himself to the Father.” (From On the Incarnation, cited by Grogan)

   o The altar and sacrifice described most likely are fulfilled during the Millennium, when sacrifice will be allowed as a memorial of Jesus’ great work, but never as atonement. “For just as restored Israel will bring blood sacrifices unto the Lord to keep in remembrance of the all-sufficient blood sacrifice of Christ, so this may also take place in Egypt on that memorable day.” (Bultema)

• **He will strike and heal it:** Whatever judgment God allowed, His design was that people would repent and return to Him so they could be healed.
2. (23-25) An amazing peace between three formerly hostile enemies.

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”

- **Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria**: God promises the day will come when there will be peace between Israel, Egypt, and Assyria. There will be trade and travel between the three nations (a highway from Egypt to Assyria). In that day, the LORD will bless all three nations.

- **Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria, the work of My hands, and Israel is My inheritance**: What an amazing work of redemption! This shows that God’s salvation will extend to the nations, and He will call forth His own even from Egypt and Assyria, not only from Israel.
  - It was powerful to say this of Egypt; it was almost unbelievable to say it about Assyria, the nation Jonah hated so much. “In Isaiah’s day, Assyria was the one power feared by every little nation in the Fertile Crescent. The calculated brutality of the Assyrians probably made them more of an object of general hatred than any other nation of antiquity. The Egyptians, Babylonians, and Persians were all capable of inhuman acts, but the Assyrian record for callous cruelty is difficult to parallel.” (Grogan)
  - “Who, standing amid the terrors of the plagues, could ever have supposed that Egypt would be addressed as ‘my people’? Who could have thought that Assyria, the tyrant persecutor, would ever be called ‘the work of my hands’? Yet these are the trophies and triumphs of divine grace.” (Meyer)
  - “But Israel is always his inheritance. There he finds rest and home, for the Lord’s portion is his people. Oh to know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints!” (Meyer) We are also the Lord’s inheritance; in Ephesians 1:18, Paul prayed that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. God’s people are His riches and inheritance and glory!

- **Blessed is Egypt My people**: From this passage regarding the conversion of Egypt, Spurgeon drew the following points (from his sermon, The Fruits of Grace).
  - God’s grace often comes to the very worst of men.
  - God’s grace sends a Savior.
  - Grace changes men’s language.
  - God’s grace sets men on holy service.
  - God’s grace teaches men to pray.
  - God’s grace instructs men.
  - Grace makes even trouble a blessing to a man.
  - God’s grace changes the relations of men to each other.
  - God’s grace makes men to be blessed, and to be a blessing to others.
ISAIAH 20: DON’T TRUST IN EGYPT – Impending Conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia

- v.1-6 Assyria conquers and leads their captives away in shame. This is why Isaiah told Israel not to look to a confederacy to stand against the Assyrians, but to look to the Lord.

A. Isaiah acts out a sign.

1. (1) The political setting for the sign.
   - In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it,
   - In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod: This describes the time when the army of Assyria conquered the Philistine city of Assyria. Isaiah’s sign is a response to this victory of Assyria.
     - This invasion has a concrete marking point in secular history: 711 B.C.
   - He fought against Ashdod and took it: The Philistines were both neighbors and thorns to Israel, and the fall of Ashdod would certainly make Judah think, “We’re next. We need protection.”

2. (2) The LORD gives Isaiah a sign to act out.
   - At the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.” And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.
   - Remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet: Before this, Isaiah wore an outer garment of sackcloth – clothes of mourning. Now, God tells him to remove his outer garment of sackcloth, and to take his sandals off.
     - “God would sometimes have his prophets to add to their word a visible sign, to awaken people’s minds to a more serious consideration of the matters proposed to them.” (Poole)
     - And he did so, walking naked and barefoot: We shouldn’t think that Isaiah was nude, completely without clothing. Instead, he only wore the inner garment customary in that day – sort of like wearing only your underwear or a nightshirt. The message wasn’t nudity, it was complete poverty and humiliation. Isaiah dressed as the poorest and most destitute would dress.
       - “One need not imagine that Isaiah walked around stripped for the entire three years or that Ezekiel lay on his side for 390 days without getting up (Ezek. 4:9). Perhaps part of each day was used for those designated purposes.” (Wolf)
       - “Not stark naked, but stripped as a prisoner, his mantle or upper garment cast off.” (Trapp)
       - “Other prophets were asked to go through equally difficult experiences as signs to Israel. Hosea endured a trying marriage, and Ezekiel’s wife died as an illustration for the nation (Ezek. 24:16-24).” (Wolf)

B. The meaning of the sign.

1. (3-4) The sign announces the judgment and humiliation of Egypt.
   - Then the LORD said, “Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.”
   - My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years as a sign and wonder against Egypt: Under the command of the LORD, Isaiah dressed in this poor and humble way for three years. It was a message against Egypt, because the king of Assyria would lead away the Egyptians as prisoners.
   - To the shame of Egypt: As the Assyrians took the Egyptians captive, they would humiliate them by stripping them and leading them away as prisoners. This would all be to the shame of Egypt.
“So dealeth the devil with all his wretched captives, whom he driveth away hellward, naked a barefoot with their buttocks uncovered, the shame of their nakedness exposed to public view for want of the white raiment of Christ’s righteousness that they might be clothed.” (Trapp)

2. (5-6) The sign’s message to Judah.

“Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, ‘Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?’”

- **They shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory**: When God judges Ethiopia and Egypt, it will be evident how foolish it was for Judah to look to them for protection against Assyria.
  - Whenever our *expectation* is in something wrong, or our *glory* is in something wrong, the LORD will find a way to make those things disappoint us. Judah set their *expectation* on Ethiopia, and looked to Egypt for *glory*, but now they are left afraid and ashamed.
  - “There is no place of security for the people of God, other than that to be found in the rule of God. All expectation not centred in God, is doomed to disappointment and discomfiture.” (Morgan)

- **How shall we escape**: The LORD allowed Judah to be backed into a corner, caught between two mighty Empires (Egypt and Assyria), without being able to trust either one. There was no *escape* – except in the LORD.
  - Because of the glorious promise of revival and restoration among Egypt in Isaiah 19, Judah might have been even more tempted to say, “Well, we can trust in Egypt. They are all going to come to the LORD someday anyway!” But with the dramatic three-year sign, Isaiah shows Judah how vain it was to make Egypt their *expectation* or *glory*. 

ISAIAH 21: BURDENS AGAINST BABYLON, EDOM AND ARABIA – Four Burdens Anticipating the Medes’ Invasion

- v.1-2 Prediction of Medes and Elam (Persia) destroying Babylon.
- v.3-4 Isaiah’s physical reaction to the vision.
- v.4-10 Circumstances of the invasion and fall of Babylon. Far fulfillment: destruction in Rev.14:8.
- v.13-17 Saudi Arabia will take up the side of Israel when Russia begins to invade (Ez. 38:13). Immediate prediction: within one year Arabia was conquered by Sargon (716 BC).

A. The burden against Babylon.

1. (1-2) An army from Persia marches on Babylon.

The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.
As whirlwinds in the South pass through, So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.
A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals treacherously, And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media! All its sighing I have made to cease.

- A burden against the Wilderness of the Sea: Babylon is called the Wilderness of the Sea because the great plain of Babylon was divided with lakes and marshes, so it was referred to as a “sea.”
  - “And the title of the sea might well be given to the waters of Babylon, because of the great plenty and multitude of them… the name of sea being given by the Hebrews to ever great collection of waters.” (Poole)
- Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media: Elam and Media are the ancient names for the peoples of Persia, modern day Iran. The Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian Empire, and Isaiah here prophetically sees their armies marching on Babylon.
  - “God oft maketh use of one tyrant to punish another; as here he stirreth up the Persians to plunder and waste the Babylonians. So the Persians were afterwards in like sort punished by the Macedonians, the Macedonians by the Romans, those Romans by the Huns, Vandals, Lombards, Saracens, Turks; all whom Christ shall destroy at his last coming.” (Trapp)

2. (3-10) The fall of Babylon.

Therefore my loins are filled with pain;
Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when I heard it; I was dismayed when I saw it.
My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me; The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.
Prepare the table, Set a watchman in the tower, Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes, Anoint the shield!
For thus has the Lord said to me:
“Go, set a watchman, Let him declare what he sees.”
And he saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen, A chariot of donkeys, and a chariot of camels,
And he listened earnestly with great care.
Then he cried, “A lion, my Lord! I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime;
I have sat at my post every night.
And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen!”
Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.”
Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor! That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel, I have declared to you.

- Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor: As the people collapse from fear and pain, the nation prepares for war (Arise, you princes, anoint the shield!).

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“Nothing is more hopeless and crestfallen than a wicked man in distress: for why? his life and hopes end together.” (Trapp)

**Babylon is fallen, is fallen:** This report came to the watchman. This dramatic scene was fulfilled when the Medo-Persian Empire conquered Babylon, but it also has a prophetic application. Revelation 18:2 describes the cry of an angel when God judges the world system, both commercial Babylon and spiritual Babylon: And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!” The repetition of the phrase is fallen, is fallen connects the two passages.

- The same panic and terror the people of Babylon felt when that great city was conquered by the Medes and Persians will be seen again. When the LORD strikes the world system, both spiritual Babylon and commercial Babylon, the world will be terrified and mourn the same way (Revelation 18:9-19). But God’s people rejoice over the fall of Babylon (Revelation 18:20).

### B. Burdens against Edom and Arabia.

#### 1. (11-12) The burden against Edom (Dumah).

The burden against Dumah.

He calls to me out of Seir, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”

The watchman said, “The morning comes, and also the night.

If you will inquire, inquire; Return! Come back!”

- **Dumah** was another ancient name for the kingdom of Edom, in the mountainous region of Seir. The Edomites descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob (Israel). They settled in the land to the south-east of Israel and were the sometimes enemies of Israel.

- **He calls to me out of Seir:** This is a vague, mysterious burden against Dumah. It may speak to the confusion and darkness striking Edom at the time of their judgment. Bultema wrote of these verses, “This brief burden has always been a great burden to expositors!”

- **Watchman, what of the night:** Using a powerful dramatic scene of a cry to a watchman in the night, Isaiah paints the picture of the judgment and terror that will come upon Edom.

  - On the burden against Edom: “What he may be saying is that the long night of Assyrian oppression is almost over, and the night of Babylonian rule would follow a brief ‘morning’ of respite.” (Wolf)

#### 2. (13-17) The burden against Arabia.

The burden against Arabia.

In the forest in Arabia you will lodge, O you traveling companies of Dedanites.

O inhabitants of the land of Tema, Bring water to him who is thirsty;

With their bread they met him who fled.

For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, From the bent bow, and from the distress of war.

For thus the LORD has said to me: “Within a year, according to the year of a hired man, all the glory of Kedar will fail; and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken it.”

- **The burden against Arabia:** Isaiah pictured the refugees from an attack on Arabia. They are traveling companies of Dedanites; they are thirsty, and they need bread, because they fled from the swords and from the bent bow, and from the distress of war.

- **Within a year… the glory of Kedar will fail:** Reckoning from Isaiah’s time, the attack upon Arabia would come soon, within a year.

  - Poole on according to the year of a hired man: “An exact year; for hirelings diligently observe and wait for the end of the year, when they are to receive their wages.”
ISAIAH 22: JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM – The Burden of the Valley of Vision

- v.1-4 Isaiah sees the destruction of Jerusalem.
- v.5-10 Jerusalem's preparations and precautions against the invasion of Assyria.
- v.11 The Jews have tried to fortify themselves, but have not looked to God for their protection.
- v.12 God calls them to consecrate themselves unto Him.
- v.13-14 God's indictment against them is that their attitude towards Him will not change until they die (near fulfillment).
- v.15-21 Shebna and Eliakim were two men of state in Israel. Eliakim is "God's choice" and Shebna is "moved on." Far fulfillment: Shebna is a type of Antichrist, and even as he will come and be hailed, he will be destroyed and the true Messiah will come. Eliakim is a type of Jesus Christ.
- v.22-23 Jesus picks this up when He talks to church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3. Jesus takes these words and applies them to Himself in Revelation 3.

A. Isaiah denounces the city of Jerusalem.

1. (1-4) Isaiah is grieved over a joyous city.

   The burden against the Valley of Vision.
   What ails you now, that you have all gone up to the housetops,
   You who are full of noise, A tumultuous city, a joyous city?
   Your slain men are not slain with the sword, Nor dead in battle.
   All your rulers have fled together; They are captured by the archers.
   All who are found in you are bound together; They have fled from afar.
   Therefore I said, “Look away from me, I will weep bitterly;
   Do not labor to comfort me Because of the plundering of the daughter of my people.”

   - The burden against the Valley of Vision: This is Jerusalem, a city on a hill but surrounded by still higher hill, and in the midst of three valleys. Since Jerusalem was a center for the worship of God and some of the prophets of God (including Isaiah), it is called the Valley of Vision.
     - “It is strange to find a prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem in a section that deals with the nations. But since Judah had chosen to behave like her neighbors and to desert the Lord, she deserved to be judged.” (Wolf)

   - What ails you now, that you have all gone up to the housetops: “As they used to do in times of great confusion and consternation, that they might mourn, and look, and cry to Heaven for help.” (Poole)

   - A tumultuous city, a joyous city: In his prophecy, Isaiah sees the commotion all around Jerusalem, and asks, “Is it the result of an evil tumult, or is it an expression of joy?”

   - Your slain men are not slain with the sword: When Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, the men of Judah did not bravely die in battle. They died either being starved to death in the siege of the city, or as they fled in cowardly retreat.
     - “Either by famine or pestilence in the siege, as many died, Jeremiah 14:18; 38:2, or in their flight, as others were; both which were inglorious kinds of death.” (Poole)

   - I will weep bitterly; do not labor to comfort me: We usually think of Jeremiah as the “weeping prophet.” But Isaiah also said “I will weep bitterly” when he saw God’s judgment coming against God’s people.

2. (5-7) Isaiah sees a coming army, and the LORD brings no deliverance.

   For it is a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity By the Lord GOD of hosts
   In the Valley of Vision—Breaking down the walls And of crying to the mountain.
   Elam bore the quiver With chariots of men and horsemen, And Kir uncovered the shield.
It shall come to pass that your choicest valleys Shall be full of chariots, And the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

- **For it is a day of trouble**: Isaiah sees an army full of arrows and chariots coming against Jerusalem. The prophesies the attack and overthrow of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.
- **Elam bore the quiver**: “Because Elam, Babylon’s neighbor to the east, had strongly supported the Babylonians and the Chaldeans in the struggle against Assyria, the Elamites were probably allies of the Babylonians.” (Wolf)
- **Your choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate**: Attacking armies will once again surround Jerusalem, and in that day the LORD will not deliver them.

3. **(8-14) Jerusalem makes all the wrong preparations for a coming battle.**
   He removed the protection of Judah.
   You looked in that day to the armor of the House of the Forest;
   You also saw the damage to the city of David, That it was great;
   And you gathered together the waters of the lower pool.
   You numbered the houses of Jerusalem, And the houses you broke down To fortify the wall.
   You also made a reservoir between the two walls For the water of the old pool.
   But you did not look to its Maker, Nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.
   And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts Called for weeping and for mourning,
   For baldness and for girding with sackcloth.
   But instead, joy and gladness, Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
   Eating meat and drinking wine: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”
   Then it was revealed in my hearing by the LORD of hosts,
   “Surely for this iniquity there will be no atonement for you,
   Even to your death,” says the Lord GOD of hosts.

- **You gathered together the waters of the lower pool… to fortify the wall**: When Jerusalem was faced with this subsequent attack, they prepared the city for battle and for siege, strengthening the wall of the city and making sure there was adequate water for a siege.
- **He removed the protection of Judah**: All their care in defending the city would not matter, because God had removed the protection of Judah. Instead of their building projects, the best thing Jerusalem could do for her protection was to turn her heart toward the LORD, but you did not look to its Maker, nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.
- **In that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and mourning**: Instead of preparing Jerusalem for an attack, they should have turned their hearts in humble repentance to the LORD. Instead of humbly seeking the LORD, the people of Jerusalem had both a confidence in their own preparation (joy and gladness), and a fatalistic outlook toward the future (“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”).
- **For this iniquity there will be no atonement for you**: What is this sin that can’t be forgiven? The sin of ignoring God, of refusing to humble yourself before the LORD and repent. Jerusalem was doing everything except the essential thing they had to do to prepare for the attack, and because they rejected the LORD, there would be no atonement for them.
  - “Our hearts are top-full of harlotry, ready to shift and shark in every by-corner for comfort; to hang their hopes on every hedge, rather than to roll themselves upon God, ‘the hope of Israel.’” (Trapp)

B. **Isaiah denounces Shebna, the king’s chief steward.**

1. **(15-19) Shebna had a high and honorable office, yet he used it to glorify himself.**
   Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:
   “Go, proceed to this steward, To Shebna, who is over the house, and say:
   ‘What have you here, and whom have you here, That you have hewn a sepulcher here,
As he who hews himself a sepulcher on high, Who carves a tomb for himself in a rock? Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, And will surely seize you. He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball into a large country; There you shall die, and there your glorious chariots Shall be the shame of your master’s house. So I will drive you out of your office, And from your position he will pull you down.

- **Shebna, who is over the house:** Shebna was a servant of King Hezekiah, both a steward… over the house and a scribe (2 Kings 18:18, Isaiah 37:2). These were both positions of honor and responsibility. Shebna was one of King Hezekiah’s chief assistants.
  - “The king of Judah at this time was Hezekiah – a good king – so the condemnatory judgment fell on the next person in line. Shebna and the populace in general did not share the godly principles of King Hezekiah.” (Wolf)

- **What have you here, and whom have you here:** The LORD speaks to Shebna, this proud man, and says, “Who do you think you are? What do you think you have? You really are nothing and you have nothing.”

- **As he who hews himself a sepulcher on high:** What did Shebna do with his position of honor and authority? He made himself a fancy and prestigious tomb! In that day, this was a display of significant power and wealth. In this, Shebna personifies all of Jerusalem with his obsessive self-interest.
  - Isaiah had prophesied that the people of Judah and Jerusalem would be carried away into exile, but Shebna didn’t believe it. He built this elaborate tomb to himself in Jerusalem, as if to say, “I will never be carried away in exile. I am so certain that I will die here that I will build my tomb here.”

- **He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball into a large country; there you shall die… so I will drive you out of your office:** Shebna sought honor and glory but would never find it. Instead, the LORD would make certain that he was never even buried in his prestigious, expensive tomb, but would die in exile instead.
  - Shebna is the same kind of man Jesus spoke about in Luke 12:16-21, in the parable of the rich fool. The man spent his time planning and his money building great things, but in the end, he died without God and it all meant nothing. Now, all of Shebna’s accomplishments – the beautiful tomb, the glorious chariots – mean worse than nothing, they are a shame to him instead.

2. (20-24) **The LORD lifts up Eliakim instead of Shebna.**

   ‘Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah;
   I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt;
   I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
   He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem And to the house of Judah.
   The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder;
   So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.
   I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, And he will become a glorious throne to his father’s house.

   They will hang on him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers.’

- **Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:** This man is mentioned in passages like 2 Kings 18:18 and Isaiah 36:3 as another assistant to King Hezekiah. He should be distinguished from Eliakim the son of Josiah, who was a puppet king established by Pharaoh (2 Kings 23:34).

- **My servant:** What a glorious title for Eliakim! Both Shebna and Eliakim were servants of Hezekiah, but Shebna’s heart was directed towards selfish ambition and glory, and Eliakim’s heart was turned towards the LORD.

- **Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:** The place of Eliakim before Hezekiah is somewhat obscure in the Scriptures; he is only mentioned in six passages, and the only description of him is that he was over the household (2 Kings 18:18, 37 and Isaiah 36:3, 22). But Eliakim was famous in heaven! He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand: The LORD would take the office and authority of the unfaithful Shebna and give it to Eliakim instead. God will get His work done! If a Shebna is unfaithful, the LORD will remove him from his office, strip him of his authority, and give it to another.

The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder: Because Eliakim is the LORD’s servant, the LORD will give him great authority. In that day, the chief royal steward would have the large master key of the palace fastened to the shoulder of his tunic. The key was a picture and demonstration of the authority of the chief steward. Here, the LORD gives Eliakim the authority to open and shut as the LORD’s representative, which no man can oppose.

- In this, Eliakim becomes a prophecy of the Messiah, because Jesus told us this passage spoke of Himself: These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.” (Revelation 3:7) Jesus is the one with the keys of Hades and of Death (Revelation 1:8), who has all authority both in heaven and on earth. Jesus delegates this authority as it pleases Him (Matthew 16:19).

He shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut and no one shall open: Eliakim would have this kind of authority from the LORD. Since he is a picture of Jesus, we know that Jesus has the authority to open and shut doors in our lives as He pleases. We need to accept both the open and the shut doors!

- “Down a long corridor of closed doors we may sometimes have to pass. It seems heartbreaking to see doors labelled, Friendship, Love, Home shut against us; but beyond them there is the one unclosed door through which we shall enter into our true life. Oh do not lose heart and hope in useless weeping over the closed doors of the past. Follow Him, who has the keys.” (Meyer)

I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place: Because the LORD established Eliakim’s authority, it was secure. Shebna sought glory for himself but would find shame. But Eliakim was the LORD’s servant and would become a glorious throne to his father’s house.

In those days, houses didn’t really have cupboards or storage closets as we think of them. Things were stored on pegs set up all around the room. If something was on its peg, it was safe and secure, stored properly and ready for use at the appropriate time.

They will hang on him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue: The godly Eliakim was a secure peg and could spiritually support his father’s house and his offspring. Since Eliakim is a picture of Jesus, we also see in this the believer’s total dependence on Jesus.

Clarke on they will hang on him all the glory of his father’s house: This “has been understood as the dependence of all souls, of all capacities, from the lowest in intellect to the most exalted, on the Lord Jesus, as the only Saviour of all lost human spirits.”

- There are many different vessels in the LORD’s house, with many different sizes and purposes. But they all must hang on the same peg! All are equally wrecked if they drop from the peg. The safety isn’t in the size or the quality of the vessel, but in its attachment to the peg.


‘In that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.’”

The peg that is fastened: If Eliakim is yet to be promoted to the place of honor and responsibility pictured by the peg (I will fasten him as a peg, Isaiah 22:23), then Shebna is the peg that is fastened at the moment. Therefore, before Eliakim can be put in his rightful place, Shebna must be removed and be cut down and fall.

- The LORD gave Shebna a place of honor and authority, but he didn’t hold it as a servant of the LORD. So, the LORD took the place of honor and authority away from Shebna. Even so, the great authority Jesus gave to His disciples was neither unlimited, nor unattached from Jesus’ direction. Even though Jesus gave the promise of the keys to Peter (Matthew 16:19), Peter did not have unlimited authority. Instead, Peter was rightly challenged and rebuked by another apostle, Paul, when he was out of line (Galatians 2:11-21).
And the burden that was on it will be cut off: When Shebna was removed, all those who “hung” on him were also cut off. We have to make sure that we are “hung” on the right “peg”!
ISAIAH 23: THE BURDEN AGAINST TYRE – The Fall of Tyre

- v.1-16 Tyre is laid waste by the Chaldeans (Ez. 26-28).
- v.17-18 The Lord will use Tyre again to supply the Kingdom of the Lord (Ps 45:12).

A. The promise of coming judgment against Tyre.

1. (1-5) The sailors of Tyre agonize when they hear of the destruction of their home port.
   The burden against Tyre.
   Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For it is laid waste, So that there is no house, no harbor;
   From the land of Cyprus it is revealed to them.
   Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland, You merchants of Sidon,
   Whom those who cross the sea have filled.
   And on great waters the grain of Shihor, The harvest of the River, is her revenue;
   And she is a marketplace for the nations.
   Be ashamed, O Sidon; For the sea has spoken,
   The strength of the sea, saying, “I do not labor, nor bring forth children;
   Neither do I rear young men, Nor bring up virgins.”
   When the report reaches Egypt, They also will be in agony at the report of Tyre.

- The burden against Tyre: To the north of Israel, Tyre was the leading city of Phoenicia, the great maritime power of the ancient world. Because it was such an important harbor and center for shipping, Tyre was synonymous with commerce and materialism.
  - Tyre was the “Babylon of the Sea.” Because of their excellent harbor and seamanship, they established a commercial empire far greater than one would expect given their size and military power.
  - Tyre was a city in two parts – an inland city, and an island city. The inland city was conquered by the Assyrians and the Babylonians, just as Isaiah prophesied. The island city was conquered later by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.
  - Tyre was a mixed bag for Israel. King Hiram of Tyre supplied David and Solomon great timbers for the building of the temple and other projects. Hiram gave Solomon sailors, so Israel could build their commerce by sea. But later, Tyre gave Israel one of the worst rulers Israel ever had: Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab of Israel.

- There is no house, no harbor: Isaiah pictures sailors from Tyre in the land of Cyprus and in Egypt hearing of the destruction of the harbor of Tyre. When they hear the news, the wait and are in agony at the report of Tyre.

2. (6-9) The proud city of Tyre is humbled.
   Cross over to Tarshish; Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!
   Is this your joyous city, Whose antiquity is from ancient days, Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?
   Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, Whose merchants are princes,
   Whose traders are the honorable of the earth?
   The LORD of hosts has purposed it, To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory,
   To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.

- Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland: Tyre was a city where money ruled. The merchants are princes, and the traders are the honorable of the earth. To be a leader or honorable, one didn’t need to be of royal heritage, a good or a honest man. The only thing needed was success in business!

- The LORD of hosts has purposed it, to bring dishonor the pride of all glory: Because of its great success, Tyre had become proud and full of self-glory. But the LORD of hosts has purposed to judge and humble Tyre, and Isaiah announces it.
  - “Pride, pride, pride, is that basic sin to which God is ever opposed, and man is ever expressing.” (Jennings)
3. (10-14) The destruction of the city of Tyre.
Overflow through your land like the River, O daughter of Tarshish; There is no more strength. He stretched out His hand over the sea, He shook the kingdoms; The LORD has given a commandment against Canaan To destroy its strongholds. And He said, “You will rejoice no more, O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon. Arise, cross over to Cyprus; There also you will have no rest.” Behold, the land of the Chaldeans, This people which was not; Assyria founded it for wild beasts of the desert. They set up its towers, They raised up its palaces, And brought it to ruin. Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For your strength is laid waste.

- **The Chaldeans… Assyria:** The mainland city of Tyre was defeated by both the Assyrians and the Babylonians. They were used by God to bring the city to ruin.

**B. A promise of restoration to the city of Tyre.**

1. (15-16) Seventy years of desolation for the city of Tyre. Now it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

> “Take a harp, go about the city, You forgotten harlot; Make sweet melody, sing many songs, That you may be remembered.”

- **Tyre will be forgotten seventy years:** God’s judgments are so precise that He decrees the exact number of years Tyre will be forgotten.
- **That you may be remembered:** Quoting what may have been a well-known song in his day, Isaiah makes the point that at the end of the seventy years appointed by God, Tyre will be remembered again.

2. (17-18) God’s purpose in restoring the city of Tyre. And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing.

- **She will return to her hire:** God will allow Tyre, symbolized by a prostitute, to continue her gross materialism with all the kingdoms of the world. But Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; ultimately, the riches Tyre so desperately sought will be given to the LORD anyway.
- **The LORD will visit Tyre:** Many commentators think this refers to the presence of Christianity in Tyre in the days of the early church.
  - “Tyre, after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, recovered, as it is here foretold, its ancient trade, wealth, and grandeur; as it did likewise after a second destruction by Alexander. It became Christian early with the rest of the neighboring countries. St. Paul himself found many Christian there, Acts 21:4. It suffered much in the Diocletian persecution. It was an archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, with fourteen bishoprics under its jurisdiction. It continued Christian till it was taken by the Saracens in 639; was recovered by the Christians in 1124; but in 1280 was conquered by the Mamelukes and afterwards taken from them by the Turks in 1517. Since that time it has sunk into utter decay; is now a mere ruin, a bare rock, ‘a place to spread nets upon,’ as the Prophet Ezekiel foretold it should be, chapter 26:14.” (Clarke)
ISAIAH 24: THE CHARACTER OF THE JUDGMENT OF THE LORD – Purging Earth before Second Coming

• v.1 This could mean a polar-axis flip of the earth.
• v.2-6 The Great Tribulation period will affect all people. Very few shall come out of it alive.
• v.17 The “pit” the Antichrist shall come out of (Rev.11:7; Luke 21:34-35).
• v.19-20 The earth will be devastated by earthquake. Present-day physicists who believe in a polar-axis shift also tell us that the earth will wobble as a top and flip on its axis. The wobble of the earth becomes greater as time goes on.
• v.21 The "high ones" refers to the angelic hosts of evil.
• v.22 Satan will be shut up for a period and then released, but ultimately cast into the outer darkness forever (Rev.20:7-10).

A. The scene of God’s judgment.

1. (1-3) The scope of the judgment of the LORD.

   Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
   Distorts its surface And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
   And it shall be:
   As with the people, so with the priest;
   As with the servant, so with his master;
   As with the maid, so with her mistress;
   As with the buyer, so with the seller;
   As with the lender, so with the borrower;
   As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
   The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, For the LORD has spoken this word.

• Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty: Isaiah invites us to behold, to look upon the scene of God’s judgment. The principles revealed here apply universally to the judgment of the LORD, but the ultimate fulfillment of this will be in the ultimate period of judgment, the time of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22), which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:29-30).
  
  o In the days of the Great Tribulation, the earth will not be literally empty, but Isaiah’s poetic description applies, because the earth will seem empty in many places. More than one-third of humanity will die in the judgments of the great tribulation (Revelation 9:15-21), making the areas hardest hit seem as if the earth were empty.
  
  o “The connection between these chapters and the preceding ones appear to be as follows: the judgments pronounced upon the various countries and nations in those chapters are drawn together here into a focal point. The specific divine judgments described there become here the general judgment upon the nations, which will take place when the Lord Jesus Christ with His Church will return to this earth.” (Bultema)

• As with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master: In these comparisons, Isaiah shows that a high station in life (priest… master… mistress… seller) will not protect one from the judgments of the LORD. As well, a low station of life (borrower… debtor) will not protect one either. When the judgment of the Great Tribulation comes, it will be complete in its scope!
  
  o Some who believe that the church will be left on the earth to endure the Great Tribulation believe that God will miraculously protect Christians during that time, so they face none of the judgments of the LORD, only perhaps persecution from the Antichrist. But this passage reinforces the idea that the judgments of the LORD during the Great Tribulation will be universal in their scope, and that no class of people will be immune from the general judgment of the LORD. Therefore, it makes sense for God to remove His redeemed before this period of Great Tribulation, so only those who do not trust in Him during the Great Tribulation have to suffer under these judgments.
2. (4-6) The reason for judgment.

The earth mourns and fades away, The world languishes and fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.
The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance, Broken the everlasting covenant.
Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, And few men are left.

- The earth mourns and fades away: Why does the earth mourn? Because in the Great Tribulation, the earth will be terribly afflicted by the judgments of the LORD. Revelation 8:7-13 describes the terrible effect of the judgments of the LORD upon the earth.
  - Is this God’s fault? Does God hate the earth? No, this is the fault of man: The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants. Man has defiled the earth with his sin and great wickedness, so the earth must endure some of the righteous judgment of God also. In this sense, the most ecologically responsible thing anyone could do is to honor the LORD God, walk right with Him, and in obedience to Him!
  - This passage is a good reminder of the principle that God is greater than His creation. The Bible never teaches the New Age idea of God that He is somehow bound up together with what He has created. God is separate from His creation, and when the earth fades away, when the world fades away, the LORD God will remain unchanged.

- Because they have transgressed the laws: The idea of transgression is to step over the line that God has established. God has set boundaries for us, but many of us don’t want to see or respect God’s boundaries.
  - Transgression is the spirit of our age. Notice the slogans from recent national advertising campaigns: Nothing is taboo… Break all the rules… To know no boundaries… Relax: No rules here… Peel off inhibitions. Find your own road… We are all hedonists and want to do what feels good… That’s what makes us human… Living without boundaries… Just do it. The idea is constant: you don’t have to respect God’s boundaries, because you can make your own and live by them.

- Because they have… changed the ordinance: The Hebrew word for ordinance here is torah, which often means the law of God and the word of God. Mankind is ripe for judgment because we have changed God’s word into something “lighter,” into something “more acceptable.”
  - Mankind has changed the law of God in the sense of changing the basic moral code which men have recognized and lived by for centuries. When once it was universally recognized that it was wrong to lie, wrong to cheat, wrong to be sexually immoral, wrong to do so many other things, today all of that is approved and celebrated! We have changed the ordinance, and are ripe for judgment!
  - Mankind has changed the word of God by replacing it with substitutes, or by fashioning it into something more suitable to his liking. Every time a preacher soft-peddles the gospel, every time a politician twists the Scriptures to rise in the opinion polls, every time a counselor wrenches the context of God’s word to make it fit a crazy psychological theory, they have changed the ordinance, and are ripe for judgment!

- Because they have… broken the everlasting covenant: God has entered into covenant with man, and man has turned his back on His covenant. Instead of receiving God’s everlasting covenant, man wants to make up his own way with God!
  - There is no single covenant known as the everlasting covenant because the title applies to several different covenants.
    - The covenant God made with mankind after the flood, never to judge the world again by water is called an everlasting covenant (Genesis 9:16).
    - The covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants is called an everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:7, 13, 19).
    - The covenant God made with Israel and the priesthood is called an everlasting covenant (Leviticus 24:8).
The covenant God made with David, to bring the Messiah from his line, is called an *everlasting covenant* (2 Samuel 23:5).

The New Covenant is called an *everlasting covenant*, both prophetically (Jeremiah 32:40) and after its establishment (Hebrews 13:20).

- **The curse has devoured the earth**: There is a reason for this curse. Man’s hardened, repeated rejection of God will bring the ultimate judgment: the Great Tribulation.
  - “Man has transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the covenant. For an interpretation of these words of Isaiah, read Paul – Romans 1:18-32.” (Morgan)
  - “This is the interpretation of all disease, all insanity, all the things of waste, of disorder, of strife, of misery in human history and human experience. A polluted race pollutes the earth, and chaos is the result.” (Morgan)

3. (7-13) The scene of judgment.

The new wine fails, the vine languishes, All the merry-hearted sigh.
The mirth of the tambourine ceases, The noise of the jubilant ends, The joy of the harp ceases.
They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
The city of confusion is broken down; Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
There is a cry for wine in the streets, All joy is darkened, The mirth of the land is gone.
In the city desolation is left, And the gate is stricken with destruction.
When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

- **All the merry-hearted sigh**: When the LORD brings the judgment of the Great Tribulation, there will be no more “partying as usual.” The days for eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage (Matthew 24:38) are for before the Great Tribulation. When the Great Tribulation comes, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases.

- **In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction**: During the Great Tribulation, God’s judgment will bring destruction everywhere. The judgment will be so complete that the cities will look like olive trees bare (like the shaking of an olive tree) and grape vines striped of everything (like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done).


They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing:
For the majesty of the LORD They shall cry aloud from the sea.
Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light,
The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: “Glory to the righteous!”
But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously,
Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”

- **They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing**: Even in the midst of great judgment, God has His own that praise Him. Before the Great Tribulation, God will remove all His people; but many come to trust in Jesus during the Great Tribulation, and these will praise Him in the midst of judgment (Revelation 7:9-14).

- **Glory to the righteous**: Why do they praise Him? Because even in His judgments, or perhaps especially in His judgments, the LORD shows His majesty, He shows His glory. The godly can see the goodness, the greatness, and the glory of God even in judgment, even when the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.
B. The character of God's judgment.

1. (17-18) The judgment of the LORD will always be completed.
   Fear and the pit and the snare Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
   And it shall be That he who flees from the noise of the fear
   Shall fall into the pit, And he who comes up from the midst of the pit Shall be caught in the snare;
   For the windows from on high are open, And the foundations of the earth are shaken.

   • O inhabitant of the earth: The Book of Revelation, writing of this time of Great Tribulation, makes constant reference to those who dwell on the earth (Revelation 3:10, 6:10, 11:10, 13:12, 13:14). This is in contrast to those who dwell in heaven (Revelation 13:6), who are seated with Jesus in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). Where do you sit? Where do you live? Are you an inhabitant of the earth, or do you sit with Jesus in heavenly places?

   • Fear... pit... snare: Simply put, the judgment of the LORD is inescapable. If escape the fear, you will fall into the pit. If you escape the pit, you will fall into the snare. God’s judgment has enough back-up plans to catch everyone. The only way to escape the judgment of God is to satisfy it, and the only place God’s judgment was ever satisfied was on the cross.
     ○ “The images are taken from the different methods of hunting and taking wild beasts, which were ancienly in use.” (Clarke)

2. (19-20) The intensity of the judgment of the LORD touches everything.
   The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.
   The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut;
   Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

   • The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open: The Bible describes some of this judgment during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 6:13-14), and specifically mentions a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth (Revelation 16:18). No wonder Isaiah says, the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard!

3. (21-23) The judgment of the LORD will touch everyone.
   It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
   And on the earth the kings of the earth.
   They will be gathered together, As prisoners are gathered in the pit, And will be shut up in the prison;
   After many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be disgraced And the sun ashamed;
   For the LORD of hosts will reign On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem And before His elders, gloriously.

   • The LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones: One of the more frustrating aspects of life is to see the rich, powerful wicked escape the present consequences of their sin. But in His great judgment during the Great Tribulation, no one will be able to buy a high-priced lawyer to escape judgment or bribe a politician to come out without being hurt.

   • But Isaiah is probably speaking of something even higher than the exalted ones of this earth. Bul terra and Wolf believe that the phrase the host of exalted ones refers to rebellious angels that are judged at the end of the age and imprisoned in the pit until the final rebellion of the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-10). The NIV translates the host of exalted ones as the powers in the heavens above.

   • The kings of the earth... will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit: Under God’s great and final judgment, one’s status on this earth will buy them nothing. Poetically speaking, even the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed. No degree of earthly greatness will help man on that day, and no degree of heavenly greatness will help an angelic being on that day!
     ○ “The image seems to be taken from the practice of the great monarchs of that time; who, when they had thrown their wretched captives into a dungeon, never gave themselves the trouble of inquiring about them; but let them lie a long time in that miserable condition, wholly destitute of relief, and disregarded.” (Clarke)

   • The LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously: At the end of the Great Tribulation, God will usher in a thousand years of His glorious reign over all the earth from Mount Zion...
and in Jerusalem. God’s purpose in judgment isn’t simple vengeance or vindictiveness, it is to bring about a glorious new world.

ISAIAH 25: THE SONG OF JOY FROM THE MIDST OF TRIBULATION – Triumphs of the Kingdom Age

- v.1-4 God is praised by Isaiah for being our refuge and strength. This could also be a reference to God protecting His children in the tribulation (Luke 21:36).
- v.8 Jesus has "swallowed up" death through His death and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54-55)

A. Praising God for what He has done.

1. (1) Introduction: For You have done wonderful things.

O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, For You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

- O LORD, You are my God: Isaiah 24 spoke of the judgment to come upon the world, especially in the Great Tribulation. During that time, those who have come to trust in the LORD will praise Him, even in the midst of His righteous judgment. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the LORD they shall cry aloud from the sea (Isaiah 24:14). This song shows the kind of heart that praises God in the midst of tribulation, even in the midst of the Great Tribulation.

- O LORD, You are my God: Knowing that the LORD – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God revealed in and by Jesus Christ – is our God makes us want to praise Him. When someone or something other than the LORD is our God, we are guilty of idolatry.

- I will exalt You, I will praise Your name: The worshipper here makes a decision to praise God (I will). Worship is never to be just a feeling, even if it is an intense feeling. We are to worship God with a decision.
  - If I did not praise and bless Christ my Lord, I should deserve to have my tongue torn out by its roots from my mouth. If I did not bless and magnify his name, I should deserve that every stone I tread on in the streets should rise up to curse my ingratitude, for I am a drowned debtor to the mercy of God – over head and ears – to infinite love and boundless compassion I am a debtor. Are you not the same? Then I charge you by the love of Christ, awake, awake your hearts now to magnify his glorious name.” (Spurgeon)

- For You have done wonderful things: When we think about all the wonderful things the LORD has done, it is pretty easy to make the decision to worship the LORD. God wants our worship to be filled with thought and remembrance of God’s great works, not only an emotional response.

- Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth: When we remember the greatness and permanence of God’s Word, it makes us what to praise Him. What is more reliable, more everlasting, more enduring than the Word of God?

2. (2-3) Praising God for His righteous judgment.

For You have made a city a ruin, A fortified city a ruin, A palace of foreigners to be a city no more; It will never be rebuilt. Therefore the strong people will glorify You; The city of the terrible nations will fear You.

- For You have made a city a ruin: We can worship God for His judgment, because we have confidence in His fairness. As was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah, God will never make a city a ruin unless the judgment is deserved, and God has made provision for the righteous.
  - Which city is referred to? No specific city, but in reality, every city. “There is a complete lack of any specific national reference, and none of the activities which are pursued within the city differentiate it any special way. It can best be understood, therefore, as a pictorial description of the body of organized human society, a type of ‘Vanity Fair,’ which is to be subjected to the divine judgment. When God asserts his will in judgment he will bring an end the existing human order, so that in a sense every city will be brought to chaos.” (Clements, cited in Grogan)
• **The strong people will glorify You:** The people of the LORD see His work and glorify Him. This is the first of two effects of the judgment of God. Second, the city of the terrible nations will fear You. The unrighteous fear God when they see His righteous judgment.

3. **(4-5) Praising God for His goodness to the weak.**

For You have been a strength to the poor, A strength to the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm, A shade from the heat; For the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.
You will reduce the noise of aliens, As heat in a dry place;
As heat in the shadow of a cloud, The song of the terrible ones will be diminished.

• **For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy:** God is worthy of our praise because He brings strength to the poor and needy!

• **A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat:** This is a wonderful reason to praise God, and even the strangers (aliens) are blessed by His goodness. God will even quiet the song of the terrible ones.

B. **Praising God for what He will do.**

1. **(6) A glorious feast for God’s people.**

And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees.

• **In this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast:** In several places, the Bible speaks of what is often called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Revelation 19:9 says, blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! According to Isaiah 25:6, we might say that this great feast takes place on earth, not in heaven.

• **A feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees.** For the God’s people, this will be the “victory banquet” or the “awards banquet” when after the final battle is over. What a feast that will be!
  
  o Jesus is really looking forward to this banquet. He said to His disciples at the Last Supper, *I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom* (Matthew 26:29). In this, Jesus spoke of His longing expectation for the day when He would take communion with His people at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Jesus is excited about this event; are you?

2. **(7-8) The destruction of evil.**

And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people,
And the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

• **The veil that is spread over all nations:** This is what the LORD will destroy. The picture is that there is a veil that is spread over all nations that keeps them from seeing God, loving God, and obeying God. In this glorious day, the LORD will destroy that veil.
  
  o In the New Testament, Paul speaks of Israel being blinded by a veil: *But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart* (2 Corinthians 3:15). In Isaiah’s day, it was more apparent that the nations were veiled. In Paul’s day, it was more apparent that Israel was veiled. But for both the nations and for Israel, the remedy is the same: *Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away* (2 Corinthians 3:16).

• **He will swallow up death forever:** The LORD will also destroy death. The day will come when death is powerless. Death was introduced by Adam’s rebellion (Genesis 2:16-17) and will one day be completely eliminated by God.
  
  o Paul knew this and looked forward to this day. He proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 15:54: *Death is swallowed up in victory.* This will be true for every believer when death is defeated by resurrection. A resurrected body is not a resuscitated corpse. It is a new order of life that will never die again.
4. (10-12) The LORD resolves all things.

For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest, And Moab shall be trampled down under Him, As straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. And He will spread out His hands in their midst
As a swimmer reaches out to swim, And He will bring down their pride Together with the trickery of their hands.
The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low, And bring to the ground, down to the dust.

- For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest: The LORD will settle His hand of favor, power, and glory on Mount Zion. After the Great Tribulation, when Jesus Christ reigns from Jerusalem, the whole creation will know that the hand of the LORD does rest on this mountain.
  - “The powerful and gracious presence of God (which is oft signified in Scripture by God’s hand) shall have its constant and settled abode; it shall not move from place to place, as it did with the tabernacle; nor shall it depart from it, as it did from Jerusalem.” (Poole)
- And Moab will be trampled down: In that day, Jesus will rule the nations with all authority and righteousness (Psalm 2:8-12). God will reach out (As a swimmer reaches out to swim) and bring low every proud, rebelling heart. Those who oppose His rule He will bring to the ground, down to the dust.
o “In a powerful anthropomorphic figure, the prophet pictures the Lord’s hand resting in blessing on Mount Zion and his feet trampling on Moab in judgment.” (Grogan) So, which do we want – the loving hand of God, or to be under His feet?

**ISAIAH 26: JUDAH’S KINGDOM OF GOD SONG – Testimony of Restored and Converted Israel**

- v.3-4 In order to have the peace of God as an attribute of our Christian walk, we must first have peace with God as we receive Jesus Christ. To know the peace of God we need to keep our eyes on Him and not on our trials (John 14:27; Phil. 4:7).
- v.5-9 Before the Kingdom Age God will bring down by His judgment the unrighteous.
- v.12-18 Israel speaking to the Lord. When they were in prosperity they turned away from God, but in their adversity they repented and turned to the Lord.
- Our bodies will be changed: Jn. 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:52-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-8.
- v.20-21 Refers to the last 3 1/2 years of Great Tribulation when God's wrath is poured upon the earth for sin. But God hides His people (Rev.4:1).

**A. The city of God and the city of Man.**

1. (1-2) The strength of God’s city.

   In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: “We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

   Open the gates, That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

   - **In that day:** The context from Isaiah 24 and 25 points to the day of the Messiah’s ultimate triumph, the day when the Messiah reigns over Israel, and over all the world. In that day, there will be a lot of joyful singing, such as this song that **will be sung in the land of Judah**.

   - **We have a strong city:** Since cities came into being after the Fall, man has never known a truly godly city, the City of God on earth. In that day, all will know the strength and glory of the city of God.

      o In the fifth century, Rome was conquered by less civilized tribes from the north in Europe. The mighty Roman Empire was no more, and many blamed the fall of Rome on the new religion she had officially embraced in the last 100 years: Christianity. In this time of confusion, the greatest Christian theologian of the time wrote a book titled The City of God. In it, he tried to explain how the fall of the Roman Empire related to the kingdom of God, and he made the contrast between the city of man (ultimately represented by Rome and the mighty Roman Empire) and the City of God (the kingdom of God). Augustine pointed out that though the fall of Rome was tragic for the city of man, it really only hastened the coming of the City of God. Speaking in Augustine’s terms, Isaiah writes about the City of God when he says **we have a strong city**. The strong city is the Kingdom of God, the city of man is the world system.

      o This is an important and often neglected idea. We often disapprove of the idea of the city, and romanticize the idea of man in isolation, in a rural or primitive setting. But in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on this earth, there will be cities – but redeemed cities, glorious communities organized under the strength and salvation and righteousness and truth of the LORD. God’s supreme ideal is no escape from all community and a private communion with nature; the Kingdom of God will be realized in a strong city.

   - **God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks:** The city of God, from beginning to end, is all about salvation. Even the **walls** and the **bulwarks** of the city are saved!

   - **Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter it:** The city of God, with all its strength and salvation, is only for the **righteous**, and those who keep **the truth**. In the same principle, the New Jerusalem is a city filled with glory, which excludes the unrighteous (Revelation 21:22-27).
2. (3) **The LORD is our source of strength.**

You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.

- **You will keep him in perfect peace:** What a promise! **Perfect peace!** God promises that we can have perfect peace, and even be kept in a place of perfect peace.
  - In Hebrew, the term perfect peace is actually shalom shalom. This shows how in Hebrew, repetition communicates intensity. It isn’t just shalom; it is shalom shalom, perfect peace.
  - “Understand, dear soul, that it is thy privilege to live inside the double doors of God’s loving care. He says to thee, ‘Peace, peace.’ If one assurance is not enough, He will follow it with a second and a third.” (Meyer)
  - Some can have this perfect peace, but it is fleeting, and they are never kept there. Others can be kept in peace, but it is not a perfect peace, it is the peace of the wicked, the peace of spiritual sleep and ultimate destruction. But there is a perfect peace that the LORD will keep in is in.

- **Whose mind is stayed on You:** This is the place of perfect peace, and the source of it. When we keep our minds stayed – settled upon, established upon – the LORD Himself, then we can be kept in this perfect peace.
  - To be kept in this perfect peace, it is a matter of our mind. This isn’t so much a matter of our spirit or of our soul or of our heart. It is a matter of our mind. We are to love the LORD our God with all of our mind (Matthew 22:37). We are transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2). We can have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5). We are not to set our mind on earthly things (Philippians 3:19), but to set our mind on things above (Colossians 3:2). The Christian life is not an unthinking life of just doing, or experiencing, but it is also about thinking, and where we set our mind is essential in our walk before the LORD.
  - To be kept in this perfect peace, our mind must be stayed. The Hebrew word sawmak comes from the root “to prop,” and has the idea “to lean upon or take hold of… bear up, establish, uphold, lay, lean, lie hard, put, rest self, set self, stand fast, stay (self), sustain.” (Strong’s Dictionary) In other places the same word is translated sustained (Genesis 27:37, Psalm 3:5), or when the priest would put their hands on the head of a sacrificial animal (Exodus 29:10, 15, 19), or of the laying on of hands in other circumstances (Numbers 27:18), of being upheld (Psalm 71:6), to stand fast upon (Psalm 111:8), of being established (Psalm 112:8), of leaning upon (Isaiah 36:6, 48:2). So, what sustains your mind? What do you lay your mind upon? What upholds your mind? What does your mind stand fast upon? What is your mind established upon? What does your mind lean upon? To have this perfect peace, your mind cannot occasionally come to the LORD; it has to be stayed on Him.
  - To be kept in this perfect peace, our mind must be stayed on the LORD. If our mind is stayed on ourselves, or our problems, or the problem people in our lives, or on anything else, we can’t have this perfect peace. This is the heart that says with the Apostle Paul, that I may know Him (Philippians 3:10). Satan loves to get our minds on anything except the LORD!

- **Because He trusts in You:** This is another way of expressing the idea of keeping our minds stayed on Him. Almost always, you keep your mind stayed on whatever you are trusting. When we trust the LORD, we keep our mind stayed on Him.
  - Proverbs 3:5 expresses this same idea: Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. The word for lean in Proverbs 3:5 comes from the same root as the word stayed in Isaiah 26:3. When we trust in the LORD, we do not lean on our own understanding. To lean on the LORD is to trust Him. To be sustained by the LORD is to trust Him. To be established by the LORD is to trust Him. To upheld by the LORD is to trust Him.
• The battle for trust in our lives begins in our minds. If we trust the LORD, it will show in our actions, but it will begin in our mind.

• **Trust in the LORD forever:** Because of the promise of Isaiah 26:3, we are exhorted to trust in the LORD forever – and therefore to receive the blessing of the promise, perfect peace!

• **For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength:** If the LORD calls us to rely on Him completely with our mind, He appeals to our mind with a rational reason why we should trust the LORD – because He is everlasting strength. It isn’t that the LORD has everlasting strength, He is everlasting strength.
  o Clarke’s comment on Isaiah 12:2 applies here also: “The word Yah read here is probably a mistake; and arose originally from the custom of the Jewish scribes, who, when they found a line too short for the word, wrote as many letters as fitted it, and then began the next line with the whole word.”

3. (5-6) **The destiny of the city of man.**
   
   For He brings down those who dwell on high, The lofty city;  
   He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust.  
   The foot shall tread it down—The feet of the poor And the steps of the needy.”

• **He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city:** The city of man is lofty, and its exalted ones dwell on high. But the LORD will bring them down nonetheless. The city of man, the world system, is nothing to the LORD; He lays it low.

• **He brings it down to the dust:** The city of man, the world system, is all about power and prestige, built on the backs of the weak and the poor. But when God brings the city of man down to the dust, He will turn all that around, and the feet of the poor shall tread it down.
  o Jesus expressed the same principle in Matthew 5:5: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Jesus told us oppose the power and prestige thinking of this world and to live with the thinking of His Kingdom right now (Matthew 20:25-28).

4. (7-9) **The way of the upright.**
   
   The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.  
   Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You;  
   The desire of our soul is for Your name And for the remembrance of You.  
   With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;  
   For when Your judgments are in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

• **The way of the just is uprightness:** In the Kingdom of God, His just people walk in a way – the way of uprightness. Isaiah accurately gives the sense of order in this; the LORD makes His people just by a relationship of faith and trust in Him, then they walk in the way of... uprightness.
  o Why do they walk in uprightness? Because they serve the LORD God, who is Most Upright Himself. As they trust the LORD, are declared just by the LORD, they walk in His own way.
  o You weigh the path of the just: The LORD looks at His righteous ones (the just) and He evaluates their path. The LORD cares about the walk of His just ones!

• **The desire of our soul is for Your name:** In the Kingdom of God, His just people love Him and desire Him.
  o The desire is displayed in waiting: O LORD, we have waited for You. When you desire something, or someone, you will wait for them, and do it gladly because of your desire.
  o The desire is displayed in seeking: With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early. When you desire something, or someone, you seek them all the time, both early and at night.

• **The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness:** The way of the upright will be one day vindicated.
5. (10-11) The way of the wicked.

Let grace be shown to the wicked. Yet he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the LORD. LORD, when Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed For their envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

- Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness: The wicked are ungrateful for God’s goodness.
- And will not behold the majesty of the LORD… they will see and be ashamed… the fire of Your enemies shall devour them: The wicked end in disaster.

B. Promises made to a humble heart.

1. (12-18) The prayer of a humble heart.

LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us. O LORD our God, masters besides You Have had dominion over us; But by You only we make mention of Your name. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And made all their memory to perish. You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land. LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them. As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery. So have we been in Your sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

- You have also done all our works in us: Isaiah must have been reading Ephesians 2:8-10: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Even our good works are works that He has done... in us.
- Masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name: The humble heart repents of past idolatry, and rejoices in the present freedom in the LORD.
  - The humble heart sees the folly of their past idolatry: They are dead, they will not live. The humble heart sees the victory of the LORD over all idols: You have punished and destroyed them. “Obviously this verse does not suggest that the ‘other lords’ had real existence as deities but simply that they were believed to have and that their rule was sinfully acknowledged by the people in past times.” (Grogan)
  - The Hebrew word for dominion is baal, which can mean master or husband. Of course, Baal was also the chief god of the native Canaanites, and a seductive idol for Israel. In this prayer, Judah essentially says, O LORD our God, masters besides you have “Baal-ed” us.
- We have been with child, we have been in pain; we have, as it were, brought forth wind: The humble heart knows the futility of working apart from the direction and blessing of God.
  - “We have had the torment of a woman in child-bearing, but not the comfort of a living child... for we have brought forth nothing but the wind; all our labours and hopes were vain and un unsuccessful.” (Poole)
- You have increased the nation: The humble heart knows the LORD is responsible for increase and blessing.
- LORD, in trouble they have visited You: The humble heart relies on the LORD in times of distress and futility.
2. (19) The promise of resurrection.

Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

- **Your dead shall live:** The Old Testament had a shadowy understanding of the life to come, because the secrets of the life to come have now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10). But here is a confident expectation of resurrection and glory for the LORD’s righteous ones.

3. (20-21) The promise of refuge in the time of great indignation.

Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.
For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood And will no more cover her slain.

- **Come, my people, enter your chambers:** Isaiah, speaking for the LORD, prophesies a time when God’s people are invited to come and find refuge until the indignation is past.
  - The refuge is secure. God’s people are secure in chambers, with the doors shut behind them. They are hidden securely (Hide yourself).

- **The LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity:**
  The indignation God’s people are hidden from is from the LORD Himself. This is not persecution from the wicked, but judgment from the LORD. This is not a local judgment, but something the LORD brings upon the inhabitants of the earth in general.
  - The devastation of the indignation of the LORD is seen all over the earth: The earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.

- **Hide yourself, as it were:** When is this time when God’s people are carried away, securely hidden, from a time of great indignation the LORD brings upon the earth? It can refer to the deliverance of the Jewish people from the fury of the Antichrist described in Revelation 12:6 and 12:13-16. But it is more likely that it speaks of the refuge, the security of God’s people when they are caught up together with the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) and escape the horrific indignation of the Lord that He pours out upon the world in the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22, Revelation 9:15-21), which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:29-30).
  - Seen this way, this is a powerful passage supporting the teaching of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, which says that Jesus Christ will remove His people from this earth before the time of Great Tribulation coming upon the earth immediately before His ultimate return.
ISAIAH 27: ORDERING THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD – Deliverance of Israel

- v.1 "That day" refers to the great tribulation period upon the earth. "Leviathan" is Satan.
- v.6 Prophecy of God stating how He will again bless the nation Israel and make them His vineyard. Already this prophecy is being fulfilled, as Israel is the third largest fruit exporting nation in the world (though it is smaller than the state of California).
- v.10 The city at one time was barren.
- v.12-13 After the barren period God regathers His people back into the land.

A. In His Kingdom, God blesses Israel.

1. (1) In the Kingdom of the LORD, Leviathan is defeated.

   In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

   - In that day: This brings us back to the theme of Isaiah 24 through 27 in general, the day when the Kingdom of the Messiah ultimately triumphs and rules.

   - The LORD, with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent: The ultimate triumph of the LORD in the day of the Messiah is expressed in victory over Leviathan the fleeing serpent.

     - Some make the connection between Leviathan and ancient myths of nations near Israel. “The language used draws on mythology; but this need cause us no serious problem. Writers, whether of Scripture or otherwise, frequently use illustrative material, drawing that material from a wide variety of sources: nature, history, mythology, or literature. The use of mythology here simply shows that Isaiah and his readers knew the mythological stories, not that they believed them. If a modern historian referred to a fierce and aggressive nation as ‘a great dragon,’ would his readers assume he believed in the objective existence of such creatures? Surely not!” (Grogan)

     - “The term as used here is normally linked with the Ugaritic Lotan, the chaos monster destroyed by Baal in the Canaanite creation myth… the term may be applied figuratively to monstrous enemies of Israel and of God.” (Grogan)

     - While there is an illustrative element here, Isaiah may be more literal than many would like to admit. If Satan could manifest himself as a serpent to Eve in the Garden of Eden, why not also manifest himself as a dreadful sea-dragon?

   - Leviathan that twisted serpent: What do we know about Leviathan from this passage? We know that Leviathan is identified with a serpent. We know that Leviathan is resisting God (fleeing… twisting; twisting has the idea of coiling, as if it were ready to strike). We know that Leviathan is connected with the sea. And we know that Leviathan’s destiny is to be destroyed by the LORD.

     - What do we know about Leviathan from other passages of Scripture? Leviathan is referred to in passages like Job 3:8, Job 41, Psalm 74:14, and Psalm 104:26. These passages reinforce the idea of Leviathan as a mighty, serpent-like creature, connected with the sea, who resists God and will be crushed by the LORD.

     - We are familiar with the reference to Satan as a serpent (Genesis 3:1-5), but here the picture is of a sea-serpent or a perhaps what we would know as a dragon. This reference may be a literal reference, and at some point in history, either past or present, Satan may manifest himself as monster connected with the sea. Certainly, Revelation uses this imagery in describing the emergence of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:1-4).

   - He will slay the reptile that is in the sea: Essentially, Isaiah prophesied the ultimate defeat of Satan when the Kingdom of the Messiah conquers all (He will slay the reptile).
2. (2-6) In the Kingdom of the LORD, Israel blossoms.

In that day sing to her, “A vineyard of red wine! I, the LORD, keep it, I water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day. Fury is not in Me. Who would set briers and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.”

Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

- **A vineyard of red wine! I, the LORD, keep it**: In the days of the Kingdom of the Messiah, the LORD keeps the vineyard of Israel with special care. He waters it (**I will water it every moment**), He protects it (**lest any hurt it**), He guards it constantly (**I keep it night and day**) against all enemies, forcing them to **make peace** with Him and His vineyard.

- **Let him take hold of My strength**: We can only be fruitful when take hold of the strength of the LORD. As long as we hold on to our own strength, what we really have is weakness.
  - Poole on **let him take hold of My strength**: “He seems to allude to that history of Jacob’s wrestling with the angel of God… which he could never have done but by a strength received from God.”
  - “Verse 5 is a neglected OT promise of forgiveness to the penitent. In verse 4 the God of battles is marching against the briers and the thorns with a flaming torch in his hand. He is about to set fire to this rank undergrowth, but before doing so he proclaims the alternative of peace.” (Grogan)

- **Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit**: The result is blessing for the LORD’s vineyard. This will be ultimately fulfilled in the Kingdom of the Messiah, but if we yield to the care of the LORD right now, He will care for us as His precious vineyard right now, and we will enjoy the blessings of that care (**John 15:1-8**).
  - “Whereas the vineyard in chapter 5 was overrun by thorns, not a brier or thorn can be found in this vineyard.” (Wolf)

3. (7-9) In the Kingdom of the LORD, Israel receives mercy.

Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him?
Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him?
In measure, by sending it away, You contended with it.
He removes it by His rough wind In the day of the east wind.
Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin:
When he makes all the stones of the altar Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, Wooden images and incense altars shall not stand.

- **Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him**: The LORD shows His mercy to Israel, in that even though the LORD struck Israel when Israel went astray, He did not strike Israel as severely as He did the other nations that went astray.

- **The iniquity of Jacob will be covered**: The LORD shows His mercy to Israel in that He covers their sin. This is ultimately fulfilled in the Kingdom of the Messiah when **all Israel will be saved** (**Romans 11:26**).

- **When He makes all the stones of the altar like chalkstones that are beaten to dust**: The LORD shows His mercy to Israel in that He destroys their idolatrous altars and images, forcing them to worship the LORD only.
B. In His Kingdom, God makes the nations submit to Him.

1. (10-11) In the Kingdom of the LORD, the city of man lies desolate.

   Yet the fortified city will be desolate, The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; The women come and set them on fire.
   For it is a people of no understanding; Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them, And He who formed them will show them no favor.

   **The fortified city will be desolate**: The city of man, representing the world system, will be made desolate by the judgment of the LORD. Knowing this, why would we put our hope, our confidence, or our expectation in the world system?

   **The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness**: The city of man, the world system, will be made so desolate that it will resemble a wilderness with bare branches, useful only for fire.
   o “In [Isaiah] 10:33-34, God goes into battle against the great trees, lopping the boughs from them with his axe. Here the undergrowth feels the shriveling heat of his anger.” (Grogan)

   **He who formed them will show them no favor**: This is the terrible judgment against the city of man, against the world system. We want the favor of the LORD, we long for His favor. But the worlds system, the citizens of the city of man, will be shown no favor.

2. (12-13) In the Kingdom of the LORD, He is worshipped in Jerusalem.

   And it shall come to pass in That day that the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

   **You will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel**: The LORD will be worshipped by His own regathered people. They will come from the nations (Assyria… Egypt), and they will come to worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.
DELIVERANCE FOUND IN THE LORD, NOT IN EGYPT (Isa 28-35)

Isaiah 28 begins an eight-chapter section (28-35) mostly directed to the southern kingdom of Judah. Since it is often most effective to address a sin present in a third party, and then apply it directly to the person, Isaiah will first speak of the sin of Israel, then switch the focus to Judah.

ISAIAH 28: A WORD TO DRUNKARDS – Woe to Ephraim

• v.1-3 Northern kingdom of Israel was filled with pride and folly. The people do not seek God even in the midst of the adversity about to overtake them.
• v.7 Their heavy drinking has caused their judgment to err.
• v.11-12 Paul interprets this Scripture to refer to speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14:2). Tongues are a restful experience for those who exercise the gift.
• v.14-18 Judgment will come regardless of what men have done, other than receiving Jesus Christ, to keep them from hell.
• v.20 The only sure rest is in Jesus Christ.

A. The sinful state of the drunkards of Ephraim.

1. (1-4) A flood of judgment upon the drunkards of Ephraim.

Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower Which is at the head of the verdant valleys. To those who are overcome with wine!
Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm,
Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, Who will bring them down to the earth with His hand.
The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, Will be trampled underfoot;
And the glorious beauty is a fading flower Which is at the head of the verdant valley,
Like the first fruit before the summer, Which an observer sees; He eats it up while it is still in his hand.

• To the drunkards of Ephraim: In Ephraim (another name for the northern nation of Israel because the tribe of Ephraim was a prominent tribe in that nation), drunkenness was a significant enough problem that the LORD directed Isaiah to directly address the drunkards of Ephraim.
  o This is one of several passages of Scripture that speaks to drunkards. Proverbs 23:29-35 speaks of the folly of drunkenness. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled with the Spirit instead of being drunk. Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:10, 11:21, Galatians 5:21, and 1 Peter 4:3 each contain commands against drunkenness. Jesus specifically warned against drunkenness in the last days (Luke 21:34-36).
  o Spiritually, alcoholism and drug addiction have been the ruin of many a man and woman. The power of those addictions keeps many from coming to Jesus at all, and they severely stunt the spiritual growth of those who trust Jesus yet have to battle their addictions. We should listen to what Proverbs tells us about drunkenness in passages such as Proverbs 20:1 and 23:29-33.
  o Practically, the world pays a high price for the ruin of alcoholism and drug addiction. To speak of alcohol alone, according to the United States Center for Disease Control, in 2010 88,000 people died of alcohol related causes in the USA, and excessive drinking cost the USA economy $249 billion dollars – almost a quarter of a trillion dollars.
  o Drunkenness is behind many other crimes and sins. Many drunkards either commit violent or sexual crimes or become victims violent or sexual crimes. According to some past statistics, 75% of the men and 55% of the women involved in date-rape situations had been drinking or taking drugs just before the attack. At one time the FBI said that 50% of all rapes involve alcohol.

• Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim: Like any other sin, drunkenness is connected to pride, so much so that Isaiah likens the drunkards of Ephraim to a crown of pride. Much of the self-hatred and self-despising drunkards feel is rooted in too much focus upon one’s self, which is the essence of pride.
- **Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower:** Drunkenness makes everything beautiful and good in our lives fade away. Many men and women have gone from the top to skid row because of drunkenness.

- **To those who are overcome with wine:** When alcohol *overcomes* us, we are in sin. When it impairs our senses, our thinking, our judgment, or our reflexes, we are *overcome with wine* and it is sin.
  - One might wish that there was a strict prohibition against drinking alcohol in the Bible, but there isn’t. Jesus made wine (John 2:1-10) and drank wine (Mark 14:22-26) and was even unjustly accused of being a drunkard (Matthew 11:19). Paul recommended the use of wine to Timothy, knowing that it is purer to drink than plain water (1 Timothy 5:23). The Bible regards drink, moderately used, as a gift from God (Psalm 104:15).
    - So, while the Bible allows the moderate use of alcohol, it *strictly condemns drunkenness*.

  - What is drunkenness? Some only consider a person drunk if they are “passed-out drunk.” But whenever alcohol impairs our senses, our thinking, our judgment, or our reflexes, we are *overcome with wine* and it is sin. Whenever we feel *compelled* to drink, or have difficulty *not drinking*, we are *overcome with wine* and it is sin. If we have to *hide our drinking*, or are *secretly ashamed of our drinking*, we are *overcome with wine* and it is sin.

  - **Overcome** is the Hebrew word *halam*, which literally means “to strike down” and by implication means “to hammer, to conquer, to beat down, to overcome, to hit with a hammer.” The same word is translated *pounded* in Judges 5:26, describing when Jael pounded a tent peg through the head of Sisera. When you get drunk, that’s what you are doing to yourself.

- **Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one:** The drunkard needs to know that God is stronger than the drunkard, stronger than the power of alcohol, stronger than anything. If the drunkard is powerless to stop his drinking, God has the power to help him stop – or the power to judge him (*the drunkards of Ephraim will be trampled underfoot*).

- **Like the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees; he eats it up while it is still in his hand:** The drunkard needs to learn the value of *delayed gratification*. The gratification of drinking may be intense and immediate, but it fades quickly and crashes hard. The drunkard must learn the value delaying immediate gratification for a future benefit, instead of eating the *fruit... while it is still in his hand*.
  - The importance of appreciating the value of delayed gratification has been measured in what has been called the marshmallow test. A researcher gave this choice to a four-year-old: “I am leaving for a few minutes to run an errand and you can have this marshmallow while I am gone, but if you wait until I return, you can have two marshmallows.” Researchers at Stanford did this test in the 1960s, and a dozen years later they found that the kids who grabbed the single marshmallow tended to be more troubled as adolescents, and the one-marshmallow kids also scored an average of 210 points less on SAT tests. Learning to delay gratification is important!

2. (5-6) **The beauty of the LORD replaces the faded beauty of Ephraim.**

   *In that day the LORD of hosts will be For a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty*  
   *To the remnant of His people, For a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment,*  
   *And for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.*

- **The LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty:** Sometimes when we see the faded glory that comes with sins like drunkenness, we can grow discouraged or depressed. But even if all the glory of man fades because of disobedience and sin, God’s glory remains. When we are completely “ungloried” because of the wreckage of sin, we can set our focus on the glory of the LORD.

- **For a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment:** When our glory has faded because of our sin, we may lose our judgment and discernment. But then we can receive them from the LORD.

- **And for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate:** When our glory has faded because of our sin, we may lose our strength and ability to fight. But then we can receive them from the LORD.
3. (7-8) The corruption of drunkenness in Judah.

But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way:
The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.
For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean.

- They also: Since Isaiah mentions the priest and the prophet in this section, it seems that they also refers to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. If the people of Ephraim had a problem with drunkenness, so did they also.
  - “Judah had caught this disease of Ephraim... Sin is more contagious and catching than the plague.” (Trapp)
- They also have erred through wine and through intoxicating drink are out of the way: Drunkenness always leads to error and takes us out of the way – the way of wisdom and God’s will.
- The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink: Drunkenness is something that can touch any person, at any stage of life. Even the priest and the prophet can find themselves under the tyranny of drunkenness (swallowed up by wine).
- For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that no place is clean: Drunkenness leads to this kind of degradation and disgrace. This is because of the way alcohol works. Alcohol is a depressant; it “loosens” people because it depresses their self-control, their wisdom, their balance and judgment.
  - This makes the idea of being “drunk in the Holy Spirit” especially unbiblical and offensive. The Holy Spirit does not depress us; He has the exact opposite effect. The Holy is a stimulant, and He moves every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance. Of those who act silly or crazy claiming to be “drunk in the Holy Spirit,” the most charitable thing to say is that they are simply acting in their own flesh, because they certainly are not being led by the Holy Spirit of God.

B. God’s message to those who are ripe for judgment.

1. (9-10) The simple message is mocked.

“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message?
Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?
For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept. Line upon line, line upon line. Here a little, there a little.”

- Whom will he teach knowledge: These are the words of the drunk, ungodly prophets and priests described in Isaiah 28:7-8. They ask Isaiah, the godly prophet, whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? In their mocking minds, Isaiah’s message is fit only for children (Those just weaned from milk).
  - “Verses 9 and 10 portray the sarcastic reaction these Judean leaders had to Isaiah’s words of rebuke. They were tired of Isaiah’s strictness and of his recurring application of God’s laws. The string of monosyllables in verse 10 may mean that the Judean leaders regarded Isaiah’s message as meaningless or as child’s play.” (Wolf)
  - “Many commentators have been puzzled by verse 10 and have wrestled to make sense of the Hebrew. The truth of the matter seems to be, as the NIV margin suggests, that it is not meant to make sense. Isaiah’s words had hardly penetrated the alcohol-impregnated atmosphere that surrounded his hearers.” (Grogan)
  - “Thus this good prophet became the drunkard’s song. Any man may be witty in a biting way, and those that have the dullest brains have commonly the sharpest teeth to that purpose.” (Trapp)
- Precept upon precept: With this, the drunk, ungodly prophets and priests mock Isaiah’s teaching. “It is too simple. It is simply precept upon precept… line upon line… here a little, there a little. We are so smart and spiritually sophisticated and advanced that we can go on to deeper things.”
  - In their mocking of Isaiah’s message, they actually pay him a great compliment. It is a beautiful thing for God’s truth to be presented precept upon precept… line upon line… here a little, there a little. When the
word of God is properly presented, there is something for both the simple and immature to receive, and also something for the great saint to rejoice in and be fed.

2. (11-13) Isaiah warns of the consequences of rejecting the simple message of the LORD.

For stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people,
To whom He said, “This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,”
And, “This is the refreshing”; Yet they would not hear.
But the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,”
That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.

- **With stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people:** If the simple, straightforward message is rejected, God will find another way to communicate to the hard-hearted. He will send unusual messengers to bring the word.

- **This is the rest… this is refreshing:** The message of rest and deliverance would be rejected (they would not hear). But it wasn’t the fault of the word of the LORD – the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.”
  - This is the blessed way to present God’s word: **precept upon precept, line upon line.** Isaiah takes the taunt of the drunkards and receives it as a compliment. God’s messengers are to present all of God’s word (without skipping a line), and to present it simply.
  - This also implies that we can’t receive all aspects of God’s message at once. “It is an excellent thing that the gospel is taught us by degrees. It is not forced home upon men’s minds all at once, but it comes thus, ‘Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.’ God does not flash the everlasting daylight on weak eyes in one blaze of glory, but there is at first a dim dawn, and the soft incoming of a tender light for tender eyes, and so by degrees we see.” (Spurgeon)

- **That they might go and fall backward and be broken and snared and caught:** In fact, the result of the faithful presentation of the word of the LORD for those who reject isn’t good for them. It will result in their destruction.

3. (14-15) The false confidence of sinful leaders.

Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem,
Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we are in agreement.
When the overflowing scourge passes through, It will not come to us,
For we have made lies our refuge, And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves.”

- **You scornful men, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem:** Sadly, some of the simple and immature were those **who rule this people.** They needed to hear the word of the LORD just as everyone did.
  - There is no one too high, too exalted, too mature, too advanced for the word of the LORD, and to hear it **precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.**

- **We have made a covenant with death:** The rulers of Jerusalem were extreme in their rejection of God, and felt they had an “agreement” with death and the grave (**Sheol**). They proudly believed the **overflowing scourge** of God’s judgment and correction would not come against them.
  - They had no fear of death and thought they had made friends with death and the grave. This same way of thinking is common in our modern world. The ungodly **should** fear death, because with death ends all opportunity for repentance, and their eternal doom is sealed. Satan has a significant interest in making the wicked feel that death is their friend.
  - A 1996 Los Angeles Times article told the story of Heidi, a 15-year-old who lived in Rancho Palos Verdes. She attended one of the nation’s finest public schools, where she played soccer as a sophomore. She loved horses and had recently been baptized into the Mormon Church. Chris was a 16-year-old surfer from San Pedro, who got A’s and B’s, took college prep courses, and had a part time job working a gas pump. His grandfather said he was a well-adjusted kid. Chris played guitar in a garage band and was deeply affected by the suicide of grunge singer Kurt Cobain, and how he had devoted a creative writing project to the subject of
suicide. A friend of Chris’ said: “He was kind of death-happy. Not sad, but more like, ‘The other side is gonna be so much more fun.’ More like, ‘I can’t wait to die.’” On Saturday, March 16, Heidi swiped the keys to her mom’s white Plymouth Horizon, sneaked out and met Chris in San Pedro. Late that night, Heidi and Chris hiked 100 feet down a rugged path, then ducked through a hole in the chain-link fence to get to a narrow concrete spillway known as “the diving board.” On the ledge, they set down a blue cigarette lighter, and cigarette butts arranged in an arrow point to the sea, which lay 150 feet below. Then they both jumped to their deaths. Chris and Heidi were both deceived into thinking that death could be their friend, but the moment they passed into eternity, they would have given anything to go back to the world where they could repent and get right with God.

- **We have made lies our refuge:** This was their strength! This was their protection! What slender confidence!
  - In his sermon titled *Refuges of Lies and What Will Become of Them*, Charles Spurgeon lists six lies that men try to take refuge in: 1. The lie that we are, or can be good enough. 2. The lie that fate or predestination determines all, so there is nothing for us to do. 3. The lie that places confidence in new, false teachings. 4. The lie that religious profession is enough. 5. The lie that one can have a saved soul and an unchanged life. 6. The lie that trusts an old experience instead of an ongoing relationship.

*4. (16-19) The security of the Messiah and the precarious place of sinners.*

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; When the overflowing scourge passes through, Then you will be trampled down by it. As often as it goes out it will take you; For morning by morning it will pass over, And by day and by night; It will be a terror just to understand the report.”

- **Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation:** In contrast to the weak, narrow foundation of the wicked (*we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves*), God has a solid foundation for our lives — a stone for a foundation.
  - What is this foundation? 1 Peter 2:6 applies this passage directly to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the foundation for our lives, and only with a secure, stable foundation can anything lasting be built. Anything “added on” to the house, not built upon the foundation, is sure to end up in wreckage.
  - Who lays this stone? **Behold, I lay in Zion.** It is God’s work. We are unable to provide the right kind of foundation for our lives, but God can lay a foundation for us. We are asked to **behold** God’s foundation, appreciate it, wonder at it, value it, and build our lives upon it.

- **A tried stone:** Our Messiah was **tried,** was tested, and was proven to be the glorious, obedient Son of God in all things.

- **A precious cornerstone:** Our Messiah is **precious,** and a **cornerstone.** The cornerstone provides the lines, the pattern for all the rest of the construction. The cornerstone is straight and true, and everything in the entire building lines up in reference to the cornerstone.

- **A sure foundation:** Our Messiah is a **sure foundation,** and we can build everything on Him without fear.

- **Justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet:** In God’s building, it isn’t just as if He establishes the cornerstone and then walks away and allows the building to be built any way it pleases. Instead, He keeps the building straight with **justice** and **righteousness.**

- **The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place:** The ungodly leaders of Jerusalem **made lies** their **refuge** and found a hiding place **under falsehood** (Isaiah 28:15). But the storms of life and God’s judgment would sweep away their **refuge of lies** and their **hiding place.** They had built on the wrong foundation and would therefore see destruction.
• **Your covenant with death will be annulled**: The ungodly leaders of Jerusalem thought they made a “deal with death,” but will find that God will annul their **covenant with death**. When His **scourge** of judgment comes, they will surely **be trampled down by it**.

• And the scourge of judgment will not touch them lightly. **Morning by morning** and **by day and by night** they will feel the sting of God’s correction.

5. (20-22) **Advice to those ripe for judgment**.

   For the bed is too short to stretch out on, And the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself in it.
   For the LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon;
   That He may do His work, His awesome work, And bring to pass His act, His unusual act.
   Now therefore, do not be mockers, Lest your bonds be made strong;
   For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts, A destruction determined even upon the whole earth.

• **The bed is too short… the covering so narrow**: The rulers of Jerusalem had to realize that their present place was precarious, and they could find no refuge where they were at right then.

   o Their rejection of God gave them no peace, no rest, and no warmth. What can be worse than trying to sleep in a **bed that is too short**? With trying to keep warm with something so narrow that he cannot wrap himself **in it**? Yet this is a picture of the world, working, striving, longing for their bed – and when they gain it, it is **too short** and has no proper blankets! The child of God, on the other hand, is given rest and peace and covering by Jesus Christ. We shouldn’t long for the short beds and narrow coverings of the world; we should thank God for the place He gives us in Jesus Christ and enjoy it!

• **For the LORD will rise up**: The rulers of Jerusalem had to realize that fighting against God was always a losing proposition. There was no way they could win that battle because God would always **do His work, His awesome work**.

• **The LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim**: At Perazim, the LORD accomplished a great victory for Israel in the days of David (2 Samuel 5:20). At Gibeon, the LORD accomplished a great victory for Israel in the days of Joshua (Joshua 10:11). In those cases, the LORD fought for Israel, but if her leaders did not repent, they would soon find the LORD fighting **against** Israel. This use of God’s strength against His people is surely His **awesome work**, or as the King James Version puts it, **His strange work**.

• **Now therefore, do not be mockers**: The rulers of Jerusalem had to realize the danger of mocking God with their “deals with death” and haughty words against God.

6. (23-29) **The timing of the farmer and the timing of God**.

   Give ear and hear my voice, Listen and hear my speech.
   Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow? Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods?
   When he has leveled its surface, Does he not sow the black cumin And scatter the cummin,
   Plant the wheat in rows, The barley in the appointed place, And the spelt in its place?
   For He instructs him in right judgment, His God teaches him.
   For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin;
   But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick, And the cummin with a rod.
   Bread flour must be ground: Therefore he does not thresh it forever,
   Break it with his cartwheel, Or crush it with his horsemen.
   This also comes from the LORD of hosts, **Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance**.

• **Give ear and hear my voice**: The rulers of Jerusalem had to listen to God’s word and pay attention to His voice.

• **Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow**: The end of Isaiah 28 is a poem relating the work of God to the work of a farmer. A farmer doesn’t only plow; he knows when to stop plowing and when to level the ground, when to plant, and what to plant where. He uses different tools at different times and works them all together to produce crops. In the same way, God knows what instruments to use in our life, and what time to use them. We don’t have to **doubt or despair** at what God is doing in our lives, because He is an expert farmer, working on us with all His wisdom.


- "He used the proper instrument and procedure at the proper time to accomplish His purposes among His stubborn people." (Wolf)

- **Who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance:** The phrase **wonderful in counsel** is the same words used to describe the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 (Wonderful Counselor). It reminds us of the perfect timing and wisdom of God’s work in our lives.

**ISAIAH 29: THE CAUSE AND CURE OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS – Discipline and Blessing**

- v.1-10 Spiritual blindness and lethargy had overcome the people.
- v.16 Analogy of man as clay in God the Potter’s hands.

**A. The coming distress upon Jerusalem.**

1. (1-4) **The LORD humbles a proud Jerusalem.**

   “Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city **where** David dwelt! Add year to year; Let feasts come around.
   Yet I will distress Ariel; There shall be heaviness and sorrow, And it shall be to Me as Ariel.
   I will encamp against you all around, I will lay siege against you with a mound,
   And I will raise siege works against you.
   You shall be brought down, You shall speak out of the ground;
   Your speech shall be low, out of the dust; Your voice shall be like a medium’s, out of the ground;
   And your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

- **Woe to Ariel:** The name **Ariel** means **Lion of God**, and in this passage is used as a symbolic reference to Jerusalem (**the city where David dwelt**). The only place where **Ariel** is used as a name for Jerusalem is in this chapter of Isaiah, and the word only appears one other time in the Old Testament (as the name of a priest in **Ezra 8:16**).
  - There is some dispute as to if **Ariel** means **Lion of God** (the literal translation) or an **altar for burning**, which is a very similar word in Hebrew (used in passages like **Ezekiel 43:15-16**). If it is to be understood as **an altar for burning**, then the idea is that “The fighting and bloodshed around Jerusalem would make the city like a giant place of sacrifice.” (Wolf) But, considering the context as a whole, it is best to see **Ariel** with its literal meaning – **Lion of God**.
  - When we consider the way **Ariel** is used in these verses, and the context as a whole, the idea behind calling Jerusalem **Lion of God** is probably sarcastic. The repetition of the name (four times in two verses), and the context of God’s judgment against Jerusalem, suggest the idea that Jerusalem may have thought of herself as the **Lion of God**, but God didn’t share that lofty opinion of the city. It may be that the people of Jerusalem had taken to calling themselves by the name **Ariel**, to both express and strengthen their confidence.

- **Add year to year; let feasts come around:** The feeling in Isaiah 29:1 is that Jerusalem is proud (**Ariel**), resting on its spiritual heritage instead of its present reality(**the city where David dwelt**!), and living for present pleasures without concern for God.

- **Yet I will distress Ariel:** Jerusalem may have this high opinion of itself, but it is not out of the reach of God’s hand of judgment. Instead of the routine of **year to year** and the **feasts**, God will send **heaviness and sorrow**. If Jerusalem sees itself as a **lion**, then God will fight against them with the same fury a man would have against a lion (**it shall be to Me as Ariel**).

- **I will encamp against you all around:** Using the images of warfare for that day, God promises to battle against Jerusalem, and to conquer her (**You shall be brought down**).

- **You shall be brought down:** In all of this, the LORD will bring down the lofty self-image Jerusalem has of itself. Instead of calling herself **Ariel**, and **the city where David dwelt**, their **speech shall be brought low, out of the dust**. Instead of loud boasts, their **speech shall whisper out of the dust**.
2. (5-8) The LORD protects and delivers a humbled Jerusalem.

“The LORD protects and delivers a humbled Jerusalem.

Moreover the multitude of your foes Shall be like fine dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones Like chaff that passes away;
Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly.
You will be punished by the LORD of hosts With thunder and earthquake and great noise,
With storm and tempest And the flame of devouring fire.
The multitude of all the nations who fight against Ariel, Even all who fight against her and her fortress,
And distress her, Shall be as a dream of a night vision.
It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams, And look— he eats;
But he awakes, and his soul is still empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams, And look— he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed he is faint, And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the nations shall be, Who fight against Mount Zion.”

The multitude of your foes shall be like fine dust: The closing image in the previous verses was Jerusalem groveling in the dust. Now, the LORD uses another image, spun off of the idea of dust – Jerusalem’s enemies will be scattered as fine dust. God will humble Jerusalem in the dust, and then scatter her enemies like fine dust, like chaff that passes away.

You will be punished: This seems to be directed against the nations that come against Jerusalem. God will allow them to come against the city, and to humble it, but God will punish the nations that have come against His city.

It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams: Because the LORD will protect Jerusalem, the nations that come against her will ultimately be frustrated. They will be like a man who dreams of food but wakes up hungry. They will dream of fulfillment but be unfulfilled.
B. The spiritual blindness of Jerusalem.

1. (9-10) The spiritual stupor of Jerusalem.

Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind!
They are drunk, but not with wine; They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink.
For the LORD has poured out on you The spirit of deep sleep, And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets;
And He has covered your heads, namely, the seers.

- **Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind**: Jerusalem’s pride (as expressed in Isaiah 29:1) has made them spiritually **blind**, and spiritually **drunk**. The LORD tells Jerusalem to **pause and wonder** at this, because though they do it to themselves, they lack the self-awareness to see their condition.

- **They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink**: This is not seen as a “blessing from the Spirit of the LORD.” This is a curse, both self-induced and sent from the LORD. This speaks powerfully to those today who promote the idea of God “blessing” His people with being “drunk in the Spirit.”

- **For the LORD has poured out on you**: Because Jerusalem chose blindness, and chose spiritual drunkenness, God sent something: the LORD poured out on them the **spirit of deep sleep**. As drunks will “sleep it off,” so the LORD will send blind, proud, drunk Jerusalem into the lethargy and vulnerability of spiritual sleep. But a drunk can become sober after sleep; for those who are spiritually drunk, sleep worsens their condition.
  - When we are asleep, we are doing nothing productive. When we are asleep, we are vulnerable. When we are asleep, we are insensitive. God sent these things to a blind, proud, drunk Jerusalem.
  - The problem of spiritual sleep didn’t end with Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day. Romans 13:11 was written to Christians: And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Christians need to be awake, especially knowing the time!

- **For the LORD has poured out on you**: Because Jerusalem chose blindness, and chose spiritual drunkenness, God took away something: He has closed your eyes, namely, the **prophets**. As a drunk has blurred vision and poor perception, so God closed the spiritual eyes of the nation – namely, the **prophets**.
  - The prophets were silent, and the word of God was neglected because the people wanted it that way. In silencing the **prophets** and the **seers**, God simply gave Jerusalem what she wanted.
  - The prophet Amos spoke of the same idea: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12)

2. (11-12) The spiritual illiteracy of Jerusalem.

The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which **men** deliver to one who is literate, saying, “Read this, please.” And he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, “Read this, please.” And he says, “I am not literate.”

- **A book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate**: Isaiah likened Jerusalem to the blind and to the drunk. Now, he likens them to the illiterate. But this isn’t a literal literacy, because the literate man receives the vision of God, but to him it is like a sealed book. When the book of the vision is brought to the illiterate man, he does no better (I am not literate).

- **Read this, please**: Many today “read” or “receive” God’s word like an illiterate man “reads” the newspaper. They can pick out a few words here and there, and they can certainly look at the pictures. They can sit with an open newspaper, enjoy themselves to some degree, and appear to be reading. But the true content really escapes them.

3. (13-16) Why the LORD sends spiritual blindness upon Jerusalem.

Therefore the LORD said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,
Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.”
Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark;
They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?” Surely you have things turned around!
Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay: For shall the thing made say of him who made it,
“He did not make me”? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?

- These people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me. Jerusalem knew how to talk the spiritual talk, but their hearts were far from God. You can’t always tell a person’s heart by what they say. You can’t always tell a person’s heart by what they do. Though only God can really know the heart, the closest we can come is by looking at the whole of their life – not just what they say or do, and especially not only at how they act at church or among Christians.
  - Jesus said, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34). This is a true – but not absolute – principle, because people can draw near to God with their mouths and honor the LORD with their lips, and their hearts can still be far from God. Of course, their speech will betray them at one time or another – but just maybe never at church!
  - This manner of talking the talk, but not having the heart, didn’t end in Isaiah’s day. Jesus quoted this passage from Isaiah when He rebuked the religious leaders of His day for their hypocrisy (Matthew 15:7-9, Mark 7:6-7). It didn’t end in Jesus’ day either!
  - How did their hearts get far from God? They have removed their hearts far from Me. God doesn’t move away from His people; they remove their hearts from Him.

- And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men: The people of Jerusalem had no fear of God in themselves; it had to be commanded by others. Their hearts did not respond to God, but only to men.

- The wisdom of their wise men shall perish: Because Jerusalem’s pride had led them into spiritual blindness, sleep, drunkenness, illiteracy, and hypocrisy, God will destroy the wisdom of their wise men. Their wise men promoted the pride that led to all these evils!
  - Isaiah calls this a marvelous work and a wonder, for God to reject the wisdom of man and to display His wisdom. Paul was also amazed at the “wisdom” of man, and how it compared to the “foolishness” of God: For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men (1 Corinthians 1:21-25).

- Who sees us: In their false wisdom, the proud people of Jerusalem thought they could hide their thoughts (hide their counsel) and their deeds (their works are in the dark) from the LORD. Surely you have things turned around! They thought they could hide from the LORD, and that they had Him all figured out. The truth is turned around! The LORD has them all figured out, and they really don’t know God at all.

- Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay: The people of Jerusalem made the terrible mistake of raising themselves up and lowering God at the same time. So, for them, the clay was just as worthy, just as intelligent, just as powerful, as the potter was!

- For shall the thing made say of him who made it, “He did not make me”: Indeed, man says exactly this today. Man looks at God our Creator, and says, “He did not make me.” For the LORD and His prophet, this was absolutely absurd, but today it passes for high science!

- Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”: Indeed, man says exactly this today. Instead of seeing the absolute need for an intelligent designer who created all things, many believe that chance – absolute blind, random, purposeless chance, having no understanding at all – brought all things into being.
• People who are otherwise intelligent often fall into this delusion. Jacques Monod, a biochemist, wrote: “Chance alone is at the source of every innovation, of all creation in the biosphere. Pure chance, absolutely free but blind, at the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution.”
  
  o But assigning such power to “chance” is crazy. Chance has no power. For example, when a coin is flipped, the chance it will land “heads” is 50%; however, “chance” does not make it land heads. Whether or not it lands heads or tails is due to the strength with which the coin is flipped, the strength of air currents and air pressure as it flies through the air, where it is caught, and if it is flipped over once it is caught. Chance doesn’t “do” anything but describe a probability.

  o When Carl Sagan petitioned the federal government for a grant to search for intelligent life in outer space, how did he hope to find it? By using a super sensitive instrument to pick up radio signals from distant space. When he received those radio signals, he looked for order and pattern, which would demonstrate the signals were transmitted by intelligent life. In the same way, the order and pattern of the whole universe demonstrates that it was fashioned by intelligent life, not by “chance.” Scientists detect “chance” in the radio signals constantly (in the form of unpatterned static), but it tells them nothing.

  o Therefore, when someone says the universe or anything else came about by chance, they are extremely ignorant, superstitious, or just repeating a line they have heard before and have unthinkingly accepted.

• He did not make me: We need to remember the context of the whole chapter – the pride and blindness of Jerusalem. It is perhaps the height of man’s pride and blindness to reject the LORD as our creator.
C. A promise of restoration.

1. (17-21) Sight for the spiritually blind, justice for the wicked.

*Is it not yet a very little while*
*Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?*
*In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book,*
*And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.*
*The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD,*
*And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.*
*For the terrible one is brought to nothing,*
The scornful one is consumed, And all who watch for iniquity are cut off—
*Who make a man an offender by a word, And lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate,*
*And turn aside the just by empty words.*

- **Is it not yet a very little while**: God’s restoration will come, and all things considered, it is in a very little while. It may not seem so to us when we are in the midst of a trial, but it is true.

- **Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest**: The land of Lebanon was known for its mighty forests, which would be brought low and turned into a fruitful field. On the other hand, the fruitful field would become as a forest. God would cut one down and raise another up.
  - A “proverbial saying, expressing any great revolution of things; and, when respecting two subjects, and entire reciprocal change.” (Clarke)

- **The deaf shall hear… the eyes of the blind shall see**: When God’s people are restored, pride no longer prevents them from hearing God’s word or seeing God’s work. Just as much as these are miracles in the natural realm, they are miracles in the spiritual realm also. We need to humbly seek God for ears to hear and eyes to see.

- **The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD**: Joy is the proper reward for the humble. When we are humble – having an accurate estimation of ourselves, and a proper perspective of ourselves in relation to God and others – our lives are filled with the most joy.
  - The humble and the poor have their joy in the LORD. He is a constant source of joy that can never be taken away!
  - Pride is the enemy of joy. We can be proud and have fun, we can be proud and have success, we can be proud and experience excitement, and we can be proud and be happy because of happy circumstances. But we cannot be proud and have joy in the LORD, or to whatever degree we are proud, we are missing joy in the LORD. The proud can never have joy in the LORD if they are in humble or poor circumstances.

- **The terrible one is brought to nothing**: The work of the LORD does not stop at restoring His corrected people. It extends to bringing justice upon the wicked. Singled out for judgment by the prophet are those who have no sense of proportion or justice: Who make a man an offender by a word… turn aside the just for a thing of naught.

Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:

“Jacob shall not now be ashamed, Nor shall his face now grow pale;
But when he sees his children, The work of My hands, in his midst,
They will hallow My name, And hallow the Holy One of Jacob, And fear the God of Israel.
These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, And those who complained will learn doctrine.”

- **Jacob shall not now be ashamed**: Significantly, God addresses His people as Jacob in this promise of restoration. The name Jacob, given to the father of the 12 tribes, is not complimentary. It has the idea of a “con-man” or a “trickster.” Anyone who is really a Jacob, has good reason to be ashamed, but when God restores His people, even the “Jacobs” shall not now be ashamed.

- **When he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name**: The picture is of the patriarch Jacob looking over his descendants, and no longer being ashamed of them, because they now hallow the name of the LORD, and respect the holiness of the LORD.

- **These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmured will learn doctrine**: Finally, in God’s day of restoration, the truth is taught and known and exalted. Those who erred in spirit now have understanding, and those who murmured know better because they know the truth.

  - This chapter says a great deal about spiritual blindness:
    - Spiritual blindness is caused by pride.
    - Spiritual blindness will bring us low.
    - Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual drunkenness.
    - Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual sleep.
    - Spiritual blindness leads to spiritual illiteracy.
    - Spiritual blindness causes hypocrisy.
    - Spiritual blindness makes men believe God cannot know what they think or see what they do.
    - Spiritual blindness makes men deny God as Creator.
    - Spiritual blindness is cured through humility.
    - Spiritual blindness can only be healed through the LORD’s restoration.
ISAIAH 30: TRUST IN THE LORD, NOT IN EGYPT – Warnings to Turn to God, Not Man

- v.1-2 The Israelites in their stupidity turn to man (Egypt), not to God, for their help. There is no real substance to Egypt.
- v.7 God asks His people not to worry, but to be still and trust in God.
- v.16-19 Those who fled to Egypt were destroyed, but those who stayed at Jerusalem were safe.
- v.26 Description of sun possibly going into a supernova (Rev.16:8-9).
- v.27 Tophet means "the place of the burning fire." This is the final place of the wicked. The New Testament Greek word for this is gehenna (Mk. 9:44, 46).

A. A rebuke to those in Judah who looked to Egypt for deliverance.

1. (1-2) God exposes the sin of those who put their trust in Egypt.

   “Woe to the rebellious children,” says the LORD, “Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin; Who walk to go down to Egypt, And have not asked My advice, To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!”

- Who walk and go down to Egypt… To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh: This prophecy was given at a time when the Assyrian army was attacking Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel would be conquered by Assyria, and the people of Israel would be taken into exile. The Assyrians would then come against the southern kingdom of Judah, and because of this threat the leaders of Judah looked to Egypt for protection against the Assyrian invasion.

- Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit: In looking to Egypt, Judah forsook the LORD. In one sense, it was wise and good for Judah to understand that they needed help and were willing to look outside of themselves for help. In the larger sense, it was foolish and evil of Judah to look to others – especially Egypt – for help, instead of looking to the LORD.

  o You take counsel – but is it of the LORD? You devise plans – but are they of God’s Spirit? It is one sin to reject the LORD, and another sin all together to trust in something else. Therefore, to do what Judah did in this situation is to add sin to sin.

2. (3-5) The folly of trusting in Egypt.

   Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be your humiliation. For his princes were at Zoan, And his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of a people who could not benefit them, Or be help or benefit, But a shame and also a reproach.

- Therefore the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be your humiliation: From the perspective of heaven, the strength of Pharaoh was nothing. As the LORD saw it, Egypt was no substance, just a shadow.

- They were all ashamed of a people who could not benefit them: The ambassadors of Egypt came to Judah, and saw that Judah had nothing to “give” them. It was foolish for the leaders of Judah to trust in a nation that looked at them this way!
B. The burden against Judah for their trust in Egypt.

1. (6-7) Their trust in Egypt will gain them nothing.

The burden against the beasts of the South.
Through a land of trouble and anguish, From which came the lioness and lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent, They will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys,
And their treasures on the humps of camels, To a people who shall not profit;
For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose.
Therefore I have called her Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.

- **The burden against the beasts of the South**: Isaiah proclaims a burden against the pack animals of Judah, which will carry the riches of Judah down to Egypt, through the wilderness, in a foolish attempt to purchase protection against the Assyrians.

- **The Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose**: No wonder Isaiah felt sorry for the donkeys that will carry the treasure of Judah down to Egypt. Despite the riches that the pack animals bring across the desert, Egypt will not help Judah at all, so one could call Egypt Rahab-Hem-Shebeth, which means “Rahab Sits Idle” of “Rahab the Do-Nothing.” Rahab is a name, but it is also the Hebrew word for pride, and is sometimes used as a title for Egypt (Psalm 87:4). Egypt will sit idly by as the Assyrians trouble Judah.

  - “It is all useless, bringing neither help nor advantage. ‘Well, of course!’ Isaiah might have said, for from the feared killer (Assyria) they were seeking help from the proved killer (Egypt)!” (Motyer)

2. (8-11) The LORD documents Judah’s rejection of His message.

Now go, write it before them on a tablet, And note it on a scroll,
That it may be for time to come, Forever and ever:
That this is a rebellious people, Lying children,
Children who will not hear the law of the LORD;
Who say to the seers, “Do not see,”
And to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us right things;
Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.
Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us.”

- **Now go, write it before them on a tablet… that it may be for a time to come, forever and ever**: God tells Judah this before it happens, and wants it documented. This is so when it all unfolds exactly as the LORD had spoken, Judah can have greater trust in the LORD.

- **That this is a rebellious people, lying children… who say to the seers, “Do not see”**: God wanted Judah’s rejection of His message, and His messengers, to be documented. Judah wanted to hear from the prophets and God’s messengers, but they did not want to hear the truth from them. They want religion, but they don’t want the living God of heaven to be real in their life (Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us).

  - The problem God confronted in Judah didn’t end in the days of Judah. Paul describes the same kind of heart in 2 Timothy 4:3-4: *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*
3. (12-14) The judgment to come upon Judah for their trust in Egypt and for their rejection of His message.

Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:
“Because you despise this word, And trust in oppression and perversity, And rely on them, Therefore this iniquity shall be to you Like a breach ready to fall, A bulge in a high wall, Whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.
And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter’s vessel, Which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments A shard to take fire from the hearth, Or to take water from the cistern.”

- **Because you despise this word... Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall:** God promises that because Judah trusted in Egypt instead of Him, everything will be broken and collapsed. Judah will be like a collapsed wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. Judah will be like a shattered clay pot, which is broken in pieces.

4. (15-17) Judah brought low because of their self-reliance and rejection of God’s message.

For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel:
“In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”
But you would not, And you said, “No, for we will flee on horses”—Therefore you shall flee!
And, “We will ride on swift horses” — Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift!
One thousand shall flee at the threat of one. At the threat of five you shall flee,
Till you are left as a pole on top of a mountain And as a banner on a hill.

- **In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength:** God offered to Judah the promise of protection from Assyria. They didn’t need to look to Egypt to help at all. They could have trusted God for His promise.
  - Trusting God’s promise means returning. If there is conspicuous disobedience in our lives, we must return to the LORD’s ways. Outright disobedience is never consistent with real trust in God’s promise. Returning also has the idea of drawing close to the LORD.
  - Trusting God’s promise means rest. When we trust God, we don’t have to strive for ourselves. We don’t have to run all about trying to protect or guard ourselves. We have the best Protector, the best Guard in God. We can rest in Him, and when we do, it shows we are really trusting in God’s promise.
  - Trusting God’s promise means quietness. You don’t need to argue for your side when God is on your side. Be quiet before Him and before others. It shows that you really trust Him.
  - Trusting God’s promise means confidence. You aren’t given to despair or fear because you trust God’s promise. You know He can and will come through, and you have a profound confidence in the God who loves you.
  - All of these things together mean a real trust in God’s promise, and it means that we shall be saved, and it means that we will find strength. There is no person walking this earth more powerful than a child of God boldly and properly trusting the promise of the living God!

- **But you would not, and you said, “No, for we will flee on horses” – Therefore you shall flee:** Because Judah rejected God’s promise, and trusted in horses and other such things instead, they would need to flee! If they would have trusted God’s promise instead, they would never have had reason to flee, and would have seen the LORD’s salvation and strength instead.

- **One thousand shall flee at the threat of one:** This is reversal of the promise of Leviticus 26:8, and a fulfillment of the curse promised in Leviticus 26:17: *I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you.*
C. The blessing of restoration for Judah.

1. (18) A call to trust in God’s timing.

Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you.

For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him.

- Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you: We often wonder why the LORD waits to do things in our lives. Isaiah tells us plainly that it is so He may be gracious to you. Whenever the LORD waits or seems to delay, it always has a loving purpose behind it. We can trust that even when we don’t understand it.

- And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on us: When God has mercy on us, it exalts Him. Mercy does nothing to exalt the person who receives it; mercy recognizes the guilt of the one who deserves the punishment. But mercy exalts the goodness of the person who gives it. It shows them to be loving, generous, and full of mercy.

- For the LORD is a God of justice: On the surface, mercy and justice seem to oppose each other. If some guilty criminal stands before the judge, he has the choice to show either mercy or justice. But God is so great, He can show both at the same time. Because on the cross, Jesus took the punishment we deserve, God’s justice is satisfied. At the same time, He shows mercy by extending the work of Jesus to us as payment for our sins. Only God can reconcile mercy and justice, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

- Blessed are all those who wait for Him: Because God is so great, there is a built-in blessing for those who wait for Him. Isaiah doesn’t mean wait just in the sense of passing time, but in the sense of patiently waiting for and trusting God’s promise.

  - “Certain of God’s people are in trouble and distress, and they are eager for immediate rescue. They cannot wait God’s time, nor exercise submission to his will. He will surely deliver them in due season; but they cannot tarry till the hour cometh; like children, they snatch at unripe fruit. ‘To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven’; but their one season is the present; they cannot, they will not wait. They must have their desire instantaneously fulfilled, or else they are ready to take wrong means of attaining it. If in poverty, they are in haste to be rich; and they shall not long be innocent. If under reproach, their heart ferments towards revenge. They would sooner rush under the guidance of Satan into some questionable policy, than in childlike simplicity trust in the Lord and do good. It must not be so with you, my brethren, you must learn a better way.” (Spurgeon)

2. (19) God promises to bless His people by responding to their cry.

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more.

He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you.

- You shall weep no more… He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry: When God’s people wait on Him and patiently trust His promise, God pours out His grace at the cry of their heart. Even if it feels God is distant, He hears and promises to answer.

3. (20-21) God promises to bless His people with guidance.

And though the Lord gives you The bread of adversity and the water of affliction,

Yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers.

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,”

Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.

- Though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction… your eyes shall see your teachers: When Judah was prosperous and comfortable, they wouldn’t listen to God. Now, God has given them the bread of adversity and water of affliction, but they can hear God and be guided by Him again. It’s always better to be uncomfortable and in tune with the Lord than to be comfortable and out of step with God.
4. (22) **God promises to bless His people with the desire for purity.**

You will also defile the covering of your graven images of silver,
And the ornament of your molded images of gold.
You will throw them away as an unclean thing; You will say to them, “Get away!”

- **You will also defile the covering of your graven images of silver:** The people of Judah kept household idols that they used to honor or worship other gods. The LORD promises a day when they will **defile** those images and **throw them away as an unclean thing.** What a wonderful thing it is when God’s people say to wicked and idolatrous things, “Get away!”

- **You will throw them away as an unclean thing:** The literal Hebrew for **unclean thing** is literally a **menstrual cloth.** The people of God would come to hate their idols so much that they would throw them away as readily as they would throw away a used menstrual cloth. Interestingly, the King James Version and the New International Version both translate these words as **menstrual cloth,** but the New King James Version uses the euphemistic **unclean thing.**

5. (23-26) **God promises to bless nature with abundance.**

Then He will give the rain for your seed With which you sow the ground,
And bread of the increase of the earth; It will be fat and plentiful.
In that day your cattle will feed In large pastures.
Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground Will eat cured fodder,
Which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.
There will be on every high mountain And on every high hill Rivers and streams of waters,
In the day of the great slaughter. When the towers fall.
Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold,
As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people
And heals the stroke of their wound.

- **Then He will give the rain for your seed:** When Judah puts away their idols, boldly trusting God’s promise, then God will send material blessings on Judah. For a nation of farmers, it was a wonderful promise to make them **fat and plentiful.** In a naturally dry land, it was a wonderful promise to give abundant **rivers and streams of waters.**

- **In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people and heals the stroke of their wound:** Better than the material blessing of the LORD is His loving care.

6. (27-29) **God promises His people will have gladness in the day of judgment.**

Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, Burning with His anger, And His burden is heavy;
His lips are full of indignation, And His tongue like a devouring fire.
His breath is like an overflowing stream, Which reaches up to the neck,
To sift the nations with the sieve of futility;
And there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, Causing them to err.
You shall have a song As in the night when a holy festival is kept,
And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute,
To come into the mountain of the LORD, To the Mighty One of Israel.

- **Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with His anger:** Isaiah sees the judgment of the LORD quickly coming, **to sift the nations with the sieve of futility.** However, God’s people do not need to fear: **You shall have a song… and gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, to come into the mountain of the LORD.** What a contrast!
  - “The truth is that God’s people are here portrayed rejoicing at his judgment on sin because they must take his point of view on everything, and because this judgment is at the same time their salvation.” (Grogan)

- **You shall have a song:** 1 John 4:17 expresses the same idea: **Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.** Boldness and joy in the day of judgment are precious gifts from God.
The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard, And show the descent of His arm, With the indignation of His anger And the flame of a devouring fire, With scattering, tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the LORD Assyria will be beaten down, As He strikes with the rod. And in every place where the staff of punishment passes, Which the LORD lays on him, It will be with tambourines and harps; And in battles of brandishing He will fight with it.

For Tophet was established of old, Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; Its pyre is fire with much wood; The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, Kindles it.

The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard: Isaiah wants God’s people see the glory of God’s judgments. When we understand how God’s perfect judgment exalts His justice and His righteousness, we see the glory of the judgment of the LORD.

Assyria will be beaten down: In the near view, Isaiah sees the judgment of the LORD against Assyria. Judah had no business trusting in Egypt for help against the Assyrians, but they should have trusted the LORD instead, because the LORD will take care of the Assyrians

- As it happened, this was exactly the case. 2 Kings 19:35 describes how God sent the angel of the LORD and killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. When the people woke up, there were 185,000 dead Assyrian soldiers.

For Tophet was established of old, yes for the king it is prepared: Tophet was a place in the Valley of Hinnom, just outside of Jerusalem’s walls (Jeremiah 7:31). The Valley of Hinnom served as Jerusalem’s garbage dump, and the combination of disgusting rubbish and smoldering fires made it a picture of hell. The Hebrew word for hell (gehenna) comes from the word for the Valley of Hinnom. Therefore, God says He has a special place in hell for the Assyrian king!

- Trapp on Tophet: “Hence it is here used for hell, together with that eternity of extremity which the damned there endure; and this the Assyrians are here threatened with, yea, their very king, whose preservation from the stroke of the angel was but a reservation to a worse mischief here and hereafter.”

- God had an eternal place for the Assyrian king who attacked Judah and Jerusalem (He has made it deep and large; its pyre is fire with much wood). But God also had a special judgment for that king on earth. 2 Kings 19:36-37 describes how when the king of the Assyrians returned home after attacking Judah, his own sons murdered him as he worshipped in the temple of Nisroch his god. “Great men, if not good, shall be greatly tormented; and the more they have of the fat of the earth, the more they are sure to fry in hell.” (Trapp)

- “Isaiah starts with the ‘real’ day of the Lord. He is Lord over all the nations. (By implication, what is Assyria, compared with such a God?) The Lord’s people will be safe in his Day: their part will be to sing amid the judgments of God. So then, regarding Assyria in the here and now, they will be shattered, Judah will sing, the funeral pyre is ready and so is the fire.” (Motyer)
ISAIAH 31: THE LORD WILL GIVE VICTORY, NOT EGYPT – The Lord Will Defend

- Background: Impending invasion of Assyria and pressure on Israel to ally with Egypt.
- v.1 Woe to those who are seeking help from man as their first resort.
- v.4 The Lord will stand by His people.
- v.5 Dual fulfillment: in 1917 the Turks held Jerusalem. It was preserved from destruction when the British reconnaissance planes flew over and frightened the Turks, who fled without battle.
- v.8-9 The Assyrians will be destroyed, not by man but by the Lord (2 Kings 19:35). Angels are given charge over us for protection (Ps. 91:12, 34:7).

A. The folly of trusting in Egypt.

1. (1) Woe to those who look to Egypt, not the LORD.

   Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses,
   Who trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong,
   But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, Nor seek the LORD!

   ▪ Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help: Isaiah confronts Judah with two sins: the sin of trusting in Egypt and their military might, and the sin of not looking to the Holy One of Israel. Judah felt they had a reason to trust in chariots (because they are many). Judah felt they had a reason to trust in horsemen (because they are very strong). But they couldn’t seem to find a reason to trust in the LORD!
     - “They did not, of course, abandon faith per se. Everybody lives by faith. It is part of the human condition. Financiers trust market forces, militarists trust bombs, scientists trust nature’s regularities. Jerusalem’s leaders trusted Egypt.” (Motyer)

   ▪ Nor seek the LORD: How much better to have the heart of the Psalmist in Psalm 20:7: Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. And our trust should only be in the LORD.
     - “He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish as certainly as he that stands with both feet on a quicksand.” (Trapp)

2. (2-3) The LORD is mightier than the Egyptians.

   Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, And will not call back His words,
   But will arise against the house of evildoers, And against the help of those who work iniquity.
   Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; And their horses are flesh, and not spirit.
   When the LORD stretches out His hand, Both he who helps will fall,
   And he who is helped will fall down; They all will perish together.

   ▪ Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster: Though Judah couldn’t seem to find a reason to trust God, the reasons were there, and Isaiah calls them to remember the reasons. They should trust God more than the Egyptians or their armies because He also is wise and will bring disaster… He will arise against the house of evildoers.

   ▪ Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit: Judah was also wrong about their trust in Egypt. The Egyptians and their armies were not as mighty as they seemed to be. All the LORD must do to topple them, along with all who trust in them, is to stretch out His hand.
B. The LORD will defend Judah and Jerusalem.

1. (4-5) The LORD defends Mount Zion.

For thus the LORD has spoken to me:
“As a lion roars, and a young lion over his prey (When a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him, 
He will not be afraid of their voice Nor be disturbed by their noise),
So the LORD of hosts will come down To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.
Like birds flying about, So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver it; Passing over, He will preserve it.”

- As a lion roars… So the LORD of hosts will come down to fight for Mount Zion: Again, their trust in Egypt for protection against the Assyrian invasion was both foolish and unnecessary. God would protect Mount Zion if Judah trusted Him or not!
- Like birds flying about, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem: The picture is of a mother bird protecting her young. So, God will defend Jerusalem with the ferocity of a lion, and also with the tender care of a bird. The combination of the two images is powerful.
  o “As birds flying; which come from above, and so cannot be kept off; which fly swiftly and engage themselves valiantly and resolutely, when they perceive that their young ones are in eminent danger.” (Poole)
  o “The Lord of Hosts will be strong as the lion that growls over his prey… and He will be sweet and soft and gentle as a mother-bird.” (Meyer)

2. (6-9) An invitation to repent to the God who will deliver.

Return to Him against whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. For in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold; sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

“Then Assyria shall fall by a sword not of man, And a sword not of mankind shall devour him.
But he shall flee from the sword, And his young men shall become forced labor.
He shall cross over to his stronghold for fear, And his princes shall be afraid of the banner,”
Says the LORD, Whose fire is in Zion And whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

- Return to Him: Because of how great God is, because of how terrible the alternatives to serving Him are, we should feel compelled to return to Him. Repentance means turning towards God, and away from anything we have put in God’s place (idols of silver and idols of gold – sin, which your own hands have made).
- Then Assyria shall fall by sword not of man: This was fulfilled exactly. The Assyrian army devastated almost the entire land of Judah, and camped on the outskirts of Jerusalem, waiting to conquer the nation by defeating the capital city. But 2 Kings 19:35 describes how God simply sent the angel of the LORD and killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. When the people woke up, there were 185,000 dead Assyrian soldiers. It was a victory that had nothing to do with the sword… of man. God was more than able to protect Judah and Jerusalem.
v.1-4 There will be restoration of man physically.
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v.6-7 The liberal theology will be seen in a true light, as it has not really fed those who were hungry for God.
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v.9-11 Defiled womanhood represents a defiled nation. Women are often used to portray the moral condition of a nation.
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v.14-16 Signs of the last days: Israel's budding and God's Spirit being poured out (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:14-18).
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v.17 Righteous living guarantees a quietness and assurance that one has done the right thing.
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A. Blessings from the coming king.

1. (1) In the aftermath of Jerusalem's deliverance, a king comes.

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice.

- Behold, a king will reign in righteousness: This promise was made in a certain context. In the previous chapter, God assured that the Assyrians would be judged, and Judah would be delivered. But God didn’t want only to remove the threat; He also wanted to bless Judah was a righteous king, so the promise was made.

  o However, it is likely that the prophecy of Isaiah 32:33 was given before the time of the prophecy of Isaiah 30-31. Both look to the time of the Assyrian invasion of Judah, but Isaiah 30-31 are set in the time of Hezekiah, as the invasion nears Jerusalem. Most commentators believe that the king who will reign in righteousness mentioned here was Hezekiah, and since it says that he will reign, this prophecy may have been given at the beginning of Isaiah’s prophetic career, during the reign of King Ahaz, the predecessor to King Hezekiah.

  o It is possible that the prophecy of Isaiah 32:33 was given during the reign of Hezekiah, and this announcement refers to the latter part of his reign. It is also possible that it was given during the time of Hezekiah, and it prophesies the coming of King Josiah, the great-grandson of the present king of Judah, Hezekiah, who reigned during the Assyrian threat. Josiah was a righteous king (2 Kings 22:2).

- A king will reign in righteousness: In some sense, Hezekiah certainly fulfilled this prophecy. It was written of him, and he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done... 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 (2 Kings 18:3, 5-6).

- A king will reign in righteousness: Yet ultimately, Hezekiah was a picture of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. Jeremiah 23:5 announces this about our Messiah: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

  o “This seems to have been delivered in the time of Ahaz, and to speak of Hezekiah, and of his righteousness and happy government. But withal, as Hezekiah and his reign was an eminent type of Christ and of his kingdom; so this prophecy looks through Hezekiah unto Christ.” (Poole)

- And princes will rule with justice: It wasn’t enough – it is never enough – to have a righteous king. The king must have helpers. princes under him, who will also rule with justice. Hezekiah had such loyal princes, such as Eliakim, Shebna the scribe, the elders of the priests, and Isaiah himself (2 Kings 19:2).

  o These weren’t princes in the literal sense of being sons of King Hezekiah. The Hebrew word for princes can mean any ruler under a king.

  o If Hezekiah, the righteous king, points to Jesus, then who are Jesus’ princes? His people are His princes! But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:10). Many of the seemingly unnecessary trials and pains of this life a wonderful purpose in the world beyond: training us to be princes, faithfully ruling with King Jesus!
2. (2-4) The blessings of restoration from the king.

A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, And a cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
The eyes of those who see will not be dim, And the ears of those who hear will listen.
Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

- **Rivers of water in a dry place**: This described how wonderful the spiritual renewal during the reign of Hezekiah was, like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. By God’s blessing, those who see could see better than ever, and those who hear will listen.
  
  - The more glorious reign of Jesus is all these things for us as well. He is a shelter from the storm (a cover from the tempest), as rivers of water in a dry place, and like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
  
  - “If King Hezekiah were a type of Christ, then this prophecy may refer to his time; but otherwise it seems to have Hezekiah primarily in view. It is evident, however, that in the fullest sense these words cannot be applied to any man; GOD alone can do all that is promised here.” (Clarke)

- **The heart of the rash will understand knowledge**: The spiritual renewal during the reign of Hezekiah promoted trust in God’s Word, and because of that, hearts were changed. God also would bless in miraculous ways (the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly).

3. (5-8) The blessings of righteousness and integrity from the king.

The foolish person will no longer be called generous, Nor the miser said to be bountiful;
For the foolish person will speak foolishness, And his heart will work iniquity:
To practice ungodliness, To utter error against the LORD,
To keep the hungry unsatisfied, And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises wicked plans
To destroy the poor with lying words, Even when the needy speaks justice.
But a generous man devises generous things, And by generosity he shall stand.

- **The foolish person will no longer be called generous… the foolish person will speak foolishness**: The spiritual renewal during the reign of Hezekiah meant that spiritual reality would be exposed for all to see. No more would there be deception by appearances; if a man were foolish, he would be exposed as foolish.
  
  - **Wicked plans**: “Apart from Job 17:11, has a uniformly bad meaning. It occurs nineteen times of sexual misconduct (e.g. Leviticus 18:17). It is planning for one’s own advantage at whatever cost to others.” (Motyer)

- **But a generous man devises generous things**: Not only would the foolishness of the foolish be exposed, but so would the generosity of the generous. Righteousness and wickedness would each be seen for what they were and regarded accordingly.
  
  - “Wickedness shall be discovered and punished wheresoever it is, and virtue shall be manifested and rewarded, and all things shall be managed with sincerity and simplicity.” (Poole)
B. A call to prepare for the coming of the Spirit.

1. (9-11) **The women at ease are called to repent.**

   Rise up, you women who are at ease, Hear my voice;  
   You complacent daughters, Give ear to my speech.  
   In a year and some days You will be troubled, you complacent women;  
   For the vintage will fail, The gathering will not come.  
   Tremble, you women who are at ease; Be troubled, you complacent ones;  
   Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, And gird sackcloth on your waists.

   - **Rise up, you women who are at ease:** Before the righteous king would come, the people had to prepare themselves. The women who are at ease and the complacent daughters had to get ready for the righteous king.
   
     - **At ease** is the same word used later in the chapter, where God promises secure dwelling places (Isaiah 32:18). **Complacent** is the same word used in later in the same chapter, where God promises peaceful habitation. “According to Isaiah, there is nothing wrong with feeling secure and undisturbed as long as one’s trust is solidly based on the Lord.” (Wolf)

   - **Tremble, you women who are at ease:** Instead of an indulgent, self-focused life, they would be required to tremble, be troubled, and put on the clothing of mourning.

2. (12-14) **The whole land mourns.**

   People shall mourn upon their breasts For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.  
   On the land of my people will up thorns and briers, Yes, on all the happy homes in the joyous city;  
   Because the palaces will be forsaken, The bustling city will be deserted.  
   The forts and towers will become lairs forever, A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks—

   - **People shall mourn upon their breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine:** Because of the Assyrian invasion to come, God would use the tough economic times to wake Judah up. *For the vintage will fail, the gathering will not come* (Isaiah 32:10). The tough times touched everyone (all the happy homes in the joyous city... the palaces will be forsaken).

3. (15) **The Spirit is poured out upon a humbled people.**

   Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,  
   And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,  
   And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

   - **Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high:** God used the invasion from Assyria, the tough times, and the humble mourning of the people to prepare them for an outpouring of His Spirit.
     
     - **Until:** It was only the Spirit of God that could make the difference; the tough times would last until the Spirit was poured out.
     
     - **Is poured out:** God wanted to do more than scatter a few drops of His mercy and blessing; He wanted His Spirit to be poured out upon His people.
     
     - **From on high:** This is where the true outpouring of the Holy Spirit comes. It doesn’t come from among men, or because of men’s efforts. It comes from heaven, from on high.

   - **The wilderness becomes a fruitful field:** When the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was barren and desolate before is now full of life and fruitfulness. True fruitfulness comes from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

   - **And the fruitful field is counted as a forest:** When the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was good before (a fruitful field) miraculously becomes even better (a forest).
4. (16-20) Blessings brought by the Spirit.

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field.
The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.
My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,
Though hail comes down on the forest, And the city is brought low in humiliation.
Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, Who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.

- **Justice… righteousness… peace… quietness and assurance forever**: When God’s Spirit is poured out among His people, this is what it is like. This means that we shouldn’t be satisfied with what claims to be of the Spirit but isn’t marked by the fruit of the Spirit. This means that if we lack these things, we can come and ask the LORD to pour out His Spirit upon us.

- **My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings… though hail comes down on the forest, and the city is brought low in humiliation**: When God’s Spirit is poured out, we live on a principle higher than circumstances. If others feel the pelting hail, or are brought low in humiliation, it doesn’t matter to those blessed by the poured-out Spirit of God.
ISAIAH 33: THE LORD DELIVERS ZION – Jerusalem Delivered

- v.1-8 The Assyrians have come and taken many of the cities of Judah and laid them waste.
- v.10-13 God punishes the Assyrians.
- v.14 The fire of God (Heb. 12:29). For the Christian, it's a refining process (James 1:2).

A. The LORD comes in judgment and graciousness.

1. (1) Woe to plundering Assyria.

   **Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered;**
   **And you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you!**
   **When you cease plundering, You will be plundered;**
   **When you make an end of dealing treacherously, They will deal treacherously with you.**

   - **Woe to you who plunder:** This prophecy, spoken before the Assyrian invasion, shows that this seemingly unstoppable army will in fact be stopped. Those who did the plundering will be plundered and will be dealt with treacherously by others.

   - **They will deal treacherously with you:** Jesus spoke of this same principle in Matthew 7:1-2: Judge not, that you not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. God has every right to deal with us as we have dealt with others.

2. (2-4) The prayer of God’s people.

   **O LORD, be gracious to us; We have waited for You.**
   **Be their arm every morning, Our salvation also in the time of trouble.**
   **At the noise of the tumult the people shall flee; When You lift Yourself up, the nations shall be scattered;**
   **And Your plunder shall be gathered Like the gathering of the caterpillar;**
   **As the running to and fro of locusts, He shall run upon them.**

   - **O LORD, be gracious to us:** In light of the Assyrian threat and the longed-for deliverance of a righteous king, God’s people no longer look to the Egyptians, they no longer look to themselves. Now, they look to the LORD, and cry out, “O LORD, be gracious to us.”

   - **We have waited for You. Be their arm every morning:** God’s people aren’t trusting in themselves anymore. They are waiting on the LORD and looking to His arm every morning.

   - **When You lift Yourself up, the nations shall be scattered:** God’s people have a confident expectation in the LORD. Their prayer is filled with wonderful expectancy.
     - **Like the gathering of the caterpillar:** “Verse four may already have had an initial fulfillment after the death of the Assyrian soldiers, for undoubtedly the inhabitants of Jerusalem congregated like caterpillars around the corpses and the implements of war.” (Bultema)

3. (5-6) The praise of God’s people.

   **The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness.**
   **Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, And the strength of salvation;**
   **The fear of the LORD is His treasure.**

   - **The LORD is exalted:** The tough times were hard, but they brought God’s people to a different, better view of who He is. Because they have been brought low, they see that the LORD is exalted.

   - **He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness:** God’s people pray this in anticipation of the answer. You don’t have to wait until God does it all to give Him thanks. You can, by faith, give Him thanks ahead of time!

   - **The fear of the LORD is His treasure:** Honor, respect, and reverence towards the LORD is His treasure. It is a gift God gives us, not so we will cower in fear, but so we will rightly honor Him.
4. (7-9) The LORD’s judgment brings the earth low.

Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside, The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.  
The highways lie waste, The traveling man ceases.  
He has broken the covenant, He has despised the cities, He regards no man.  
The earth mourns and languishes, Lebanon is shamed and shriveled;  
Sharon is like a wilderness, And Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

- **Their valiant ones shall cry outside**... **The earth mourns and languishes**: When the judgment of the LORD comes to the earth, everyone is brought low before Him. The **valiant ones shall cry**, and the **ambassadors of peace** – who trusted in other nations instead of the LORD – **shall weep bitterly**. Even the mighty **Lebanon**, with her majestic forests of cedar, **is shamed and shriveled**.

- **Their valiant ones**: The Hebrew word translated **valiant ones** appears only this one time in the Bible.
  - “The word erellam, which we translate valiant ones, is very difficult; no man knows what it means. Kimchi supposes that it is the name of the angel that smote the Assyrian camp! The Vulgate, and my Old MS., translate it **seers**; and most of the Versions understand it this way. None of the MSS. give us any help.” (Clarke)

B. The fire of the LORD.

1. (10-13) The LORD announces His fire of judgment.

“Now I will rise,” says the LORD; “Now I will be exalted, Now I will lift Myself up.  
You shall conceive chaff, You shall bring forth stubble; Your breath, as fire, shall devour you.  
And the people shall be like the burnings of lime; Like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire.  
Hear, you who are afar off, what I have done; And you who are near, acknowledge My might.”

- **Now I will rise**: As the whole earth is brought low by the judgment of the LORD, at the same time, the LORD lifts Himself up.

- **And the people shall be like the burnings of lime; like thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire**: God’s judgment will come like fire, and the wicked and worthless works of man will be like **chaff** and **stubble** that is quickly and ferociously burned in the fire.
  - “To lime stresses the intensity of the blaze.” (Moyer)

2. (14-19) Fearful sinners and blessed saints.

The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites:  
“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”  
He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions,  
Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,  
And shuts his eyes from seeing evil: He will dwell on high;  
His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure.  
Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will see the land that is very far off.  
Your heart will meditate on terror: “Where is the scribe?  
Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?”  
You will not see a fierce people, A people of obscure speech, beyond perception,  
Of a stammering tongue that you cannot understand.

- **The sinners in Zion are afraid**: Of course they are! The judgment of the LORD is coming! Those who were not afraid to practice their sin are now afraid when righteous judgment comes upon their sin.

- **He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly... He will dwell on high**: Though the sinners and hypocrites are terrified at the coming judgment of the LORD, the LORD’s righteous ones are comforted that God is coming to set things right.

- **Your eyes will see the King in His beauty**: The LORD will bless His righteous ones. They will have a **place of defense**, a **fortress**, and **bread** and **water** will not fail them. But far above these material blessings, they will see the
King in His beauty. In the most immediate sense, this referred to Hezekiah; but in the ultimate sense, to our Beautiful Savior Jesus.

- Beyond all the material glory, splendor, and comfort of heaven, this is the greatest glory of heaven: not to be personally glorified, but to see the King in His beauty.

- It isn’t only seeing the King; it is seeing Him in His beauty. It can be said that we occasionally catch a “glimpse” of our King Jesus, and even sometimes have a glance at His beauty. But the highest experience we could have now is like seeing what we will experience when we see the King in His beauty. Paul said of our present walk, For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known (1 Corinthians 13:12). Today, when we look in a good mirror, the image is clear. But in the ancient world, mirrors were made out of polished metal, and the image was always unclear and somewhat distorted. We see Jesus now only in a dim, unclear way, but one-day we will see Him with perfect clarity.

- Heaven is precious to us for many reasons. We long to be with loved ones who have passed before us and whom we miss so dearly. We long to be with the great men and women of God who have passed before us in centuries past. We want to walk the streets of gold, see the pearly gates, see the angels round the throne of God worshipping Him day and night. However, none of those things, precious as they are, make heaven really “heaven.” What makes heaven really heaven is the unhindered, unrestricted, presence of our LORD, and to see the King in His beauty will be the greatest experience of your eternal existence.

- Part of the beauty of the King in heaven will be the scars He retains from His suffering for our sake on this earth. After Jesus rose from the dead in His glorified body, His body uniquely retained the nail prints in His hands and the scar on His side (John 20:24-29). In Zechariah 12:10, Jesus speaks prophetically of the day when the Jewish people, turned to Him, see Him in glory: then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. Zechariah 13:6 continues the thought: And one will say to him, “What are these wounds between your arms?” Then he will answer, “Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”

- Your heart will meditate on terror: The revealing of the King will be the greatest glory for the child of God, but it will be greatest terror for the one who has set their heart against or apart from God. In vain, they will look to the scribe or he who weighs or he who counts the towers for help, but there will be none.

- You will not see a fierce people, a people of obscure speech: Though the northern nation of Israel was demolished by the Assyrians (a people of obscure speech, beyond perception), the southern nation of Judah would be delivered (you will not see). Isaiah mixes the pictures of the LORD’s ultimate deliverance on the day of judgment, and the soon coming deliverance from the Assyrians.

3. (20-24) Zion is delivered and blessed:

Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts;
Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home, A tabernacle that will not be taken down;
Not one of its stakes will ever be removed, Nor will any of its cords be broken.
But there the majestic LORD will be for us A place of broad rivers and streams,
In which no galley with oars will sail, Nor majestic ships pass by
(For the LORD is our Judge, The LORD is our Lawgiver, The LORD is our King; He will save us);
Your tackle is loosed, They could not strengthen their mast, They could not spread the sail.
Then the prey of great plunder is divided; The lame take the prey.
And the inhabitant will not say, “I am sick”; The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity.

- Look upon Zion… your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation: In the midst of the Assyrian threat, God will preserve Jerusalem. Not one of its stakes will ever be moved!

- A place of broad rivers and streams: God’s blessing on Zion would bring broad rivers and streams to this once barren, desert land.

  - “This chapter, so full of compelling imagery, presents a picture of Jerusalem as a kind of Near Eastern Venice or Amsterdam, or, to place it in its historical context, like the great cities of Egypt or Mesopotamia. Most
great civilizations have grown up around important rivers. Israel, in general, and Jerusalem, in particular, were exceptions to this.” (Grogan)

- **There the majestic LORD will be for us… no galley with oars will sail, nor majestic ships pass by. For the LORD is our Judge… He will save us:** A wide river will not give a path to an enemy coming on a ship. God will save and protect.
  - Those **majestic ships** turned out to be not so majestic after all. **Your tackle is loosed, they could not strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail.** It was foolish to ever fear the **majestic ships** instead of trusting the **majestic LORD**.
  - “Although they shall have from God the security of a great river, yet they shall be freed from the disadvantage of it; which is, that the enemies may come against them in ships; for no galleys nor ships of the enemy’s shall be able to come into this river to annoy them.” (Poole)

- **The lame take the prey… the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity:** When God saves, He does it in unlikely ways. It is an unexpected blessing that the **lame take the prey**. It is an unexpected blessing that people can be **forgiven their iniquity**. The **majestic LORD** brings unexpected blessing!
  - “They shall not only receive from me a glorious temporal deliverance; but, which is infinitely better, the pardon of all their sins, and all those spiritual and everlasting blessings which attend upon that mercy.” (Poole)
ISAIAH 34: THE INDIGNATION OF THE LORD AGAINST ALL NATIONS – Armageddon in the Day of the Lord

- v.1-4 Descriptions of occurrences in the earth during Armageddon. There will be much meteorite activity.
- v.5-16 Isaiah encourages a turning to God’s Word when these events happen, so we can see that God foreknew it.

A. The indignation of the LORD against the peoples of the nations.

1. (1-4) The fury and the completeness of the judgment of the LORD.

Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people!
Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it.
For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.
Also their slain shall be thrown out; Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;
All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.

- The indignation of the LORD: In the immediate context, Isaiah continues the thought of the coming judgment against the Assyrians. But in the larger context, we can see this passage as an announcement of the judgment of come upon the nations during the Great Tribulation.
  - Jesus, and many Old Testament prophets, plainly told us of a coming time He called great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), when because of the judgment of God, conditions on earth would be the worst human history had ever seen. Revelation chapters 6, 8-9, and 16-18 describe this horrific time, when there will be widespread ecological, economic, cosmic, and human catastrophe on a level never before known in history.
  - The idea that this chapter relates to the very end times goes back a long way among Christian teachers. “Eusebius, with many other ancients, will have this chapter to be understood of the end of the world and the last judgment.” (Trapp)

- Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people: It made sense for Isaiah to address the nations. In light of how terrible the great tribulation will be, when we consider how prophecy has been fulfilled, and how the stage is set for even more fulfilled prophecy, we should hear and take heed!
  - The stage is set for a rebuilt temple that will come in the last days, necessary to fulfill the prophecies of the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).
  - The stage is set for the sort of world-dominating confederation of nations, heir to the Roman Empire to arise (Daniel 2:36-45; Revelation 13:1-8; 17:10-14).
  - The stage is set for a political and economic “superman” to arise, the sort of single political leader who will lead this world-dominating confederation of nations (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 13:4-7).
  - The stage is set for the kind of false religion the Bible says will characterize the very last days (2 Thessalonians 2:4, 9-12; Revelation 13:11-15; 17:1-6).
  - The stage is set for the kind of economic system predicted for the very last days (Revelation 13:15-17).
  - The stage is set for the end-times scenario the Bible says will happen between Russia and Israel in Ezekiel 38-39.

- For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations: The warning regarding this time of the indignation of the LORD is directed not to God’s people, but to the nations. This is because God’s people will escape the terrors of the great tribulation, though they may experience great hardship in the time leading up to it. Jesus said we should pray that we would be counted worthy to escape that time of terrors (Luke 21:36) and be taken to heaven in the great catching away of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).
2. (5-7) The great bloodshed at the judgment of the LORD.

“For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse, for judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, It is made overflowing with fatness, With the blood of lambs and goats, With the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, And a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen shall come down with them, And the young bulls with the mighty bulls; Their land shall be soaked with blood, And their dust saturated with fatness.”

- **Indeed it shall come down on Edom:** The Edomites were near neighbors to Israel, and often bitter rivals. The Edomites rejoiced whenever the people of Judah or Israel were afflicted, so Isaiah focuses on the judgment that will come against Edom, using them as a single example of the large judgment that will come upon all the nations (as in Isaiah 34:1-2).
  - “Edom was a sister nation to Israel, but it hated Israel more than any other nation. Throughout all of history we see a burning hatred of Edom against Israel. It is for this reason that Edom is frequently presented as a representative of all the nations that hated the Jews.” (Bultema)
  - “Edom had derided and attacked Judah for centuries, but now God would avenge this hateful attitude that is so characteristic of the world’s ways.” (Wolf)

- **The sword of the LORD is filled with blood… their land shall be soaked with blood:** The indignation of the LORD finds its final fulfillment in the battle of Armageddon, which will be a terribly bloody affair (Revelation 14:20).

- **Overflowing with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams, for the LORD has a great sacrifice… and a great slaughter:** In associating this time of judgment with the image of sacrifice, Isaiah tells us that this is payment for the penalty of sin. Even as a sacrificial victim paid for the sin of the one bringing the sacrifice, so the bloody judgment of sin at Armageddon will be a payment for the penalty of sin. It will be an imperfect, incomplete payment, but it will be a payment of some kind.
  - “The mention of sacrificial animals is primarily intended to refer to the slaughter of people.” (Wolf)

- **The wild oxen shall come down with them:** The King James Version translates wild oxen as unicorns. Bultema writes, “There used to be quite a difference of opinion regarding the word unicorns, but today the general opinion is that it does not mean rhinoceros but aurochs, or wild bison. According to Deuteronomy 33:17, this animal did not have one but two horns.”
  - “Wild oxen were not used in the sacrifices. Possibly therefore Isaiah is using animal metaphors for the important people and leaders of Edom.” (Motyer)
B. The indignation of the LORD against the land of the nations.

1. (8-10) The land is made desolate.
   For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
   Its streams shall be turned into pitch, And its dust into brimstone;
   Its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever.
   From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever.

   - Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone: In this day of the LORD’s vengeance known as the great tribulation, there will be unparalleled ecological disaster. Before Jesus Christ returns at the end of the great tribulation, one-third of the earth’s vegetation, one-third of the oceans, and one-third of fresh waters will be destroyed and unusable (Revelation 8 and 16).

2. (11-15) The land is inhabited only by animals of the wilderness.
   But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
   And He shall stretch out over it The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.
   They shall call its nobles to the kingdom, But none shall be there, and all its princes shall be nothing.
   And thorns shall come up in its palaces, Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
   It shall be a habitation of jackals, A courtyard for ostriches.
   The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
   Also the night creature shall rest there, And find for herself a place of rest.
   There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs And hatch, and gather them under her shadow;
   There also shall the hawks be gathered, Every one with her mate.

   - But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it: Much of the earth will be so destroyed that in many places, only wild animals will be able to live.

   - The wild goat shall bleat to its companion: The King James Version translates wild goat as satyr, which was a mythical demonic creature. The Hebrew word here is sair, which as an adjective means hairy (Genesis 27:11) and as a noun refers to a male goat (Genesis 37:31 and Leviticus 4:23). It is possible that Isaiah means that wild goats will inhabit the desolate regions of Edom, or he may mean that it will be the haunt of demonic spirits. Bultema thinks the best translation “is satyrs, demons, or field devils.”

   - Also the night creature shall rest there: The Hebrew word for night creature is lilith, which is the feminine form of the word “night.” Old Jewish superstitions make Lilith a beautiful demon of the night, who seduced men and killed children. It is possible that Isaiah uses the term to describe the demonic habitation of Edom after God’s judgment.

3. (16-17) The surety of the judgments of the LORD.
   “Search from the book of the LORD, and read:
   Not one of these shall fail; Not one shall lack her mate.
   For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.
   He has cast the lot for them, And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
   They shall possess it forever; From generation to generation they shall dwell in it.”

   - Search from the book of the LORD, and read: not one of these shall fail: This remarkable statement tells us that Isaiah understood that his words were the words of the LORD. It also tells us that Isaiah meant that his prophecy should be understood literally – poetically, but literally. It also means that Isaiah clearly challenged doubters to “look it up” once the prophecy was fulfilled.
     o “After Edom has become a wasteland, men will take out the scroll and verify that Isaiah’s predictions came true.” (Wolf)

   - Search from the book of the LORD, and read: not one of these shall fail: This time of great tribulation is certainly coming upon the earth. This is beyond all doubt; our part isn’t to bring it or to prevent it, but simply to be ready, and to pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36).
v.1-6 In the Kingdom Age both the earth and man will be restored to the way God originally intended them to be.

v.9 In that day also all men will live in peace and safety.

A. The restoration of the land and of the people.

1. (1-2) The land is restored.
   The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.

2. (3-4) Weak people are strengthened.
   Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you.”

• Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees: The coming judgment would be enough to make the hands of anyone weak, and knees of anyone feeble. But in light of the glorious restoration God will bring from that time, it is no time to have weak hands or feeble knees! Get strong and get going!
   - We use our hands to work with; those with weak hands are not working for the LORD as they should. We use our knees both to progress with and to pray with. Those with feeble knees are not progressing with the LORD and praying as they should.
   - Hebrews 12:12 quotes this verse from Isaiah to make the point that even in a time of chastening from the Lord, we should take strength and courage in the LORD, knowing that it is His Fatherly love and care that has allowed and directed the chastening. It’s time to get strong in the LORD and move on!
   - But the passage both here in Isaiah and Hebrews 12 indicates that there are some among God’s people who indeed have weak hands and feeble knees. What is the cause of it? If we are not making progress in our walk with Jesus, fault can surely be found with weak hands and feeble knees.

• Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “Be strong, do not fear… He will come and save you.” In our present trials, we need the strong hope of the LORD to overcome our fearful hearts. Our fearful hearts are not hoped by a vain, vague optimism; they are helped by the assured confidence that He will come and save.
3. (5-6a) **The sick and the diseased are healed.**

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing.

- **Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened:** When God’s salvation comes, miraculous power comes with it. It is a miracle for the blind to see, for the deaf to hear, for the lame to run, and for the mute to speak. But when He will come and save you, He does it with miraculous power!

- **Shall be opened:** When John the Baptist was in prison, he became discouraged, and to wonder if Jesus really was the Messiah he had proclaimed Him to be. When John’s disciples brought this question to Jesus, He replied: *Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.* (Matthew 11:4-6). If Jesus didn’t use the exact words of Isaiah 35, he certainly used the idea. Jesus, the Messiah, had come to bring God’s salvation, and that would be accompanied with miraculous power.

4. (6b-7) **Abundance replaces lack.**

For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.
The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

- **For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert:** When God’s salvation comes, miraculous provision comes with it. What was dry and useless before becomes well-watered and fruitful.

- **Streams in the desert:** Jesus said He would bring this kind of beautiful provision in the lives of His people: “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive. (John 7:38-39) There is no reason for a Christian to endure a “dry time,” not when the miraculous power of Jesus Christ to provide is present.

  o **The parched ground shall become a pool:** “The word translated *parched ground* actually means *mirage*, air reflection, an atmospheric phenomenon frequently seen in Eastern deserts which is caused by the reflection of the hot rays of the sun… Now the prophet brings the glad tiding that what used to be a mere semblance and an illusion will one day become a glorious reality.” (Bultema)

**B. The Highway of Holiness.**

1. (8) **A Highway of Holiness is made for God’s people.**

A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray.

- **A Highway of Holiness:** Today, we take good roads for granted. But in the ancient world, a good road – a highway – was an amazing blessing for travel, progress, and business. Isaiah announces that in the ministry of the Messiah, there will be a wonderful highway, a road, known as the Highway of Holiness.

  o The Hebrew word for *highway* indicates what our English word literally says: “a high-way.” It speaks of a raised road, lifted above the ground. It is a high, glorious road to travel on!

  o The construction of this Highway of Holiness was the greatest engineering feat ever accomplished.

  “Engineering has done much to tunnel mountains, and bridge abysses; but the greatest triumph of engineering is that which made a way from sin to holiness, from death to life, from condemnation to perfection. Who could make a road over the mountains of our iniquities but Almighty God? None but the Lord of love would have wished it; none but the God of wisdom could have devised it; none but the God of power could have carried it out.” (Spurgeon)
• **The unclean shall not pass over it:** This highway isn’t for everyone. It has a “toll booth,” but you can’t make it on this highway by paying your way. You are only allowed on this highway if you are cleansed by the great work of the Messiah.

• **Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray:** When we stick on God’s **Highway of Holiness**, even though His work in us isn’t complete yet – we may still be in some ways a fool – yet we are safe because we are on His highway! There are guardrails on the dangerous curves, and He keeps us from falling off as He develops the wisdom and maturity in us that will also keep us on the highway.

2. **(9) The safety of the Highway of Holiness.**

   No lion shall be there, Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it;  
   It shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there.

• **No lion shall be there:** As we stay on God’s **Highway of Holiness**, we are protected from the attacks of the lion. Though your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8), that lion has never yet devoured anyone who stayed on the road. The promise is sure, no lion shall be there! It shall not be found there!

3. **(10) The travelers on the Highway of Holiness.**

   And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

• **And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing:** We use this **Highway of Holiness** to come to where God lives and reigns – Zion – and we come there **with singing**. God can put a song in our heart as we travel on His **Highway of Holiness**!

   o **The ransomed of the LORD:** The word ransomed is related to the word goel and refers to the one who has been rescued by the goel – the kinsman-redeemer.

• **With everlasting joy on their heads… and sorrow and sighing shall flee away:** We can know some of this now, but we aren’t at our destination on the **Highway of Holiness** yet. But when we arrive there, God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

   o Using the pictures of this chapter, it is as if we come to God barren, dry, blind, deaf, weak, and crippled. Then the miraculous power of Jesus comes to change us, heal us, and provide for us. That isn’t the end of God’s work though; He then goes on to make a **Highway of Holiness** that the transformed man can walk on. The highway would be helpful to one who was barren, dry, blind, deaf, weak, and crippled; but when the highway is provided for the one who is healed and provided for as we are in Jesus, the blessing is even more amazing.

   ▪ Are you on that Highway?
   ▪ Are you making progress on it?
   ▪ Are you enjoying the travel?
   ▪ Are you inviting others to join you?
Isaiah 36-39 – Historical (Narrative) Interlude

In Isaiah Part 2, we enter the historical interlude. We learn in Isaiah 1:1 that Isaiah functions as a prophet during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah: that is, from 740 – 686 B.C. During that time two major historical events occur:

1. Assyria’s attack on the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. and
2. Assyria’s attack on Jerusalem in 701 B.C., while Hezekiah is king and Isaiah is prophet.

That attack in 701 B.C.—and God miraculously saving Jerusalem—foreshadows greater events to come. The defeat of Assyria in 701 B.C. marks the beginning of Assyria’s decline as a world power and the rise of Babylon on the world’s stage. Once Babylon defeats Assyria it gets all the territory Assyria conquered, down to the gates of Jerusalem. In 605 B.C. Babylon attacks Jerusalem and does what Assyria failed to do: it conquers Judah and Jerusalem, sending the survivors into exile in Babylon.

Isaiah 36

Rabshakeh's Threats

v.1-7 Rabshakeh shows his ignorance in two areas: the worship of the Lord by Israel and the counsel God had given Israel not to trust in Egypt but in the Lord. Isaiah was encouraging Israel to trust in Him.

v.9-10 Rabshakeh ridicules them and blasphemes God by indicating that the Lord had directed him against Israel.

v.22 After hearing the threats of Rabshakeh, the men tore their clothes (as was the custom when one is in serious distress).

A. Rabshakeh speaks to leaders in King Hezekiah’s government.

1. (1-3) Officials from King Hezekiah’s government meet Rabshakeh, general of the armies of Assyria.

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field. And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

- In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah: This is about the years 700 B.C., during the reign of the godly King Hezekiah of Judah. The events of this chapter are also recorded in 2 Kings 18:13-27 and 2 Chronicles 32:1-19.
  - This begins a four-chapter section different than the prophecies recorded before or after. Isaiah 36 and 37 describe the LORD’s work against the Assyrian threat. Isaiah 38 and 39 describe the response to the Babylonian threat.
  - “This is history at its best, not dull recital of statistics and dates but an account which enables us to sense the haughty arrogance of the Assyrian and the chilling clutch of despair at the hearts of the Israelites.” (Cundall, cited in Grogan)

- Sennacherib King of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them: This Assyrian invasion has been the broad background for much of the Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah chapters 1 through 35. Now, Isaiah gives us a historical record of what happened during the time he prophesied about.
  - The Assyrian army swept down from the north, conquering Syria and Israel, as Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 8:3-4 and many other passages. The Assyrian army then came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them, as Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 7:16-17 and many other passages.

- Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem: At the time of Isaiah 36:1-3, the Assyrian army has conquered the both Syria and northern kingdom of Israel and has devastated the countryside and fortified cities of Judah. All that remains is Jerusalem, and if the Assyrians conquer her, then Judah is destroyed as a nation just as Syria and Israel were. These were the desperate times of King Hezekiah!
3. (7) Rabshakeh speaks against Judah’s trust in God.

The mention of Lachish is important historically. Lachish was thirty miles south-west of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have discovered a pit there with the remains of about 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib’s attack. In the British Museum, you can see the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish, which was an important fortress city of Judah.

- **He stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool… Eliakim… Shebna… Joah… came out to him:** Rabshakeh seems to be in complete command of the situation. He can walk right into the city of Jerusalem and stand at the crucial water supply – which would be Jerusalem’s life-line in a siege attack. As he stands there, three officials from Hezekiah’s government come to meet him.

**2. (4-6) Rabshakeh speaks against Judah’s trust in an alliance with Egypt.**

Then the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say now to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: “What confidence is this in which you trust? I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

- **What is the confidence in which you trust:** One of the great battles for Hezekiah during this time was the temptation to make a defensive alliance with Egypt, which seemed to be the only nation strong enough to protect Judah against the mighty Assyrians.
  - As a prophet, Isaiah did everything he could to discourage Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah from putting their trust in Egypt (Isaiah 19:11-17, 20:1-6, 30:1-7). The LORD wanted Judah to trust Him instead of Egypt.
  - In this sense, Rabshakeh is speaking the truth! God wanted Judah to have no *confidence* in Egypt at all. But Rabshakeh isn’t doing it to bring Judah to a firm trust in the LORD God, who can and will deliver them from the Assyrians. He does it to completely demoralize Judah and drive them to despair.
  - Satan attacks us the same way! Often, even when he tells the truth (“You are such a rotten sinner!”), he never does it to lead us to a firm trust in the LORD our God (“Jesus died for sinners, so if I am a rotten sinner, Jesus died to forgive and free me!”). Instead, Satan’s strategy – even if he tells us the truth – is always to demoralize us and drive us to despair.

- **You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt:** Strangely, Rabshakeh could see the truth of Egypt’s weakness better than many of the leaders of Judah could!
  - *Egypt* had made its one attempt to redeem its promises (28:14) and its army had been beaten at El Tekeh. The Rab-shakeh had himself seen this, but his words are more far-reaching and damaging, exposing the criminal stupidity of Judah’s leaders: surely, he said, they knew that anyone who ever trusted Egypt suffered for it.” (Motyer)

**3. (7) Rabshakeh speaks against Judah’s trust in God.**

“But if you say to me, ‘We trust in the LORD our God,’ *is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before this altar’?*”

- **If you say to me, “We trust in the LORD our God”:** Rabshakeh anticipated the response of the leaders of Judah. “Rabshakeh, you say that we can’t trust in Egypt. All right, we won’t. But we can trust in the LORD our God.”

- **Is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away:** Rabshakeh knew that King Hezekiah had implemented broad reforms in Judah, including the removal of the *high places* (2 Kings 18:3-4).
  - The *high places* were spots of “individual worship” which were prohibited by God’s law (Leviticus 17:1-4). Israel was commanded to bring their sacrifices to the official center for sacrifice (the tabernacle or later, the temple). In the pagan world at that time, it was customary to offer sacrifice wherever one pleased – altars would customarily be built on high hills, in forested areas, or at other special places.
4.

- That practice may have been fine for the time of the patriarchs. But now, God regarded sacrifice at **high places** as an offense. Hezekiah did right when he took away the **high places** and the **altars**, demanding that people come to the temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice.

- This command runs completely contrary to the way most people come to God in our culture. For the most part, Americans have an entirely individualistic way of coming to God, where each person makes up their own rules about dealing with God as they see Him. In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues interview a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they describe as representing many Americans’ experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operates in her life, she says: “I believe in God. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is ‘Sheilaism.’ Just my own little voice.” This “pick-and-choose-as-I-go-along-according-to-my-inner-voice” approach is just like picking your own high place and altar to sacrifice to God the way you want to instead of the way God wants you to.

- **Is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away:** In Rabshakeh’s thinking, Hezekiah’s reforms have really **displeased** God, so he should not expect help from the LORD God of Israel. Rabshakeh would say, “Look at all the places there used to be where people would worship the LORD God of Israel. Now, since Hezekiah came in, there is only one place. More is always better, so the LORD God of Israel must be pretty sore at Hezekiah!”

  - The enemy of our souls has an amazing way of discouraging our obedience. If Hezekiah was not careful, this argument of Rabshakeh would start to make sense, when really it was demonic logic through and through!

  - “The theological misunderstanding shown by the field commander at this point argues for the authenticity of the speech, which many critics have dubbed a free creation by the author of the narrative.” (Grogan)

4. (8-9) **Rabshakeh speaks against the army of Judah.**

   **Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?**

- **Give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria:** This reminds us of Rabshakeh’s whole strategy, which is to **make Judah give up**. This is the entire reason Rabshakeh is at the aqueduct, speaking to these leaders of Hezekiah’s government. He had the vastly superior armies; he could have just attacked Jerusalem without this little speech. But Rabshakeh would prefer it if Judah would simply **give up**, out of fear, discouragement, or despair.

  - The enemy of our soul uses the exact same approach. Many of us picture Satan as “itching for a fight” with us. Really, Satan doesn’t want to do battle with you. First of all, there is the strong chance you will win. Second of all, win or lose, the battle can draw you closer to the LORD. Thirdly, what the LORD does in your life through the battle can be a great blessing for other people. No, Satan would much rather not fight you at all! He would much rather try to **talk you into giving up**!

  - We see this exact strategy used against Jesus during His temptation in the wilderness. When Satan promised Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for Jesus’ worship, Satan was trying to **avoid** the fight, and trying to **talk Jesus into giving up** (Luke 4:5-8). It didn’t work with Jesus, and it shouldn’t work with us.

- **I will give you two thousand horses — if you are able on your part to put riders on them:** Here, Rabshakeh mocked Judah’s weak army. He said, “Even if we helped you with 2,000 horses, it wouldn’t do you any good.” His basic message was, “We could beat you with one hand tied behind our backs!” (How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants).
5. (10) **Rabshakeh tells them that the LORD God of Israel is on his side.**

Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and destroy it.’”

- **Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it:** Rabshakeh saves his best thrust for last: “Admit it, Hezekiah. You know your God is on my side.”
  - Like all good deception, it would have been easy for Hezekiah and his men to believe this one. After all, hadn’t the Assyrians been wildly successful? Surely, God must be on their side. Didn’t they have the most powerful army? Surely, God must be on their side.
- **The LORD said to me, “Go up against this land, and destroy it.”** This is the finishing blow of a brilliant attack. “Hezekiah, God told me to destroy you. I’m just doing His will, and there is nothing you can do to stop it, so you may as well surrender.”
  - Significantly, we can say that **Rabshkeah was partially correct!** God was with him, and his attack on Judah fulfilled God’s prophesied plan! In conquering Syria, in conquering Israel, and in bringing Judah to the brink, the Assyrians **did the will of God!** God prophesied that all this would happen (Isaiah 8:3-4, 7:16-17 and many other passages in Isaiah). He allowed it to happen so His prophesied plan would be fulfilled.
  - However, we should never think that God tempted an **innocent man** with an **evil plan.** In fact, even though God predicted and planned this invasion of the Assyrians, Rabshakeh may have been lying indeed when he said, **“The LORD said to me.”** God did not have to do anything special to direct the bloodthirsty, conquest-hungry Assyrians to attack Syria, Israel, and Judah. He simply allowed the Assyrians to carry out the corrupt desires of their evil hearts. Therefore, the Assyrians could never excuse themselves by saying, “We were doing the LORD’s will!” even as Judas could never make that excuse regarding his wicked betrayal of Jesus.

B. **Rabshakeh speaks directly to the people of Jerusalem.**

1. (11-12) **Hezekiah’s men ask Rabshakeh to speak only to them.**

Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, “Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall.” But the Rabshakeh said, “Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?”

- **Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it:** We can just imagine how difficult this was for these leaders in Hezekiah’s government. They must have thought, “It’s bad enough we have to hear this. But since he is speaking in Hebrew, everyone will hear, and soon the people will become so discouraged they will rise up against us and make us surrender!”
- **Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall:** Rabshakeh doesn’t care if the common citizens of Jerusalem hear him. That’s how he wants it! The more fear, discouragement, and despair he can spread, the better!
- **Who will eat and drink their own waste with you:** Rabshakeh is pointing forward to what conditions would be like in Jerusalem after an extended siege. He wanted this to gross out everyone who heard it, and magnify the sense of fear, discouragement, and despair.

2. (13-20) **Rabshakeh’s speech to the people of Jerusalem.**

Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, “Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, “The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”’ 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; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, “The LORD will deliver us.” Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from...
the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

- **Then Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew:** Saying “don’t do that” to Rabshakeh was like saying it to a naughty child. He couldn’t wait to speak to the people of Jerusalem!

- **Hear the words of the great king:** Rabshakeh’s speech was intended to glorify the enemy facing God’s people.

- **Do not let Hezekiah deceive you:** Rabshakeh’s speech was intended to make God’s people doubt their leaders.

- **Nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD:** Rabshakeh’s speech was intended to build fear and unbelief in God’s people.

- **For thus says the king of Assyria:** “Make peace with me by a present and come out to me, and everyone one of you will eat from his own vine.” Rabshakeh’s speech was intended to make surrender an attractive option.

- **Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land:** Here, Rabshakeh refers to the policy of “ethnic cleansing” and “forced resettlement” practiced by the Assyrians. When they conquered a people, they forcibly resettled them in faraway places, to keep their spirits broken and their power weak. Rabshakeh’s speech was intended to make this terrible fate seem attractive.

- **Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria:** Rabshakeh’s speech was intended to destroy their trust in God. His message is simple, and cunning in its Satanic logic: “The gods of other nations have not been able to protect them against us. Your God is just like one of them and can’t protect you either.”
  - For anyone who had the spiritual understanding to see it, Judah could have started planning the victory party right then. It is one thing to speak against Judah, its people and leaders. It was another thing all together to mock the LORD God of Israel this way and count Him as “just another god.”
  - Typical of the work of the enemy of our souls, Rabshakeh was going well until he simply overstepped his bounds. There was no way God would let him off the hook for this one. He has offended the LORD God in a way he will soon regret.

3. (21-22) The response of the leaders in Hezekiah’s government and the citizens of Jerusalem.

But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king’s commandment was, “Do not answer him.” Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

- **But they held their peace and answered him not a word:** They didn’t try to argue with Rabshakeh. Often, it is useless – if not dangerous – to try and match wits with this demonic logic. How much better to keep silent and trust God, instead of trying to win an argument!
  - “Silence is our best reply to the allegations and taunts of our foes. Be still, O persecuted soul! Hand over thy cause to God. It is useless to argue, even in many cases to give explanations. Be still, and commit thy cause to God.” (Meyer)

- **For the king’s commandment was, “Do not answer him.”** King Hezekiah was wise enough to make this command, and his officials and the people were wise enough to obey him.

- ** Came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn:** Though they were silent, they were still deeply affected by this attack. It didn’t just roll of their back as if it were nothing. They have the same experience Paul described in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9: 2 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. Thing were hard, but the battle was not lost yet!
ISAIAH 37: ASSYRIA DESTROYED, GOD GLORIFIED – God’s Promised Deliverance Fulfilled

- v.1 Sackcloth was used to "afflict" oneself in a sense of mourning.
- v.6-7 God's answer to Sennacherib's threats.
- v.14-20 Hezekiah immediately brings his problem to the Lord. He acknowledges the one, living, true God and prays for deliverance. Also, as he lays out the facts to God, he asks the Lord to glorify Himself and show that He is God.
- v.21-29 The Lord's second message to Sennacherib.
- v.30-35 The Lord assures Hezekiah and encourages him.
- v.36-38 The Lord fulfills His promise. The Assyrians and Sennacherib are slain.

A. King Hezekiah seeks the LORD.

1. (1-5) Hezekiah’s immediate reaction upon hearing the words of Rabshakeh.

   And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: ‘This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.’” So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

   - When King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth: The tearing of clothes and the wearing of sackcloth (a rough, burlap-type material) were expressions of deep mourning, usually for the death of a loved one. Hezekiah took this report regarding Rabshakeh seriously, knowing how dedicated they were to the complete conquest of Jerusalem.
     - Hezekiah’s initial reaction is good. He sees the situation for what it really is. Often, when we are in some kind of trial or difficulty, we handle it poorly because we never see the situation accurately. Jerusalem’s situation is desperate, and Hezekiah knows it.
     - There was good reason for Hezekiah to be so humble before the LORD. “City after city has fallen to Sennacherib and long lines of deportees are already snaking their bitter way into exile – and it is all Hezekiah’s fault! He followed the lunatic policy of rebellion and was bewitched by Egyptian promises. He might as well have sold his people himself. But even when a matter is our own fault we can still pray about it. And the Lord can always be trusted to pity his people.” (Motyer)

   - And went into the house of the LORD: Hezekiah’s second reaction was even better. He did not allow his mourning and grief to spin him into a rejection of the LORD’s power and help. He knew this was a more necessary time than ever to seek the LORD.
     - When it says, went into the house of the LORD, we should not think that it means that King Hezekiah went into the holy place itself, which was forbidden for all except priests. It simply means that Hezekiah went to the courts of the house of the LORD, to seek God in the place which was open to him as a man of Israel.
     - A previous king of Judah, King Uzziah, saw his life tragically struck when he broke this command of the LORD to stay out of the holy place of the temple. 2 Chronicles 26:16 says, But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. In response, God struck Uzziah with leprosy, and he was an isolated leper until his death.

   - Then he sent Eliakim… Shebna… and the elders of the priests… to Isaiah the prophet: The third thing Hezekiah did was also good. The king sought out the word of the LORD, given through the prophet of the LORD.

   - The children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth: Hezekiah put these words in the mouth of his messengers to Isaiah to express the total calamity of the situation. This was a proverbial expression for a disaster – a woman so exhausted by labor that she could not complete the birth, so it was likely that both mother and child would die.
It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh: Hezekiah knew that their only hope was that God would take offense at the blasphemies of Rabshakeh, and rise up against him.

Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left: “Isaiah, pray for us. Our nation is devastated by this Assyrian invasion, and Jerusalem alone is left standing. Pray for the remnant that is left.”

2. (6-7) Isaiah’s words of assurance to King Hezekiah.

And Isaiah said to them, “Thus shall you say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”’”

Thus says the LORD: Isaiah was aware he spoke as a prophet of the LORD. Without hesitation, he speaks as if he were speaking for the LORD God of heaven. We can be sure Isaiah did not take this lightly. The fate of the nation, and his entire credibility as a prophet, was riding on what he said.

Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard: Perhaps we can sense the gentlest rebuke in these words from the LORD. “Hezekiah, it is good for you to seek Me so passionately. But the words of Rabshakeh are only words. Do not be afraid of them.”

With which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me: How these words must have cheered Hezekiah! Before, he had hoped it may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh... to reproach the living God (Isaiah 37:4). Now, the LORD speaks through the prophet Isaiah, saying He has indeed heard these words! Now, God is taking it personally!

The servants of the king of Assyria: Servants is “a deliberately belittling expression, ‘the king of Assyria’s lads/flunkies’.” (Motyer) “He calls Rabshakeh and the other officers of the army the slaves or servant boys – we could say the errand boys – of the king of Assyria.” (Bultema)

Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land: Here, the LORD God assures Hezekiah that He will indeed deal with Rabshakeh. He has heard his blasphemy and will bring judgment against him.

3. (8-13) Rabshakeh’s letter to Hezekiah.

Then the Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “He has come out to make war with you.” So when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Seiphvaim, Hena, and Ivah?’”

So the Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: This must have seemed to Hezekiah to be the fulfillment of the LORD’s promise through the prophet Isaiah. Rabshakeh left Jerusalem, and Hezekiah must have thought “Now he’ll go back to his own land and be killed, just like the LORD promised. Good riddance! Thank You LORD!”

The king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “He has come out to make war with you”: While Rabshakeh was away, the Assyrians learned that Egyptian troops (under an Ethiopian king) were advancing from the south. This would be the Egyptian intervention Assyria feared, and that many in Judah trusted in. But as Isaiah prophesied, it would amount to nothing (Isaiah 20:1-6 and 30:1-7).
4. (14-20) Hezekiah’s prayer.

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. Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: “O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone.”

Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD: Hezekiah did exactly what any child of God should do with such a letter. He took it to the house of the LORD (to the outer courts, not the holy place), and he spread it out before the LORD. In this, Hezekiah boldly and effectively fulfilled the later command of 1 Peter 5:7: casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- To be in the ministry means you will receive nasty letters. What should one do with them? Often, the best thing to do is to simply throw them away, especially if they are anonymous. But if they are to be read and kept, they should be spread… before the LORD. “LORD, show me what there is in this letter that I need to hear. Show me what I need to disregard. Help me to see beyond this person’s sinful manner or tone and see if you have something in this for me.”

- One old preacher received a letter with no sender or return address on the envelope. When he opened it, he saw a single piece of paper with only one word: “Fool!” He took it to the pulpit the next Sunday, and said: “I received an unusual letter this week. Never before have I received a letter where the writer signed his name, but forgot to write anything else!”

- O LORD of hosts: This title for our God essentially means, “LORD of armies.” Hezekiah was in a crisis that was primarily military in nature, so it made sense for him to address the LORD first according to the aspect of God’s nature that was most needful for him. “LORD of armies, send some troops to help us!”

- God of Israel: This title for God reminded Hezekiah – and the LORD also, in our human way of understanding – that the LORD God was the covenant God of Israel, and that He should not forsake His people.

- The One who dwells between the cherubim: Here, Hezekiah sees the great majesty of God. Surely, the One who dwells between the cherubim would never allow Rabshakeh’s blasphemies to go unpunished.

- You are God, You alone: God is a simple title for our LORD, but perhaps the most powerful. If He is God, then what can He not do? If He is God, then what is beyond His control? Hezekiah realizes the most fundamental fact of all theology: God is God, and we are not! God is God, and Rabshakeh or the Assyrians are not!

- You who made heaven and earth: In recognizing the LORD God as Creator, Hezekiah sees that the LORD has all power and all rights over every created thing. We can almost feel Hezekiah’s faith rising as he prays this!

- Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see: Hezekiah knew very well that the LORD did in fact hear and see the blasphemies of Rabshakeh. This is a poetic way of asking God to act upon what He has seen and heard, assuming that if God has seen such things, He will certainly act!
• All the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God: In his prayer, King Hezekiah draws the contrast between the living God and the false gods of the nations the Assyrians have already conquered. Those false gods were not gods, but the work of men’s hands – wood and stone, so they were not able to save them from the Assyrians. But Hezekiah prays confidently that the living God will save them, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone.

B. Isaiah brings the LORD’s answer to King Hezekiah’s prayer, and a word to Rabshakeh.

1. (21) The power of Hezekiah’s prayer.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria,

• Because you have prayed to Me: The glorious answer which fills the rest of the chapter came because Hezekiah prayed. What if he would not have prayed? Then we are to think that no answer would have come, and Jerusalem would have been conquered. Hezekiah’s prayer really mattered. How many blessings, how many victories, how many souls saved for Jesus’ glory, lie unclaimed in heaven until the LORD can say, because you have prayed to Me?

2. (22-35) The LORD’s word to Rabshakeh.

This is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

“The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken her head behind your back!
Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel.
By your servants you have reproached the Lord, And said, ‘By the multitude of my chariots
I have come up to the height of the mountains, To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars And its choice cypress trees; I will enter its farthest height, To its fruitful forest.
I have dug and drunk water, And with the soles of my feet I have dried up All the brooks of defense.’
Did you not hear long ago How I made it, From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass, That you should be For crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins.
Therefore their inhabitants had little power; They were dismayed and confounded;
They were as the grass of the field And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops And grain blighted before it is grown.
But I know your dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, And your rage against Me.
Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears,
Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back By the way which you came.’”

This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself,
And the second year what springs from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap, Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.
And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah Shall again take root downward, And bear fruit upward.
For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, And those who escape from Mount Zion.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:
“He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it.
By the way that he came, By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,” Says the LORD.
“For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.”

• The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn: The idea is that the Assyrians have come to ravish the daughter of Zion, the city of Jerusalem. But God won’t allow it. “Jerusalem is represented as a young girl rebuffing with contempt the unwelcome advances of a churl.” (Grogan)
• “Virgin is used here in the sense of being untouched by the marauder. The Assyrian came intent on rape but his victim remains unharmed because you have prayed.” (Motyer)

• Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel: The LORD, speaking through Isaiah, simply says to Rabshakeh, “Do you know whom you are dealing with?” Rabshakeh obviously did not know.

  o Curiously, this prophecy may have never reached the ears of Rabshakeh. After all, Isaiah didn’t exactly have free access to him. But perhaps before his terrible end, God found a way to get this prophecy to him. Or, perhaps God had it for this blasphemer as a special message in hell. At the very least, this prophecy would have been hugely encouraging to Hezekiah and all of Judah, even if Rabshakeh never heard it on this earth.

• By the multitude of my chariots, I have come up to the height of the mountains: Here, the LORD describes the great pride the Assyrians had in their own conquests. But they forgot that the LORD was really in charge (Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Therefore the inhabitants had little power). Even if the Assyrians didn’t know it, they owed their success to the LORD!

  o How humbling this must have been for the Assyrians! All along, they thought it was because of their mighty power they had accomplished so much. Here, God makes it plain that it was His power that did it.

• I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in: God knew everything about this enemy, and because Assyria went too far in blaspheming the One who made all their success possible, therefore I will put My hook in your nose… and I will turn you back by the way which you came. This was an especially dramatic statement, because this is exactly how the Assyrians would cruelly march those whom they forced to relocate out of their conquered lands. They would line up the captives, and drive a large fishhook through the lip or the nose of each captive, string them all together and march them. God says, “I’m going to do the same thing to you!”

  o You shall eat this year such as grows of itself: “The invasion prevented sowing in 702 B.C., but when the threat lifted in 701 they would find sufficient growth to preserve life; in 701 the withdrawing Assyrians still inhibited agriculture, yet in 700 there would still be enough through ‘chance growth’. Thus the Lord would confirm retrospectively that it was his hand that dispersed the threat.” (Motyer)

• For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant: As much as the Assyrians would like to crush Jerusalem and Judah, they will not be able to. God will preserve His remnant.

• He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there… for I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake: God plainly and clearly draws a line. Although the Assyrian military machine is poised to lay siege to Jerusalem, and ultimately crush them, they won’t. The King of Assyria will not come into this city, because God is defending it.

  o Why does God defend the city? For My own sake. God will defend His own glory. Often, we unnecessarily think that we must defend the glory of the LORD. But that isn’t really the case. God is more than able to defend His own glory.

  o Why does God defend the city? For My servant David’s sake. King David had died almost 300 years before this, but God still honored His promise to David (2 Samuel 7:10-17). God would defend Jerusalem, not for the city’s sake at all – Jerusalem deserved judgment! But He does it for His own sake, and for the sake of David. In the same way, God the Father defends and blesses us, not for our own sake – we often deserve His judgment! But He often does it for His own sake, and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. (36) God strikes down the mighty army of Assyria.

Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

• The angel of the LORD went out: Simply and powerfully, God destroys this mighty nation in one night. 185,000 died at the hand of the angel of the LORD. Against all odds, and against every expectation except the expectation of faith, the Assyrian army was turned back without having even shot an arrow into Jerusalem. The unstoppable was stopped, the undefeated was defeated!
The prophet Hosea made this same prediction: *Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen.* (Hosea 1:7)

“Herodotus, the Greek historian, recorded that one night Sennacherib’s army camp was infested with mice (or rats) that destroyed the arrows and shield-thongs of the soldiers. He probably got this tradition from Egyptian sources, and it could well be a somewhat garbled version of the event recorded here.” (Grogan)

- **All dead:** This was not “hard” for God to do. Far “harder” for the LORD was getting the heart and minds of His people in the right place. Once they were there, it was nothing for God to dispatch *one angel* to do this.

### 4. (37-38) The end of Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home*, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

- **He departed and went away:** Exactly as God said He would. But he left still full of pride. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned record, which is preserved in the spectacular Annals of Sennacherib (the Taylor Prism), which can be seen in the British Museum. It shows how full of pride Sennacherib’s heart still was, even if he could not even claim he conquered Jerusalem!

  - “I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150 people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen. Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country. And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier.” (Cited in Bultema)

  - “The Biblical account concludes with the much debated statement that the Assyrian army was struck down in some way during the night with considerable loss of life, following which the siege was called off… The Assyrian Annals tacitly agree with the Biblical version by making no claim that Jerusalem was taken, only describing tribute from Hezekiah.” (T.C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*)

- **Now it came to pass:** Between Isaiah 37:37 and Isaiah 37:38, some 20 years passed. Perhaps Sennacherib thought he had escaped the judgment of God, but he hadn’t. He met the bitter end of death at the end of swords held by his own sons.

  - An old Jewish legend – and nothing more than a legend – says how it was that Sennacherib’s sons came to kill him. Sennacherib was troubled at how God seemed to bless the Jews so much, and tried to find out why. Someone told him it was because Abraham had loved God so much that he was willing to sacrifice his son unto the LORD. Sennacherib thought he would be even more favored by God, and decided to kill two of his sons in sacrifice to the LORD, becoming even more blessed than Abraham and his descendants. But his two sons learned of the plan, and killed him before he could kill them, thus fulfilling the word of the LORD!
**ISAIAH 38: KING HEZEKIAH’S LIFE IS SPARED – Hezekiah’s Healing**

- v.1 Isaiah was referring to Hezekiah setting his relationship with the Lord in order.
- v.2-8 As proof to Hezekiah of His promise, the Lord changes the degrees of the sun. God is not held to the laws of the universe that He has set.
- v.9-20 It would appear that there is a "direct" will of God and a "permissive" will. Because Hezekiah had begged to live, he two years later had a son, Menassah, who led Judah down. When we insist on our own way over the Lord's, it is never the best way and the result is negative.

**A. The mercy of God to Hezekiah.**

1. (1) Isaiah’s announcement to Hezekiah.

   In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”

   - **In those days:** This happened at the time of the Assyrian invasion of Judah, because Jerusalem had not been delivered from the Assyrian threat yet (Isaiah 38:6). The events of this chapter are also recorded in 2 Kings 20:1-11.
     - “Interpreters agree that the events described in chapters 38 and 39 preceded the invasion of 701 B.C… Many date these events in 703 B.C., but the evidence more strongly suggests a date of about 712 B.C.” (Wolf)
   - **Was sick and near death:** We are not told how Hezekiah became sick. It may have been through something obvious to all, or it may have been through something known only to God. However Hezekiah became sick, it was certainly permitted by the LORD.
   - **Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live:** God was remarkably kind to Hezekiah, telling him that his death was near. Not all people are given the time to set your house in order.
     - We know from comparing 2 Kings 18:2 with 2 Kings 20:6, that Hezekiah was 39 years old when he learned he would soon die.

2. (2-3) Hezekiah’s prayer.

   Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, and said, “Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

   - **Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall:** This shows how earnest Hezekiah was in his prayer. He directed his prayer in privacy to God, and not to any man.
   - **Remember now, O LORD:** To our ears, Hezekiah’s prayer might almost sound ungodly. In it, his focus is on self-justification and his own merits. It is pretty much as if Hezekiah prayed, “LORD, I’ve been such a good boy and You aren’t being fair to me. Remember what a good boy I’ve been and rescue me.”
     - But under the Old Covenant, this was a valid principle on which to approach God. Passages like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 show that under the Old Covenant, blessing and cursing was sent by God on the basis of obedience or disobedience. On that principle, David could write in Psalm 15: LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart. (Psalm 15:1-2)
     - But under the New Covenant, we are blessed on the principle of faith in Jesus (Galatians 3:13-14). Hezekiah’s principle of prayer isn’t fitting for a Christian today. We pray in the name of Jesus (John 16:23-24), not in the name of who we are or what we have done.
     - “We come across similar pleas again and again in the prayers of God’s children of old. The Psalms abound with them. But we do not find them in the New Testament. The Church bases its pleas on Christ’s righteousness.” (Bultema)
   - **And Hezekiah wept bitterly:** Why was Hezekiah so undone at the prospect of death? Many Christians today would say, “Take me home, LORD!” But Hezekiah lived under the Old Covenant, and at that time there was not a confident
assurance of the glory in the life beyond. Instead, Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2
Timothy 1:10). Also, under the Old Covenant Hezekiah would have regarded this as evidence that God was very
displeased with him.

3. (4-5) Isaiah brings God’s answer to Hezekiah’s prayer.

And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, “Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of
David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years.

- I will add to your days fifteen years: In response to Hezekiah’s prayer, God granted Hezekiah fifteen years more.
  - Because Hezekiah recovered, was God’s word (You shall die and not live, Isaiah 38:1) proved false? No; first,
    Hezekiah did in fact die, just not as soon as God first announced. Second, when God announces judgment it is
    almost always an invitation to repent and to receive mercy.

- I have heard your prayer: Hezekiah’s prayer was important. By all indications, if Hezekiah had not made his
  passionate prayer, then his life would not have been extended. Prayer matters!
  - In fact, God gave two gifts to Hezekiah. First, He gave the gift of an extended life. Second, He gave the gift of
    knowing he only had fifteen years left. If he were wise, this would still give King Hezekiah the motivation to
    walk right with God and to set his house in order.

4. (6) The promise of deliverance from the Assyrian threat.

I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.”

- I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria: This promise is in accord with the LORD’s
  previous prophecies of deliverance, and dates this chapter as being before God destroyed the Assyrian army (Isaiah
  37:36-37).

- I will deliver you… and I will defend this city: The connection of the two promises indicates that one would
  confirm the other. When Hezekiah recovered his health, he could know that God would also deliver him from the
  Assyrians.

5. (7-8) A sign to confirm the promise.

And this is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: Behold, I will
bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees
backward.” So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

- This is the sign… that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: God showed even more mercy to
  Hezekiah. God was under no obligation to give this sign. In fact, God would have been justified in saying, “Hey
  Hezekiah, I said it and you believe it. How dare you not take My word for true?” But in real love, God gave Hezekiah
  more than he needed or deserved.
  - God shows the same mercy to us. It should be enough for God to simply say to us, “I love you.” But God did
    so much to demonstrate His love to us (John 3:16, Romans 5:8).

- Behold, I will bring the shadow of the sundial… ten degrees backward: God promised to do something
  completely miraculous for the confirming sign. And it happened just as God promised: So the sun returned ten
  degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.
  - This was a wonderfully appropriate sign for Hezekiah. By bringing the shadow of the sundial move
    backward, it gave more time in a day – just as God gave Hezekiah more time.
  - How was this miracle accomplished? We simply don’t know. God could have simply “moved the sun back.”
    Or, He may have simply provided the miraculous appearance of it on the sundial of Ahaz. It doesn’t really
    matter how God did it; He has miraculous resources and ways we know nothing about.
B. King Hezekiah’s statement regarding his healing.

1. (9-14) Hezekiah’s lament.

This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:
I said, “In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol; I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”
I said, “I shall not see YAH, The LORD in the land of the living;
I shall observe man no more among the inhabitants of the world.
My life span is gone. Taken from me like a shepherd’s tent; I have cut off my life like a weaver.
He cuts me off from the loom; From day until night You make an end of me.
I have considered until morning—Like a lion, So He breaks all my bones;
From day until night You make an end of me.
Like a crane or a swallow, so I chattered; I mourned like a dove; My eyes fail from looking upward.
O LORD, I am oppressed; Undertake for me!

- In the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol: Sheol is the Hebrew word for “the grave” or “the place of the dead.” Here, Hezekiah laments the news of his impending death.

- I shall not see YAH, the LORD in the land of the living: Hezekiah’s pain at his approaching death is increased as he believes that in the grave he will no longer see the LORD.

  - Again, Hezekiah’s thinking is based in the cloudy understanding of the world beyond before life and immortality were brought to life through the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:10). Though there are occasional glimpses of hope into the world beyond (such as in Job 19:25-27), for the most part there is no clear understanding of the nature of life after death (Psalm 6:5, Psalm 88:3-5, 11).

  - This explains why Hezekiah does not believe death as a certain pathway to the presence of the LORD. For these Old Testament saints like Hezekiah and David, the grave (Sheol) was an uncertain place. They knew the LORD was there (Psalm 139:8), but they didn’t know exactly how. So, for these Old Testament saints, going to the world beyond was exchanging this world’s certainty for the uncertainty of the world beyond.

- O LORD, I am oppressed: Since Hezekiah lived before the finished work of Jesus, he lived under the bondage of the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). How different for the believer in Jesus Christ, for whom death has no victory or sting (1 Corinthians 15:53-55).

  - “Hezekiah has been compared with Paul who desired to depart and be with Christ, but this comparison is unfair, for Hezekiah still lived under the shadow of the Old Dispensation. Israel knew of an immortal life but did not quite have the glorious hope the Church now has.” (Bultema)

- Like a crane or a swallow, so I chattered; I mourned like a dove: “The varied cries of Palestine’s birds express the varied nature of Hezekiah’s many cries to God, now quiet, now shrill, now mournful.” (Grogan)

2. We can have a clearer understanding of the world beyond than King Hezekiah did.

- The Bible uses three main words to describe where people go when they die. Sheol is a Hebrew word with the idea of the “place of the dead.” It has no direct reference to either torment or eternal happiness. The idea of Sheol is often accurately expressed as “the grave.” Hades is a Greek word used to describe the “world beyond.” In the Bible, it has generally the same idea as Sheol. Revelation 9:1 speaks of the bottomless pit; this place called the abyssos is a prison for certain demons (Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Or more generally, it is considered part of the realm of the dead (Romans 10:7 uses it in the sense of Hades). Gehenna is a Greek word borrowed from the Hebrew language. In Mark 9:43-44, Jesus speaks of hell (gehenna). Hell is a Greek translation of the Hebrew “Valley of Hinnom,” a place outside Jerusalem’s walls desecrated by Molech worship and human sacrifice (2 Chronicles 28:1-3; Jeremiah 32:35). It was also a garbage dump where rubbish and refuse were burned. The smoldering fires and festering worms of the Valley of Hinnom made it a graphic and effective picture of the fate of the damned. This place is also called the “lake of fire” in Revelation 20:13-15, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

- The place known as Sheol and Hades is not what we normally think of as “Hell.” It was, before the finished work of Jesus, the place where the dead awaited judgment or final justification (as illustrated by Jesus in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31). Jesus was in Hades after His death on the cross, but did not (and could not) remain there (Acts 2:25-32). It seems that Jesus preached in Hades (1 Peter 3:18-19) and there is a sense in which
Jesus set the captives in Hades free (Ephesians 4:8-9 and Isaiah 61:1). Jesus made no atonement in Hades; the price was already paid on the cross (John 19:30) when Jesus suffered in His physical body (Colossians 1:19-22). Jesus went to Hades as a victor not as a victim. Jesus’ work and preaching offered salvation for the believing dead who in faith waited in Hades (Hebrews 11:39-40), and His work sealed the condemnation of the wicked and unbelieving. Since Jesus’ work on the cross is finished, there is no “waiting” for believers who die, who go straight to heaven (2 Corinthians 5:6-8, Philippians 1:21-23). In that sense, Jesus “shut down” the part of Hades known as “Abraham’s Bosom”; but the portion of Hades reserved for torment is occupied until the final judgment, when those who are there will be sent to what we normally think of as “Hell.” Gehenna is what we normally think of as “Hell,” the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20, 20:10-15, and 21:6-8). Actually, Gehenna or hell has many names or titles in the Bible, including lake of fire (Revelation 19:20), everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41), everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46), and outer darkness (Matthew 8:12).

The Old Testament has little clear revelation about the afterlife; confident statements like Job 19:25-26 are countered by fuzzy passages like Ecclesiastes 3:19-20 and Psalm 6:4-5. However, the New Testament gives much more specific revelation regarding the afterlife; these are things that have now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:10) Significantly, most people who teach wrong doctrines about the afterlife (such as “soul sleep” or annihilationism) base their arguments on these “fuzzy” passages from the Old Testament, instead of the much clearer passages in the New Testament. In doing this, they reject the clear principle of 2 Timothy 1:10.

3. (15-20) Hezekiah praises God for sparing his life.

“What shall I say? He has both spoken to me, And He Himself has done it.
I shall walk carefully all my years In the bitterness of my soul.
O LORD, by these things men live; And in all these things is the life of my spirit;
So You will restore me and make me live.
Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption,
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.
For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.
The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day;
The father shall make known Your truth to the children.
“The LORD was ready to save me;
Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments
All the days of our life, in the house of the LORD.”

What shall I say? He has both spoken to me, and He Himself has done it: When God answered his prayer, all Hezekiah could do was praise God. He knew that it was all the LORD’s work, both in word (spoken to me) and deed (done it). So, Hezekiah was speechless (What shall I say?).

I shall walk carefully all my years: This is a good promise Hezekiah makes, and one often on the lips of the person God has spared. But in the end, it was only a good promise if Hezekiah made it good.

- What did Hezekiah do with these added 15 years? One thing he did was father a son who would succeed him on the throne of Judah. Of the next king of Judah, Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, it is written that he was 12 years old when he became king (2 Kings 21:1). This means he must have been born in the last 15 years of Hezekiah’s life. Sadly, fathering Manasseh was not a worthy achievement. It was written of him, And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel (2 Kings 21:2). In fact, God specifically targeted Judah for judgment because of the terrible sins of Manasseh (2 Kings 21:10-15).

- In this, we may see that the LORD had a better plan than Hezekiah did in calling him home at the earlier time. God knew that if Hezekiah lived, he would give birth to this wicked successor. Sometimes it is best to simply leave our lot with the LORD, and leave what even seems to be clearly good up to His wisdom.
• **It was for my own peace that I had great bitterness:** Hezekiah is to be admired for his accurate self-knowledge, and his honesty. He admits that it was not for God’s glory or honor, or even for the glory or honor of his kingdom that he was troubled over his impending death and that he wanted his life spared. It was for his own peace.

• **For Sheol cannot thank You, death cannot praise You; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth. The living, the living man, he shall praise You, as I do this day:** Again, this passage reflects the uncertain understanding of the world beyond before the finished work of Jesus Christ. Hezekiah knew he could praise God while he walked this earth, but he wasn’t so sure about the world beyond.

• **Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the LORD:** Hezekiah shows the logical response to God’s great deliverance – praise.

4. **(21-22) How the LORD healed Hezekiah.**

   Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover.”

   And Hezekiah had said, “What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”

• **Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover:** Apparently, God used this medical treatment – at the very least, He used it as a sign – to bring Hezekiah’s healing. God can, and often does, bring healing through medical treatments, and apart from an unusual direction from God, medical treatment should never be rejected in the name of “faith.”

   o “The patient must pray, but withal make use of means; trust God, but not tempt him.” (Trapp)

• **What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD:** Hezekiah wanted a sign, but why a sign that would allow him to go up to the house of the LORD? Because he could not and would not go up to the house of the LORD until he was healed, so the two were connected.
ISAIAH 39: SHOWING OFF THE LORD’S TREASURE – Babylonian Captivity Foretold

- v.1-8 Another evil, out of the prolonging of Hezekiah's life: the king of Babylon approaches Hezekiah and learns of Judah's defenses.

A. King Hezekiah shows off the treasures of his house to envoys from Babylon.

1. (1) A letter from the king of Babylon.
   
   At that time Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.

- At that time: This was after the miraculous recovery of Hezekiah. The LORD was good enough to give King Hezekiah 15 years more of life; but it was up to Hezekiah if those years would be lived in wisdom and to the glory of God.

- Sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered: Apparently this was a gesture of kindness from the king of Babylon, showing concern to Hezekiah as fellow royalty.

- Merodach-Baladan: His presence showed this was more than a courtesy call. This was an attempt to bring the kingdom of Judah on to the side of the Babylonians against the Assyrians.
  
  o “To the Assyrians Merodach-Baladan was a terrorist; to himself he was a freedom-fighter with his life devoted to the liberation of his beloved Babylon from Assyrian tyranny.” (Motyer)
  
  o “Hezekiah was deeply worried about Assyria. Feeling honored by the embassy, he gladly welcomed the envoys of this archenemy of Assyria. Without consulting either the Lord or Isaiah, he showed them his vast treasures, his abundant supplies of food, and his military armaments. God had given Hezekiah great wealth, so the visitors were duly impressed (2 Chron. 32:27-29).” (Wolf)
  
  o The first part of Isaiah (chapters 1 through 38) mainly dealt with the present threat from the Assyrian Empire. The rest of Isaiah (chapters 39 through 66) will prophetically speak to the threat of the coming Babylonian Empire. Therefore, “This brief chapter is actually an introduction to the second half of Isaiah.” (Bultema)

2. (2) Hezekiah entertains the envoys from the king of Babylon.

   And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

- And Hezekiah was pleased with them: We can imagine that this was flattering for King Hezekiah. After all, Judah was a lowly nation with little power, and Babylon as a junior superpower. To receive this notice and recognition from the king of Babylon must have really made Hezekiah feel he was important.

- Showed them the house of his treasures: We can imagine Hezekiah wanting to please these envoys from Babylon and wanting to show them that they had good reason to be impressed with him and his kingdom. So, he did everything he could to impress them, and showed them the very best riches of the royal household – and he showed them everything.

- There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them: As the coming rebuke from Isaiah will demonstrate, this was nothing but proud foolishness on Hezekiah’s part. He is in the dangerous place of wanting to please and impress man, especially ungodly men.
  
  o It was a genuine compliment for Hezekiah to receive this recognition from the king of Babylon. But Hezekiah received it wrongly, and let it go to his head. It is easy to get too puffed up when people compliment or recognize us, and to begin to take their praise – and ourselves – too seriously.

  o In this place of wanting to please man, Hezekiah is no longer a true servant of God. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:10, For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. When we live to please men, we cannot at the same time live to please and serve God. When we live to please men, we are really living to
serve ourselves, because what we value from men is the praise and honor and recognition they may give us. It is a glorious thing to live to *serve* men, but not to live to *please* them.

- “Just as Samson revealed his strength to the whore, so Hezekiah revealed God’s glory to the devils as though he were their companion and had received favors from Babylon.” (Kohlbrugge, cited in Bultema)
- “What should Hezekiah have said to the envoys?” The answer is plain: “Thank you for coming and thank Merodach from his gift and invitation, but the fact is I have a divine promise to lean on; it has been confirmed personally in my return to health and cosmiscally in the sign of the sun. I cannot turn from faith in the promises of God.” (Motyer)

**B. Isaiah reproves Hezekiah.**

1. (3-4) Isaiah questions Hezekiah regarding the visit of the Babylonian envoys.

Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?” So Hezekiah said, “They came to me from a far country, from Babylon.” And he said, “What have they seen in your house?” So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”

- **What did these men say, and from where did they come to you:** Isaiah probably already knew the answer to these questions. It is likely that his questions were guided by God to allow Hezekiah the opportunity to answer honestly (which he did) and to see his error himself (which he apparently did not).
- **They have seen all that is in my house:** There is the flavor that Hezekiah was *proud* to tell Isaiah this. He is like a small-town boy who is awed by the attention of a big-city man. “Isaiah, you should have seen how impressed those Babylonians were by all I have. They really know we are something here in Judah!” Hezekiah’s pride and inflated ego have made him *blind*.

2. (5-7) The word of the LORD to Hezekiah through Isaiah.

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the LORD. ‘And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”

- **All that is in your father’s house... shall be carried to Babylon:** Hezekiah thought that this display of wealth would impress the Babylonians. All it did was show them what the kings of Judah had, and what they could get from them. One day the kings of Babylon would come and take it all away. This was fulfilled in 2 Kings 24:10-13 and 2 Kings 25:11-17, under the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.
  - It would be more than a hundred years before Babylon carried away the royal treasures of Judah, but they did come, just as Isaiah prophesied. This prophecy is so remarkably accurate that many skeptics insist – without grounds other than unbelief – a later “Isaiah” must have written it after the fact.
- **And they shall take away some of your sons... and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon:** Worse than taking the material *riches* of the kings of Judah, the king of Babylon would take the *sons* of the king of Judah – his true riches!
  - One fulfillment of this was the taking of Daniel and his companions into captivity. Daniel was one of the king’s descendents taken into the palace of the king of Babylon (Daniel 1:1-4). Because of this promise of God through Isaiah, many think that Daniel and his companions were made *eunuchs* when they were taken to serve in the palace.
3. (8) King Hezekiah’s response.

So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!” For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days.”

- “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!” For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days”: This is a sad state of heart in the king of Judah. God announces coming judgment, and all he can respond with is relief that it will not happen in his lifetime.
  - In this, Hezekiah shows himself to be almost the exact opposite of an “others-centered” person. He is almost totally self-centered. All he cares about is his own personal comfort and success.

- For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days”: There is no doubt that Hezekiah started out as a godly king, and overall his reign was one of outstanding godliness (2 Kings 18:3-7). Yet his beginning was much better than his end; Hezekiah did not finish well. God gave Hezekiah the gift of 15 more years of life, but the added years did not make him a better or more godly man.
  - Time or age doesn’t necessarily make us any better. Consider that time does nothing but pass away. We sometimes say, “time will tell,” “time will heal,” or “time will bring out the potential in me.” But time will do nothing of the sort! Time will only come and go. It is only how we use time that matters. Hezekiah didn’t make good use of the extra time the LORD gave him.
**Isaiah 40-66 – Grace - The Babylonian Period – Hope for Troubled Times**

In Isaiah Part 3, the tone changes completely. Chapters 40 – 66 comprise some of the best poetry in the Bible, and the theme of that poetry is grace. Here we learn that after the Babylonian Captivity, God will redeem his people, bringing them back into fellowship with him to the place where they belong. And that return foreshadows an even greater redemption, not just for Israel, but also for all of humanity.

**THE ONE TRUE GOD VERSUS IDOLS (Isa 40-48)**

**ISAIAH 40: COMFORT AND STRENGTH FOR GOD’S PEOPLE – Joyful Prospect and Reproof for Despondencies**

- v.1-2 God's forgiveness and reconciliation.
- v.3-5 The declaration of the coming of the Messiah and his return (Mk. 1:3)
- v.6-8 Weakness and frailty of man contrasted with the power of God. The Lord's word is eternal.
- v.10-11 Reference to Jesus Christ (Jn. 10:11).
- v.13-14 Trying to instruct God or inform Him only indicates our lack of a true comprehension of the omniscience of God.
- v.15 Merchants, to show their honesty, blew dust off a scale before weighing the merchandise. This is the dust these nations are likened to.
- v.20-22 God is so awesome and great that there is no figure man can create that could accurately represent Him.
- The Bible teaches us that the earth is round (Job 26:7).
- v.25 We can't compare the infinite (God) with the finite (man).
- v.29-30 His strength is perfected in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 11:34).

**A. The Word of the LORD prepares the way of the LORD.**

**1. (1-2) Comfort for the afflicted people of God.**

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.

"Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,
That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned;
For she has received from the LORD’s hand Double for all her sins."

- "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God: The previous 39 chapters of Isaiah certainly had passages of comfort and hope, but there was a strong tone of judgment and warning throughout the section. Now, beginning with Isaiah 40, the tone shifts to being predominantly full of comfort and blessing, full of the glory of God.
  - Remember where Isaiah 39 just ended: announcing the coming Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, and the exile of the nation. “The announcement that the Babylonians would someday capture Jerusalem and take the people into exile was a bitter blow. How could Judah celebrate the downfall of Assyria when everyone knew that a more powerful invader was on the way?” (Wolf)
  - Isaiah is a book in three sections. Chapters 1-35 are prophetic, with the theme of condemnation. Chapters 36-39 are historic, and the theme is confiscation. Chapters 40-66 are messianic, and the theme is consolation.

- **Comfort, yes, comfort My people**: Isaiah knew what it was to warn and instruct God’s people; but the LORD also wanted His people to receive His comfort. 2 Corinthians 1:3 speaks of our Lord as the God of all comfort; God wants His messengers to speak comfort to His people!
  - In any group waiting to hear God’s word, there are any number of hidden hurting hearts. It is important for those hurting hearts to hear a word of comfort from God’s messenger. As one preacher put it, “Preach to broken hearts and you will never lack an audience.”

- **Speak comfort to Jerusalem**: This means that Jerusalem needed a word of comfort. This means that God had comfort to give them. God’s comfort is not a hollow, positive-thinking, “There’s-a-silver-lining-behind-every-cloud” kind of message. God always gives His people reasons for comfort.
That her warfare is ended: At the moment Isaiah spoke this, the battle may have still loomed. This may very well have been a prophetic word; even though there was still an army against them, as far as God was concerned, her warfare is ended. This was reason for comfort.

That her iniquity is pardoned: At the moment Isaiah spoke this, Jerusalem was well aware of her sin – Isaiah had made them aware of it! Yet, the prophet speaks of a day when comfort can be offered because her iniquity is pardoned. This is real comfort; to be recognized as a sinner – as one having iniquity – yet knowing just as much that our iniquity is pardoned. This was reason for comfort.

For she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins: This declares the basis for the pardon of iniquity – the sin has been completely paid for. Isaiah, speaking in Old Covenant terminology, speaks of Jerusalem bearing the curse for disobedience described in passages like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. But the same principle applies to the believer under the New Covenant: our iniquity is pardoned because our sin has been paid for. This is reason for comfort.

2. (3-5) A voice in the wilderness prepares the way of the LORD.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Here, Isaiah speaks for the LORD’s messenger, who cries out to the barren places.

Prepare the way of the LORD: The idea is that the LORD is coming to His people as a triumphant King, who has the road prepared before Him so He can travel in glory and ease. Every obstacle in the way must be removed; every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth.

The comfort comes with tender words, spoken to the heart. Speak comfort is literally, “‘speak to the heart’, like a young man wooing his girl (Genesis 34:3).” (Motyer) How God’s messengers today must speak to the heart!
• The glory of the LORD shall be revealed: His glory is revealed to the prepared hearts described in the previous verses. And it is revealed without regard to nationality; all flesh shall see it together. This glory of the LORD is not revealed only to Jerusalem or Judah, but to every prepared heart. The certainty of this word is assured because the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

• This passage of Isaiah 40:3-5 has a direct fulfillment in the New Testament, in the person and ministry of John the Baptist. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, knew this at the birth of his son (Luke 1:76). And three gospels directly relate this passage to the ministry of John (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, and Luke 3:3-6).
  o Jesus was the coming Messiah and King, and John the Baptist’s ministry was to be one crying in the wilderness, and through his message of repentance, to prepare the way of the LORD. We often fail to appreciate how important the preparing work of the LORD is. Any great work of God begins with great preparation. John wonderfully fulfilled this important ministry!

3. (6-8) The message of the voice in the wilderness.

  The voice said, “Cry out!” And he said, “What shall I cry?”
  “All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
  The grass withers, the flower fades. Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
  Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”

• What shall I cry: The voice in the wilderness knew he had an important work, but wanted to know more exactly what his message should be.

• All flesh is grass: The message is the frailty of man. Isaiah thinks of the beautiful green grass covering the hills of Judah after the winter rains, and how quickly the grass dies, and the hills are left brown and barren. This is how frail and weak man is. Even the beauty of man is fleeting and passes as quickly as spring wildflowers (all its loveliness is like the flower of the field).
  o Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it: Man is in this frail state at the pleasure of God. It is to God’s glory and according to His plan that man is this frail, and the glory of man is so fleeting.

• The word of our God stands forever: The message is the permanence of God and His word. In contrast to the frailty and fleeting glory of man (The grass withers, the flower fades), the word of our God endures.
  o The word of our God certainly has endured. It has survived centuries of manual transcription, of persecution, of ever changing philosophies, of all kinds of critics, of neglect both in the pulpit and in the pew, of doubt and disbelief – and still, the word of our God stands forever!
  o “Written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness, nor existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined.” (Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict)
  o In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian demanded that every copy of the Scriptures in the Roman Empire be burned. He failed, and 25 years later, the Roman Emperor Constantine commissioned a scholar named Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the Bible at government expense.
  o Voltaire, the French skeptic and infidel who died in 1778, said that 100 years from his time, Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history, and that the Bible would be a forgotten book. Many years after Voltaire’s death, the Geneva Bible Society used his press and his house to produce stacks of Bibles.
  o “Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would on the Pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed a persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, ‘Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.’ So the hammers of the infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this book had not been the book of God, men would have
destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and book still lives.” (Hastings, cited in McDowell)

- **The word of our God**: This message, cried out by the voice in the wilderness, was meant to prepare hearts for the coming of the LORD by leading them into repentance. The understanding of our frailty and fleeting glory, contrasted with the eternal enduring of God and His word, should humble us in repentance before the LORD. It certainly worked in the ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:7-18).

- **The word of our God stands forever**: Peter made a wonderful reference and application to this passage in 1 Peter 1:22-25.
  - There, he gives a stirring call for love among believers (*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 1 Peter 1:22*).
  - Then, using the passage from Isaiah 40:8, he says why we should love one another this way: *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.* (1 Peter 1:23-25)
  - Peter makes a beautiful connection, showing that the enduring word Isaiah spoke of is the same word of the gospel that is preached and believed, bringing salvation.
  - Peter also makes a beautiful application. Since this eternal, always potentially fruit-bearing seed is in us, we have both the *obligation* and the *ability* to have a *sincere love of the brethren*. Perhaps we could say that if we need more love for others, it begins with having more of the *incorruptible seed* set in our hearts and allowed to grow.

**B. “Behold Your God!”**

1. **(9) An invitation to behold your God.**

   **O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain;**
   **O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid;**
   **Say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”**

- **You who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain**: Isaiah speaks of a message so great – tidings so good – that they must be spread as widely as possible. From on top of the *high mountain*, the messenger can proclaim this great message to as many people as possible. It is a message that should be shouted out, so the messenger is told, **Lift up your voice with strength.**

- **Say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God”**: What is the great message, that should be shouted so loud? It is an invitation to **behold your God**. There is nothing greater for a believer to do than to study and to know their God.
  - The message isn’t to give God a passing glance. No; we are invited to **behold your God**. It speaks of a study, of a long-term mission to know the greatness and the character of our God. It also shows how important it is for the message of God’s preacher to focus on God. After every sermon, a preacher should ask, “Did I help the people to **behold your God**?”
  - A great philosopher named Alexander Pope once wrote, “Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; the proper study of mankind is man.” In one sermon, Spurgeon replied to that famous statement: “It has been said by someone that ‘the proper study of mankind is man.’ I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God’s elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of
God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.”

2. (10) Behold the returning LORD.

Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.

- **Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand**: One aspect of our God we should behold is the fact of His return. Our God will return to this earth, and He will come with power (a strong hand… His arm shall rule).
- **The Lord GOD shall come**: When the LORD comes back, He comes to reward His people (His reward is with Him). He comes to inspect His work (and His work before Him). This is something important for us to know about our God!

3. (11) Behold the loving Shepherd.

He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

- **He will feed His flock like a shepherd**: Another aspect of our God to behold is His loving care as a shepherd. The first thing a shepherd must do for his sheep is feed them, and the LORD feeds us like a shepherd feeds his flock.
  - Sheep must be directed to the good pasture and must be moved on to new pasture when they have stripped the grass bare. We need as much carefully directed feeding as sheep! “No creature has less power to take care of itself than the sheep; even the tiny ant with its foresight can provide for the evil day, but this poor creature must be tended by man or else perish.” (Spurgeon)
  - God loves to identify Himself with a shepherd. Many of the greatest men of the Bible were shepherds, and their character as shepherds points to Jesus Christ.
    - Abel is a picture of Jesus, the sacrificed shepherd.
    - Jacob is a picture of Jesus, the working shepherd.
    - Joseph is a picture of Jesus, the persecuted and exalted shepherd.
    - Moses is a picture of Jesus, the calling-out-from-Egypt shepherd.
    - David is a picture of Jesus, the shepherd king.
- **He will gather the lambs with His arm**: Our LORD shows special care for the lambs. The youngest, the weakest, are not despised – they are given special care by the LORD who first actively gathers them, then who will carry them in His bosom. He doesn’t cast the weak lambs over his shoulder, as a shepherd might carry a sheep. Instead, He lovingly cradles them in His bosom, close to His heart. That is both a safe place and a tender place.
  - “To carry is kindness, but to carry in the bosom is loving-kindness. The shoulders are for power, and the back for force, but the bosom is the seat of love.” (Spurgeon)
  - “I see the Lord of angels condescending to personal labor. Jesus Christ himself gathers with his own arm and carries in his own bosom the lambs of his flock. He doth not commit this work to an angel, nor does he even leave it to his ministers; but he himself, by his Spirit, still undertakes it.” (Spurgeon)
- **And gently lead those who are with young**: The shepherd carries a rod and a staff and knows how to use them; but He also knows how to gently lead those who are with young. He knows exactly when to be gentle, and when more severe guidance should be used.
- **Like a shepherd**: Jesus is given three great titles regarding His work as a shepherd.
  - *Jesus the Good Shepherd* (John 10:11-15). He is good in His care and sacrifice for the flock.
  - *Jesus the Great Shepherd* (Hebrews 13:20). He is great in His glorious triumph over every enemy.
  - *Jesus the Chief Shepherd* (1 Peter 5:4). He is the Chief over all His people in His return. At His return, Jesus also exercises another aspect of His role as Shepherd: He divides the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31-33). “Did you ever notice that the same Shepherd who saves the lost, will curse the finally impenitent? He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and he shall set the
sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, ‘Depart ye cursed.’ What lips are those which pronounce those dreadful words? The Shepherd’s lips.” (Spurgeon)

4. (12) **Behold the God over all creation.**

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span
And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?
Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?

- **Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand:** Another aspect of our God to behold is His authority over all creation. Our God is so great, and so dominant over all creation, that He has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and has measured heaven with a span.
  - This is another example of what we call *anthropomorphism* – speaking of God in human terms so we can partially understand who He is and what He does. God is not a being with the body of a giant, so large that all the waters of the earth could be cupped in His hand, or so large that the universe could be measured by the span of His hand. The Bible tells us that God the Father is spirit, so He does not have a body as we know it (John 4:24). But we understand exactly what the LORD tells us through the prophet Isaiah – God is so great, so dominant over all creation that we should stand in awe of His power and glory.
  - Once my youngest son and I had a discussion about who in our family was bigger. We observed that his big brother was bigger than he was, and his big sister was bigger than the big brother, and mom was bigger than big sister, and I was bigger than mom was. Then my son looked at me and said, “But you’re not bigger than God.” That’s something for everyone to remember!

- **And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure:** It isn’t just about size; it’s also about smarts. God is so great in His wisdom and intelligence that He calculated the dust of the earth in a measure. God knows exactly how many grains of dust there are on the earth. Even if a person knew the number of hairs on their head (as God knows, according to Luke 12:7), they could never calculate the dust in their own house – much less the dust of the earth!
  - To take it further, God knows how heavy the mountains are (He weighed the mountains in scales), and the hills also for that matter! (And the hills in a balance)

5. (13-14) **Behold the God of all wisdom.**

Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him?
With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of justice?
Who taught Him knowledge, And showed Him the way of understanding?

- **Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him:** Another aspect of God to behold is His great wisdom. He has the raw intelligence to know how much dust there is in the earth, and how heavy the mountains and the hills are. But more than that, God has the wisdom to use that knowledge. God is so wise, that no one has directed the Spirit of the LORD; no one as His counselor has taught Him.
  - **Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD:** In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament used in the days of Jesus and the disciples), this is translated Who has known the mind of the Lord? This is the place where the apostle Paul quotes from in Romans 11:34.

- **With whom did He take counsel:** God needs no counsel, no instruction, no teacher, and no one to show Him the way of understanding.
C. God’s greatness is measured in comparison to others.

1. (15-17) God’s greatness surpasses all nations.

Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a bucket, And are counted as the small dust on the scales;  
Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.  
And Lebanon *is not* sufficient to burn, Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.  
All nations before Him *are* as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

- **Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket:** The glory of a powerful nation is something to behold. We think of a huge military parade, with all the strength of the nation on display. But compared to God, it is *nothing*. The greatest glory of the greatest nation is *as a drop in a bucket* compared to the greatness and glory of the Lord GOD.

- **Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering:** If man were to take all the wood in the mighty forests of Lebanon and use it to make a burnt offering of all the animals of the land, it would not be enough to satisfy God. Man’s best efforts can not satisfy the honor and glory of God.

- **They are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless:** In this chapter, God declares His greatness over all creation, but He never says of creation that it is less than nothing and worthless. But the nations have an arrogance, a pride against God that puts them lower than creation itself – He accounts them less than nothing and worthless.

2. (18-20) God’s greatness surpasses all idols.

To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?  
The workman molds an image, The goldsmith overspreads it with gold, And the silversmith casts silver chains.  
Whoever is too impoverished for *such* a contribution Chooses a *tree* that will not rot;  
He seeks for himself a *skillful workman* To prepare a carved image *that will not totter*.

- **What likeness will you compare to Him:** There are many likenesses that represent the gods of the nations. How do they compare to God? They don’t compare at all, because they are only the work of men’s hands (*the workman molds an image*).

  - “Maybe we are not as crude as the ancient Israelites, though some nations are. However, some people worship a crucifix, others will worship the church, or idolize the preacher. Some people will bow before the gods of materialism, ambition, sex, even home and loved ones, and will substitute anything if only they can escape having to get down to the basic need of facing why it is that God does not guide or deliver.” (Redpath)

- **To prepare a carved image that will not totter:** The empty images that are the idols of the nations are so insignificant that they must be made so that they *will not totter*. They can’t even stand up on their own! God has no rivals.

  - Look at the care you have to give to your idols. First, you have to choose good wood, because who wants to worship a rotting god? Then you must choose a skilled workman because who wants to worship a poorly made god? Then it has to be well designed because who wants to worship a god that keeps falling over?  
  “Whenever Isaiah speaks about idolatry, he cannot keep from using the most cutting mockery.” (Bultema)
3. (21-26) God’s greatness is evident, as He is the Creator of all.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless.
Scarcely shall they be planted, Scarcely shall they be sown, Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth,
When He will also blow on them. And they will wither, And the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.

“To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing.

- **Have you not known? Have you not heard**: Isaiah can’t believe that anyone could doubt the greatness of God when they see the glory of God’s creation. First, He sits above all creation (It is He who sits above the circle of the earth). Second, He created it all (Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain).
  - Isaiah’s amazement is well placed. How can anyone look at the glory and design evident in creation, and fail to understand that there must be a glorious designer behind such a glorious design?
  - “This is one of the central Old Testament passages on the doctrine of creation. It teaches that the physical fabric of creation is a direct artifact of the Creator.” (Motyer)
  - Isaiah uses an interesting phrase when he describes God as the one who sits above the circle of the earth. How could Isaiah possibly know that the earth’s shape was a circle? He probably didn’t know; but the LORD who spoke through Isaiah did know!
  - Every once in a while, unlearned critics talk as if Bible believing people are members of the “Flat Earth Society” – people so out of touch with real science that they still insist the earth is flat. In response, we should be reminded that Augustine, perhaps the greatest of the church fathers, who lived about a thousand years before Columbus, professed that the earth was round, not flat. As well, in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas, the most profound and prolific of medieval theologians, observed that the spherical shape of the earth could be empirically demonstrated. All they did was agree with Isaiah: It is He who sits above the circle of the earth.

- **He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless**: God’s power and glory is not only exalted above the inanimate creation, but also over men of power on the earth. When people have political power (princes) or legal power (judges) it is easy for them to think of themselves as gods! Through the message of Isaiah, the LORD sets this straight. All God needs to do is to blow on them, and they will wither.

- **Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name**: God’s mastery over all creation is shown by the fact that He can bring out all the stars by number, and then He calls them all by name. With the billions and billions of stars in the universe, it is staggering to know that God can number and name them all!
  - “The astronomers are still busily engaged in counting and classifying the stars, but Christ has described, counted and ordered them already.” (Bulterma)

D. Applying the knowledge of God’s greatness.

1. (27-28) Having confidence in God’s power and wisdom.

Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel:
“My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God”?
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

- **Why do you say**: Having spent all of Isaiah 40 showing us the greatness and the glory of God, now Isaiah shows us how understanding this makes a difference in our lives – beyond the obvious compulsion we should feel to honor and worship this great God!
• Why do you say, O Jacob... “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my just claim is passed over by my God”: Understanding the greatness and glory of God persuades us that there is nothing in our life hidden from God, and there is nothing neglected by God.

• Have you not known? Have you not heard: The people asked this question in Isaiah 40:21 doubted there was a God who created all. The ones asked the same question in this verse seem to know there is a creator, but live as practical atheists. They don’t seem to understand that the fact there is a God of all creation makes a difference in everyday life.
  o “How easy it is to believe in the infinite power of God and at the same time to feel that He is unable to meet our personal needs!” (Wolf)

• Have you not heard: These practical atheists need to hear what they already know: that the Lord GOD is the Creator of the ends of the earth. Then they need to hear about the Creator: that He neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. Those who really believe these truths about God should live as if God is really there.

2. (29-31) Receiving the strength of the LORD.

He gives power to the weak. And to those who have no might He increases strength.
Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall,
But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

• He gives power to the weak: After explaining all the greatness and glory of God, now Isaiah explains another benefit we can receive from our God – He gives us His great power!
  o Notice who God gives power to: the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Those who are proud and confident in their own wisdom and strength will receive no strength from God.

• Even the youths shall faint and be weary: Those who thought themselves strong find themselves weak. God’s strength is reserved for those who know they are weak, and know they have no might.

• But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength: How do we receive this strength from the LORD? We receive it as we wait on the LORD. The idea behind wait on the LORD is not a passive sitting around until the LORD does something. Yes, God gives us strength; but we don’t expect it to come as if He were pouring it into us passively. He brings it to us as we seek Him, and rely on Him, instead of our own strength. If we are weak, it is because we do not wait on the LORD!
  o We are also told that we renew our strength. It is strength that was once received when we first came to the LORD in weakness and no might. Then, that strength is renewed as we wait on the LORD. Renew is “from a basic meaning ‘to change’… [it] comes to mean ‘to put on afresh’: here, ‘keep putting on fresh strength.’” (Motyer)

• They shall mount up with wings like eagles: This is the measure of strength the LORD gives us – strength to soar above everything else.

• They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint: This is the purpose of the strength the LORD gives us – strength to move forward and progress for Him. It isn’t strength to show off, but strength to go forward in.
  o Weak in Isaiah 40:29 and faint in Isaiah 40:30 are the same Hebrew word, which means “failure through loss of inherent strength.” Weary in Isaiah 40:30 is a different word, which means “exhaustion because of the hardness of life” (Motyer). If we are worn out for either reason, God is here to give us strength – if we will wait on Him!

• Notice the order, because it seems strange. First, we mount up with wings like eagles. Then we run. Finally, we walk. Does it seem out of order? Not at all. First, we recognize that we soar up into heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). Then we set ourselves on the course to run the race (Hebrews 12:1). Then we are in the good place to walk the walk (Colossians 2:6).
ISAIAH 41: FEAR NOT – Prediction of Cyrus' Reign.

- v.1-4 The Lord has raised up Cyrus.
- v.8-10 Promises for Israel and the church. God has not cast them away (Rom. 11:25-27).
- v.11 Many things done in the name of Christianity have misrepresented God. The outcome has been bitterness towards the church (Mt. 25:35-40).
- v.15-20 Prediction of the tremendous agricultural success Israel enjoys today. The Lord had done it for them.
- v.21-24 God challenges the people in the area of prophecy to see if their false idols can accurately tell of things to come.
- v.26-29 The false gods the people were worshipping could not counsel them, as they are empty and vain.

A. The glory of God over the coastlands.

1. (1) A command and an invitation to the coastlands.

Keep silence before Me, O coastlands, And let the people renew their strength!
Let them come near, then let them speak; Let us come near together for judgment.

- **Keep silence before Me, O coastlands:** The Hebrew word translated coastlands is also translated islands or isles in other passages, such as Isaiah 11:11 and 40:15. It is also translated with broader words like territory in passages like Isaiah 20:6. The idea is probably best expressed as “distant lands.” Here, God is calling to all nations – even the “distant lands” – to keep silence before Him. Why? Because they are coming to God’s courtroom: **Let us come near together for judgment.**
  - Bultema on coastlands: “a poetic name for the idolatrous distant nations.” Motyer: “Isaiah uses the word [coastlands] as shorthand for the far reaches of the earth.”

- **And let the people renew their strength:** Isaiah 40:31 has just promised that those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength. But here, God advises the people – those in the distant lands, who do not know Him – to renew their strength as they come into His courtroom. If you are going to contest with God, you had better be prepared!
  - The problem is that while those who wait upon the LORD have the LORD’s limitless strength, those from distant lands have no god of strength to help them. “The repetition of the phrase ‘renew their strength’ (cf. 40:31) may well be ironic. Perhaps as the exiles renew their strength in the true God, so the nations are ironically exhorted to do the same – but in their man-made deities!” (Grogan)

- **Let them come near, then let them speak:** God will allow the idol worshippers of all the world come before Him and justify their idolatry. They will have the opportunity to speak, though they must enter His courtroom in silence, out of respect of His majesty.
  - There are many different reasons for silence. There is the silence of shame, the silence of attention, the silence of submission. Any one of these is good reason to initially be silent in the LORD’s presence.

2. (2-4) God reasons with the coastlands.

Who raised up one from the east? Who in righteousness called him to His feet?
Who gave the nations before him, And made him rule over kings?
Who gave them as the dust to his sword, As driven stubble to his bow?
Who pursued them, and passed safely By the way that he had not gone with his feet?
Who has performed and done it, Calling the generations from the beginning?
I, the LORD, am the first; and with the last I am He.

- **Who raised up the one from the east:** God questions the idolaters from the distant lands, and asks them who authored this important event in human history – who raised up the one from the east?
  - Commentators warmly debate the identity of this one from the east. Most believe him to be either Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people and the father of the faithful, or Cyrus, the king who joined the Medes and
the Persians into a fighting force which conquered Babylon – which, prophetically, is the broad time context Isaiah speaks to.

- Wolf speaks for those who believe Cyrus is spoken of: “Born east of Babylon in what is now Iran, Cyrus would move through country after country, conquering every king in his path. Shortly after 550 B.C., Cyrus was able to unify the Medes and the Persians and to defeat the powerful kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor. Then he turned south to conquer Babylon (539 B.C.).” Bultema adds regarding Cyrus: “Both secular and sacred documents present him as righteous and good, and he can be called righteous or, as the text actually has it, justice, especially since he carried out the righteous acts of vengeance on Babylon and that of the deliverance of Israel.”

- Clarke speaks for those who believe Abraham is the one from the east: “Some explain it of Abraham, others of Cyrus. I rather think that the former is meant; because of the character of the righteous man, or righteousness, agrees better with Abraham than with Cyrus.”

- Who is it? It’s a tough call, and either answer can be correct according to the context. On balance, it is best to see the one from the east as Abraham, because of the word of the LORD later in the chapter, in Isaiah 41:22: Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were. God appeals to idols and their worshippers, and asks them to tell both the future and the past. Since Cyrus is mentioned in Isaiah 41:25 (I have raised up one from the north… from the rising of the sun), he is the figure that shows God’s knowledge of the future. Abraham is the figure that shows God’s knowledge of the past. Past and future – with the present sandwiched in-between – all belong to the LORD our God.

- **Who… Who… Who:** As God invites those in distant lands to come and reason with Him, He shows them His greatness over all creation, and over all history. They must ask themselves, “Who is in control of the course of human events?” **Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning?**
  - This is always a relevant question. Is there a point, a direction to human history? Is it just a random, meaningless combination of undirected events? Is it a cycle, fated to repeat itself endlessly? Or, is there a God in heaven who directs human events, always moving to a final resolution and fulfillment? Our answer to this question influences almost everything in our lives.

- **I, the LORD, am the first; and with the last I am He:** Here, the LORD God of Israel declares that He has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning. He lifts up and puts down kings and nations. He is the first and He is the last; He is the “bookend” both before and after the saga of human history, starting the story, ending the story, and keeping the whole story together.
  - If God is both the first and the last, then He also has authority over everything in-between. This means that there absolutely is a plan of God for human history, and He directs the path of human events toward His designed fulfillment. Our lives are not given over to blind fate, to random meaninglessness, or to endless cycles with no resolution. Instead, the LORD God who is the first and the last directs all of human history and even our individual lives.
  - Jesus takes the same title of the First and the Last in Revelation 1:17 and 22:13. If the LORD is the first and the last according to Isaiah 41:4, and if Jesus is the First and the Last according to Revelation 1:17 and 22:13, since there cannot be two firsts or two lasts, Jesus must be the LORD God!
3. (5-7) The reaction of the coastlands.

The coastlands saw it and feared. The ends of the earth were afraid; They drew near and came. Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, “Be of good courage!” So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith; He who smooths with the hammer inspired him who strikes the anvil, Saying, “It is ready for the soldering”; Then he fastened it with pegs. That it might not totter.

- **The coastlands saw it and feared**: When they met this God of all authority and power, they feared. They were brought so low by this encounter with God that they had to encourage one another to go on! (Everyone helped his neighbor, and said to his brother, “Be of good courage!”)
  - This is a logical reaction. It is the same kind of reaction Peter had when he saw the great power of Jesus (Luke 5:8).
- **So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith**: What did they do with the fear they felt after their encounter with God? They let the fear drive them away from the true God. Instead of surrendering to this God of glory and majesty and power, they turned from God, and made for themselves gods, idols of gold!
  - Isaiah pours on the irony. It took a lot of work to make a good god. It took skilled workers (the craftsman…the goldsmith…he who smooths with the hammer…him who strikes the anvil). It took organization and teamwork (“It is ready for the soldering”). If you don’t do it right, your god might not be able to stand up! (That it might not totter.)
  - People still see something of God’s power and glory, reject it, and then make their own god. This is Paul’s whole message in Romans 1:18-25.

B. God encourages Israel.

1. (8-9) Israel is different from those in the distant lands.

But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, “You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away.”

- **But you, Israel, are My servant**: In contrast to the God-rejecting and idol-making people in distant lands, Israel – remember the name means, “Governed by God” – Israel is the servant of the LORD.
  - A servant of God would never make God into his own image, his own idea of what God should be. Servants don’t tell their masters what to do, or what to be. Servants know who the master is and who the servant is.
  - “Israel is twice addressed as servant (literally ‘slave’), that is to say a person without position or rights – but this servant belongs to a great master.” (Motyer)
- **Jacob, whom I have chosen**: Lest Israel become proud, God pops their swelling quickly. If they are Israel – “Governed by God” – then they are also Jacob – “Conniving, untrustworthy con-man.” They are only the servant of God because He has chosen them.
- **The descendants of Abraham My friend**: Israel stood in this place because of their family relationship to Abraham. Since Abraham was the friend of God, so his descendants had a special place before God also.
  - Jehoshaphat knew that Abraham was the friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7). James knew that Abraham was the friend of God (James 2:23). We are also the friends of God, not because of our relation to Abraham, but because of our relation to the Son of God, Jesus. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15:14-15)
- **You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth… And said to you, “You are my servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away”**: Again, Israel’s special place before God is because of God’s initiative, not because of Israel’s achievement. Israel is different from the idol-makers in distant lands because of God’s work in them, not because of their own greatness.
2. (10-13) Fear not, for God’s help is present.

Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’

“Behold, all those who were incensed against you Shall be ashamed and disgraced;
They shall be as nothing, And those who strive with you shall perish.
You shall seek them and not find them—Those who contended with you.
Those who war against you Shall be as nothing, As a nonexistent thing.
For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.’

- **Fear not, for I am with you:** This is both a command and a promise. Israel is commanded to fear not. Fear, worry, and anxiety are often sin. When the God who rules over the nations as described in Isaiah 41:2-4, the God who chose us and loves us as described in Isaiah 41:8-9, when that God tell us fear not, we must take it seriously! But there is also a promise. We fear not, because the LORD has told us, I am with you. What more do we need? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)
  - How much more prone to fear and discouragement we are when we are alone. But we are never alone, because God has declared, fear not, for I am with you.

- **Be not dismayed, for I am your God:** “Remember Me? The God of all power and glory? I’m that one. I am your God.” Years ago, J.B. Phillips wrote a wonderful book titled, *Your God is too Small*. In it, he showed how when people forget the greatness of God, they easily become dismayed. But God says, be not dismayed, for I am your God.

- **I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand:**

  God’s strength and glory make Him able to help us. But it is His love that makes Him say, “I will help you.”
  - Idols must be fastened... with pegs, so they might not totter (Isaiah 41:7). You have to hold them up. But God holds us up; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. You should never have a God that you have to hold up!
  - Knowing this, do we see the terrible nature of our fear and unbelief? They say to God, “You are not with me. You are not the God of glory and might. You do not really love me.”
  - “Every truthful man feels that he has a right to be believed. He speaks upon the honor of an honest man, and if you say, ‘I cannot believe you,’ and even begin to lament that you have no faith in him, the reflection is not upon yourself, but on the person whom you cannot believe. And shall it ever come to this, that God’s own children shall say that they cannot believe their God? Oh, sin of sins! It takes away the very Godhead from God, for if God be not true, he is not a God; and if he be not fit to be believed, neither is he fit to be adored, for a God whom you cannot trust you cannot worship.” (Spurgeon)

- **Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced:** God will deal with our enemies if we keep our trust in Him. He knows how to make our adversaries – whether they be men or devils – ashamed and disgraced.
  - Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced is, in part, an outworking of God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3: I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. God has always crushed anti-Semitic nations and movements, and in the reign of the Messiah, He will crush them completely.

- **For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, “Fear not, I will help you”:** In Isaiah 41:10, God promised to uphold you with My righteous right hand. That was God’s hand holding us up. Now, we see God’s hand holding our right hand, and giving us strength over fear, doubt, and our adversaries.
3. (14-16) Fear not, with God’s help, no obstacle is too great.

“Fear not, you worm Jacob, You men of Israel!
I will help you,” says the LORD And your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
“Behold, I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth;
You shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, And make the hills like chaff.
You shall winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, And the whirlwind shall scatter them;
You shall rejoice in the LORD, And glory in the Holy One of Israel.”

- Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel: The idea of a worm is connected to the name Jacob, but the idea of men is connected with the name Israel.
  - “In the rabbinical commentary on the five books of Moses, Yelamedenu is asked, Why are the Israelites called a worm? To signify, that as the worm does not smite, that is, gnaw the cedars, but with its mouth, which is very tender, yet it nevertheless destroys the hard wood; so all the strength of the Israelites is in prayer, by which they smite the wicked of this world, though strong like cedars, to which they are compared.” (Clarke)
  - The name Jacob, as applied to Israel here, always points back to Israel’s lowly and deceitful past, so that it is by no means an honor.” (Bultema)
  - And your Redeemer: “Redeemer is goel, see Isaiah 35:9, the Next-of-Kin who takes upon himself his people’s needs as if they were his own.” (Motyer)

- Behold, I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and beat them small: God will so help Israel and so empower them, that they will be able to cut down mountains as if they were a great threshing machine, removing mountains and seeing their dust blown away. The point is clear: nothing, not even a mountain, will stand in their way when God helps them.
  - “I don’t know of any other than the Creator Himself who can take a weak worm and make it sharp with teeth! God can do that.” (Redpath)
  - Jesus expressed the same idea in Matthew 17:20: If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

- You shall rejoice in the LORD, and glory in the Holy One of Israel: When we overcome great obstacles with the help of the LORD, we know it is His work. We rejoice in the LORD, not in ourselves. We glory in the Holy One of Israel, not in ourselves.

4. (17-20) Fear not, God has abundant resources.

The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
I will open rivers in desolate heights, And fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land springs of water.
I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, The myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine And the box tree together, That they may see and know, And consider and understand together, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

- I will open rivers in desolate heights: In response to the cry of the poor and needy, those whose tongues fail for thirst, God sends miraculous supplies of water to them. God has resources and supplies we know nothing about, and He loves to supply us from His hidden resources.

- I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree: God will also make barren places fruitful, and full of beautiful forests. God can take the most barren wilderness and make it a forest.
  - “Water and shade are the two great needs of the desert traveller… None of the trees mentioned are fruit trees: the point is shelter, not sustenance.” (Motyer)
• That the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it: When it all takes place, everyone will know this. Miraculous supplies of water and forests in the wilderness are impossible without God, so He gets the glory when the work is done.

C. Idolatry on trial.

1. (21) God calls idols and their worshippers to trial.

“Present your case,” says the LORD.
“Bring forth your strong reasons,” says the King of Jacob.

• Present your case: God is fair. He will not condemn idols, the false gods of the nations, and those who worship them, without a fair trial. So He invites these idols and their worshippers to come and present your case. “Let’s hear your side of the story.” Bring forth your strong reasons. “Let’s hear your best arguments.”

• Says the King of Jacob: This is the only place in the Bible where God uses this title. King of Jacob is used only here, but the title king of Israel is used 138 times in the Bible, mostly of men, but of the Lord GOD in Isaiah 44:6 and Zephaniah 3:15, and of Jesus in John 1:49 and 12:13.

2. (22-24) God examines the defendants – idols and their worshippers – at the trial.

Let them bring forth and show us what will happen;
Let them show the former things, what they were, That we may consider them,
And know the latter end of them; Or declare to us things to come,
Show the things that are to come hereafter, That we may know that you are gods;
Yes, do good or do evil, That we may be dismayed and see it together.
Indeed you are nothing. And your work is nothing: He who chooses you is an abomination.

• Let them bring forth: God invited idols to present your case in Isaiah 41:21. But none is presented; the next words are God’s questioning of the idols. Why don’t the idols present their case and defend themselves? Because they are dumb statues that can’t speak! So, the questioning moves on, and God examines the defendants.

• Let them bring forth and show us what will happen: If these idols really are gods, then they certainly know the future and the past. Then let them speak up. Show us what will happen. Then, let them show the former things, what they were. Gods know these things, don’t they? Do it that we may know that you are gods.

• Yes, do good or do evil: It is as if God stands in a courtroom, questioning a thousand idols of different sizes and designs, and finally cries out, “Do something! Do good or do evil! Can’t you do anything?”

• Indeed you are nothing: But they cannot do anything. So, the accusation is made based upon the evidence: your work is nothing; he who chooses you is an abomination.

   o Today, idolatry is still an abomination. Though few bow down to statues, many still fashion a god of their own opinion, and decide that is the god they will respect. Even many churchgoers do this today. “The spiritual conflict experienced today is exactly of the same nature and of the same character as you find depicted here. The issue is still unsettled in the minds of men, though it is settled eternally in the mind of God. The world is still making every effort to put the best possible show upon its worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Its worship is more the patronizing of the shell of religion than bowing in submission before an empty cross, and occupied throne, and the King of kings in glory.” (Redpath)

• Indeed, you are nothing, and your work is nothing: Paul quotes this idea in 1 Corinthians 8:4, when he writes, Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.
I have raised up one from the north, And he shall come; 
From the rising of the sun he shall call on My name; 
And he shall come against princes as though mortar, As the potter treads clay. 
Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know? 
And former times, that we may say, “He is righteous”? 
Surely there is no one who shows. Surely there is no one who declares, 
Surely there is no one who hears your words. 
The first time I said to Zion, “Look, there they are!” And I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings. 
For I looked, and there was no man; I looked among them, but there was no counselor, 
Who, when I asked of them, could answer a word. 
Indeed they are all worthless; Their works are nothing; Their molded images are wind and confusion.

- I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: In contrast to the idols who can tell nothing of the future, the LORD knows. He knows that He will bring Cyrus from the north to conquer the Babylonians, who conquered Judah and Jerusalem and took them captive. God would use Cyrus to allow the Jews in exile to return (Ezra 1).
  - “Cyrus had the greatest respect for Jehovah, as we can read in his proclamation concerning the freeing of Israel in Ezra one. In it he states correctly that Jehovah had given him all the kingdoms of the earth.” (Bultema)
  - “The ‘north’ is included because the Persians conquered the lands north of Babylon before invading her borders.” (Wolf)

- Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know: Not the idols; they know nothing. Not man, for I looked, and there was no man... Who, when I asked of them, could answer a word.

- Indeed they are all worthless; their works are nothing: Finally, the verdict is read at the trial. Apart from God, in the grand scheme of things, all of the greatness of man is worthless, and all the great works are nothing. And what of the idols? Their molded images are wind and confusion.
  - “This chapter is the great I WILL chapter of the Bible. No fewer than fourteen times in the scope of these verses does God reinforce His authority with the promise, ‘I will.’” (Redpath) Look at them all:
    - I will strengthen you. (Isaiah 41:10)
    - I will help you. (Isaiah 41:10, 13, and 14)
    - I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)
    - I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth. (Isaiah 41:15)
    - I will open rivers in desolate heights. (Isaiah 41:18)
    - I will make the wilderness a pool of water. (Isaiah 41:18)
    - I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree. (Isaiah 41:19)
    - I will set in the desert the cypress tree. (Isaiah 41:19)
    - I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings. (Isaiah 41:27)
  - What a contrast with Isaiah 14 – the “I will” chapter of Satan! Look at the “I wills” of Satan:
    - I will ascend into heaven. (Isaiah 14:13)
    - I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. (Isaiah 14:13)
    - I will also sit on the mount of the congregation. (Isaiah 14:13)
    - I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. (Isaiah 14:14)
    - I will be like the Most High. (Isaiah 14:14)
  - The “I wills” of Satan were all proud and self-directed. Every “I will” of the LORD in Isaiah 41 is for the benefit and blessing of His people. Though Satan was lifted up in pride, and proclaimed his “I wills,” none of them came to pass. But each and every one of God’s “I will’s” will happen!
  - “When God says, ‘I will,’ He says it with all the authority of omnipotence. He has foreseen every difficulty. He has studied every obstacle which may come in His way. He has anticipated every possible contingency. He knows the weakness of the one to whom He makes His promise, and yet He says, ‘I will!’” (Redpath)
ISIAH 42: THE SERVANT’S SONG – Christ, Servant of Jehovah

1. Prediction of Jesus Christ and His gospel coming to the Gentiles.
2. Heb. 2:8-9; Col. 3:1.
3. v.2-4 The Lord frees us from the power of sin.
4. v.6-7 We must take care that we do not seek to serve God to bring glory to ourselves.
5. v.14 God has been patient with the earth for a long time.
6. v.15-16 The Lord will make the earth waste during the tribulation period, but then He will begin His restoring work.
7. v.19-20 Mk. 8:18; Jn 1:11.
8. v.21-25 The Jews were driven out of the land because of their rejection of the Messiah, yet they did not realize that this was the reason.

A. The LORD speaks of His Servant.

1. (1-4) The character of the Servant.

   “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights!
   I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.
   He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
   A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.
   He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth;
   And the coastslands shall wait for His law.”

   - **Behold! My Servant:** The LORD calls to all people – the people of Israel, and the coastslands – and tells them to **behold** (study, set focus upon) His **Servant**.
     - “The word ’ebed can refer to a slave (Exodus 21:20-21) or a vassal king (2 Samuel 10:19), an individual subject (Genesis 21:25) or a tributary nation (1 Chronicles 18:2, 6, 13). In all those cases the term refers to a person or group characterized by dependence and servitude.” (Lindsey)
     - The New King James Version rightly capitalizes **Servant** because the context demonstrates this is a clear reference to Jesus. Additionally, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-5 and plainly says it is a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus (Matthew 12:16-21). So, in this, the LORD commands all peoples to put their focus on Jesus.
     - What do we see when we **behold** Jesus, the LORD’s **Servant**? Among many things, we see Him as the **Servant**. As Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-28 (also recorded in Mark 10:43-45), **Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.** And **whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.** When Jesus said **let him be your servant, it means being a servant is a choice.** When Jesus said **let him be your slave,** it showed how deep service should go. When He said that He **did not come to be served, but to serve,** it shows the essential heart of a servant. When Jesus said **and to give His life a ransom for many,** it showed how far servants go.
     - But Jesus, the **Servant**, is more than an example to us. He is our **Servant**. He serves us; not only in what He did in the past, but also, He serves us every day through His constant love, care, guidance, and intercession. Jesus did not stop serving when he went to heaven; He serves all His people **more effectively than ever** from heaven.

   - **My Servant whom I uphold:** This was certainly true for Jesus, but it is true also in the way the LORD deals with all His servants. He promises to **uphold** His servants. When someone is the servant of another, the servant is required to give full service and obedience to the master. But the master is also required to take care of the servant. The LORD always can say **My Servant whom I uphold.**
There may be another sense in this; Redpath believes it speaks of the Father’s trust in and dependence on the Son. “The picture is taken from an Eastern court, where a monarch is in a procession, and as he walks he leans upon a favorite courtier. This verse, in fact, could well be translated, ‘Behold, my servant, upon whom I lean.’ It is an indication of a special favor and confidence. So we have the picture of God the Father leaning upon God the son, counting upon Him and trusting Him to fulfill all His purposes.” Can God “lean on” you? Can He depend on you?

- **My Elect One in whom My soul delights**: Jesus is the ultimate Elect One, our election is really a matter of being chosen in Jesus. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:4, *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. In whom My soul delights* shows that for the LORD, election is not a cold, calculating, technical thing. It is connected deeply with His love and approval. When God chooses someone, His soul delights in them. If you are chosen in Jesus before the foundation of the world, then God says, “My soul delights in you.”

  - Understanding this helps us to receive God’s favor, instead of trying to give Him a reason to delight His soul in us! Many of us are trying to earn the approval of God, instead of realizing it is His free gift, received by faith, because He has chosen – elected – to delight His soul in us.

- **I have put My Spirit upon Him**: Jesus was filled with the Spirit and did ministry in the power and flow of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16).

- **He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles**: The ministry of the Servant, the Messiah, would not be restricted to the Jewish people. He would also have a ministry to the Gentiles, bringing justice and righteousness to them.

- **He will not cry out, nor raise His voice**: This doesn’t mean that Jesus never spoke loudly. It refers to His gentle, lowly heart and actions. Jesus didn’t make His way by bluster and loud, overwhelming talk, but by the Spirit of God upon Him.

  - “He is not self-assertive: probably the three verbs here are cumulative, stressing his quiet, unaggressive demeanour, but shout (‘shriek’) could suggest that he is not out to startle, cry out (‘raise his voice’) not to dominate or shout others down, raise his voice (‘make his voice heard’) not out to advertise himself.” (Motyer)

  - “Think for a moment about the modesty of God. He is always at work: He guides the sun, the stars, and the universe. He controls every galaxy. He refreshes the earth constantly. But He works so quietly that many people now try to make out there is no God at all… That is the hallmark of reality in service. God’s artists do not put their signatures to the pictures they create. His ambassadors do not run after the photographer all the time to get their pictures taken. It is enough that they have borne witness to the Lord.” (Redpath)

- **A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench**: This is another reference to the gentle character of Jesus. A reed is a fairly fragile plant, yet if a reed is bruised, the Servant will handle it so gently that He will not break it. And if flax, used for tinder to start a fire, does not flame but only smokes, He will not quench it into extinguishing. Instead, the Servant will gently blow on the smoking flax, fanning it into flame again.

- Often we feel that God deals roughly with our weaknesses and failures. Just the opposite is true. He deals with them gently, tenderly, helping them along until the bruised reed is strong and the smoking flax is in full flame.

  - “Think again of that reed: something that has been crushed, or hurt by unkindness, a life that is somehow bent and bruised and shattered, without strength or beauty. There is nothing attractive about a reed, and there is certainly nothing very pleasant about the circumstances in which it lives! Usually it grows in a smelly, unsavory swamp.” (Redpath)

  - “We call ourselves Christians, but if you are like me, sometimes you are desperately ashamed of how dimly your light burns. There is far more smoke than fire: so little prayer, so little real testimony, so much depression and discouragement. But the Lord says He will not extinguish the smoking flax.” (Redpath)

  - “He is not dismissive of others: however useless or beyond repair (bruised reed), however ‘past it’ and near extinction (smouldering wick) they may seem. The negative statements imply their positive equivalents: he can mend the broken reed, fan into flame the smouldering wick. The former has been internally damaged, the latter lacks the external nourishment of oil. The Servant is competent both to cure and to supply.” (Motyer)
2. (5-9) The LORD of glory and His promise to His Servant.

Thus says God the LORD: The promise of the Servant and His ministry is so wonderful, that the One making the promise should state His credentials. Just as when we take out a loan, the bank asks for assurance we can fulfill our promise, so this verse is another “credit check” on God. God the LORD is more than happy to do so. First look up, because He created the heavens and stretched them out. Then look down, because He spread forth the earth and that which comes from it. Then look in a mirror, because He gives breath to the people on it. The God who did such great things can fulfill His promises about the Servant!

I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand: Specifically, this is a promise from the LORD to the Servant – Jesus Christ. What encouragement Jesus must have received from passages like this when He faced difficult and trying times during His earthly ministry!

Called You in righteousness: “Because there was nothing unholy or unrighteous in My calling, You can be confident that the calling will be fulfilled.”

Will hold Your hand: “I am with You always, to love and guide You. I will never leave You. I am holding Your hand all the time!”

He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged: The Servant is gentle, but not weak. He will bring forth justice for truth. There aren’t two ways about it; it will happen, and failure or discouragement will not stop the Servant.

Isn’t it wonderful that Jesus never gets discouraged? When we think of the job that He has to do, the obstacles He must overcome, and the tools He needs to work with, it is amazing that He never becomes discouraged. It is because He has all power and authority!

Fail is the same word as smoking in smoking flax He will not quench. Discouraged is the same word as bruised in a bruised reed He will not break. “So here is the Servant of the Lord… there are no bruises about Him; He is no mere smoking flax. He is well able to do the task of redemption because He is free from all the weaknesses and failures of His people. He has no flaws or blemishes – He is perfection and majestic strength.” (Redpath)

Till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law: The work of the Servant will extend to the whole earth, and all the peoples – even those in the distant coastlands – shall serve Him.

Thus God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it:

“I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.
I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.
Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Jesus sees the value in a bruised reed, even when no one else can. He can make beautiful music come from a bruised reed, as He puts His strength in it! Though a smoking flax – used for a wick on an oil lamp – is good for nothing, Jesus knows it is valuable for what it can be when it is refreshed with oil. Many of us are like the bruised reed, and we need to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man (Ephesians 3:16). Others are like the smoking flax and can only burn brightly for the LORD again when we are drenched in oil, with a constant supply coming, as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus wants us to have His heart towards the lowly, broken, and hurting. It’s easy to pass them by just as quickly as the priest and the Levite passed the man on the road to Jericho. “The superficial Christian worker ignores that kind of situation. He wants a sphere to serve where it will be worthy of his talent, if you please. A task where his abilities will be recognized and used, something that is big enough to justify all the training he has undergone. In the eyes of the Lord, the test of the real servant is, does he bend with the humility of Jesus Christ over a bruised reed and smoking flax?” (Redpath)
1. **I will keep You:** “You will not get lost or left behind. I am always there to watch over You and **keep You.**”

2. **And give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles:** “You will fulfill the purpose I have called You to. You will bring salvation, not only to Your **people,** but also to those afar off, who seem beyond salvation.”

3. **To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison:** “I will use You to do miraculous works of restoration and healing, both physically and spiritually. You will be used to bring sight and freedom to many.”

4. **What glorious promises, each fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus!** By extension, these promises also belong to us. Jesus prayed, As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world (John 17:18). We are sent as Jesus was sent and can receive these same promises as belonging to us.

### B. The work of the LORD’s Servant

1. **(10-12) Praise for the victory of the Servant.**

   Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise from the ends of the earth,
   You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!
   Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, The villages that Kedar inhabits.
   Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, Let them shout from the top of the mountains.
   Let them give glory to the LORD, And declare His praise in the coastlands.

### 1. (10-12) Praise for the victory of the Servant.

- **Sing to the LORD a new song:** This sounds like a Psalm (Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 98:1, and others), because it is a song of praise. Who the Servant is and what He does is so glorious, it has to bring out a **new song** of praise.
- **You coastlands and you inhabitants of them:** Who should sing this **new song**? Everyone who has been touched by the work of the Servant. Since even the **coastlands** were blessed by the Servant (Isaiah 42:4), they should praise Him also!
2. (13-17) The LORD brings judgment against all who serve false gods.

The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies.
“I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once.
I will lay waste the mountains and hills, And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands, And I will dry up the pools.
I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them, And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them, And not forsake them.
They shall be turned back, They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images, Who say to the molded images, ‘You are our gods.’

• The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man: This day of praise is a day of victory for the LORD over all false gods. He shall prevail against His enemies.

• He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war… He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud… I will cry like a woman in labor: The LORD does this work of judgment with energy. He isn’t passive or dispassionate in His judgment. When the LORD sets things right on the earth, He does it with zeal.
  o The difference between He shall cry out, yes shout aloud and He will not cry out, nor raise His voice (Isaiah 42:2) shows the difference between the first and Second Coming of Jesus. The first coming was meek and lowly; the Second Coming will be loud and demonstrative!

• I will lay waste the mountains and hills: No obstacle can get in the way of the LORD’s work. Mountains and hills can’t get in His way. Rivers and pools will not stop Him. Even the blindness of others will not prevent His plan. In the end, it is certain that they shall be greatly ashamed, who trust in carved images.

3. (18-20) The deaf and blind come to the Servant.

“Hear, you deaf; And look, you blind, that you may see.
Who is blind but My servant, Or deaf as My messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as he who is perfect, And blind as the LORD’s servant?
Seeing many things, but you do not Observe; opening the ears, but he does not hear.”

• Hear, you deaf; and look, you blind, that you may see: Who are the deaf and the blind the LORD speaks to here? The are the deaf and blind among God’s people. The LORD has already spoken to the blind among the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:16). Now, He speaks to the blind that He calls My servant, the deaf whom He calls My messenger.
  o Obviously, a blind man will have trouble being a good servant. A deaf man will have trouble being a good messenger.

• Seeing many things, but you do not observe: This is a word to these blind ones who think they can see. They act as if they can see, but they really can’t observe anything. They will stay blind and deaf as long as they can’t admit their need.

• He does not hear: What is the cure? It begins with knowing our condition. When the deaf know they are deaf, and the blind know they are blind, they know their need, and do not deceive themselves about their condition.
  o When Jesus healed a man born blind, He used the occasion to speak about spiritual blindness, and its cure. In the diagnosis of Jesus, only those who know they are blind can be healed of their blindness. Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.” Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.” (John 9:39-41)

The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake: He will exalt the law and make it honorable. But this is a people robbed and plundered; All of them are snared in holes, And they are hidden in prison houses; They are for prey, and no one delivers; For plunder, and no one says, “Restore!” Who among you will give ear to this? Who will listen and hear for the time to come? Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers? Was it not the LORD, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, Nor were they obedient to His law. Therefore He has poured on him the fury of His anger And the strength of battle; It has set him on fire all around, Yet he did not know; And it burned him, Yet he did not take it to heart.

- **The LORD is well pleased… He will magnify the law and make it honorable**: The LORD God is pleased to bring this justice on the earth, and to magnify and honor the law.
  - Though under the new covenant, we do not come to God on the basis of the law, it does not mean that the law of God is bad. As Paul wrote in Romans 7:12, *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.* The weakness of the law is not in the law, but in us. The law perfectly suits the purpose God intended for it: to display God’s holy standard, to expose our sin, and to show is the need for salvation in Jesus.

- **But this is a people robbed and plundered**: God looks upon His people and sees the pain and devastation the world, the flesh, and the devil has wrought upon them. They are robbed and plundered, they are for prey, and no one delivers. Worst of all, no one says, “Restore!”

- **Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers**: Who did this? Isaiah’s answer is almost shocking: Was it not the LORD, He against whom we have sinned? In this circumstance, God allowed the low, defeated place of Israel as discipline for their sin, for their chosen blindness and deafness.

- **For they would not walk in His ways, nor were they obedient to His law**: The painful and low place of Israel was meant to draw them back to the LORD. We can know that the LORD only used these measures after He had exhausted far gentler measures. Yet even these sharp measures did not work: Yet he did not know… Yet he did not take it to heart.

- **It has set him on fire all around**: This correction from the LORD felt like fire to Israel; yet they did not respond to it. In 1 Peter 4:12-19, Peter also relates trials and correction from the Lord to fire: Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you… For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? God’s purpose in the fiery trial is to bring us to repentance and softness of heart, and the more we resist that work, the more the fire will burn! We should respond as Peter said we should in 1 Peter 4:19: Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. Is the fire of God’s correction burning away the sin and impurity in your life, or is it just making you blacker and harder?
**ISAIAS 43: FEAR NOT – Israel to be Redeemed and Restored**

- v.5-6 God predicts the regathering of the Jewish people to Israel.
- v.7 The word "bara" translated "created" from the Hebrew means "something created out of nothing."
- v.10-11 God is declaring that there is no other God but Himself and no other gods to come
- v.22-24 Israel had not been keeping the covenant with God by sacrifice and offerings.
- v.25-28 Because they have not kept His covenant, they experienced desolation.

**A. Reasons not to fear.**

1. **(1) Fear not, knowing you belong to the LORD.**

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name; You are Mine.”

- **Says the LORD, who created you… and He who formed you:** God speaks to His people as their Creator. God has a special and unique claim upon us because He is our Creator. When men forget or reject God as Creator, they fail in the most basic obligation they have to God.

- **Fear not:** This is a command, accompanied by promises. By outward circumstances, the people of Judah had reason to be afraid of Babylon’s army and exile. God points them past the present circumstances to both this command and promise.

- **For I have redeemed you:** Not only did Israel have obligation to God as their Creator, by also as their Redeemer. He is the one who bought them out of literal exile and spiritual slavery.
  - The redeemer bought an unfortunate relative out of their slavery and debt. He rescued them and paid the slave price or debt they could not pay. When God calls Himself our Redeemer, it looks forward to the price that must be paid for our salvation.

- **I have called you by your name; You are mine:** God twice owns His people. He has right of ownership both as Creator and Redeemer. His ownership is personal, because He says I have called you by your name. His ownership is certain, because He seals it by saying You are mine.
  - Knowing that we belong to the LORD is a wonderful answer to fear. We can know that He holds us, protects us, guards us, and cares for us. We can know that He would not have created, redeemed, and called us unless He intended to finish His work in us. How can we be afraid when we know this God is for us, is looking out for our interests?

2. **(2-7) Fear not, knowing the LORD is with you.**

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.
For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored,
And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life.
Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west;
I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’
Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth;
Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him.

- **When you pass through the waters, I will be with you:** Through any potential obstacle, God will be with us. Deep waters? I will be with you. Must you walk through the fire? Then you shall not be burned. When God is with us, He is for us, and who can be against us?
Israel had and would have their trials, but we have ours also. Trials are inevitable; it doesn’t say if you pass through the waters, it says when you pass through the waters. The text doesn’t say, “When you walk on a luxurious padded carpet, I will be with you.” It says God will be with us in the toughest of circumstances. Trials are varied; sometimes we face waters, sometimes rivers, and sometimes fire. Floods overwhelm, fires consume.

The mention of the LORD’s presence and protection in the fire reminds of the story of the three sons of Judah cast into the Babylonian furnace, because they would not bow or bend to worship an idol. They also were preserved in the fire by the presence of God (Daniel 3:19-25).

This passage is also full of images from the Exodus from Egypt. “The statement, ‘I am the Lord, your God’ would remind every Jewish reader of Exodus 20, where the divine description is followed by the words ‘who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery’ (Exodus 20:2). So, learning from this past event, they could rest in his promise to bring them again into their own land.” (Grogan)

“Israel is just as indestructible as God’s Word and Covenant are. Whoever can annihilate Israel can do more than Satan and all the powers of hell have been able to do in ages past. What is true of Israel, however, is equally true of the Church. Against it, too, the flames have raged and the waters have boiled but, according to His promise, the Lord Jesus has always been with her.” (Bultema)

• **Walk through the fire:** God helping us, we can do this. We don’t have to panic, we don’t have to fear, and we don’t have to run as if we didn’t trust God. He can so strengthen us in our trials that we can walk through the fire.
  
  - “Walking is the pace at which you go when you are not in a hurry, when you are not concerned or alarmed. When you are not burdened or anxious, then you walk. ‘He that believeth shall not make haste’ (Isaiah 29:16).” (Redpath)

• **Since you were precious in My sight:** God here describes the motivation for His work of redemption. He loves us! We are precious in His sight! This is an Old Testament example of the truth in John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.
  
  - “To prove His love for His people, God was willing to give Egypt, Cush, and Seba as a ransom for Israel. These three nations may symbolize Israel’s great worth, or they may have been named in anticipation of the subsequent Persian conquests.” (Wolf)

• **Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east:** God’s presence and blessing with Israel would also be demonstrated by unleashing the shackles of their exile. They could have hope for the future because they knew they were called by the name of the LORD, and they were created for His glory.
  
  - Whom I have created for My glory means that God not only has created us, but that He has created us for a purpose. If we have no Creator, then we are purposeless; but God has created us, and He did it for a purpose, creating us for His glory. This means that when we are glorifying God, we are fulfilling the purpose we were created for, and will therefore be the happiest and fulfilled.

**B. Witnesses to the work of the LORD.**

1. (8-9) The nations and the people of Israel are called to either prove their case or accept God’s.

Bring out the blind people who have eyes, And the deaf who have ears.
Let all the nations be gathered together, And let the people be assembled.
Who among them can declare this, And show us former things?
Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; Or let them hear and say, “It is truth.”

• **Bring out the blind people who have eyes:** Previously, in Isaiah 42:19, the LORD spoke of His blind and deaf servants, who had willingly closed their eyes and ears to His truth and ways. Now, God tells these blind and deaf servants of His come forth – with all the nations who will be gathered together.

• **Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses:** God invites both His blind, deaf people and the nations to prove Him wrong or themselves right in their rejection of Him. It is if
God is saying, “You have chosen to worship and honor other gods. Come before Me now and justify yourself. Bring plenty of witnesses.”

- “We must not miss the pathos: imagine any litigant depending on the blind to testify to what they have seen and the deaf to what they have heard!” (Motre)

2. (10) The LORD commissions His witnesses.

“You are My witnesses,” says the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.
I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior.
I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed,
And there was no foreign god among you; Therefore you are My witnesses,”

Says the LORD, “that I am God. Indeed before the day was, I am He;
And there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?”

- **You are My witnesses:** God’s people had witnessed the greatness of God. If only Israel would remember the great things God had done among them, they would see each wonderful work of His as a witness to the truth that He is the only true God.
  - The idol worshippers have nothing to say as witnesses, because their gods can do nothing. But the people of God are witnesses of His greatness and power. They have seen it and experienced it.

- **And My servant that I have chosen that you may know and believe Me:** A witness is a passive observer of what someone has done, and Israel had seen the great works of God. But they were more than passive observers; God called Israel to be His servant. That was why they were chosen — not to sit around and glory in their chosenness, but to serve the LORD, and to know the LORD and believe Him in every way.

- **Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me:** In clear, certain words, God says that not only is He the most high God, but that there are no other gods beside Him. There are no “junior gods.” There are no “second class gods.” **There was no God formed** before the LORD, and there will be no God formed after Him.
  - What about Biblical passages which some take to suggest there are other gods? For example, in John 10:34, Jesus quotes Psalm 82:8-9, saying You are gods. But the judges of Psalm 82 were called “gods” because in their office they determined the fate of other men. Also, in Exodus 21:6 and 22:8-9, God calls earthly judges “gods.” In John 10, Jesus is saying “if God gives these unjust judges the title ‘gods’ because of their office, why do you consider it blasphemy that I call Myself the ‘Son of God’ in light of the testimony of Me and My works?” Jesus is not taking the you are gods of Psalm 82 and applying it to all humanity, or to all believers. The use of gods in Psalm 82 was a metaphor.
  - In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul calls Satan the god of this age. Certainly, he does not mean Satan is a true god, a rival god to the Lord GOD. Satan can be called the god of this age because so many people regard him as god! But Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 8:4-5 that the idols the nations worship are merely so-called gods, and that there is no other God but one.
  - This is an important point, because some — such as Jehovah’s Witnesses — take the opinion that Jesus is indeed god, but a “junior level god.” They will allow that He is mighty God (Isaiah 9:6), but not that He is Almighty God. But when the LORD says through Isaiah, before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me, it proves there is only one true God. There are figurative or metaphorical gods, such as the judges of Psalm 82. There are false gods such as the devil or the idols of the nations. But there are no true Gods apart from the LORD, Yahweh, who is One God in Three Persons. Ironically, the Jehovah’s Witnesses took their title from this very passage which proves their doctrine is wrong!

- **And besides Me there is no savior:** The LORD God is the only savior. Only He has declared and saved — there was no foreign god among you who did any good. He is our help and support. Sadly, we often turn to our only savior as a last resort, instead of as a first resource.
  - Since Jesus is clearly our savior (Philippians 3:20, 2 Timothy 1:10), and there is no other savior beside the LORD, then Jesus must be the LORD. The LORD, Yahweh, is One God in Three Persons.
• **Therefore, you are My witnesses:** If Israel would remember that only the LORD has ever rescued them, they would not be so quick to turn to other gods and to turn away from the LORD. We should all be witnesses to the saving, rescuing, and healing work of the LORD.

• **Indeed, before the day was, I am He:** God’s credentials go beyond His saving work on behalf of His people. He comes before time itself. Before there was ever a day, God was. So, His strength is infinitely greater than anyone else’s; He can rightly say **there is no one who can deliver out of My hand.** When God does something, no one will reverse it.

*C. The LORD redeems a hard-hearted people.*

1. **(14-17) A promise to judge Babylon.**

   Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel:
   “For your sake I will send to Babylon, And bring them all down as fugitives—
   The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their ships.
   I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King.”

   Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea And a path through the mighty waters,
   Who brings forth the chariot and horse, The army and the power
   (They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):

   • **For your sake I will send to Babylon:** Isaiah prophesied before the Babylonians ever conquered Judah and sent the nation into a 70-year exile. Yet Isaiah prophesies, not only about the coming captivity, but also beyond it to the eventual judgment upon Babylon for what they will do to Judah.

   • **Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea:** At the time Isaiah prophesied, Babylon was an up-and-coming world power. Before they would be judged, they would be a world dominating super-power. How could Israel be confident that God was up to the job of delivering them and judging Babylon? All they had to do was look at God’s great works in the past, such as when He made **a way in the sea** – when He parted the Red Sea so Israel could cross and escape the Egyptian armies (Exodus 14). Isaiah powerful brings up these images when he writes of **the chariot and the horse, the army and the power** of these enemies of God’s people, and how **they shall lie down together… they are extinguished.** Just as God overwhelmed the Egyptian armies that had enslaved Israel, so would He judge the Babylonians also.

      o This teaches us that we can always justify trusting God right now by remembering the great things He has done.

      o This teaches us that we never want to oppose the LORD, or His people.

   • **The LORD your Redeemer… the Holy One of Israel… your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King:** In just these few verses, look at the glorious titles of God. In this passage, prophetically intended to comfort Israel in the mist of Babylonian captivity, God powerfully holds forth images of His own strength and power.
2. (18–21) God promises His exiled people a new work.

Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old.
Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert.
The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches,
Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, to give drink
To My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise.

- **Do not remember the former things**: As Isaiah writes prophetically to Israel, they were mired in the desperate circumstances of captivity and exile. God wants to put their eyes on the new work He will do, so it begins with a reminder to **not remember the former things**. If they are stuck in the failure and sin and discouragement of the past, they will never go forward to the new thing God has for them.
  - It is a fascinating – and instructive – switch between Isaiah 43:16-17 and Isaiah 43:18. In Isaiah 43:16-17, Israel is told to look to the past by remembering the great things God did for them at the Red Sea. But in Isaiah 43:18, they are told, **do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old**. This shows us that there is a sense in which we must remember the past, in terms of God’s great work on our behalf. There is also a sense in which we must forsake and forget the past, with all its discouragement and defeat, and move on to what God has for us in the future.

- **Behold, I will do a new thing**: Staying stuck in the past can keep us from the **new thing** God wants to do. If Israel stayed stuck in the discouragement and seduction of Babylon, they would never look for the **new thing** of release from exile.
  - We can make an idol out of the “new.” We can err as the people of Athens did who spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). We can be tossed about by every wind of doctrine. But we can also err on the other side of the balance, and work against the **new thing** God wants to do.
  - **Shall you not know it?** God asks the same question today. “Will you stay in step with My Spirit? When He leads into something new, shall you not know it?”

- **I will even make a road in the wilderness**: Between the captivity in Babylon and the return to Israel lay hundreds of miles of wilderness. God’s people didn’t need to be afraid because God would **make a road in the wilderness**, provide **rivers in the desert**, and even protect His people from animals, because **the beast of the field will honor Me**, the LORD says.
  - Often, when God makes a promise, we worry about the details or the obstacles for the fulfillment of the promise. God replies to us, “Don’t worry about it at all. **I will even make a road in the wilderness.** I have resources and plans you don’t know about. Leave those problems to Me.”

- **They shall declare My praise**: This is part of fulfilling the purpose God created us for, as mentioned in Isaiah 43:7 (Whom I created for My glory). When we **declare** our **praise** for God, we are giving Him glory, and fulfilling one of the purposes we were created for.
  - This passage has in view Israel’s prophesied deliverance from Babylon, but also more than that. It also has in mind the ultimate deliverance, brought by the Messiah.
  - “From all which texts laid together, it appears that this latter deliverance, compared with that out of Egypt, is not to be confined to their freedom from the Babylonish captivity, but to be extended to the consequences of it, and especially to the redemption by Christ, because otherwise that Egyptian deliverance was more glorious and wonderful in many respects than the Babylonian.” (Poole)

But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob; And you have been weary of Me, O Israel.
You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings, Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices.
I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings, Nor wearied you with incense.
You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices;
But you have burdensed Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities.

- **But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob:** Who, and when, is Isaiah speaking to? He may have come out of the prophetic future into the prophetic present and may be speaking to the people of Judah in his own day. He may still be speaking in the prophetic future and rebuking the hard-hearted complacency of many of the Babylonian exiles, most of whom had no interest in returning to the Promised Land.

- **And you have been weary of Me:** In the flesh, sometimes we regard serving and obeying the LORD as a weary thing. We feel it is such a burden to serve the LORD. We think we are so bad off following His ways and feel so oppressed and afflicted. Sometimes people say, “I just need to take a break,” and essentially mean that they need to take a break from the LORD!

  - When we feel like this, it is certain evidence that we are not in step with Jesus, and the true nature of Jesus. He said, *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.* (Matthew 11:28-30) If following God always seems like some great, weary burden – then you really aren’t following Him.

- **You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings:** When we are weary of the LORD like this, it often shows in our giving, and in immorality (you have burdensed Me with your sins).

  - Perhaps the Israelites were insincere in their worship. When they did bring offerings, they simply went through the motions of worship, and so God did not consider their empty sacrifices to be true sacrifices at all.” (Wolf)

- **You have burdensed Me with your sins, you have wearied Me with your iniquities:** Isaiah speaks to God’s people who felt “burnt out,” burdened, and weary on the LORD. God replies to them, “You feel burdened? You feel weary? Try being Me! You have burdensed Me with your sins, you have wearied Me with your iniquities.”


I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.
Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted.
Your first father sinned, And your mediators have transgressed against Me.
Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary; I will give Jacob to the curse, And Israel to reproaches.

- **I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions… I will not remember your sins:** What will God do with such a hard-hearted people? He will forgive them at the earliest opportunity. He will forget their sins. Despite all the sin and disregard for God, He still loves His people, and longs for their humble return.

  - Jesus’ story of the Prodigal Son is a beautiful illustration of this principle. The Prodigal felt the father was a weary burden to be relieved, and he went his own way. But the father still loved him and was ready to forget all the sin as soon as the Prodigal humbly returned.

  - **I will not remember your sins:** How can God forget? By simply choosing to not remember. God has forgotten our sin as being fully paid for by what Jesus endured on the cross. We can forget our sin also and put it far from us.

- **Let us contend together; state your case:** God says to His people, “Do you want to justify yourself? Then do it. Present your best case.” But no matter what they say on their behalf, God has a stronger argument against them: **Your first father sinned.** “You are a child of Adam, and his sin has infected the whole human race, including yourself. You are sinner through and through from birth. Stop trying to justify yourself and humbly look to Me for salvation.”

- **And your mediators have transgressed against me:** Not only were they – and we – born in sin because of Adam, they trusted in the wrong mediators. The ones they trusted to save them before God were sinners themselves. Looking
to a perfect, sinless Mediator can only save us, for there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)

- **I will give Jacob to the curse**: Because of this deep sinfulness, and failure to look to God’s solution for sin, there was only a curse for Jacob. Because we are born in sin, and when we reject God’s Mediator, then all there is left for us is the curse and reproaches.
ISAIAH 44: THE LORD, YOUR REDEEMER – The Promise of the Spirit

- v.4-5 The Lord foretells of a revival among the young.
- v.6 The Father and the Son.
- v.9-13 Various methods and types of idols the people had made.
- v.16-17 The lack of logic and inconsistency of man in trying to create his own god.
- v.18 They have rebelled so much against God that He allows their eyes to be shut (Jn. 12:39-40).
- v.19 Rom. 1:25.

A. A promise to pour out the Spirit.

1. (1-4) Fear not, knowing the promise of the outpoured Spirit.

Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant, And Israel whom I have chosen.
Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you:
“Fear not, O Jacob My servant; And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;
They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.”

- Yet hear now: Though Isaiah 43 ended with a warning of judgment, it does not mean God takes back His promise of hope and restoration. Israel can still know the goodness of the LORD if they will only turn back to Him.
- Thus says the LORD who made you: This reminds us that God is still active in and responsible for creation. He didn’t just create Adam and Eve and then let the whole thing go. There is a sense in which God has made each one of us, so we each have a personal obligation to Him as our Creator.
- And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen: The name Jeshurun means “the upright one.” It is used here as a contrast to the name Jacob, even as Israel is sometimes used as a contrast to Jacob.
  - “The name Jeshurun appears only three more times in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5, 26; and in all cases it is used of Israel… this word bespeaks a wonder of grace, for He calls His deeply sinful people His beloved, His upright one.” (Bultema)
- Fear not… For I will pour water on him… I will pour My Spirit on your descendants: This is a glorious promise to a humble, returning Israel. God will not simply give them His Spirit; He will pour out His Spirit on them as if water was poured over them.
  - This is a freedom in the giving of the Spirit. This is a flow in the giving of the Spirit. This is abundance in the giving of the Spirit. This is evident giving of the Spirit. God wants to pour His Spirit upon His people! If you experience a few drops, God wants to pour. If you are bone dry, God wants to pour. If you know the pour, God wants to keep pouring! We must learn to stop saying “when” as God pours!
  - “Without the Spirit of God we can do nothing; we are as ships without wind, or chariots without steeds, like branches without sap, we are withered; like coals without fire, we are useless; as an offering without the sacrificial flame, we are unaccepted. I desire both to feel and to confess this fact whenever I attempt to preach. I do not wish to get away from it, or to conceal it, nor can I, for I am often made to feel it to the deep humbling of my spirit.” (Spurgeon)
  - “I believe that, at this present moment, God’s people ought to cry to him day and night that there may be a fresh baptism into the Holy Ghost. There are many things that are desirable for the Church of Christ, but one thing is absolutely needful; and this is the one thing, the power of the Holy Ghost in the midst of his people.” (Spurgeon)
  - Who receives this gift? I will pour water on him who is thirsty. When we are thirsty for the outpouring of the Spirit, ask for it and receive it in faith, we can expect to be poured on. God is looking for dry ground to pour out floods upon!
- And My blessing on your offspring: God doesn’t only want to pour His Spirit; He also wants to pour His blessing, on us and our offspring.
• As the old hymn says:
  *Showers of blessings, showers of blessing we need.*
  *Mercy-drops 'round us are falling,*
  *But for the showers we plead.*

• **They will spring up among the grass like willows:** The effect of the poured-out Spirit is *life*. Life springs up and grows where the Spirit of God is poured out.

2. (5) **The promise of belonging to the LORD.**

  One will say, “I *am* the LORD’s”; Another will call himself by the name of Jacob;
  Another will write with his hand, “The LORD’s,” And name himself by the name of Israel.

• **One will say, “I am the LORD’s”:** Another effect of the poured-out Spirit is that He identifies us as belonging to the Lord. When the Holy Spirit is poured out on us, we know we belong to the Lord, and we aren’t afraid to say it. The Holy Spirit is an identifying *seal* upon the believer (Ephesians 1:13).

• **Another will write with his hand, “The LORD’s,” and name himself by the name of Israel:** When the Holy Spirit is poured out on us, we *want* to take the name of the Lord. We want everyone to know we belong to Him, and He belongs to us.
  
  o Spurgeon on Another will write with his hand, “The LORD’s”: “The text may have another rendering, for, if you notice, the word ‘with’ in the text is in italics, to show that it was inserted by the translators. It might run thus: ‘Another shall subscribe his hand unto the Lord.’ This alludes to the custom which still exists, but which was more common in those days, of a servant being marked or tattooed in the hand with his master’s name… Paul alludes to this when he says, ‘Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;’ as much as to say, ‘I am Christ’s: I have had his name branded upon me.’”

B. **The LORD alone is God.**

1. (6-8) **The LORD declares to witnesses that He alone is God.**

  Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
  “I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God. And who can proclaim as I do?
  Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people.
  And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them.
  Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it?
  You *are* My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed *there is* no other Rock; I know not one.”

• **I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God:** The LORD has already taken this unique title in Isaiah 41:4, in the same context of proclaiming His glory against the feeble false gods. An idol can never be the *First*, because an idol needs someone to make him. An idol can never be the *Last* because they wear out and break. But the Lord GOD of Israel is both the *First* and the *Last*; He is completely unique, and besides Him there is no God.
  
  o “As first he does not derive his being from any other, but is self-existing; as last he remains supreme at the End.” (Motyer)

  o Jesus takes the same title of the *First and the Last* in Revelation 1:17 and 22:13. If the LORD is the *First* and the *Last* according to Isaiah 44:6, and if Jesus is the *First and the Last* according to Revelation 1:17 and 22:13, since there cannot be *two firsts* or *two lasts*, Jesus must be the LORD God!

• **Who can proclaim as I do:** Because God is the *First* and the *Last*, He lives outside our time-domain, and can proclaim things before they happen. He can proclaim the *things that are coming and shall come*. This shows God really is who He says He is, watching and directing the parade of human and cosmic history as it makes its course down His appointed path.

• **Do not fear, nor be afraid:** Knowing these truths about God isn’t only good for winning theological quiz games. When we really know who God is, and His great wisdom and authority over all things, it erases all fear in our lives.
• You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me: God says to His people, “You are all witnesses of these truths. Tell Me yourself – is there any God besides Me?”
  o Because there is no other God besides the LORD, it means that God the Father is the LORD, God the Son is the LORD, and God the Holy Spirit is the LORD. Yahweh – the name translated by the small-caps LORD – is the Triune God, the One God in Three Persons. There are no “grades” or “degrees” to true deity. There are false gods, symbolic gods, and the true God – and the only true God is Yahweh, the LORD.

• Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one: Since God is the only God, He is the only solid ground to build our life upon.

2. (9-20) The folly of idol makers.

Adam Clarke writes of this passage: “The sacred writers are generally large and eloquent upon the subject of idolatry; they treat it with great severity, and set forth the absurdity of it in the strongest light. But this passage of Isaiah… far exceeds anything that ever was written upon the subject, in force of argument, energy of expression, and elegance of composition.”

Those who make an image, all of them are useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They are their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.
Who would form a god or mold an image That profits him nothing?
Surely all his companions would be ashamed; And the workmen, they are mere men.
Let them all be gathered together, Let them stand up;
Yet they shall fear, They shall be ashamed together.
The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, Fashions it with hammers, And works it with the strength of his arms.
Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; He drinks no water and is faint.
The craftsman stretches out his rule, He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane, He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man, According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.
He cuts down cedars for himself, And takes the cypress and the oak;
He secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it.
Then it shall be for a man to burn, For he will take some of it and warm himself;
Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and worships it; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.
He burns half of it in the fire; With this half he eats meat; He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms himself and says, “Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.”
And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image.
He falls down before it and worships it, Prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”
They do not know nor understand;
For He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, And their hearts, so that they cannot understand.
And no one considers in his heart, Nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say,
“I have burned half of it in the fire, Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals;
I have roasted meat and eaten it; And shall I make the rest of it an abomination?
Shall I fall down before a block of wood?” He feeds on ashes;
A deceived heart has turned him aside: And he cannot deliver his soul,
Nor say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

• Those who make a graven image, all of them are useless: Isaiah will brilliantly show the foolishness of idol makers. A simple look at how idols are made shows how silly it is to regard them as gods, so the idol makers themselves are their own witnesses against themselves.

• The workmen, they are mere men: Isaiah looks at the people who make idols, and notices that they themselves are only weak, frail men. The blacksmith becomes hungry, and his strength fails. The craftsman works hard with wood, but it is only wood. Half of the tree is made into an object of worship and trust, and the other half is burned for a warm fire and cooking.
• They do not know nor understand; for He has shut their eyes, so they cannot see: How could the idol makers fail to see what is so obvious about the stupidity of idolatry? God has shut their eyes and shut their hearts.
  o Is this unjust of God? Is He condemning man for something that He is really responsible for? Not at all. They first loved the darkness and chose their blindness, then the LORD gave them what they wanted. Isaiah points to this when he writes, no one considers in his heart, nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say… a deceived heart has turned him aside.
  o It is the same way that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh (Exodus 4:21). Sometimes it says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15), sometimes it says simply that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, without saying who did it (Exodus 7:13). Who really did it? When we consider the occasions where God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, we must never think that God did it against Pharaoh’s will. It was never a case of Pharaoh saying, “Oh, I want to do what is good and right and I want to bless these people of Israel” and God replying, “No, for I will harden your heart against them!” When God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, He was allowing Pharaoh’s heart to do what Pharaoh wanted to do – God was giving Pharaoh over to his sin (Romans 1:18-32).
  o “The idolater chose a delusion and became deluded.” (Motyer)

• He feeds on ashes: The wooden idol from the craftsman’s shop is just a warm fire away from being ashes. Worshipping and serving and idol – any false god – is as wise and as satisfying as eating ashes. We can only satisfy our soul in God.

• And he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand”: The one given over to a false god is so entranced in the lie that he is in bondage. He holds the idol in his right hand – the hand of power and authority – yet cannot see that it is a lie.
  o “The idolater picks up the figurine in his hand, holding it, but in reality it holds him. He is in bondage to a lie.” (Motyer)
  o “And such passages as these are added in such cases to give an account of the prodigious madness of sinners herein; because, as they wilfully shut their own eyes, and harden their own hearts, so God judicially blinds and hardens them, and gives them up to believe lies, and then it is no wonder if they fall into such dotages.” (Poole)

3. (21-23) Remembering and praising the greatness and the glory of the true God.

“Remember these, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me! I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.” Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel.

• Remember these, O Jacob: As Israel remembers the foolishness of making and worshipping idols, it should inspire greater trust and confidence in God. When we think about the alternatives to following the LORD, it should make us follow Him all the more closely.
  o As Peter said to Jesus, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

• Remember these, O Jacob: If the foolishness of the alternative wasn’t enough, God gives His people many more reasons to trust and love Him: I have formed you… you are My servant… you will not be forgotten by Me… I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions… I have redeemed you. Any one of these would be reason enough, but combined, they are overwhelming.

• Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it: This is the only logical reaction to seeing who God is. And if God’s people won’t do it, then creation itself will (Shout, you lower parts of the earth; break into singing, you mountains).

• For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel: Creation rejoices when God saves and glorifies Himself in His people. Paul developed this theme in Romans 8:19-22.
**4. (24-28) The LORD demonstrates He is the true God by prophesying a future deliverer of Israel.**

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb:

“I am the LORD, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself; Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, And drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, And makes their knowledge foolishness; Who confirms the word of His servant, And performs the counsel of His messengers; Who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be inhabited,’ To the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ And I will raise up her waste places; Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers’; Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” And to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”’

- **Thus says the LORD:** The LORD makes remarkable claims through this whole passage, and in these verses. He claims to be their Redeemer, the Creator of each person (who formed you from the womb), the Creator of all things (who makes all things), wiser and greater than anyone (who frustrates the signs of the babblers), who upholds His own (who confirms the word of His servants), who resurrects dead cities (who says to Jerusalem, “You shall be inhabited”), and who has authority over all creation (who says to the deep, “Be dry!”). How can God back up such great claims?

- **Who says of Cyrus:** God proves He is who He claims to be by announcing the name of a deliverer for Israel’s Babylonian exiles – and Isaiah wrote this more than 200 years before Cyrus fulfilled this prophecy – by name!
  - The prophet alluded to the king who would bring about Israel’s release from captivity in Isaiah 41:2, but in this passage, amazingly, he mentions him by name. “Cyrus, whom God here designeth by his proper name two hundred years before he was born, that this might be an undeniable evidence of the certainty and exactness of God’s foreknowledge, and a convincing argument, and so most fit to conclude this dispute between God and idols.” (Poole)
  - “This great passage, with its two explicit references to Cyrus, has attracted much scholarly discussion. For many modern scholars it represents the strongest argument for ‘Deutero-Isaiah,’ for they cannot conceive of supernatural predictive prophecy of such detail.” (Grogan)
  - Some believe that Isaiah wrote much of this, but someone after the events were fulfilled just wrote in the name Cyrus. This doesn’t hold true, because the whole section is carefully written to dramatically reveal the name of Cyrus. Just the name couldn’t have been written in later.
  - “We can, of course, choose to disbelieve what it says, but we must not adjust its testimony to suit modern conventions, tastes or prejudices. The evidence of the Old Testament (as of the New) is that pre-knowledge of personal names is given when, for whatever reason, the situation warrants it (cf. 1 Kings 13:2 with 2 Kings 23:15-17; Acts 9:12). This special dimension of prediction is at home in Isaiah, who, more than any other prophet, makes prediction and fulfilment the keystone of his proof that the Lord is the only God.” (Motyer)
  - “If the fact of predictive prophecy is accepted, we are in no position to set limits to its exercise, and, since the OT does not let us into the secrets of the mechanisms or ‘psychology’ of inspiration, we do not have the clues to decide what is possible and what is impossible. Within the total biblical context, the revelation of names is perfectly at home (see, e.g., Genesis 16:11; Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:13).” (Motyer)
  - “Josephus in his Antiquities relates that when Cyrus came across his name mentioned in this place in Isaiah 220 years before he lived, he was seized by a holy desire to fulfill what was written of him.” (Bultema)

- **He is My shepherd:** Cyrus was a shepherd in the sense that God used him to do something good and helpful for Israel.
  - “The lost sheep were to be rounded up and returned to their true fold in Judah by this foreigner… this oracle gives the first explicit reference in the Book of Isaiah to God’s plans to rebuild the city.” (Grogan)
  - “Kings were called ‘shepherds’ as being guardians and carers of their people (56:11; 2 Samuel 24:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Jeremiah 2:8). The title here signifies that the coming conqueror is the Lord’s appointed carer – even, as a shepherd would, to lead them into their proper pastures.” (Motyer)
• **He shall perform all My pleasure**: Cyrus was a special instrument in God’s hand, for God’s work. He would do the work of the LORD and open the door for the work of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple after the Babylonians destroyed them.

  o The royal proclamations of Cyrus fulfilling this prophecy are found in Ezra 1:2 and 2 Chronicles 36:23.

• **Who says to the deep, “Be dry”**: The specific work commissioned by Cyrus is described in detail, including drying up the waters and laying the foundation for the temple (**Your foundation shall be laid**).

  o Trapp on **Who says to the deep, “Be dry!”** “That will put it into the heart of Cyrus to dry up the Euphrates, and so to take Babylon.”

  o “**Foundations**: interestingly, as Ezra records (3:10-13; 5:16), in the days of Cyrus the rebuilding of the temple did not progress beyond the laying of the foundations.” (Motyer)

  o With such amazingly specific claims, it is no wonder that God proves who He is through predicted and fulfilled prophecy. *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.* (2 Peter 1:19-21)
ISAIAH 45: “LOOK TO ME AND BE SAVED” - Proof of God’s Sovereignty

- v.1 Daniel 5:6.
- v.2-4 The Lord predicts Cyrus' invasion 190 years before the event takes place Cyrus gave the decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem after Israel's Babylonian captivity.
- v.7 Hebrew word translated "evil" here means "sorrow, wretchedness, calamity, adversity or affliction."
- v.9 To strive with God, a man must have the wrong concept of God. To strive with Him is the height of folly, as fighting Him is fighting your own good (Jer. 29:32). We are as clay in God's hands and can only discover the potter's plan as we yield ourselves to Him.
- v.13 God formed Cyrus for the purpose of setting the people of Israel free to rebuild Jerusalem.
- v.17 God will never cast off the nation Israel, but has promised to keep them.
- v.18 This verse also used as a proof-text for the "gap" theory of creation.
- v.20-23 God has revealed and declared himself in the Bible. We can make our own picture of God with our own ideas, but the truth is seen as He has shown us in His Word.

A. Looking to the God who chose Cyrus.

1. (1-3) God’s calling and mission for Cyrus.

   “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—
   To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings,
   To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:
   ‘I will go before you And make the crooked places straight;
   I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron.
   I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places,
   That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel.

   **Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus:** Isaiah carries on this remarkable prophecy from the previous chapter. In it, God announces – by name – the deliverer for His people from a coming captivity, and He does it 200 years before the man Cyrus is born.

   - **His anointed** means that Cyrus had a particular anointing from God for his work. God poured out His Spirit on a pagan king, because God wanted to use that man to bless and deliver His people.
   - “There is precedent for the divine anointing of a non-Israelite king, though in one passage only (1 Kings 19:15-16). Although the living God normally employed Israelites for such purposes, he is sovereign and may use whom he will.” (Grogan)
   - **Thus says the LORD to His anointed** means that this word was particularly directed to Cyrus. This was God’s message to him, and Cyrus apparently listened. “These things Cyrus knew from reading the book of prophecy which Isaiah had left behind two hundred and ten years earlier.” (Josephus, Antiquities XI, 5 [i.2], cited in Grogan)

   **Whose right hand I have held:** Like many of us, Cyrus could look back on his life and career and see how the LORD held his hand the entire time. To subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings: Cyrus had a remarkable military career.

   - “To his appointed and enabled one, to subdue many nations. Xenophon, in his first book… gives us a list of them. Cyrus subdued, saith he, the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappodcians, Phrygians, the Lydians, Carians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, the Bactrians, Indians, Cilicains, Sacians, Paphloagonians, Maryandines, and many other nations. He also had a dominion over the Asiatics, Greeks, Cyprians, Egyptians… He vanquished, saith Herodotus, whatever country soever he invaded.” (Trapp)

   **To open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut… I will break in pieces the gates of bronze:** The armies of the Medes and Persians, under Cyrus, conquered the city of Babylon in a remarkable raid described in Daniel 5. According to the ancient historian Herodotus, while King Belshazzar of Babylon held a reckless party, Cyrus conquered the city by diverting the flow of the Euphrates into a nearby swamp; thus, lowering the level of the river so his troops could march through the water and under the river-gates. But they still would not
have been able to enter, had not the bronze gates of the inner walls been left inexplicably unlocked. *God opened the gates of the city of Babylon for Cyrus* and put it in writing 200 years before it happened!

- “In October 539 BC, Cyrus advanced into lower Mesopotamia and, leaving Babylon till last, conquered and occupied the surrounding territory. Seeing which way the wind was blowing, Nabonidus of Babylon deserted his city, leaving it in the charge of his son Belshazzar… the taking of Babylon was as bloodless and effortless as Daniel 6 implies.” (Motyer)

- **I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places:** The night they conquered the city, Cyrus and his armies took all the staggering treasures of Babylon – and it was important the Cyrus know that the *LORD* had given it to him.
  - On the night Babylon fell, Cyrus probably had no great sense of the LORD’s guidance or presence. He probably thought himself both brilliant and lucky. Often, we succeed in something only by the blessing and pleasure of God, and never see the miraculous hand of God behind it all.
  - God certainly gave Cyrus treasures. Clarke cites Pliny: “When Cyrus conquered Asia, he found thirty-four thousand pounds weight of gold, besides golden vessels and articles in gold.”

- **That you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel:** God announced all this 200 years before its fulfillment, so that Cyrus would know and glorify the LORD. But the LORD also did it so Cyrus would show kindness to the people of God, granting them permission to return to the Promised Land from the captivity imposed on them by the Babylonians.
  - The royal proclamations of Cyrus fulfilling this prophecy are found in Ezra 1:2 and 2 Chronicles 36:23.

2. (4-7) The purpose behind God’s calling and mission for Cyrus.

- **For Jacob My servant’s sake:** Cyrus would like to think that God picked him because he was the smartest or most talented or strongest man available. Really, God’s focus was on His people. It wasn’t Cyrus that moved God to act, but the condition and cry of His people. It was for their sake.
  - “That all these victories were for the sake of little Israel is one of the ironies of God’s control of history.” (Grogan)
  - “Cyrus is preferred in order that Israel might be released. Cyrus shall have a kingdom, but only in order that God’s people may have their liberty. The Lord raises up one, and He puts down another. Behind all the drama of human events today there is a God who is planning for His church – through affliction and persecution, chastening and tribulation – to be perfected and prepared to inherit the Kingdom of God.” (Redpath)

- **I have named you, though you have not known Me… I will gird you, though you have not known Me:** Cyrus didn’t even know the LORD, yet God could anoint him, guide him, bless him, and use him. How much more should God be able to do through those who have at least a mustard seed’s worth of faith in Him!
  - *Proverbs 21:2* says, *The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.* God can work in and through others in very unexpected ways.

- **That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me:** This was wonderfully fulfilled in Ezra 1:1-3. That passage shows how when Cyrus made his proclamation allowing the people of God to return to the Promised Land, that he acknowledged to the whole world the greatness and uniqueness of the LORD God of Israel.
  - *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout*
all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.”

- I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things:
  Simply put, Isaiah knows, Cyrus would know and declare to the whole world, and we should know today, that God is in control. Since this prophecy was given long before God’s people went into the captivity Isaiah now announces deliverance from, they could be comforted through the captivity by knowing God is in control.
  o Isaiah’s point is that there are not two gods or forces in heaven, one good and one bad, as in a dualistic “yin and yang” sense. “Cyrus was a Persian, and Persian had a dualistic concept of God and the world. Their good god they called Ahura-mazda and the evil god Angra-mainya. The former had created the light, the second the darkness.” (Bultema)
  o But God has no opposite. Satan is not and has never been God’s opposite. There is one God. He is not the author of evil; evil is never “original,” but always a perversion of an existing good. Yet God is the allower of evil, and He uses it to accomplish His eternal purpose of bringing together all things in Jesus (Ephesians 3:8-11 and 1:9-10). If God could further His eternal purpose by allowing His Son to die a wicked, unjust death on a cross, then He knows how to use what He allows for His eternal purpose.
  o “Undoubtedly the Lord is no representative of evil as such, but He does make use of evil so that it may bring forth good.” (Calvin, cited in Butlema)
  o When God does great, miraculous things, it is easy to believe that He is in control. When times are hard and the trials heavy, we need to believe it all the more.

B. Looking to the God who created everything.

1. (8) God calls to the creation.

  “Rain down, you heavens, from above, And let the skies pour down righteousness; 
  Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, And let righteousness spring up together. 
  I, the LORD, have created it.

- Rain down, you heavens: The great God described in the previous passage can speak to the heavens and bring rain. It is true in the literal, natural sense; but it is also true in a literal spiritual sense. God can send a flood from heaven, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

- Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation: God can send His blessing from every direction. It comes down from the heavens, it comes up from the earth.

- Let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together: It is important to see that salvation and righteousness always spring up together. When God brings salvation to a life, He also brings righteousness to that life. They spring up together.

- I, the LORD, have created it: What is God speaking of here? That He created the natural, physical world? Or that He created the invisible, spiritual world? Both are true, so both may be in mind here.
2. (9-10) **The foolishness of resisting our Creator.**

   “Woe to him who strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd **strive** with the potsherds of the earth!
   Shall the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’ Or shall your handiwork **say**, ‘He has no hands’?
   Woe to him who says to his father, ‘What are you begetting?’ Or to the woman, ‘What have you brought forth?’”

   - **Woe to him who strives with his Maker:** Knowing that God is the Creator of all things should make us hesitant to oppose Him in any way. It is as foolish as for the clay to say to him who forms it, “What are you making?”
     - It is foolish to oppose our Creator because since He made us, He can break us. If it foolish to oppose our Creator because since He made us, He knows what is best for us. It is foolish to oppose our Creator, because we owe the greatest obligation to Him.
     - “The idea is quite commonly held that the Jews murmured about God’s decree that a heathen would deliver them, and that these words are a rebuke.” (Butlera)

   - **Or shall your handiwork say, “He has no hands”:** The only thing more foolish than the creature resisting and oppose the Creator is for the creature to believe there is no Creator! Isaiah pictures a clay pot, the handiwork of the potter saying, “My potter has no hands. I have no Creator!”

   - **Woe to him who says to his father, “What are you begetting?”:** The begotten has no say in his coming to be. It is simply foolish and counter-productive for us to question and accuse God over how He made us. Each of us has our strengths and weaknesses, and we each have our triumphs and challenges. We simply need to accept what we are before God and look for His redeeming, transforming power to conform us into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

3. (11-13) **The God of all creation will raise up Cyrus and deliver His people.**

   Thus says the LORD, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
   “Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.
   I have made the earth, And created man on it.
   I—My hands—stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded.
   I have raised him up in righteousness, And I will direct all his ways;
   He shall build My city And let My exiles go free, Not for price nor reward,”
   Says the LORD of hosts.

   - **I have made the earth, and created man on it:** Repeatedly through this extended section of Isaiah, God emphasizes His place as Creator. The importance put on this idea here shows us that knowing God as Creator isn’t an option, or just a matter of text-book fights in the courts and public schools. When we reject God as Creator, we reject the God of the Bible, and serve a God of our own imagination. He really did make us, and it really does matter.
     - “In the Old Testament the Creator is not only the One who began everything, but also the One who maintains everything in existence, controls and guides everything.” (Motyer)

   - **I will direct all his ways; he shall build My city and let My exiles go free:** The God of all power and creation uses that power on behalf of His people. He will direct the ways of the announced deliverer – Cyrus – and cause him to rebuild Jerusalem and release the people of God captive to a forced relocation. And Cyrus will do it **not for price or reward**, but out of a conviction from God that he must do it! (Ezra 1:1-3)
C. Looking to the LORD who is above all gods.

1. (14-17) When the LORD is revealed as the true God, idolaters submit, and God’s people are saved.

Thus says the LORD: “The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush And of the Sabaeans, men of stature, Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; They shall walk behind you, They shall come over in chains; And they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, ‘Surely God is in you, And there is no other; There is no other God.’” Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior! They shall be ashamed And also disgraced, all of them; They shall go in confusion together, Who are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed or disgraced Forever and ever.

- **They shall walk behind you, they shall come over in chains**: Even as Israel was led away in the captivity of a forced relocation, so one day Israel will be supreme among the nations and lead them as they and the LORD please.

- **And they shall bow down to you... saying, “Surely God is in you... there is no other God”**: The submission of the nations to Israel is not so much to Israel itself, as it is to the God of Israel.

- **Truly You are God**: Isaiah here pours out an inspired flood of praise, describing God, exalting God, declaring confidence in God, receiving from God.
  
  o **Truly You are God, who hide Yourself**: It isn’t that God hides Himself from the seeking sinner. Isaiah simply declares what Paul would later say in 1 Timothy 1:17: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

  o Bultema on **Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior**: “When he sees how God for many centuries hides His face from Israel, He cries out these words, overcome by rapture and emotion. The LORD hides Himself from Israel during the **times of the Gentiles** (18:4; 40:27; 49:14; Hosea 3:3-5)... So it is clear that we may not apply these words to a seeking sinner. From such God does not hide Himself. But when in the last days Israel will seek Him, she will find Him.”

2. (18-21) The LORD declares His greatness and the foolishness of idolatry.

For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I am the LORD, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in vain’; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You who have escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god that cannot save. Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior, There is none besides Me.

- **For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens**: By sheer repetition, Isaiah virtually pounds it into our awareness – that God is our Creator, and we have obligations to Him as our Creator.

- **Who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited**: This brief statement – who did not create it in vain – is the Scriptural basis for a speculative doctrine known as the “Gap Theory.”

  o The Gap Theory is based on a comparison between Isaiah 45:18 and Genesis 1:2, which they translate as the earth became without form and void. Here in Isaiah 45:18, God says that He did not create it in vain, and **vain** is the same Hebrew word for void found in Genesis 1:2. The idea is that God did not create it in vain (void), but that it became without form and void through Satanic attack and ages of desolation, which explain the vast geological ages and fossil remains which seem to date far beyond the history of the Bible. According to the Gap Theory, Genesis 1:3 and following is the re-creation of a world that was made void by Satan.
This first thing to be said against the Gap Theory is that while to translate *Genesis 1:2* (*The earth was without form, and void*) as *the earth became without form and void* doesn’t follow the plainest understanding of the Hebrew grammar here. It is permissible, but a bit of a stretch. The most natural way to translate the passage is to say *the earth was without form and void* instead of *the earth became without form and void*.

The other thing to be said against the Gap Theory is how it has been used as an answer to how some have interpreted the fossil record. Those who believe in the Gap Theory assign old and extinct fossils to this long and indefinite “Gap” between *Genesis 1:1* and *1:2*. But whatever merit the Gap Theory may have, it cannot explain the extinction and fossilization of ancient animals. The Bible says plainly death came by Adam (*Romans 5:12*), and since fossils are the result of death, they could not have happened before Adam’s time.

Bultema on this verse and the Gap Theory: “We wish only to state that this text alone is not sufficient proof for it. In any case it is clear that the ultimate purpose of the earth is not to be void but to be inhabited by converted Israel and the converted nations.”

- **I did not say to the seed of Jacob, “Seek Me in vain.”** It is a wicked thing to think God ever says to His people, “**Seek Me in vain.**” When we seek for God with all of our heart, we will find Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says, *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Hebrews 11:6* says, *he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

- **They have no knowledge, who carry the wood of their carved image, and pray to a god that cannot save:** As the LORD declares His own greatness, faithfulness, and saving power, it naturally contrasts with the foolish idols of the nation – which must be carried, instead of being able to carry the one who worships them!

- **Who has declared it from ancient times:** The amazing phenomenon of predictive prophecy shows that God is who He says He is, and that there is no other God besides Him.

- **A just God and a Savior:** As much as anything else, this shows the amazing power, wisdom, and love of God. At first glance, it is impossible to see how a **just God** can be a **Savior** when justice demands that sinners be damned. But prompted by His great love, God fulfilled the righteous demands of His justice at the cross, so He could extend Himself to us as **Savior**, yet still remain **a just God**.

  - As Paul put it in *Romans 3:26*: *That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

**3. (22-25) Looking to the LORD and finding salvation in surrender.**

“Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.
I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness,
And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.
He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.
To Him men shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.
In the LORD all the descendants of Israel Shall be justified, and shall glory.’”

- **Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth:** This simple but powerful statement shows the plan of salvation.

  - It shows the **simplicity** of salvation: all we must do is **look**. “One can read may books on theology which expound all kinds of things in an attempt to show how man can reach God, but these theories are far from the truth. The Holy Spirit needs exactly four letters, two of them the same, to tell us what to do: l-o-o-k. That is all. It is the simplest, basic thing any person can do, yet the most difficult to do in daily living.” (Redpath)

  - It shows the **focus** of salvation: we must look to **God**, and never to ourselves or to anything else of man. “Look unto ME, is His Word, which means looking away from the church because that will save nobody; away from the preacher because he can disappoint and disillusion you; away from all outward form and ceremony. You must look off from all this to the throne and there, in your heart, see the risen, reigning Lord Jesus Christ.” (Redpath)

  - It shows the **love** behind salvation: God pleads with man, **“Look to Me.”**

  - It shows the **assurance** of salvation: **and be saved**.

  - It shows the extent of God’s saving love: **all you ends of the earth!**
- **Look to Me**: In Numbers 21, the people of Israel were stricken by deadly snake bites, and Moses lifted up the image of a bronze serpent, raised on a pole, and the people who looked to it lived. The people were saved not by *doing* anything, but by simply *looking* to the bronze serpent. They had to trust that something as seemingly foolish as looking at such a thing would be sufficient to save them, and surely, some perished because they thought it too foolish to do such a thing!
  - So it says here in Isaiah: **Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!** We might be willing to do a hundred things to earn our salvation, but God commands us to only trust in Him – to *look* to Him!
  - “Wherever I am, however far off, it just says ‘Look!’ It does not say I am to see; it only says ‘Look!’ If we look on a thing in the dark we cannot see it, but we have done what we were told. So if a sinner only looks to Jesus, he will save him; for Jesus in the dark is as good as Jesus in the light, and Jesus when you cannot see him is as good as Jesus when you can. It is only ‘look!’ ‘Ah!’ says one, ‘I have been trying to see Jesus this year, but I have not seen him.’ It does not say see him, but ‘look unto him!’” (Spurgeon)

- On Sunday, January 6, 1850, a young man not quite sixteen years of age was walked through a village street in a little town some fifty miles from London, England. On the bitterly cold day the snow fell heavily; but he was more concerned to find a church, because he was deeply conscious of his need of God, and of the breakdown, sin, and failure of his life even at that young age. As he made his way through the street with the snow falling, he felt it was too far to go to the church which he had intended to visit, so he walked down a back lane and entered a little Methodist chapel. He sat down on a seat near the back, and it was as cold inside as it was out! There were only about thirteen people there.

  Five minutes after the service was due to begin at eleven o’clock, the regular preacher for the morning hadn’t come. He had been delayed by the weather. So one of the deacons came to the rescue and began conducting the service, and after a little while announced his text: ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.’ The deacon didn’t know much, so he only spoke for about ten minutes.

  Charles Spurgeon himself tells what happened: “I had been wandering about, seeking rest, and finding none, till a plain, unlettered, lay preacher among the Primitive Methodists stood up in the pulpit, and gave out this passage as his text: ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.’ He had not much to say, thank God, for that compelled him to keep on repeating his text, and there was nothing needed – by me, at any rate, – except his text. I remember how he said, ‘It is Christ that speaks. “I am in the garden in an agony, pouring out my soul unto death; I am on the tree, dying for sinners; look unto me! Look unto me!” That is all you have to do. A child can look. One who is almost an idiot can look. However weak, or however poor, a man may be, he can look; and if he looks, the promise is that he shall live.’ Then, stopping, he pointed to where I was sitting under the gallery, and he said, ‘That young man there looks very miserable.’ I expect I did, for that is how I felt. Then he said, ‘There is no hope for you, young man, or any chance of getting rid of your sin, but by looking to Jesus;’ and he shouted, as I think only a Primitive Methodist can, ‘Look! Look, young man! Look now!’ And I did look; and when they sang a hallelujah before they went home, in their own earnest way, I am sure I joined in it. It happened to be a day when the snow was lying deep and more was falling; so, as I went home, those words of David kept ringing through my heart, ‘Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;’ and it seemed as if all nature was in accord with that blessed deliverance from sin which I had found in a single moment by looking to Jesus Christ.”

  Somehow in a very strange and amazing way that young man looked from the depths of his soul into the very heart of God. He went out from the church, and he tells that as he walked through the streets, his burden had been lifted, never to return again. He walked with a new spring in his step, a new joy in his face, a new sense of peace in his heart. He had looked and lived.

- **For I am God, and there is no other**: This is why we must look to the LORD, and to the LORD alone. Only He is God. Institutions are not God. The Church is not God. Pastors are not God. Brothers and sisters in Christ are not God. We don’t look to them; we look to the LORD, for He alone is God.

- **I have sworn by Myself**: When God confirms an oath, who does He swear by? He swears by Himself. There is no one greater, so He swears by His own holy name and character.
  - As Hebrews 6:13 says, *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.*
• **That to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath:** The LORD here declares there will come a day when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue will swear by His greatness. Paul obviously quoted this passage in Philippians 2:10-11.
  
  o  Paul’s quotation of Isaiah 45:23 in Philippians 2:10-11 is an overwhelming evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ. Clearly, in Isaiah 45:23 it is the LORD God speaking (I, the LORD, speak, Isaiah 45:19). Now, Paul clearly puts these high words and this high praise towards Jesus: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Additionally, the confess is made that Jesus Christ is Lord – and the word Lord is the same word used in Paul’s ancient Bible for “LORD” in the Old Testament.

• **Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength:** This is the declaration of every believer. Righteousness and strength are found in the LORD, not in ourselves or anywhere else. Indeed, in the LORD all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory!

- v.1-2 Their false gods became a burden even to the beasts that had to carry them.
- v.3-4 The true and living God, rather than having to be carried and supported by man, carries them Himself.
- v.6-7 They worship a god that is of no help to them. People today may not acknowledge the true and living God, yet they do worship their own idols of power, intellect, wealth, pleasure, etc.
- v.12-13 God promises His righteousness placed in Zion.

A. The idols of the nations are carried into captivity.

1. (1-2) The false gods are carried away on carriages.

   Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle.
   Your carriages were heavily loaded, A burden to the weary beast.
   They stoop, they bow down together; They could not deliver the burden, But have themselves gone into captivity.

   - Bel bows down, Nebo stoops: Bel and Nebo were names of two false gods the idol-worshipping nations served. It is as if now God gets personal, “naming names” when it comes to idols; and now these false gods are brought low.
     - The names of the pagan gods Bel and Nebo are familiar to us in the names Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar.
     - “In chapter 45 Isaiah declared that every knee will bow to the Lord, and here he pictures the gods of the great Babylon stooping low in humiliation.” (Grogan)

   - Your idols were on the beasts and on the cattle. Your carriages were heavily loaded: Isaiah pictures God’s people going into captivity, in a forced relocation. Loaded on to their beasts and carriages are their idols – even their idols are carried away into captivity, and loaded on the moving trucks! The bottom line is they could not deliver the burden, but have themselves gone into captivity.

2. (3-4) The LORD, the true God, will carry His people.

   “Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
   Who have been upheld by Me from birth, Who have been carried from the womb:
   Even to your old age, I am He, And even to gray hairs I will carry you!
   I have made, and I will bear; Even I will carry, and will deliver you.

   - Who have been upheld by Me from birth, who have been carried from the womb: The false gods represented by dumb dead idols must be carried; but God carries His people. He carried them from before their birth, and He promises to continue to carry them (even to gray hairs I will carry you!).

   - I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry: This is the same Fatherly care Jesus spoke of in Luke 12:6-7: Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. When we understand that has made us, and we are valuable to Him, then we can trust Him to carry us.
     - It’s a worthy question: do you have to carry your gods, or does your God carry you?
3. (5-7) The LORD can save His people when the idols are helpless.

“To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal And compare Me, that we should be alike? They lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship. They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it And set it in its place, and it stands; From its place it shall not move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer Nor save him out of his trouble.

- They lavish gold out of the bag: Much money and attention is given to the production and care of our idols. Yet, though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer nor save him out of his trouble. Isaiah again exposes the ironic folly of idolatry.

B. A call to remember.

1. (8-10) Remember that the LORD knows the beginning and the end.

“Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.’

- Remember this, and show yourselves men: We can gain the courage of men when we remember the things God tells us to remember. How much defeat we suffer in the Christian life through simply forgetting!

- Remember the former things of old… there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning: God knows the end of every matter, of every course of circumstances, just as clearly as anyone else can see the beginning of it.

- Saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure”: God knows the end from the beginning because He is much more than a passive observer of events. His counsel shall stand. His works and plans never fail, because He will do all His pleasure. God isn’t just watching the entire parade of history, He is directing the parade.
  - The essential point is that God’s people must remember this about the LORD – that He knows the end from the beginning and is in control over all things. When we remember this, we will show yourselves men. We can have tremendous courage in our God when we understand and remember who He is and what He does.

2. (11-13) Remember that the LORD will bring a deliverer to Zion.

Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, Who are far from righteousness: I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.

- Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel: This is another reference to Cyrus. God’s people need to remember that God always has a deliverer for His people, even if He has to find one among pagan kings!

- My salvation shall not linger: God’s people need to remember that God’s timing is always precise and wise. When we are stubborn-hearted we need to listen to the LORD and remember He never delays and is never late. God’s always has His deliverer, and always knows exactly when to bring His deliverance.
**ISAIAH 47: BABYLON BROUGHT LOW — Judgment Upon Babylon**

- v.3 He will not meet Babylon as a man but as God in judgment.
- v.4-10 God speaks against Babylon for her horrible treatment of God’s people (Mt. 25:35-40).
- v.7-8 The Babylonians’ attitude of themselves was that they would reign forever. Isaiah predicts their destruction, as told in Daniel 5:17-31.
- v.14-15 All the wise men and astrologers will not even be able to save themselves, much less anyone else.

**A. The humiliation of Babylon.**

1. **(1-3) Babylon, represented as a woman, is humbled.**

   “Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, Take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, Yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, And I will not arbitrate with a man.”

   - **Come down and sit in the dust:** Isaiah pictures proud Babylon as a humiliated woman, who shall no more be called tender and delicate. She is stripped of her fine clothing, and is forced to march in a forced relocation (pass through the rivers).
     - Bultema calls this “The bold image of a rich, frivolous and sensual young woman who, as a prisoner, is doomed to the despicable state of a slave and in every respect is treated like a Near-Eastern slave woman.”

   - **I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man:** The humiliation God will impose on Babylon is exactly the humiliation she put upon Judah and Jerusalem. When God humbles Babylon, He is taking vengeance and cannot be talked out of His judgment.

2. **(4) The LORD of hosts is glorified.**

   *As for our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.*

   - **As for our Redeemer:** Seemingly, Isaiah cannot help himself – when he sees how God will take vengeance on this enemy of God’s people, he praises God and boasts in his redeemer.

   - **Our Redeemer:** This translates the great Hebrew word gaal or goel, the kinsman-redeemer.
     - Bultema on the Hebrew word for Redeemer: “A gaal had to be a close relative. Christ is this too, for according to His humanity He came forth from the Jews. A gaal had to be able to deliver. The Holy One of Israel does not lack this ability. Sometimes a gaal had to exercise bloody vengeance. Christ will work bloody vengeance upon Babylon for its oppression of His people. Frequently a gaal had to pay a ransom to free a prisoner. The Lord Jesus paid with his blood on Golgotha to ransom His people. On the basis of these considerations, to which could be added many more, it is evident that the name Gaal is very fitting for the Savior.”

3. **(5-7) Why God will humble Babylon.**

   “Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; For you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms. I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, And given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily. And you said, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’ So that you did not take these things to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them.

   - **I was angry with My people:** Babylon thought that she conquered Judah and Jerusalem through her own power. But Babylon didn’t see that she really conquered them because God was angry with His people, and therefore used Babylon as an instrument of His work. God says, “You didn’t know that I had given them into your hand.”
• You showed them no mercy: As an instrument in God’s hand, Babylon was too enthusiastic in their attack on God’s people. Even though God allowed it and used it, they still should have showed mercy to God’s people. We are always safe when we take the path of mercy!

• And you said, “I shall be a lady forever”: Babylon was blind, Babylon was cruel, and now Babylon is shown to be proud and presumptuous. For all these reasons, God promised to humble Babylon.

  o Bultema applies the sense of Isaiah 47:5-11 to the corrupt Church: “In her self-satisfaction and frivolous self-deception she says, I shall be a lady. She claims royal riches, power and honor for herself for ever. A queen feels she must reign, and that was also the Church’s goal quite early. Soon it placed a cross on its steeple instead of on its shoulders. With all its veneration of the cross, it hated the cross in a spiritual sense and reached for the crown of the world.” (Bultema)

B. The rebuke of Babylon.

1. (8-9) Why sudden humiliation comes to Babylon.

   “Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures,
   Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me;
   I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children’;
   But these two things shall come to you In a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood.
   They shall come upon you in their fullness Because of the multitude of your sorceries,
   For the great abundance of your enchantments.

• Hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely: In the midst of her pride and arrogance (I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow), God brings another charge against Babylon. Judgment also comes because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments. Babylon was famous as a founding place and breeding ground for occult arts and practices.

2. (10-11) The pride and arrogance of Babylon is rebuked.

   “For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, ‘No one sees me’;
   Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you;
   And you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me.’
   Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know from where it arises.
   And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off.
   And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, Which you shall not know.

• You have trusted in your wickedness: This is a searching insight into the heart of the proud sinner. They trust in their continuing wickedness to cover the tracks of their previous sin. They are clever, but their wisdom in wickedness has warped them (Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you).

• Therefore evil shall come upon you: And it did for Babylon, which was suddenly conquered in one night, when they believed all was safe and secure (as recorded in Daniel 5).

  o The rebuke of Babylon’s pride is a simple fulfillment of a principle repeated three times in the Scripture: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5).
3. (12-15) **A challenge to the stargazers and sorcerers of Babylon.**

Stand now with your enchantments And the multitude of your sorceries,
In which you have labored from your youth—
Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail.
You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels;
Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, And the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you From what shall come upon you.
Behold, they shall be as stubble, The fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves From the power of the flame;  
*It shall not be* a coal to be warmed by, *Nor a fire* to sit before!  
Thus shall they be to you With whom you have labored. Your merchants from your youth;
They shall wander each one to his quarter. No one shall save you.

- **Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries:** God challenges the sorcerers of Babylon to save them from His judgment. After all, if they have real spiritual power, they should be able to. But their weakness in the face of the LORD’s judgment will be exposed.
  - “For the Babylonians, sorcery also included a mood of complacency (v. 10), because the people relied on their magicians to predict the coming of the enemy and to defeat him. In Babylonia the intellectual and the magical were intertwined, the wise man being instructed in all the arts of the supernatural.” (Grogan)

- **Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them:** Not only can the sorcerers of Babylon not deliver others from God’s judgment, they can’t even deliver *themselves*. The fire of judgment that comes upon them will be severe; it will *not be a coal to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!*
  - “False religion may seem to offer the warmth of ‘helpfulness’, but it is not a fire to sit by, rather a fire which will burn up, a furnace of destruction.” (Motyer)
  - How many greatly underestimate the blazing strength of God’s judgment! We see the same tragic thinking among those who say, “I won’t mind going to hell. I’ll party there with all my friends!” Some have even said that they will ski on the lake of fire! They think the fires of judgment will somehow be useful or comforting, but they are making a deadly mistake. Can there be a more dangerous sin?

- **No one shall save you:** What a final sentence! And if we will not find our salvation in the LORD; if we will not look to Him and be saved, then certainly *no one shall save you.*
ISAIAH 48: CHASTENING AND MERCY FOR JUDAH — Israel Reminded of God's Promises

• v.1 The name "Israel" means "governed by God." They call themselves after God, but do not live by Him.
• v.8-9 God knew they would be stiff-necked and hard-headed, but because of His mercy He did not cut them off.
• v.10 Affliction would be their refining process.
• v.16-18 Speaking in regard to Jesus Christ (Jn. 8:59).
• v.21-22 If they had obeyed His commands, then they would have had peace.

A. The LORD clearly sees the hard hearts of His people.

1. (1-2) The LORD sees the hypocrisy of Judah.

   “Hear this, O house of Jacob, Who are called by the name of Israel, And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah; Who swear by the name of the LORD, And make mention of the God of Israel, But not in truth or in righteousness; For they call themselves after the holy city, And lean on the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is His name:

   • House of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel: Judah should take notice at this opening statement. God identifies His people as the house of Jacob — the name Jacob essentially meaning “deceiver, cheater” — and says they only have the name of Israel, not the character of Israel, which means “governed by God.”

   • And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah: The second statement of Isaiah 48 isn’t any more complimentary to the southern kingdom of Judah. God reminds them of their tribal ancestor, Judah, who was noted for his cruelty (Genesis 37:26-27) and immorality (Genesis 38). The LORD speaks to His people and says, “You come from your father Judah.” It’s hardly a compliment.

   • Who swear by the name of the LORD… but not in truth or in righteousness: God exposes the sin of His people. They take His name, and identify with the holy city, and give appearance that they lean on the God of Israel. Yet it is only image, not reality, and God sees through the image to the reality.
      o Look at all Judah has: “An honoured name, an impeccable pedigree, a true religious allegiance, a privileged citizenship and a mighty God to rely on — but it is all unreal. There is no genuineness (truth) in it, nor does it satisfy the standards of God (righteousness).” (Motyer)

2. (3-5) The LORD sees that Judah has no excuse.

   “I have declared the former things from the beginning; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. Because I knew that you were obstinate, And your neck was an iron sinew. And your brow bronze, Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you, Lest you should say, ‘My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.’

   • I have declared the former things from the beginning… Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass: The LORD has shown Israel His power to declare the future in predictive prophecy. He did this because I knew that you were obstinate, knowing Israel’s love of idolatry, He gave them irrefutable evidence.

   • Lest you should say: This means that Judah was without excuse. They knew the greatness and power of God, yet they still lived with only a religious image, without a spiritual reality.
3. (6-8) The LORD sees how deep the sinfulness of Judah is.

“You have heard; See all this. And will you not declare it?
I have made you hear new things from this time, Even hidden things, and you did not know them.
They are created now and not from the beginning;
And before this day you have not heard them, Lest you should say, ‘Of course I knew them.’
Surely you did not hear, Surely you did not know; Surely from long ago your ear was not opened.
For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, And were called a transgressor from the womb.

- You have heard; see all this. And will you not declare it: It is as if the LORD is amazed that His people have seen all of His great power and glory, yet they still stand in obstinate rebellion against Him.
- For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb: The LORD states the reason why His people are so deeply sinful. They are sinners from the womb, so their sinfulness is deeply entrenched.
  - It is a difficult concept for our individualistic ears, but the Bible teaches that we are sinners from the womb, and that we inherited a sin nature because we descend from Adam and sinned in Adam (Romans 5:12). It isn’t our individual acts of sin that make us sinners; it is our descent from Adam. Our individual acts of sin merely prove that each of us is a transgressor from the womb.

B. The LORD’s mercy to his undeserving people.

1. (9-13) The reason for the LORD’s mercy to His people.

For My name’s sake I will defer My anger,
And for My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off.
Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.
Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last.
Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When I call to them, They stand up together.

- For My name’s sake I will defer My anger: Knowing how deeply sinful His people are, why would the LORD ever show mercy to His people? He does it for His name’s sake. It isn’t because Israel deserves mercy; indeed, mercy can never be deserved. God gives it to glorify Himself and to further His eternal purpose.
- I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it: Why has a disobedient Israel felt refining fires from the LORD? Again, it is for the sake and honor and glory of the LORD.
  - Does it bother us to know that God allows trials and His refining fires in our lives for His own sake? We should remember that we are not at the center of the universe, but God is. Everything He does and allows furthers His eternal purpose.
- I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last… My right hand has stretched out the heavens: To answer any resentment among His people, God reminds them why He allows things for His glory and to further His praise. He can do it because of who He is – the only True God, the God of all glory, the God of all eternity, the God of all Creation.
2. (14-19) The unfulfilled potential of God’s disobedient people.

All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; He shall do His pleasure on Babylon, And His arm shall be against the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper. Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me. Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

“I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go. Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!

Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants also would have been like the sand, And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand; His name would not have been cut off Nor destroyed from before Me.”

- **The LORD loves him**: Though the LORD is the God of all glory and power, He is not some kind of “ego-maniac.” He is motivated by love for His people.
  - It is the LORD’s love for us that makes Him want us to obey and praise Him. Love desires, quite properly, that things work according to their design and purpose. We were designed and purposed to obey and praise our Creator. God can call us to submit to Him, and honor Him, for our good, not to satisfy some need in God.
  - So, just as much as it is the love of the LORD for His people that shall do His pleasure on Babylon – punishing this nation that set itself against His people – so it is the love of the LORD that allows the refining fires to touch His people.

- **Come near to Me, hear this… now the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me**: This is the Servant of the LORD, the Messiah Himself speaking. Only He was from the beginning. The Messiah is pleading with His people!
  - “Finally (v. 16) another speaker mysteriously enters the prophecy. This verse has a number of features that have mystified commentators, who have been puzzled particularly by its final couplet. Young, Kidner, and other conservative commentators have argued that the new speaker introduced here (or in the whole verse) is in fact God’s Servant, the Servant of the songs… Perhaps he is introduced here because Cyrus’ work is in fact simply a harbinger of the much greater deliverance he would bring to God’s people.” (Grogan)

- **Oh, that you had heeded My commandments**: In light of His power and love for Israel, God laments their unfulfilled potential, unfulfilled because of their disobedience.
  - If they had only obeyed, then your peace would have been like a river. Peace as flowing, bountiful, and life giving as a river!
  - If they had only obeyed, then your righteousness would have been like the waves of the sea. Righteousness as certain, as unending, as reliable as the sea!
  - If they had only obeyed, then your descendants would have been like the sand. Descendants as numerous and as dense in population as the sand!
  - It is sobering to think what unfulfilled potential we have, and what disobedience or unbelief keeps us from everything God has for us. “Yes, I am deeply impressed with the simplicity of the road to revival. Just twenty-four hours’ obedience in our lives, and we would be living in such a flood tide of Holy Spirit blessing that there would not be room enough to contain it!” (Redpath)
3. (20-22) Praise for the LORD’s redemption – and a warning.

Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing, Declare, proclaim this, Utter it to the end of the earth;
Say, “The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!”
And they did not thirst When He led them through the deserts;
He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them;
He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.
“There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”

- **Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing:** Despite Israel’s disobedience and unfulfilled potential, the LORD still loves them and will still free them from their captivity in Babylon. When they leave Babylon, they will go forth with a **voice of singing**.

- **Declare, proclaim this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say, “The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob”**: God tells His people to declare His praises even to the end of the earth. The whole world should know how great and merciful God is!

- **“There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked”**: Hand in hand with praise for the greatness of the LORD is a contrast – the destined misery for the wicked.
  - Often, it seems that the way of the wicked is peaceful. This was how it seemed to the Psalmist in Psalm 73; yet when he saw the end of the wicked, and gained perspective in the house of the LORD, he knew that ultimately, there is no peace… for the wicked.
  - “Verse 22 is a refrain that occurs again in 57:21, and both times it comes at the end of a nine-chapter section.” (Wolf)

- The broad section of Isaiah 40 through 48 focused on the promise of God’s deliverance of His people from their captivity in Babylon, and the specific prediction of the Gentile king who would deliver them, Cyrus. Through the section, God shows that His desire to deliver His people proves His love, His ability to deliver His people proves His power, and His prophetic knowledge of the deliverer proves His uniqueness among all gods. Starting with Isaiah chapter 49, there is no longer a mention of Cyrus, now the focus is on the ultimate deliverer, the Messiah. Though there is still reference to the deliverance from Babylon’s captivity, the real focus is on the ultimate deliverance the Messiah will bring.
THE LORD’S SERVANT WILL BRING SALVATION THROUGH VICARIOUS SUFFERING (Isa 49-57)

ISAIAH 49: THE MESSIAH’S MISSION – Israel’s Coming Redeemer

This chapter is full of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the words quoted could not possibly have their complete fulfillment in any other save in our Savior. (Alan Redpath)

- v.1 7 Descriptions of Jesus Christ (Rev.2:16, 19:15; Ps. 22:9-10).
- v.5 The purpose of Jesus Christ was to bring Israel back to God.
- v.6 Jesus, rejected by the Jews, became a light to the Gentiles.
- v.7 The gospel will permeate many nations.
- v.10 Rev.7:16.
- v.12-13 God will bring His people together again.
- v.15 God declares that He will not forget Israel.
- v.20-21 They will come into the land and prosper so that it will be too small for them.
- v.22-23 The kings of the earth shall pay homage year by year.
- v.25 If one fights against Israel, he fights against the Lord.

A. The Messiah declares His mission.

1. (1-2) The call and the preparation of the Messiah.

“Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar!
The LORD has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.
And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.”

- **Listen, O coastlands, to Me**: As the context will show, these words come prophetically from the Messiah, the Servant of the LORD revealed in previous chapters. Here, He commands the coastlands – the distant lands of the Gentiles – to listen to Him.

- **The LORD has called Me from the womb**: The Messiah, later revealed as Jesus Christ, was called from the womb. Actually, as shown in Micah 5:2, Jesus was called even before He was in Mary’s womb, yet here He starts at the point which any man could most readily relate to.

- **From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name**: This was fulfilled in Luke 1:31, where the LORD, through the angel Gabriel, declared the name of Jesus before the conception in Mary’s womb.

- **He has made My mouth like a sharp sword**: This means that the very words of the Messiah have power and authority. While some might need to brandish a weapon to show their authority, the Messiah needs only to speak.

- **In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me**: The Messiah prophetically proclaims that He is like a carefully made and polished arrow in the service of the LORD, ready to be used at the right time. This probably has reference to the “hidden” years of Jesus, when He lived in obscurity, as a polished shaft waiting in the quiver of the LORD.
2. (3-4) The Messiah’s confidence in the LORD.

“And He said to me, ‘You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.’
Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;
Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, And my work with my God.’”

- You are My servant, O Israel: Since the rest of the context of this chapter indicates that this passage speaks of the Messiah, it is best to regard Israel as a reference to the Messiah. How can the LORD speak of the Messiah as Israel? First, because the Messiah comes from Israel, and is a representative of the nation. Second, because the Messiah fulfills the name Israel, which means, “governed by God.”
  - “On the surface, the statement ‘You are my servant, Israel,’ explicitly identifies Yahweh’s Servant as the nation Israel. But if that were the case, an apparent contradiction would arise in verses 5-6, in which the Servant’s task is to bring Israel back to Yahweh and to the land… the view that ‘Israel’ is a title of the individual messianic Servant harmonizes most satisfactorily with the passage and context.” (Lindsey)

- Then I said, “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the LORD”: The translators of the New King James do not believe these words belong in the mouth of the Messiah, because the do not capitalize the pronoun my, as they would if they believed it spoke of the Messiah. Yet these words can be set prophetically in the mouth of the Messiah, because surely Jesus was tempted by the discouraging thought that all His work was in vain and for nothing. Yet He triumphed over such temptation by declaring, my just reward is with the LORD.
  - When we consider what – and who – the Lord Jesus had to work with on this earth, we certainly must believe that one of the great temptations He faced was discouragement. This passage shows that even though He ministered in difficult and discouraging circumstances, He never gave into discouragement, but always put His trust in the LORD.

3. (5-7) The Messiah blesses Israel and the nations.

“And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, And My God shall be My strength),
Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”
Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,
To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors,
To the Servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You.”

- To bring Jacob back to Him: This shows that an important aspect of the Messiah’s mission was to bring Israel back to the LORD. This shows that ethnic Israel has an enduring place in God’s plan, and that plan will be fulfilled when all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26).

- It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob… I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles: Though part of the Messiah’s mission is directed to Israel, He also has a mission to the Gentiles. What will the Messiah do for the Gentiles? That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth. The Messiah would not simply bring salvation; He would be... salvation to the ends of the earth.
  - “Israel has light but needs restoration, while the Gentiles need both light and salvation.” (Grogan)

- Thus says the LORD… to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors: The LORD speaks to His Messiah, and reveals that He will be One whom man despises, and whom His own nation abhors. This is an important – yet lightly noted – prophecy of the rejection of the Messiah, by mankind in general and by Israel specifically.

- Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship: Yet in the end, the Messiah will not be despised or abhorred. He will receive the worship and honor He deserves, because He is the chosen of the LORD.
4. (8-12) The glory of the Messiah’s ministry.

Thus says the LORD: “In an acceptable time I have heard You. And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages; That You may say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’ To those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’ “They shall feed along the roads, And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights. They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them. Even by the springs of water He will guide them. I will make each of My mountains a road, And My highways shall be elevated. Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, And these from the land of Sinim.”

- **In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You:** The LORD God extended His help and preservation to the Messiah all through His earthly ministry. Yet if there is any specific time that this promise was fulfilled, it was as Jesus died on the cross and trusted in the promise of resurrection.

  - It is beautiful to imagine Jesus comforting and strengthening His soul with these promises as He anticipated and endured the ordeal of the cross. He could know, based on this promise, that the LORD would hear, help, and preserve Him.

- **And give You as a covenant to the people:** Jesus, the Messiah, doesn’t merely bring a covenant; He isa covenant to the people.

- **That You may say to the prisoners, “Go forth”:** Jesus’ ministry set people free from bondage and imprisonment.

  - Jesus set the demon possessed free from the bondage of chains and demonic torture (Mark 5:1-15).
  - Jesus set the sick and diseased free from the bondage of their infirmities (Luke 13:16).
  - Jesus set the righteous dead captive in Hades free from their place (Ephesians 4:8).
  - Jesus sets those in bondage to sin and the law free (John 8:33-36, Galatians 3:22-23).

- **For He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them:** In an immediate sense, this refers to God’s supply and sustaining of the exiles returning from Babylon to Judah, through the unseen hand of the Messiah. In the larger sense, it speaks of mercy and provision of God for people as they return to Him in the last days, as they shall come from afar.

- **I will make each of My mountains a road:** The mountains in the way of the returning exiles – both in near and far fulfillment – would seem to defeat the purpose of the LORD. But they will not.

  - Notice it says each... mountain (or, as in the King James Version, all... mountains). “There is no exception in that great, but little word, all. There is nothing in life – no obstacle, no loneliness, no trial, no sorrow – which may not be a way into God’s richest blessing. There is no situation of entanglement, nothing that you can possibly conceive, but this can be part of God’s way to make His mountain a way of deliverance.” (Redpath)

  - Notice it says My mountains. The mountains in the way are still the LORD’s mountains, allowed there for a purpose. And the purpose is not to torment you, or because He hates you. There is a loving, wise purpose for every mountain, and God wants to make each of My mountains a road!

  - “[When you make] the commitment of your life to Jesus Christ without reservation, then you can go to meet your mountains and meet obstacles in Jesus – not to meet them outside Him, but in Christ. If you do that, then the mountain between you and God’s land of blessing becomes the way into it.” (Redpath)

- **And these from the land of Sinim:** Some identify Sinim with a place in Egypt; others identify it with China. The idea is that God will bring back the captives (particularly in the far fulfillment) from every conceivable place.

  - “Sinim’ is probably Aswan, near the southern border of Egypt… This assumes that ‘Sinim’ is derived from sewenim… If the Masoretic Text is correct, a long standing interpretation connects Sinim with China.” (Wolf)
B. The LORD’s faithfulness to Zion.

1. (13-14) The LORD is praised for goodness to Zion – and an objection is raised.

Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted. But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.”

- Sing, O heavens! For the LORD has comforted His people: It is simply assumed that the people the LORD has comforted will praise Him; here, the LORD calls for creation itself to add their voices in praise for all the Messiah has done.
- But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me”: In the midst of this great praise for the Messiah and His saving work, Zion – speaking of the highest hill in Jerusalem, and the place of God’s people by association – objects. Zion believes, “The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.”
  - The rest of Isaiah 49 and Isaiah 50 will answer this question. Because of their captivity in Babylon, Zion wonders “Does God really care about us?” God will answer, with strength and insight, this question that many have asked since.

2. (15-18) God does care, and the LORD proclaims His love and faithfulness to Zion.

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me. Your sons shall make haste; Your destroyers and those who lay you waste shall go away from you. Lift up your eyes, look around and see: All these gather together and come to you. As I live,” says the LORD. “You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament, and bind them on you as a bride does.

- Can a woman forget her nursing child: Though bizarre accounts of unspeakable cruelty surface from time to time, everyone knows that a woman will never forget her nursing child. Yet the LORD says, Surely they will forget, yet I will not forget you. The LORD’s affection for His people is greater than the devotion a woman has for her nursing child!
- See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands: This has obvious and beautiful fulfillment in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus. As Jesus told Thomas in a post-resurrection appearance, look at My hands (John 20:27). When we see the nail-scarred hands of Jesus, we see how He has inscribed us on the palms of His hands. With such love, how could God ever forget His people?
- Your walls are continually before Me: The walls refer to the walls of the city of Jerusalem, which figuratively speak of the health, the strength, the prosperity, and the security of God’s people. God is always mindful of the condition of His people, despite the objections of a doubting Zion.
- Your sons shall make haste… you shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament: The LORD will bring back the exiled and captive sons of Zion to the Promised Land, and this will be an ornament for God’s people. The LORD’s love and faithfulness for Zion is also shown by His promise for their future. It isn’t just demonstrated by the past and the present, but also by His future plans for them.
  - This promise was partially fulfilled in the return of the exiles from Babylon, but will be ultimately fulfilled in the regathering of Israel in the last days.

o Grogan gives another perspective on Sinim: “It is most likely that Isaiah was being consciously obscure. Even unmapped places are known to God, and even from them he will gather his pilgrims.”
3. (19-26) God does care, and He promises and affirms blessing for Zion.

“For your waste and desolate places, And the land of your destruction,
Will even now be too small for the inhabitants; And those who swallowed you up will be far away.
The children you will have, After you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears, ‘The place is too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.’ Then you will say in your heart,
‘Who has begotten these for me, Since I have lost my children and am desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro? And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone; But these, where were they?’”

Thus says the Lord GOD:
“Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, And set up My standard for the peoples;
They shall bring your sons in their arms, And your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders;
Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their queens your nursing mothers;
They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet.
Then you will know that I am the LORD, For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.”
Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, Or the captives of the righteous be delivered?
But thus says the LORD:
“Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, And the prey of the terrible be delivered;
For I will contend with him who contends with you, And I will save your children.
I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh,
And they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine.
All flesh shall know That I, the LORD, am your Savior, And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

- For your waste and desolate places… will even now be too small for the inhabitants: As the LORD brings the sons of Zion back to the Israel, they will fill the land in a glorious way.

- There I was, left alone; but these, where were they: The great blessing of the returning sons of Zion – in both near and far fulfillment – will come as an astounding surprise. God’s blessing will seem to come from nowhere. Though the promise seems too good to be true, God confirms it with an oath to the nations. God will rescue Israel from both their immediate and ultimate captivity.
  - Kings shall be your foster fathers: “Calvin and most expositors believe that the text teaches that one day the greatest in the nation will love and care for the children of the Church. This text has usually been made to serve as proof of the legitimacy of the church state (or state church); however, the prophet does not have the Church in mind here, but future Israel.” (Bultema)
  - Clarke on They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet: “These expressions therefore of the prophet are only general poetical images, taken from the manners of the country, to denote great respect and reverence: and such splendid poetical images, which frequently occur in the prophetical writings, were intended only as general amplifications of the subject, not as predictions to be understood and fulfilled precisely according to the letter.”
  - “Lick up the dust of thy feet refers to the great honor which the great ones of the world will give Israel. It is mainly on the basis of this phrase that there is the practice of kissing the pope’s feet.” (Bultema)

- Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away: Babylon, the mighty empire, had taken Zion captive. But even they shall be taken away. God will show His strength and love for Zion by giving unto Babylon what Babylon gave unto Zion, even though they thought it unlikely, as shown by the question of Isaiah 49:24.
  - This was true for Zion when freed from the Babylonian captivity; it is even more true for those set free from captivity to Satan. Jesus spoke of spoiling Satan in Luke 11:21-22: When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.
  - “The pictures of eating their own flesh and drinking their own blood draw on the horrors of siege conditions. The reality is that those who oppose the Lord and his people experience the self destructiveness of sin – a recurring feature of the wars of the Lord.” (Motyer)
**ISAIAH 50: THE MESSIAH’S STEADFAST OBEDIENCE – The Humiliation of the Holy One**

- v.1 The nation was "put away" from God by their sins. They turned from God. He did not sell them; they sold themselves.
- v.4-6 Prophecy regarding Jesus Christ. Jesus here is speaking as the obedient servant of the Father. Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the Father’s will. A willing servant is a bondservant.
- v.6 Jesus was scourged by the Roman government. Spitting was a sign in that culture of ultimate disdain and disgust (Mt. 27:26, 30).
- v.11 Description of a pagan ritual that Israel practiced with fire. The Lord promises that those who took part in it shall "lie down in sorrow."

**A. The LORD’s question to Zion.**

1. **(1-2a) God does care and will lovingly confront those in Zion who doubted His care for them.**

   Thus says the LORD: “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce, Whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, And for your transgressions your mother has been put away. Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to answer?

   - **Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce:** Essentially, God speaks to a doubting Zion, “You say I don’t care about you anymore. You say I have divorced you. Very well then, produce the document. But there is none, because I have not divorced you. You will see that for your iniquities you have sold yourselves. It is your own fault, and no one else’s.”
     - “The people of Israel in exile are likening themselves to a divorced wife, forgotten and forsaken of God. The Lord interrupts this kind of thinking, and breaks into it with a challenge to His people, saying: ‘Where is the bill of divorcement? Produce it. Produce the bill and show me where I divorced you.’” But Israel cannot do it. Of course she cannot find it, because He has never given it to her. God cannot divorce those whom He has taken into covenant relationship with Himself.” (Redpath)
     - “Divorce accuses unfailing love of failure; slavery accuses sovereign power of weakness and sovereign resources of inadequacy. The truth, however, is very different, for it was all a matter of due reward of sins.” (Motyer)

   - **Why, when I came, was there no man:** Seeing that Zion’s troubles come from their own disobedience, where is the man who will stand up for Israel? Who will contend their case before God?
     - Or, there may be another sense: “Here the Lord compares Himself to a man and father of a household who is treated shamefully by his own wife and children. When he came home, there was no one to welcome him and when he called, no one answered him. Hence, He who had the right to all their respect was treated as one without any rights.” (Bultema)

2. **(2b-3) God does care, and reminds Zion of His power.**

   - **Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?**
     - Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness;
     - Their fish stink because there is no water, And die of thirst.
     - I clothe the heavens with blackness, And I make sackcloth their covering.”

   - **Is My hand shortened at all that it can not redeem:** The LORD now answers His own question. The answer to this rhetorical question is a definite, “No.” Despite the doubts of Zion, the LORD’s power and authority is beyond question.

   - **I clothe heavens with blackness:** Heaven is in mourning, because of the sin and unbelief of God’s people. “Oh, the sorrow in the heart of God – the pang, the pain, the agony, the suffering – when His children sin!… Sin in the lives of God’s people clothes heaven with blackness and sackcloth.” (Redpath)
     - Spurgeon relates this to the crucifixion: “The last miracle recorded here, namely, that of covering the heavens with sackcloth, was performed by our Lord even when he was in his death agony. We read that, at high noon,
the sun was veiled, and there was darkness over all the land for three black hours. Wonder of wonders, he who hung bleeding there had wrought that mighty marvel! The sun had looked upon him hanging on the cross, and, as if in horror, had covered its face, and traveled on in tenfold night. The tears of Jesus quenched the light of the sun. Had he been wrathful, he might have put out its light for ever; but his love not only restored that light, but it has given to us a light a thousand times more precious, even the light of everlasting life and joy.”

**B. The steadfast obedience of the Servant of the LORD, the Messiah.**

1. (**4-5**) **The care of God is dramatically shown in the Messiah’s submission unto the LORD.**

   “The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned,
   That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary.
   He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.
   The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

   - **The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned:** The Messiah now prophetically speaks again, explaining that the LORD God has given Him the ability to speak wisely. But for what purpose? To speak a word in season to him who is weary. What a glorious use of the tongue of the learned!

   - **He awakens Me morning by morning:** The Messiah prophetically speaks of His daily, wonderful, deep fellowship with God the Father. It is in these times that Jesus heard from His Father, that He could say He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Messiah could speak with the tongue of the learned because in daily time with God He learned to hear as the learned.

   - **The Lord GOD has opened My ear, and I was not rebellious:** The Messiah, speaking prophetically, looks back to a custom described in Exodus 21:5-6, where a servant became a willing bondslave to his master. The sign of this willing servant was the ear opened by the piercing of an awl, done against the entry doorway of the master. This speaks of the total submission of the Messiah to the Lord GOD.
     - If, after the six years of servitude, a servant wished to make a life-long commitment to his master – in light of the master’s goodness and his blessings for the servant – he could, through this ceremony, make a life-long commitment to his master. This was a commitment not motivated by debt or obligation, only love for the master.
     - In the ceremony, the servant’s ear would be pierced – opened – with an awl, in the presence of witnesses – then, he shall serve him for ever (Exodus 21:5-6). Psalm 40:6 also speaks of this ceremony taking place between the Father and the Son, where the Psalmist speaks prophetically for the Messiah: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Jesus was a perfect bond-slave to the Father (Philippians 2:7).

2. (**6-9**) **The care of the LORD is shown in the courageous greatness of the Messiah’s submission unto the LORD.**

   I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard;
   I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.
   “For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced;
   Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.
   He is near who justifies Me; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand together.
   Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me. Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;
   Who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old like a garment; The moth will eat them up.

   - **I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting:** This prophecy speaks in chilling detail of the sufferings of the Messiah. We know that Jesus was beaten on the back (Mark 15:15). We know Jesus was beaten on the face (Luke 22:63-65). We know that Jesus was mocked and spat upon (Mark 15:19-20).
     - There is no specific mention in the gospels of those who plucked out the beard of Jesus as part of His pre-crucifixion suffering, but from this passage in Isaiah we know it happened. What terrible agony Jesus endured! It is even more than what the gospel writers explain to us! “We have before us the language of
prophecy, but it is as accurate as though it had been written at the moment of the event. Isaiah might have been one of the Evangelists, so exactly does he describe what our Savior endured.” (Spurgeon)

- “He suffered the deepest humiliation, for to pluck out the hair (of the beard) and to cover someone’s face with spit was, according to Near-Eastern concepts, the most humiliating suffering that could be inflicted upon a man.” (Bultema)

- “Many of us could give to Christ all our health and strength, and all the money we have, very heartily and cheerfully; but when it comes to a point of reputation we feel the pinch. To be slandered, to have some filthy thing said of you; this is too much for flesh and blood. You seem to say, ‘I cannot be made a fool of, I cannot bear to be regarded as a mere impostor;’ but a true servant of Christ must make himself of no reputation when he takes upon himself the work of his Lord. Our blessed Master was willing to be scoffed at by the lowest and the lowest of men.” (Spurgeon)

- Notice it carefully: I gave My back means that Jesus did it voluntarily. Can we still think that God does not care for us?

- **For the Lord GOD will help Me:** In the midst of all this suffering, humiliation, and pain, the Messiah has an unshakable confidence in the help of the Lord GOD.
  - Can we have the same confidence in God? “It is pitiful for the Christian to refuse to suffer, and to become a fighting man, crying, ‘We must stand up for our rights.’ Did you ever see Jesus in that posture?” (Redpath)
  - Instead, trust in the LORD and proclaim, for the Lord GOD will help me.

- **Therefore, I have set My face like a flint:** Despite knowing the agony awaiting Him, the Messiah will have a steadfast determination to obey the Lord GOD and follow His way. His face will be set as hard as a flint, and nothing will turn Him aside.
  - This was exactly fulfilled in the life of Jesus, who was determined to go to Jerusalem, even knowing what waited for Him there. Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51)
  - There are two kinds of courage – the courage of moment, which requires no previous thought, and a “planned” courage, which sees the difficulty ahead and steadfastly marches towards it. Jesus had this kind of courage; He could see the cross in the horizon, but still set His face like a flint.
  - Spurgeon has a wonderful sermon on this text titled, The Redeemer’s Face Set like a Flint. These are his headings and points:
    - How the steadfast resolve of Jesus was tested.
      - By offers from the world.
      - By the persuasions of His friends.
      - By the unworthiness of His clients.
      - By the bitterness of the first few drops of suffering in Gethsemane.
      - By the ease at which He could have backed out if He had wished to.
      - By the taunts of those who mocked Him.
      - By the full stress and agony of the cross.
    - How the steadfast resolve of Jesus was sustained.
      - By His divine schooling.
      - By His conscious innocence.
      - By His unshakable confidence in the help of God.
      - By the joy that was set before Him.
    - How to imitate the steadfast resolve of Jesus.
      - When there is something right, stand for it.
      - When you have a right purpose that glorifies God, carry it out.

- **And I know that I will not be ashamed:** The courage of the Messiah isn’t a bland resignation to fate. It is a confident assurance in the Lord GOD. He can set His face like a flint because He can say, “I know that I will not be ashamed.”
He is near who justifies Me; who will contend with Me: This is the Messiah’s way of quoting Romans 8:31: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* If it isn’t clear enough, He says it again: Surely the Lord GOD will help Me; who is he who will condemn Me?

- In fact, the reason why Romans 8:31 applies to us is that it first applies to Jesus, and we are in Christ. If Jesus stands in this place of victory, then all those who are in Christ stand there also.

3. (10-11) The Servant of the LORD challenges all to submit to the LORD as He does.

“Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD And rely upon his God. Look, all you who kindle a fire. Who encircle yourselves with sparks: Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled— This you shall have from My hand: You shall lie down in torment.

Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant: Now the Messiah speaks to His people and challenges them to fear the LORD and obey His Servant – the Messiah Himself.

- “Only he who knows how to obey can call others to obedience.” (Motyer)

Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God: The Messiah guides His people into the path of light. Simply, trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon your God.

- It isn’t necessarily easy, but it certainly is simple!

Look, all you who kindle a fire: We might think that this fire is a positive thing, but in light of the entire verse, it isn’t positive. It is more like the profane fire of Nadab and Abihu described in Leviticus 10:1. If we walk in the light of that fire and in the sparks you have kindled, then we shall have torment from the hand of the LORD. This follows along the line of the Messiah’s exhortation to trust in the name of the LORD, and not in our own efforts before God, which are like a profane fire.

- “Those who ‘light fires’ refers to men who had their own schemes and their own gods. Because they had rejected the light of God’s Word, they would face terrible punishment.” (Wolf)

- “Torment… is only found here but its verb… guarantees its meaning of grief, pain and displeasure – even the ‘place of pain’ – specifically the pains of sin under the curse of God.” (Motyer)
ISAIAH 51: LISTEN AND AWAKE – God's Remnant Exhorted

- v.1 Mt. 5:6.
- v.3 God speaks of a future day of restoration for the nation Israel.
- v.4 The Lord will come and reign in righteousness.
- v.6 Mt. 24:35.
- v.7-8 The righteous will be preserved and endure, but the wicked shall perish.
- v.9-10 Response of the people to God. They wonder where God has been, and recall their past and how God had helped them.
- v.11 The Lord will set up His kingdom on earth and Israel will recognize Him.
- v.12 Why fear man? Like everyone else, he will die himself (Mt. 10:28; Prov. 29:25).
- v.14-15 God declares that Israel is His people and He is the one who keeps them. They are the ones who have slept.
- v.22-23 The day of their trouble will be over and there will be a glorious reuniting of God and His people. The Lord will judge those who have afflicted Israel. The reason for the severity of Israel's judgment is that they failed the responsibility God had given them (Luke. 12:48).

A. “Listen to Me.”

1. (1-3) Listen: The LORD’s past faithfulness is a promise of future blessing.

“Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug.
Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you;
For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.”
For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places;
He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

- **Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness**: The LORD here speaks to His people; but His people have had trouble listening to Him. So, three times in this chapter, the exhortation is given: **Listen to Me**.

- **Look to the rock from which you were hewn… Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you**: God counsels His people to look at His work in His people in days past. This is one of the great glories of God’s Word to us; it tells us how God has dealt with His people and gives us faith and guidance for His work in our lives – if we will **listen** to Him.
  - As Isaiah speaks to them here, God’s people were in a discouraged place. They felt defeated, and the prophet tells them to look to God’s work in and through His people in days past.
  - “Once a Christian gets eaten up with discouragement and unbelief it takes a great deal to shake him out of it. Those two emotions are the masterstrokes of Satan. So long as the child of God maintains an attitude of praise and trust in the Lord, then he is invincible. Once the devil gets him discouraged, that poor man in really going to take a knocking!” (Redpath)

- **For I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him**: Abraham was one man, from one simple family. Yet God **called him alone** and **increased him**. This should remind His people today that God does not need many people to do a great work. He can bless and increase one man **alone**. Isaiah wanted God’s people – in view here are the returning exiles from Babylon, and those of Israel’s ultimate regathering – to not be discouraged of their small numbers but realize that just as He did great things with Abraham and Sarah, He can do great things through them.

- **For the LORD will comfort Zion… He will make her wilderness like Eden… Joy and gladness will be found in it**: Remembering Abraham and Sarah should give them hope for this promise. The promise seems too good to be true, but by faithfully remembering God’s work in people like Abraham and Sarah, they would have the faith to believe God’s promise to them today.
  - This shows how we can benefit through God’s work in the lives of **others**. When we hear of what God has done and is doing in the lives of others, it can build our faith for God’s work in our own lives.
• He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD: This reminds us that though these promises had a near fulfillment in the return from Babylon’s captivity, their ultimate fulfillment is in a regathered, blessed, and saved Israel in the millennium.

2. (4-6) Listen: The LORD’s salvation and righteousness are forever.

“Listen to Me, My people; And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me, And I will make My justice rest As a light of the peoples.
My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;
But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.

• I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples: When the LORD ultimately regathers, blesses, and saves Israel, He will also shine forth His justice to all the world – to Israel (My nation) and to all the nations (the peoples).

• For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment: These are references to phenomenon surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus (Matthew 24:35, 2 Peter 3:7-10, Revelation 6:12-17). This is ultimately when the justice of the LORD will be displayed to Israel and all nations.
  o The judgment of the LORD isn’t only evident in creation, but in the man also: Those who dwell in it will die in like manner.

• But My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished: Those tied to the earth, not heaven will be cast away, and even the earth will vanish away. But never the righteousness or salvation of God. They remain and are more permanent than even the heavens and the earth. We don’t have to be afraid that God will change His character (My righteousness) or His mind about us (My salvation). This is something to listen to!

3. (7-8) Listen: Fear God, not man.

“Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.
For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation.”

• Listen to Me... Do not fear the reproach of men: Knowing the permanence of the righteousness and salvation of the LORD, and the passing nature of the wicked (For the moth will eat them up like a garment), we should listen to God, and not be afraid of men.
  o “I cannot imagine a true man saying, ‘I love Christ, but I do not want others to know that I love him, lest they should laugh at me.’ That is a reason to be laughed at, or rather, to be wept over. Afraid of being laughed at? Oh sir, this is indeed a cowardly fear!” (Charles Spurgeon, The Secret of Love to God)
  o “Yet you are a coward. Yes, put it down in English: you are a coward. If anybody called you so you would turn red in the face; and perhaps you are not a coward in reference to any other subject. What a shameful thing it is that while you are bold about everything else you are cowardly about Jesus Christ. Brave for the world and cowardly towards Christ!” (Charles Spurgeon, Cheer for the Worker, and Hope for London)

• But My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation: Knowing that the righteousness and salvation of the LORD are permanent and the opposition and mocking of the wicked is temporary, we should stand strong in faith. This is something to listen to!
B. **Awake, awake!**

1. (9:16) **Wake up to the power and greatness of the LORD.**

   Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD!
   Awake as in the ancient days, In the generations of old.
   Are You not the arm that cut Rahab apart, And wounded the serpent?
   Are You not the One who dried up the sea, The waters of the great deep;
   That made the depths of the sea a road For the redeemed to cross over?
   So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads.
   They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
   “I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid Of a man who will die,
   And of the son of a man who will be made like grass?
   And you forget the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth;
   You have feared continually every day Because of the fury of the oppressor, When he has prepared to destroy.
   And where is the fury of the oppressor?
   The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed, That he should not die in the pit,
   And that his bread should not fail.
   But I am the LORD your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared—The LORD of hosts is His name.
   And I have put My words in your mouth;
   I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth,
   And say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’”

- **Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD:** Here, the faithful believer calls out to the LORD, looking to Him for salvation. They know of God’s great works in the past (Awake as in ancient days) but ask God to act on their behalf now.
   - Curiously, though it is – rightfully – phrased this way, it is really more of a wake up call to faith for the believer than an attempt to wake up God. Psalm 121:4 reminds us, Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Yet it is still wonderful for the believer to call upon the LORD this way, because it awakens our faith!

- **Are You not the arm that cut Rahab apart, and wounded the serpent:** Among God’s great works remembered is His defeat of Rahab. But when did God cut Rahab apart, and wound a serpent? The name Rahab means pride, and ever since the Garden of Eden, the serpent has been associated with Satan (Genesis 3:1-6). This speaks in poetic terms of God’s victory over Satan, as it does also in Psalm 89:10.

- **So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing:** With every enemy defeated, and every obstacle taken care of, God’s people are restored. This is another promise with both a near and an ultimate fulfillment.

- **Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die:** With promises this glorious, and a God this mighty, we have no reason to fear man. Man can never undo God’s plan for our lives. Compared to the great power of God, they are like grass.

- **You forget the LORD your Maker...** You have feared continually every day: The two go together. We will only live in fear continually every day if we forget the LORD. When we forget the LORD, we forget His tender love and care for us: I have covered you with the shadow of My hand... and say to Zion, “You are My people.” This is something to be awake to!
   - The phrase I have covered you with the shadow of My hand reminds us of how God covered Moses with His hand, as Moses hid in the rock and the LORD made His glory to pass before Moses (Exodus 33:17-23).
   - The LORD would shelter and protect His people the same way. Nothing comes to us unless it has first passed through His counsel. “Ask the question again, ‘Where is the fury of the oppressor?’ And the answer comes, it is under the control of God. Even Satan, your fiercest foe, – God created him, God governs him, God can do with him just as he pleases. Then as to that poverty of which you are afraid, it will not come unless God permits it; and if it does come, the Lord can alleviate it.” (Spurgeon)
2. (17-23) Wake up to the reality of God’s wrath.

Awake, awake!
Stand up, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD The cup of His fury;
You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, And drained it out.
There is no one to guide her Among all the sons she has brought forth;
Nor is there any who takes her by the hand Among all the sons she has brought up.
These two things have come to you:
Who will be sorry for you?—Desolation and destruction, famine and sword—By whom will I comfort you?
Your sons have fainted, They lie at the head of all the streets, Like an antelope in a net;
They are full of the fury of the LORD, The rebuke of your God.
Therefore please hear this, you afflicted, And drunk but not with wine.
Thus says your Lord, The LORD and your God, Who pleads the cause of His people:
“See, I have taken out of your hand The cup of trembling, The dregs of the cup of My fury;
You shall no longer drink it.
But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you, Who have said to you,
‘Lie down, that we may walk over you.’ And you have laid your body like the ground,
And as the street, for those who walk over.”

- **Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem:** This wakeup call is directed right at Jerusalem. God’s people sometimes spiritually “fall asleep” and need to be awakened. Romans 13:11-12 says, *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*

- **You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD, the cup of His fury:** A common picture of judgment in the Old Testament is the cup of God’s wrath or fury. The idea is that God gives a cup “full” of His wrath to those who are under judgment, and they must drink it. Here, God calls Jerusalem to remember that they have drunk at the hand of the LORD, the cup of His fury when they experienced God’s judgment through the Babylonians.
  - If possible, the image is even strengthened: **You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and drained it out.** Not only did Jerusalem drink the cup, they drained it – drinking down to the dregs at the bottom of the cup. They had experienced desolation and destruction, famine and sword, and this was God’s cup for them.
  - This powerful image was in the mind of Jesus when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before His crucifixion. When He prayed, *Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done* (Luke 22:42), He had in mind the cup of God’s wrath He was about to drink – to the dregs – at the cross.

- **See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; you shall no longer drink it:** The LORD knows when to give the cup, and when to take it from His people. Now is time for their redemption and for the shame of their enemies, so the LORD promises, **I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you.** We should always be awake to God’s timing and loving promises.
  - “When faith is weak men are in a dreadful hurry, but strong faith does not judge the Lord to be slack concerning his promise. As God achieves his purpose with infinite leisure, he loves a faith that is patient and looks not for its reward this day or the next. ‘He that believeth shall not make haste’: that is to say, he shall not be ashamed or confounded by present trials so as to rush upon unbelieving actions. Faith leaves times and seasons with God to whom they belong.” (Spurgeon)
  - **Who have said to you, “Lie down, that we may walk over you”:** This “barbaric practice… is well documented in the ancient Near East, featured especially, but not exclusively, in Assyrian inscriptions” (Grogan). But God will give this humiliation to those who humiliated His people.
ISAIAH 52: JOY WHEN THE LORD REIGNS IN ZION – Jerusalem in the Kingdom Age

- v.3 Man would not be redeemed with money.
- v.6 When Jesus came to His own they did not recognize Him, but a time is coming when they will.
- v.11 Call of separation from the world to God (Rom. 12:1-1; 1 Jn. 2:15)
- v.13-15 Description of Jesus Christ (Jn. 12:32).

A. When the LORD brings back Zion.

1. (1-3) Wake up to the LORD’s redemption of Zion.

   Awake, awake!
   Put on your strength, O Zion; Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city!
   For the uncircumcised and the unclean Shall no longer come to you. Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
   Sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!
   For thus says the LORD: “You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you shall be redeemed without money.”

- Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion: The first Awake, awake! asked the LORD to put on strength (Isaiah 51:9). The second Awake, awake! asked Jerusalem to remember the LORD’s judgments and promises. Now, the third Awake, awake! tells Zion to put on strength in light of the first to awakenings.

- Put on your beautiful garments… for the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you: Jerusalem could put on clothes of beauty and glory, because the time of judgment was over. This shows that this passage has ultimate fulfillment in the very last days.

- You have sold yourselves for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money: Tragically, Jerusalem went after other gods like someone selling themselves for nothing. Yet, they would be blessed by being redeemed without money. God’s mercy answered to their tragic sin!
  - You shall be redeemed without money – but it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t cost anything. The end of Isaiah 52 begins to describe the great cost of redemption, but it is a cost paid by another.

2. (4-6) The LORD vindicates His name before those who blaspheme His name.

   For thus says the Lord GOD: “My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there;
   Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.
   Now therefore, what have I here,” says the LORD, “That My people are taken away for nothing?
   Those who rule over them Make them wail,” says the LORD,
   “And My name is blasphemed continually every day.
   Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day
   That I am He who speaks: ‘Behold, it is I.’”

- Those who rule over them make them wail… and My name is blasphemed continually every day: God looks down, and sees how the nations have oppressed His people. Egypt held them in captivity. The Assyrian oppressed them, and the Babylonians took them away for nothing, and ruled cruelly over them. Worse than how they treated God’s people was their disrespect for the LORD Himself, whom they blasphemed continually every day.

- Therefore My people shall know My name: Yet God will glorify Himself; first, He will do it among His own people. It is almost if God says, “I can abide with My name being blasphemed continually every day among the nations. Just let it be known and praised among My people.”
  - It is bad enough that the world does not know or honor God; but it is far more tragic when His own people do not know or honor Him.

- Therefore they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks: In Isaiah’s day, they didn’t know that the LORD had spoken through His Word. This is to be expected among the nations, but should never be so among God’s people. But God promises there will come a day when they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks.
3. (7-10) The whole earth sees that the LORD redeems Zion.

How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”
Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion.
Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.
The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.

- **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news:** Isaiah prophesies of the beautiful feet of those who bring the Gospel – the **good news**.
  - No wonder those who bring **good news** have beautiful feet; they are out partnering with God for the salvation of men. The **feet** speak of activity, motion, and progress, and those who are active and moving in the work of preaching the gospel have **beautiful… feet**!

  - “The watchmen who see this happy return are probably those in Jerusalem who had long awaited the messengers. According to Ezekiel, the prophets were the leading ‘watchmen’ for the nation.” (Wolf)

- **The LORD has made bare His holy arm:** The thought beginning at Isaiah 51:9 (Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD!) is completed. The LORD has shown His strength, the strength of His **holy arm**. No wonder it is a time for joy and singing!
  - “The expression **made bare his holy arm** is a Hebrew idiom derived from rolling up long, loose sleeves before starting to work. Then the arm was bared – the symbol of any mighty undertaking or initiative.” (Bultema)

- **In the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God:** God does not make His saving strength known just for those who are immediately rescued. He also does it as a witness and a testimony to others, so they can **see the salvation of our God**.

4. (11-12) A call unto and confidence for those who will return.

Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean thing;
Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD.
For you shall not go out with haste, Nor go by flight;
For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

- **Depart! Depart! Go out from there:** Prophetically, this has both a near and a distant application. It was intended for the Babylonian captives Isaiah has prophesied to; but also, for those gathered unto the LORD in the very end times. The call to separate from Babylon – both literal and spiritual – is a call to purity, for those who bear the vessels of the LORD.
  - 2 Timothy 2:21 has a wonderful promise for those vessels of the LORD who pursue purity: *Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

- **For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the LORD will go before you:** When the salvation of the LORD comes – both in its near and its ultimate fulfillment – there is a sense of peace in the glorious work of the LORD, not a striving in haste or by flight.
B. The Servant of the LORD brings salvation to many nations.

1. (13-14) The exaltation and humiliation of the Servant of the LORD.

   Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

- **Behold, My Servant**: This passage, through the end of Isaiah 53, has in focus the Servant of the LORD. This is the Servant previously spoken of in Isaiah 42:1, and Isaiah 49:3 and 6.
  - The Ethiopian in Acts 8:24 asked a question about Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12: *Of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?* This question is still asked today, and the answer is extremely important.
  - Through the book of Isaiah, many have been called servants of the LORD in one way or another. This includes Isaiah himself (Isaiah 20:3), Eliakim (Isaiah 22:20), David (Isaiah 37:35), Israel (Isaiah 41:8-9). But there is no doubt that the phrase is also used as a specific title for the Messiah, and this is what is in view here.
  - The New King James Version rightly capitalizes Servant, because the context demonstrates this is a clear reference to Jesus. Additionally, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-5 and plainly says it is a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus (Matthew 12:16-21). Additionally, in Matthew 8:16-17 the Bible takes this passage of Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 and says it specifically applies to Jesus.
  - Many people are amazed that people – especially Jewish people – can read a chapter like this and miss Jesus. But really it isn’t surprising. When we make up our minds about who Jesus is, it’s easy to become blind and deaf to the plain, simple message of the Word of God. Put away your pre-conceived notions and your cultural Jesus. Let the Word of God tell you who He is.

- **He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high**: The first words of the LORD in the mouth of the prophet regarding His Servant declare His victory. **He shall be exalted and extolled** means that the Messiah will triumph. There is no doubt about it. Before any of His suffering is announced, His glorious triumph is assured.

- **His visage was marred more than any man**: This speaks of the cruel and vicious beating Jesus endured at the hands of his enemies. Jesus was beaten so badly on His face that He hardly looked like a man. The result was so shocking that **many were astonished** when they saw Jesus.
  - *Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, “Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?”* (Luke 22:63-64)
  - The **astonishment** mentioned may be subtly referred to in the New Testament. On several occasions after His resurrection, the followers of Jesus were slow to recognize Him (Luke 24:16, John 20:14 and 21:4). On one occasion, they even seem awkward about His appearance: *Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”* – knowing that it was the Lord. (John 21:12) This may indicate that the marred visage of Jesus remained after His resurrection. We know that Jesus retained some of the scars of His crucifixion (Luke 24:40, John 20:25-28), perhaps this extends to His face as well. However, we should not be troubled by the thought of seeing an “ugly Jesus” in heaven. If those scars do remain, they will only increase His glory and beauty to our eyes, standing as badges of His matchless love.
  - **More than any man** does not literally mean that by appearances, Jesus was beaten more severely than any man would ever be beaten. It is a poetic hyperbole used to express the terrible effect of the beating He endured.
2. (15) The cleansing of many nations.

So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

- **So shall He sprinkle many nations:** Sprinkling is often associated with *cleansing from sin* in the Old Testament (Exodus 24:8, Leviticus 3:6, Numbers 19:21, Ezekiel 36:25). Here, the promise is that the work of the Messiah will bring cleansing to *many nations.*
  - The Messiah is certainly Israel’s Messiah; yet He belongs to more than Israel. His saving, cleansing work will extend far beyond Israel to *many nations.*

- **Kings shall shut their mouths at Him:** Though all will be astonished at His appearance, they will have nothing to say against Him. His glory and His great work will stop every word. When they spoke against Him before, it was in blindness, but now *what had not been told them they shall see.*
ISAIAH 53: THE ATONING SUFFERING AND VICTORY OF THE MESSIAH — Vicarious Sacrifice of Christ, Jehovah’s Servant

“This chapter foretells the sufferings of the Messiah, the end for which he was to die, and the advantages resulting to mankind from that illustrious event... This chapter contains a beautiful summary of the most peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity.” (Adam Clarke)

- v.2 We will not be attracted to Jesus by His physical beauty. Each of us can identify with Jesus. It is the love and spiritual beauty we will be attracted to, not the physical (Rev.5:4-6, 1:7).
- v.5 The Jews should not be held responsible for the death of Jesus Christ as has been the Church’s pattern historically. We are all equally responsible.
- v.6 God forsook His Son when our sin was placed upon Him (Mt. 27:46).
- v.7 Mt. 26:62-63.
- v.9 Mt. 27:57-60.
- v.10-11 Christ became the sin offering for us according to God's will because He loved us. In seeing us in fellowship with God, Jesus was satisfied. Through Jesus, we are justified.
- v.12 To reject Jesus after seeing He has fulfilled these things is to sin against the truth (Mt. 27:38; Luke 23:34).

A. The atoning suffering of the Servant of the LORD.

1. (1-3) How man saw the suffering Messiah.

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.
He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

- **Who has believed our report**: Prophetically, Isaiah anticipates at least two things here. First, he anticipates how strange and contradictory it seems that this suffering Messiah, whose visage is marred more than any man, is at the same time salvation and cleansing to the nations. Second, he anticipates the rejection of the Messiah, that many would not believe our report.

- **To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed**: In this context of the Messiah’s suffering and agony, this line seems out of place. The arm of the LORD is a picture of His strength, power, and might. Yet we will see a Messiah weak and suffering. But the strength, power, and might of God will be expressed in the midst of this suffering, seemingly weak Messiah.

- **He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant**: Jesus did grow up, as He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52). But all the while, He was as a tender plant – of seeming weakness and insignificance, not like a mighty tree.
  - A tender plant is weak and vulnerable – unless it is before Him, that is, before the LORD God. In God’s presence, that which seems to be weak is strong. If the plant is before Him, it doesn’t even matter that the ground is dry. God will sustain it with His presence.

- **As a root out of dry ground**: Jesus grew up in the Galilee region of Roman occupied Palestine. In respect to spiritual, political, and standard of living matters, it was indeed dry ground. God can bring the most wonderful things out of dry ground!
  - “Do not say, ‘It is useless to preach down there, or to send missionaries to that uncivilized country.’ How do you know? Is it very dry ground? Ah, well, that is hopeful soil; Christ is a ‘root out of a dry ground,’ and the more there is to discourage the more you should be encouraged. Read it the other way. Is it dark? Then all is fair for a grand show of light; the light will never seem so bright as when the night is very very dark.” (Spurgeon)

- **He has no form or comeliness... no beauty that we should desire Him**: Prophetically, Isaiah gives a more compelling description of Jesus than we find anywhere in the gospel accounts. Jesus was not a man of
remarkable **beauty** or physical attractiveness (**comeliness**). This doesn’t mean that Jesus was **ugly**, but it does mean that He did not have the “advantage” of good looks.

- This means that when we try to attract people to Jesus through **form or comeliness**, or **beauty**, we are using methods that run counter to the nature of Jesus. “These days it appears that we must dress up the gospel to make it attractive. We have to use the methods of technique which must be smart, well-presented, streamlined. There must be something about the presentation of the gospel that will appeal to people… to what is called ‘the modern mind.’ I wonder if we stop to think that in our efforts to make the gospel message ‘attractive’ we are drawing a curtain across the face of Jesus in His humiliation? The only one who can make Him attractive is the Holy Spirit.” (Redpath)

- **He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief**: Jesus was not a “life of the party” man. It would be wrong to think of Him as perpetually sad and morose; indeed, He certainly showed great joy (such as in Luke 10:21). Yet He knew sorrow and **grief** so intimately that He could be called a **Man of sorrows**. This, among other reasons, made Him **despised and rejected by men**.
  - Most of our sorrow is really just self-pity. It is feeling sorry for ourselves. Jesus never once felt sorry for Himself. His sorrow was for others, and for the fallen, desperate condition of humanity.
  - “He was also ‘a man of sorrows,’ for the variety of his woes; he was a man not of sorrow only, but of ‘sorrows.’ All the sufferings of the body and of the soul were known to him; the sorrows of the man who actively struggles to obey; the sorrows of the man who sits still, and passively endures. The sorrows of the lofty he knew, for he was the King of Israel; the sorrows of the poor he knew, for he ‘had not where to lay his head.’ Sorrows relative, and sorrows personal; sorrows mental, and sorrows spiritual; sorrows of all kinds and degrees assailed him. Affliction emptied his quiver upon him, making his heart the target for all conceivable woes.” (Spurgeon)
  - In 1 Timothy 3, one of the requirements for leaders in the church is that they be **soberminded**. This word describes the person who is able to think clearly and with clarity. They do not constantly joke, but know how to deal with serious subjects in a serious way. It doesn’t mean solemn and somber, but it does mean an appropriate seriousness.

- **And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him**: Because there was nothing outwardly beautiful or charismatic about the Messiah, mankind’s reaction was to withdraw from Him, to despise Him, and hold Him in low esteem. This shows that men value physical beauty and charisma far more than God does, and when we don’t see it, we can reject the ones God accepts.

2. (4-6) **The Servant of the LORD bears our sin.**

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

- **Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows**: At this point, the prophet does not have in mind the way the Messiah took our guilt and God’s wrath upon Himself. Here, he has in view how the Messiah took our **pain** upon Himself. He made **our griefs** His own, and **our sorrows** as if they were His. The image is that He loaded them up and **carried** them on His back, so we wouldn’t have to.

- How many people carry around **pain** – **griefs** and **sorrows** – that Jesus really carried for them? He took them from us, but for it to do us any good, we must release them.

- **Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted**: Curiously, this estimation was accurate. Certainly, the Messiah was **stricken**. He was **smitten by God**. He was **afflicted**. The problem was not in seeing these things, but in **only** seeing these things. Man saw the suffering Jesus but didn’t understand the reasons **why**.
• But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: Yes, the Messiah was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But now, the prophet explains why. It was for us – for our transgressions... for our iniquities. It was in our place that the Messiah suffered.
  
  o Wounded is literally “pierced through.”

• And by His stripes we are healed: Here, the prophet sees through the centuries to know that the Messiah would be beaten with many stripes (Mark 15:15). More so, the prophet announces that provision for healing is found in the suffering of Jesus, so by His stripes we are healed.

  o There has been much debate as to if Isaiah had in mind spiritual healing or physical healing. As this passage is quoted in the New Testament, we see some more of the thought. In Matthew 8:16-17, the view seems to be of physical healing. In 1 Peter 2:24-25, the view seems to be of spiritual healing. We can safely say that God has both aspects of healing in view, and both our physical and spiritual healing is provided for by the suffering of Jesus.

  o However, some have taken this to mean that every believer has the right – the promise – to perfect health right now, and if there is any lack of health, it is simply because this promise has not been claimed in faith. In this thinking, great stress is laid upon the past tense of this phrase – by His stripes we are healed. The idea is that since it is in the past tense, perfect health is God’s promise and provision for every Christian at this very moment, even as the believer has the promise to perfect forgiveness and salvation at this moment.

  o The problem of this view – not even counting how it terribly contradicts the personal experience of saints in the Bible and through history – is that it misunderstands the “verb tense” of both salvation and healing. We can say without reservation that perfect, total, complete healing is God’s promise to every believer in Jesus Christ, paid for by His stripes and the totality of His work for us. But we must also say that it is not promised to every believer right now, just as the totality of our salvation is not promised to us right now. The Bible says that we have been saved (Ephesians 2:8), that we are being saved (1 Corinthians 1:18), and that we will be saved (1 Corinthians 3:15). Even so, there is a sense in which we have been healed, are being healed, and one day will be healed. God’s ultimate healing is called “resurrection,” and it is a glorious promise to every believer. Every “patch-up” healing in this present age simply anticipates the ultimate healing that will come.

  o What Christians must not do is foolishly “claim” to be healed, despite “mere symptoms” that say otherwise, and believe they are standing on the promise of Isaiah 53:5. What Christians must do is pray boldly and trust God’s goodness and mercy in granting gifts of healing now, even before the ultimate healing of resurrection.

  o “‘With his stripes we are healed.’ Will you notice that fact? The healing of a sinner does not lie in himself, nor in what he is, nor in what he feels, nor in what he does, nor in what he vows, nor in what he promises. It is not in himself at all; but there, at Gabbatha, where the pavement is stained with the blood of the Son of God, and there, at Golgotha, where the place of a skull beholds the agonies of Christ. It is in his stripes that the healing lies. I beseech thee, do not scourge thyself: ‘With his stripes we are healed.’” (Spurgeon)

• All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way: Here the prophet describes our need for the Messiah’s atoning work. Sheep are stupid, headstrong animals, and we, like they, have gone astray. We have turned – against God’s way, every one, to his own way.

  o We all have our own way of sin. The constant temptation is to condemn your way of sin, and to justify my way of sin. But each way that is our own way instead of the LORD’s way is a sinful, destructive, damned way.

• And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all: Here we see the partnership between the Father and the Son in the work on the cross. If the Messiah was wounded for our transgressions, then it was also the LORD who laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The Father judged our iniquity as it was laid on the Son.
3. (7-9) The suffering and death of the Servant of the LORD.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearsers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

- **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth:** Despite the pain and the suffering of the Messiah, He never opened… His mouth to defend Himself. He was silent before His accusers (Mark 15:2-5), never speaking to defend Himself, only to glorify God.

- **He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearsers is silent, so He opened not His mouth:** The prophet repeats His previous point, that the Messiah will suffer without speaking to defend Himself. When Isaiah uses the phrase, **He was led as a lamb to the slaughter**, we should **not** take this as indicating that Jesus was a helpless victim of circumstances and was helpless as a lamb. Quite the contrary; even in His suffering and death, Jesus was in control (John 10:18, 19:11 and 19:30). Isaiah’s point is that Jesus was **silent**, not helpless.
  
  - “If I were to die for any one of you, what would it amount to but that I paid the debt of nature a little sooner than I must ultimately have paid it? For we must all die, sooner or later. But the Christ needed not to die at all, so far as he himself was personally concerned. There was no cause within himself why he should go to the cross to lay down his life. He yielded himself up, a willing sacrifice for our sins.” (Spurgeon)

- **He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation:** This not only refers to the confinement of the Messiah before His crucifixion, but it also speaks of the fact that the Messiah died childless. There was no one to declare His generation.

- **For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken:** This is the first indication in this passage that the suffering Servant of the LORD, the Messiah Himself, would **die**. Up to this point, we might have thought He would only have been severely beaten. But there is no mistaking the point: He is to be **cut off from the land of the living**.
  
  - “The phrase ‘cut off’ strongly suggests not only a violent, premature death but also the just judgment of God, not simply the oppressive judgment of men.” (Grogan)
  
  - This, among many aspects of this prophecy, demonstrates again that Isaiah cannot be speaking of Israel as the suffering Servant. As badly as Israel has suffered through the centuries, she has never been **cut off from the land of the living**. She has always endured, even as God promised Abraham.
  
  - The prophet brings the point home again and again. The Servant of the LORD, the Messiah, suffers, but not for Himself, but for **the transgressions of My people**.

- **And they made His grave with the wicked:** Jesus died in the company of the wicked (Luke 23:32-33), and it was the intention of those supervising His execution to cast Him into a common **grave with the wicked**.

- **But with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth:** Despite the intention of others to make **His grave with the wicked**, God allowed the Messiah to be **with the rich at His death**, buried in the tomb of the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-56, Matthew 27:57-60).
  
  - The line **because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth** is important. It shows that even in His death, even in His taking the transgressions of God’s people, the Messiah never sinned. He remained the Holy One, despite all the pain and suffering. As a recognition of that, He was buried **with the rich at His death**, and would indeed be resurrected.
B. The victory of the Servant of the LORD.


Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

- Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: The prophet gloriously, and emphatically, states that the suffering of the Servant of the LORD was ordained by the LORD, even for His pleasure!
  - This was God’s doing! He has put Him to grief! Jesus was no victim of circumstance or at the mercy of political or military power. It was the planned, ordained work of the LORD God, prophesied by Isaiah hundreds of years before it happened. This was God’s victory, not Satan’s or man’s triumph.
  - As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. The Father and the Son worked together at the cross. Though Jesus was treated as if He were an enemy of God, He was not. Even as Jesus was punished as if He were a sinner, He was performing the most holy service unto God the Father ever offered. This is why Isaiah can say, yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him (Isaiah 53:10). In and of itself, the suffering of the Son did not please the Father. But as it accomplished the work of reconciling the world to Himself, it was completely pleasing to God the Father.

- When you make His soul an offering for sin: The Hebrew speaks of a specific, sacrificial sin-offering as described in Leviticus chapter 5. The idea of a substitutionary atonement for sin cannot be more specifically stated!
  - And it was this – the becoming of the sin-sacrifice – more than the physical suffering that Jesus dreaded. “My Lord suffered as you suffer, only more keenly; for he had never injured his body or soul by any act of excess, so as to take off the edge from his sensittiveness. His was the pouring out of a whole soul in all the phases of suffering into which perfect souls can pass. He felt the horror of sin as we who have sinned could not feel it, and the sight of evil afflicted him much more than it does the purest among us.” (Spurgeon)

- He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand: The death, the burial, the offering of the Messiah does not end the story. He lives on! He lives to see His seed, His spiritual descendants. He shall prolong His days, and not be under the curse of death. And the life He lives after His death and burial is glorious; His life shall be lived prospering in the pleasure of the LORD.

- He shall be see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied: The Messiah will look upon His work – with full view of the travail of His soul – and in the end, He shall be satisfied. The Messiah will have no regrets. Every bit of the suffering and agony was worth it, and brought about a satisfactory result.
  - As the last lines to the hymn by Maltbie Babcock put it:


  This is my Father’s world:
The battle is not done;
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and heaven be one.

- By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities: It is in knowing the Messiah, in both who He is and what He has done, that makes us justified before God.
2. (12) The Messiah’s work and reward.

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

- Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong: The Messiah’s glorious work will be rewarded. With the image of dividing the spoil after a victorious battle, we see that the Messiah ultimately triumphs.
  - Paul described this ultimate triumph in Philippians 2:10-11: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. That is a glorious reward!
  - “It is a strange fact that I am going to declare, but it is not less true than strange: according to our text the extraordinary glories of Christ, as Savior, have all been earned by his connection with human sin. He has gotten his most illustrious splendor, his brightest jewels, his divinest crowns, out of coming into contact with this poor fallen race.” (Spurgeon)
  - In the end, the sufferings and humiliation of Jesus only bring Him more glory and majesty! “I do see that out of this dunghill of sin Christ has brought this diamond of his glory by our salvation. If there had been no sinners, there could not have been a Savior. If no sin, no pouring out of the soul unto death; and if no pouring out of the soul unto death, no dividing a portion with the great. If there had been no guilt, there had been no act of expiation. In the wondrous act of expiation by our great Substitute, the Godhead is more gloriously revealed than in all the creations and providences of the divine power and wisdom.” (Spurgeon)
  - Who does the Messiah divide the spoil with? With the strong: those strong in Him. We can share in the spoil of Jesus’ victory! If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. (Romans 8:17)

- Because He poured out His soul unto death: This speaks of the totality of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. Poured out means that it was all gone. There was nothing left, nothing more He could give.
  - “He hath poured out his soul unto death.” I will say no more about it, except that you see how complete it was. Jesus gave poor sinners everything. His every faculty was laid out for them. To his last rag he was stripped upon the cross. No part of his body or of his soul was kept back from being made a sacrifice. The last drop, as I said before, was poured out till the cup was drained. He made no reserve: he kept not back even his innermost self: ‘He hath poured out his soul unto death.’” (Spurgeon)

- He was numbered with the transgressors: Jesus could never become a sinner; He could never be a transgressor Himself. Yet willingly, loving. He was numbered with the transgressors. Is there a roll-call taken for transgressors? Jesus says, “Put My name down with them.” We would be shocked if a godly woman looked at a list of prostitutes and said, “Put my name down among them.” Or what if a godly man looked at a list of murderers and said, “Number me among them.” But that is what Jesus did for us, only to an even greater degree.

- He bore the sin of many: Over and over again, the prophet emphasizes the point. The Servant of the LORD, the Messiah, suffers on behalf of and in the place of guilty sinners.

- And made intercession for the transgressors: We know that presently, Jesus has a ministry of intercession (Hebrews 7:25). But Hebrews 7:25 speaks of intercession for the saints. This passage probably refers to Jesus’ prayers on the cross itself.
  - This means the work of the Messiah is made available to transgressors. It is when we see ourselves as transgressors that we can reach out and receive His salvation.

"Try and suck all the sweetness that you can out of this chapter while we read it. The personal application of a promise to the heart by the Holy Spirit is that which is wanted. The honey in Jonathan’s wood never enlightened his eyes until he dipped the point of his rod into it and tasted it. Try and do the same. This chapter is the wood wherein every bough doth drip with virgin honey. Sip: taste, and be satisfied." (Spurgeon)

- v.1-2 The Lord will enlarge the nation as He receives them again and places His blessings on them.
- v.4 Israel as an adulterous wife had forsaken the Lord.
- v.7-8 The great mercies of God.
- v.17 Our righteousness comes not of ourselves or our works but by God's grace alone.

**A. The LORD speaks to Israel as His wife.**

**1. (1-3) Israel will be restored like a barren woman who bears many children.**

“Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child!
For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD. “Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.

- **Sing, O barren, you who have not borne:** In ancient Israel, the barren woman carried an enormous load of shame and disgrace. Here, the LORD likens captive Israel to a barren woman who can now sing – because now more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman.
  - The Babylonian exile and captivity meant more than oppression for Israel; it meant shame, disgrace, and humiliation. God promises a glorious release from not only the exile and captivity, but also from the shame, disgrace, and humiliation.
  - This passage is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 4:27, in reference to the miraculous “birth” of those under the New Covenant. Paul also probably intended the phrase more are the children to also indicate that the children of the New Covenant would outnumber the children of the Old Covenant.

- **Enlarge the place of your tent:** The curse and shame of barrenness would be so completely broken, and Israel would be so fruitful, that they would have to expand their living space. This would be of particular comfort to the returning Babylonian exiles, who felt themselves small in number and weak. This promise would strengthen them.

**2. (4-6) Israel will be restored like a widow who is rescued from her reproach.**

“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore. For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth. For the LORD has called you Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, Like a youthful wife when you were refused,” Says your God.

- **And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore:** Just as God compared the disgrace of Israel to the shame of barrenness, now He compares their humiliation to the reproach of widowhood. Here, the LORD promises rescue from Israel’s shame.
  - “Shame… disgrace… humiliated represent three synonymous Hebrew verbs sharing the fundamental idea of disappointed hopes, the embarrassment of expecting – even publicly announcing – one thing and then reaping another.” (Motyer)

- **For your Maker is your husband:** Though Israel might have been regarded as forsaken as a widow, the LORD promises to stand in the place of her husband.
o Through the centuries, many a hurting woman has taken this promise for herself. Forsaken by a husband, or forsaken of a husband, they have found beautiful comfort in the promise that God would be a husband to them, when all others forsook them. The principle is true; God will supply and meet our emotional needs, and rescue us from our disgrace and shame, when others forsake us.

- **The LORD of hosts is His name**: To comfort and strengthen His people, God reminds them of how glorious of a Savior He is. He is their Maker, He is the LORD of hosts, He is their Redeemer, He is the Holy One of Israel, and He is called the God of the whole earth. Not only does God supply a husband, but a great one – Himself!

  o The promise that the LORD will meet our needs when others forsake us does not leave us to a place of “second best.” The LORD God can be a greater husband than any man can be. This is something for every single woman to remember; and something no married woman should forget. An earthly husband can never fulfill every need that the great Heavenly Husband can.

3. (7-8) **God explains His restoration of Israel.**

   “For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you.
   With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;
   But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

- **For a mere moment I have forsaken you**: God never really forsook Israel; yet He recognizes that they felt forsaken. God says, “for a mere moment I allowed you to feel that I have forsaken you.”

- **But with great mercies I will gather you**: The forsaken is in the present tense; the great mercies are in the future tense. But they are real, and give Israel cause to set their hope and trust in the LORD, though they feel forsaken at the moment.

- **I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you**: The contrast is between the moment of feeling forsaken and the everlasting nature of the kindness that will come. When we feel tried and forsaken, we should recognize that it is just for a moment, and the everlasting blessing will certainly come.

**B. Comfort and assurance to restored Israel.**

1. (9-10) **A promise to never forsake Israel.**

   “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me;
   For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth,
   So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.
   For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed,
   But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,”
   Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

- **For this is like the waters of Noah to Me**: Just as God promised that the flood waters of Noah’s day would not cover the earth forever, so will His anger recede from Israel.

- **For the mountains shall depart… but My kindness shall not depart from you**: Flood waters recede, and mountains do not. But even if the mountains shall depart, even if the hills be removed, the kindness of the LORD to His people will never depart. The kindness of the LORD is more certain than the mountains and the hills, and His covenant of peace is surer.
2. (11-17) **Promises of prosperity, peace, and protection.**

“O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, And lay your foundations with sapphires.
I will make your mazzins of rubies, Your gates of crystal, And all your walls of precious stones.
All your children shall be taught by the LORD, And great shall be the peace of your children.
In righteousness you shall be established; You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;
And from terror, for it shall not come near you. Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.
Behold, I have created the blacksmith Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument for his work; And I have created the spoiler to destroy.
No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment
You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,”
Says the LORD.

- **To you afflicted one, tossed with tempest and not comforted:** God cares about the **afflicted one**. He cares about the one **tossed with tempest**. He cares about the one who is **not comforted**. When someone is in this place – **afflicted, tossed, and not comforted** – it is easy for them to believe God doesn’t care. But He does, and He gives precious promises to give strength.

- **Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems...sapphires... rubies... crystal:** God will lavish riches upon the hurting and afflicted. When someone feels afflicted, tossed, and not comforted, they feel poor, no matter how much money they have in the bank. God promises to make the afflicted truly rich.

- **All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children:** When we are afflicted, tossed, and not comforted, we feel bad not just for ourselves, but also for our children. God gives precious assurance not only for us, but also quiets our fears for our children.

- **In righteousness you shall be established...you shall not fear... whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake:** God promises those who are afflicted, tossed, and not comforted will find protection and security in Him.

- **No weapon formed against you shall prosper:** The sovereign God – who **created the blacksmith**, who **created the spoiler to destroy** – also has the power to protect. He can promise that no weapon formed against you shall prosper. Whatever weapon is raised against God’s people is destined to be destroyed itself. God will ultimately even protect His people from criticism; indeed, **every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn**.
  - The LORD will not allow the **weapon formed against** His servants to **prosper**. Sometimes this means the LORD takes the **weapon** out of the hand of the enemy of His servants. Sometimes it means that God allows the **weapon** to strike, but brings a greater good out of it than the pain of the immediate blow. In allowing this, God will not allow the **weapon** to **prosper**, but transforms the violent sword into a trowel for building His kingdom.
  - The **tongue which rises against you** can really hurt. “Satan leaves no stone unturned against the Church of God. He uses not simply the hand; but, what is oftener a sharper weapon, the tongue. We can bear a blow, sometimes, but we cannot endure an insult. There is a great power in the tongue. We can rise from a blow which smote us to the ground; but we cannot so easily recover from slander, that lays the character low.” (Spurgeon) Yet, we can trust in the LORD’s triumph. “The more accusers, the more acquittals; the more slander, the more honor; so the enemy may slander us as much as he pleases.” (Spurgeon)
  - This is not a blanket promise for any churchgoer. The LORD specifically says, **this is the heritage of the servants of the LORD**. Are you a **servant of the LORD**? Then you can rest easy in His promised protection. The LORD also says that this is a promise for those whose **righteousness is from Me** – from the LORD Himself – and not from themselves. When a person understands that their righteousness is really from the LORD, they are much more comfortable in letting the LORD protect their righteousness.
ISAIAH 55: AN INVITATION TO RECEIVE THE GLORY OF THE LORD’S RESTORATION – Salvation Through God’s Grace

v.1 God detests commercialism and those who profit or exploit from the poor. In the Kingdom Age God will bless the earth to provide abundantly for everyone.

v.3 Christ will come and sit upon the throne of David.

v.8 Many times we don’t understand why God does the things He does. But the difference between our ways and thoughts and God’s is that He knows the end from the beginning. Therefore, He does not have to wonder whether what He has done is right.

v.9 Man’s folly is that he becomes angry with God, because God has done something in a way that he doesn’t agree with. If we insist on our own way we are exalting our knowledge above God’s, making us supreme instead of God (Rom. 1:18; Ps. 37:5).

v.10-11 God uses a common thing to illustrate His Word. As rain waters the earth to spark life, so our lives by His Word are brought to life (2 Tim. 3:16). The Word comes to our spirit and brings all of God’s potential into our lives. The first effect of the Word is what it does for us personally. The second effect is what it does through us for others (Ps. 126:6).

v.12-13 As you come into harmony with God, you come into harmony with nature and see things as you have never seen them before.

A. *An invitation to receive blessing.*

1. (1-2) An *invitation to be richly fed.*

   “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters;
   And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat.
   Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.
   Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?
   Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

   **Ho:** The prophet calls out, loud and clear, to all that can hear. This is an important announcement and is therefore prefaced with this unique call.

   o “Ho! – this is the gospel note; a short, significant appeal, urging you to be wise enough to attend to your own interests. Oh, the condescension of God! That he should, as it were, become a beggar to his own creature, and stoop from the magnificence of his glory to cry, ‘Ho!’ to foolish and ungrateful men!” (Spurgeon)

   **Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters:** It is an invitation to *everyone* – but *everyone who thirsts.* Only those who thirst will *come to the waters.* If we aren’t thirsty for what the LORD can give us, then we will never *come* to His *waters.*

   o Jesus may have had this passage from Isaiah in mind when He cried out, *If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.* (John 7:37)

   **You who have no money, come, buy, and eat:** Those who do thirst, and answer the LORD’s invitation, don’t need to bring money. Their money won’t really do them any good. They can simply bring their trust and faith and receive what God has to give them.

   **Waters… wine… milk:** It’s all free. It isn’t that the *entrance* into the Christian life is free, and then we must be charged to *advance* in the Christian life. It’s all free; our growth is just as much a gift of grace as our salvation.

   o “You are not permitted to drink freely of water, and then to purchase wine. You are not invited to come and eat freely that which is good, and then to spend your labor for that which is fat. No, the richest dainties of God’s house are as free as the bread he gives to hungry souls.” (Spurgeon)

   **Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy:** In His invitation, God asked His people to ask themselves – “Why do I spend money for what can’t *satisfy*?” This is a remarkably relevant question, in light of all the things we can pour our time and money and effort into – things which will never satisfy they way the LORD can satisfy.
• **Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance:** The invitation is clear. The offer is made, the provision is made, and everything is available – but we must still do some things.
  
  o First, we must **listen diligently**. The satisfaction God promises doesn’t come to those who don’t listen and listen diligently. It takes time, attention, and effort to listen diligently, and some aren’t willing to do this.
  
  o Second, we must **eat what is good**. This requires some discernment. We must choose what is good, and then eat that. Many just simply eat whatever spiritual meal is set before them, without taking care to see that it is good.
  
  o Third, we must **let your soul delight itself in abundance**. Even when we listen, even when we eat what is good, we still must let our soul delight itself in abundance. You can sit down at a great spiritual meal, but by your stubborn or bad attitude, simply not let your soul delight itself in abundance.

2. (3-5) An **invitation to be wonderfully led**.

   Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live;
   And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—The sure mercies of David.
   Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people.
   Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you,
   Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you.”

• **Incline your ear**: The thought carries over from the idea of let your soul delight itself in abundance. Whoever will genuinely “feast” off of the Word must consciously incline their ear towards what God will say. This explains why two people can listen to the same message, and one benefit and the other not. Often, the one who did not benefit simply did not incline their ear to the LORD.

• **Hear, and your soul shall live**: The benefit from inclining your ear to God is impressive. When we do it, we have life for our soul.

• **And I will make an everlasting covenant with you – the sure mercies of David**: For the one who will listen to the LORD, God promises a covenant. From Isaiah’s perspective, this covenant is still in the future (I will make). The covenant is also characterized by the sure mercies of David.
  
    o God showed His great mercy to David; not only by sparing David’s life when he was guilty of murder and adultery, but also in blessings and preserving and guiding David every day of his life. If God promises us the same mercy He showed to David, we are blessed indeed.
  
    o As well, the mercies of David are sure. They are certain. God never gave up on David, never stopped showing him mercy. We can count on God when He promises to us the sure mercies of David.

• **I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and a commander for the people**: God promised the blessing of good and wise leadership as a part of His sure mercies. God gave David and his remarkable leadership as a gift to Israel; here God promised that He would keep giving this gift according to the pattern shown in David.
  
    o David was a witness in the sense that he had a real relationship, a real experience with God, and could speak to Israel as a witness of what he had seen and heard in that relationship with God. Notice that David was a witness to the people. A witness to, not of the people. David did not lead through popularity polls or just giving the people what they wanted. He witnessed something from God, and he gave testimony of it to the people.
  
    o David was a leader for Israel, leading them spiritually, politically, and militarily. He led both by his godly example and his shepherd’s heart. Notice that David was a leader and a commander for the people. Not a leader and a commander of the people, but for the people. He led with a shepherd’s heart that genuinely desired God’s best for the people.
  
    o It’s curious that David is used here as God’s prototype for a leader. Curious in many ways, because David’s reign can be seen as quite troubled. He came to the throne of Israel through much struggle and difficulty. He slipped into terrible scandal, marked by murder and adultery. There was incest, rape, and murder among his own children. His reign was marred by an ugly civil war, in which his own son almost deposed him. Yet
David is here lifted up as a wonderful leader of God’s people! This shows that David’s heart after God meant more than outward success, comfort, and ease. It also shows that God’s best and most effective don’t necessarily have it easy.

- David was a commander for Israel. Even with his tender shepherd’s heart, his leadership was bold and out-front. Because he had a sense of the heart of God, being a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), he could boldly lead God’s people.

- These prophecies are fulfilled spiritually when God gives wonderful, David-like leadership to His people. They will be fulfilled ultimately when David – literal King David in his resurrection body – reigns over Israel in the millennium, the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ over this earth. Of that time, Jeremiah 30:9 says, But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. In Ezekiel 34:23-25 the LORD promises, I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. We have indications that as God’s people rule with Jesus over the millennial earth, people will be entrusted with geographical regions according to their faithfulness (Luke 19:12-19). It seems that David’s glorious portion will be to rule over Israel.

- Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you: Was this addressed to Israel, or to David as the leader and commander of God’s people? Possibly both. Certainly, its ultimate fulfillment is in the millennium, when the nations will flock to Israel (Isaiah 60:5, 60:9).

- Because of the LORD your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you: Why do the nations flock to David and/or Israel? Because the LORD has lifted them up, in accordance with His blessings of restoration.

3. (6-7) An invitation to be forgiven.

Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way. And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

Seek the LORD while He may be found: The prophet impresses a sense of urgency on God’s people. “This is the time. God can be found now. Seek Him now.” It isn’t that God is hidden and can only be found now. It is that He can only be found when our hearts are inclined to look for Him, and that inclination itself is a gift from God! We must receive the gift and make the most of it while we have it. Not seeking and failing to call upon Him while He is near, means we will not receive the blessings He promises.

Let the wicked forsake his way: The prophet impresses the need for repentance among God’s people. Repentance is simply turning around our way – turning from our own way, turning unto God’s way. Simply, this is what it means to return to the LORD, and we can never walk on God’s way until we forsake our own way. The LORD’s glorious restoration works in and through our repentance.

- Isaiah made an important point when he wrote, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Wickedness may be demonstrated by our actions (our way); but unrighteousness can be found in our very thoughts. The battleground for a righteous walk with the LORD is often found in our minds, in our thoughts. Paul knew this also when he wrote of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5), and how we must not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2).

- And He will have mercy on him: What a glorious promise! When we turn to the LORD, He will have mercy on us! In fact, He will abundantly pardon! The problem is never that we turn to the LORD and find that He rejects us. The problem is that we fail to return to the LORD!
**B. The glorious ways of the LORD.**

1. (8-9) A reminder of the difference and distance between God and man.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. 
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

- **For My thoughts are not your thoughts:** God doesn’t *think* the way we do. We get into a lot of trouble when we expect that He should think as we do. Because we are made in the image of God, we can relate to God’s *thoughts*, but we cannot master them.

- **Nor are your ways My ways:** God doesn’t *act* the way we do. He does things *His* way, and His *ways* are often not our *ways*. We get into a lot of trouble when we expect that God should act the way we do.

- **For as the heavens are higher than the earth:** How far is the distance between God’s thoughts and ours? How far is the distance between His ways and ours? The distance is as great as the heavens are higher than the earth.
  - Gloriously, in Jesus Christ, heaven has come down to earth, and we can have our thoughts and ways transformed to be *more like* God’s thoughts and ways. This is what it means to be *conformed to the image of His Son* (Romans 8:29). The distance will never be closed; God will always be God, and we will always be human. But when our salvation is complete, and we are united with the LORD in glory, the distance will be as close as is possible.
  - The difference and distance between God and man is revealed, *not* to discourage us from seeking Him, but to keep us humble as we seek. “You may conclude that it is not intended that you should understand the infinite, for you are told that his thoughts and ways are far above you; but you are required to seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.” (Spurgeon)

2. (10-11) The glorious operation of the Word of God.

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

- **For as the rain comes down:** Using the figure of the water cycle, the LORD illustrates the essential principle that His word shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please. Rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return before serving their purpose on earth (they water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud). The rain and snow eventually do return to heaven, but not before accomplishing their purpose on earth. Even so, God’s Word, when He sends it down from heaven, does not return to Him void. Instead, it always fulfills His purpose on earth.
  - This means that God is not just “all talk.” When He talks, His words accomplish His intended purpose. The word of the LORD has power, and it never fails in His intended purpose.
  - “It is an irrevocable word. Man has to eat his words, sometimes, and unsay his say. He would perform his engagement, but he cannot. It is not that he is unfaithful, but that he is unable. Now this is never so with God. His word never returns to him void. Go, find ye the snowflakes winging their way like white doves back to heaven! Go, find the drops of rain rising upward like diamonds flung up from the hand of a mighty man to find a lodging-place in the cloud from which they fell! Until the snow and the rain return to heaven, and mock the ground which they promised to bless, the word of God shall never return to him void.” (Spurgeon)

- **Make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater:** The use of these pictures to illustrate the operation of God’s Word shows that God’s Word brings forth *fruit*. It also shows that the fruit has many different applications. The same grain that gives seed to the sower also gives bread to the eater.

- **It shall accomplish what I please:** God’s Word has something to accomplish. God doesn’t just speak to hear Himself talk. His Word is not empty, or lacking in power. This also means that God’s Word has a *purpose*. He didn’t speak in unfathomable mysteries just to blow our minds, or confuse us, or leave things up to any possible interpretation. When God speaks, He speaks to accomplish a purpose.
• **It shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it**: God’s Word doesn’t barely get the job done. It **shall prosper** in the purpose God has for it. It is rich and full of life. **God’s Word always succeeds, and always fulfills God’s purpose.**
  
  o This doesn’t mean that it doesn’t matter how God’s Word is presented. Sometimes a terrible sermon has been excused by saying, “God’s Word doesn’t return void.” The principle is clear and true from this passage of Isaiah, but by the preacher’s poor preparation or preaching, there has been little of God’s Word put forth. The preacher can ignore, dilute, or obscure God’s Word so that little goes forth. When little goes forth, that little will succeed – but how much better if more of the whole counsel of God went forth to succeed!

3. (12-13) **The joy and blessing of restoration.**

  “For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace;
  The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you,
  And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
  Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;
  And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

• **For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace**: When God’s people turn to Him, listen to Him, and His Word does His work in them, **joy** and **peace** are always the result. The joy is so great, that even the **mountains** and **the hills**, and the **trees of the field** join in!

• **Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree**: Where before there was barrenness and reminders of the curse (**the thorn**), now there will be beautiful and useful trees. The picture is clear; in His glorious work of restoration, God takes away the barren and the cursed, and brings forth beauty and fruit.

• **It shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off**: When the LORD restores, all the work is done for His **name**, and for His glory. When the LORD restores, the work is secure; it is **an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.**
v.1 The time of the Lord is always very close for each one of us. Knowing we only have one short life, we need to remember that the only lasting things will be those we have done for Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

v.2 God wants us to live an honest life. A man who does this is blessed by God.

"Sabbath" is a covenant God set up with the nation of Israel. The Gentile church was not required to keep it, yet it would do us all good to have one day of rest each week for our health (Ex 31:16; Acts 21:25, Rom. 14:5).

v.4-5 1 Cor. 7:32-34.

v.7 God wanted those who weren't Jews but followed after Him to have access to Him at the Temple (Mk. 11:17).

A. A promise for those outside the borders of Israel.

1. (1-2) A call to righteousness.

Thus says the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness,
For My salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed.
Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it;
Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come: This prophetic Word is directed to God’s discouraged people, who have slacked in obedience and righteousness. They see no reason to repent as long as things look down. God shakes them out of this by calling them to keep justice, and do righteousness in anticipation of what He will do.

○ It’s like the person who says, “LORD, I’ll start giving when You bless my finances.” No; start giving now and do it in anticipation that God will bless your finances.

Blessed is the man who does this: There is both the inherent blessing of obedience, and the Old Covenant blessing to the obedient.

2. (3-8) A promise for the foreigner and the outcast.

Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, “The LORD has utterly separated me from His people”;
Nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree.”
For thus says the LORD: “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,
Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.
Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar;
For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”
The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,
“Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him.”

Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD speak saying, “The LORD has utterly separated me from His people”: Why shouldn’t they say it? Because it isn’t true. They may feel like they are utterly separated… from His people, but God promises they aren’t. So, He says to them, “Don’t say that!”

Nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree”: The eunuch is cited as an example of an outcast. Eunuchs were denied full participation in temple rituals (Leviticus 21:18-20). God didn’t want them to accept their feelings of being cast out. Though they may feel that way, God’s Word is higher than their feelings.
Often when people feel like foreigners or outcasts, the feelings become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is only in refusing to embrace such feelings, and choosing instead to trust in God’s promise, that such feelings can be broken. If God says you belong, then you belong.

- **To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, even to them I will give in My house… a place and a name:** This is God’s call to the one who feels like an outcast. Simply, He says, “Walk right. Live in obedience, and I will honor and bless you. I will give you a place and a name in My house.”
  - For many, this isn’t good enough. They demand the recognition and honor of men. It isn’t enough for God to give them a place and a name in His house. They must have a place and a name among men. Life is easier and more pleasant when we have a place and a name among men; but we must be able to find contentment having our place and name only with God.
  - The place and name we find with God is better than that among men. It is better than that of sons and daughters; it is an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.
  - Wolf on a place and a name: “An interesting application of this verse is the ‘Yad vaShem’ (A Memorial and a Name), the building in Jerusalem to honor the Jews who died in the holocaust during World War II but whose names are recorded in perpetuity.”
  - This also prophesies the passing of the dominance of the Levitical order. Clearly, giving eunuchs a place and a name in God’s house contradicted the command of Leviticus 21:18-20. But under a coming New Covenant, there is a higher principle at work than the shadows of the Levitical law.

- **Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer:** God’s people had slipped into the idea that they were accepted by God no matter what, and that others were rejected by Him no matter what. Here, the LORD makes it clear that even when a foreigner or a eunuch follow hard after God and come to Him in obedience, He will receive it.

- **For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations:** God wanted His temple – His house – to not only be a place where the Jewish people would worship Him, but to be a house of prayer for all nations.
  - The violation of this principle made Jesus angry. When He came to the temple and found the outer courts – the only place where the Gentile nations could come a pray – more like a swap meet than a house of prayer, He drove out the moneychangers and the merchants (Matthew 21:13).

- **The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, “Yet I will gather to him others”**: Because of the pain of exile and captivity, Israel had become intensely self-focused. They believed God only really cared about them, and the rest of the nations (many of whom treated Israel cruelly) did not matter. But God wanted to expand the vision of Israel beyond her own borders, so they would know that God loved the perishing world and wanted them to love them also.
B. A promise to judge the blind leaders of God’s people.

1. (9) A word to the beasts of the field.
   All you beasts of the field, come to devour, All you beasts in the forest.
   - **All you beasts of the field, come to devour**: The LORD God invites the **beasts of the field** to a great feast – to eat up the corpses of His enemies after they lay on the field of battle.
   - **Come to devour**: The same picture is used in Revelation 19:17: Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

2. (10-11) A word about the unfaithful leaders of Judah.
   His watchmen are blind. They are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.
   - **His watchmen are blind**: The leaders of God’s people are blind; judgment is on the way, but they don’t see it and warn God’s people. They don’t fulfill their purpose as **watchmen**. They are **ignorant**, like **dumb dogs**, simply **sleeping**.
   - **They are shepherds who cannot understand**: These ungodly leaders are a sad contrast to the godly leadership personified by King David in Isaiah 55:3-5. These are unfaithful **shepherds**, who only look **everyone for his own gain**.

3. (12) A word from the unfaithful leaders of Judah.
   “Come,” one says, “I will bring wine, And we will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink; Tomorrow will be as today, And much more abundant.”
   - **We will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink**: Worse than being passively ignorant and blind, they are actively wicked. As judgment approaches, they simply drink and get drunk.
   - **Tomorrow will be as today, and much more abundant**: Their blind faith in progress has replaced a reasoned faith in God. They are ripe for judgment, and unprepared for judgment. Since the picture of Isaiah 56:9 relates to the pictures in the Book of Revelation regarding the return of Jesus, we can see this as a picture of the leaders of the unprepared world – perhaps even the unprepared church – at the return of Jesus.
ISAIAH 57: THE SPIRITUAL ADULTERY OF GOD’S PEOPLE – False Leaders Rebuked

- v.1 May be a description of what happens at the Rapture of the Church.
- v.3 Addressing those who have been involved in pagan religions. These people were to be joined to God as in a husband-wife relationship. Their adultery is that they don’t devote themselves totally to the Lord.
- v.5 In their worship of Baal, the people would offer their children as sacrifices to him.
- v.13 The Lord contrasts the difference between trusting in Him and in a false god.
- v.15-19 Even though they had forsaken God, He still promises His restoration.
- v.20-21 There is constant turmoil for the man who has set His heart against God.

A. Judah’s idolatry is like spiritual adultery.

1. (1-2) The persecution of the righteous.

   The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart;
   Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil.
   He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness.

   - **The righteous perishes:** Carrying on the rebuke of Judah’s leaders from the previous chapter, the LORD speaks to the persecution of the **righteous**. In this case, it is persecution through **neglect** (the righteous perishes and no man takes it to heart).
     - When Isaiah proclaimed this is important. Many critics of the Bible demand that Isaiah was written after the Babylonian exile, because so many events after the exile are precisely prophesied. But the sins described in this chapter are strictly before the exile. This chapter is a marvelous proof that the book of Isaiah was written in the days of Isaiah, by one author, and before the exile.
     - There is no evidence of corresponding post-exilic practices. A prophet in the post-exile could not have written like this.” (Motyer) “All in all we prefer to think of the reign of Manasseh, for the abominations of this king are all found in this chapter.” (Bultema)

   - **The righteous is taken away from evil. He shall enter into peace:** Though the righteous were ignored and persecuted by the wicked leaders of Judah, God would not forsake them. When they perished, when **merciful men** were **taken away**, God used it to bless the righteous, to take them **away from evil** and to allow them to **enter into peace**.

2. (3-10) The spiritual adultery of God’s people.

   “But come here, You sons of the sorceress, You offspring of the adulterer and the harlot!
   Whom do you ridicule? Against whom do you make a wide mouth And stick out the tongue?
   Are you not children of transgression, Offspring of falsehood,
   Inflaming yourselves with gods under every green tree,
   Slaying the children in the valleys, Under the clefts of the rocks?
   Among the smooth stones of the stream Is your portion; They, they, are your lot!
   Even to them you have poured a drink offering, You have offered a grain offering.
   Should I receive comfort in these?
   “On a lofty and high mountain You have set your bed; Even there you went up To offer sacrifice.
   Also behind the doors and their posts You have set up your remembrance;
   For you have uncovered yourself to those other than Me, And have gone up to them;
   You have enlarged your bed And made a covenant with them;
   You have loved their bed, Where you saw their nudity.
   You went to the king with ointment, And increased your perfumes;
   You sent your messengers far off, And even descended to Sheol.
   You are wearied in the length of your way; Yet you did not say, ‘There is no hope.’
   You have found the life of your hand; Therefore you were not grieved.
• **Whom do you ridicule:** The wicked among God’s people made fun of the righteous. They mocked them, and God heard it. Here, the LORD challenges them, simply asking “Who do you think you are? Who are you mocking? **Are you not children of transgression, offspring of falsehood?**”
  
  o This speaks to a common sin of human nature – to see the sins or the problems of others, while being blind to our own sins or problems.

• **Inflaming yourselves with gods under every green tree:** Here, the LORD begins to expose the **spiritual adultery** of His people. They are “hot” with passion for other gods, worshipping them in the ritual worship places of Canaanite paganism (**every green tree… among the smooth stones of the stream… on a high and lofty mountain**).
  
  o In this picture, the LORD is the husband of Israel, and their passionate, chronic attraction for idols was like the lust of an adulterer. His people pursued the false gods like a lover runs after the focus of their love, and they yield themselves to the idols as a lover yields themselves to their beloved (**you have uncovered yourself to those other than Me**).
  
  o “According to the presentation of verse seven, the whoredom of Judah is compared to that of an adulteress who has become so impudent that she no longer commits her sins in secret but publicly and shamelessly. She acts without any restraint and refuses to blush with shame.” (Bultema)

• **Under every green tree:** The picture of “spiritual adultery” is especially fitting, because many of the pagan gods the Israelites went after were “worshipped” with illicit sex rituals. A **green tree** might be a place of such idolatry, because the evergreen tree spoke of constant fertility.

• **Slaying the children in the valleys:** One of the Canaanite gods the Israelites worshipped was named Molech, and he received children as sacrifices. Molech was “worshipped” by heating a metal statue representing the god until it was red hot, then by placing a living infant on the outstretched hands of the statue, while beating drums drowned out the screams of the child until it burned to death. Molech was one of the “lovers” God’s people forsook the LORD for in their spiritual adultery.
  
  o People who would not make a small sacrifice for the LORD God would kill their own children for a pagan idol! “And as the love of harlots is oft hotter than that of husband and wife, so superstition many times outdoeth true religion.” (Trapp)

• **Even to them you have poured a drink offering, you have offered a grain offering:** These are the sacrifices that **should** have been given to the LORD. But His unfaithful people gave them to idols instead. “For the devil is God’s ape, and idolaters used the same rites and offerings in the worship of idols which God has prescribed in his own [worship].” (Poole)

• **Also behind the doors and their posts you have set up your remembrance:** In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, God told Israel to inscribe His name and His word on every door post. Here, there is a perverse twisting of that – they remember their pagan gods **behind the doors and their posts.**
  
  o “The sensitive Israelite reader would, of course, remember that it was the word of God – and, most aptly, the assertion that there is only one God – that was the be inscribed on the doors.” (Grogan)

• **You are wearied in the length of your way:** As time went on, the spiritual adultery of God’s people wasn’t rewarding. After the initial thrill of their spiritual adultery wore off, they were **wearied.** But even then, they would not repent (**Yet you did not say, “There is no hope”**).
B. God describes His dealing with His disobedient people.

1. (11-13) The end of God’s patience with His people.

“And of whom have you been afraid, or feared, That you have lied
And not remembered Me, Nor taken it to your heart?
Is it not because I have held My peace from of old That you do not fear Me?
I will declare your righteousness And your works, For they will not profit you.
When you cry out. Let your collection of idols deliver you.
But the wind will carry them all away, A breath will take them.
But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain.

• And of whom have you been afraid, or feared, that you have lied and not remembered Me: Here, the LORD confronts the fact that His people do not fear Him, and that they do fear someone or something else. Nor taken it to your heart: Their superficial relationship was connected to a low view of God, and their lack of respect for Him.

• Is it not because I have held My peace from of old that you do not fear Me: Why did God’s people lack respect for Him? In part, because He showed mercy and did not punish their sin immediately. They made a crucial error, common to fallen humanity: they mistook God’s mercy and forbearance for weakness or lack of resolve.

• I will declare your righteousness and your works, for they will not profit you: God’s people didn’t trust in Him, and the things they did trust in – themselves, and their idols (let your collection of idols deliver you) could not help them. Their idols were so weak and helpless that a breath will take them.

• He who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain: This is the contrast to those who turned away from God. Trust in the LORD makes a person secure, while trust in one’s self or in idols ends in ruin.

2. (14) A stumbling block removed.

And one shall say, “Heap it up! Heap it up!
Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.”

• Heap it up! Heap it up: This doesn’t describe setting things in the way of those coming to God. Instead, using the same imagery as Isaiah 35:8, which describes a highway for God’s people, meaning a raised road that is above all obstacles. Heap it up refers to the building of this road, so that God’s people can return to Him without obstacle.

• Prepare the way, take the stumbling block out of the way of My people: Whatever gets in the way of our getting right with God must be taken out of the way. In the following verses, the LORD deals with those obstacles.
3. (15-21) God describes the way of peace and restoration.

For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry;
For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made.
For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him;
I hid and was angry, And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.
I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, And restore comforts to him And to his mourners.
“I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,”
Says the LORD, “And I will heal him.”
But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.
“There is no peace,” Says my God, “for the wicked.”

- For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: To be right with God, the first thing to do is to understand His great majesty. The LORD introduces Himself to His people with titles reflecting His great majesty and expects His people to respond to Him as such a glorious God.

- To revive the spirit of the humble: Though God is the High and Lofty One, and lives in the high and holy place, at the same time He will live with men – with him who has a contrite and humble spirit. This is the second thing to being right before God: being contrite and humble before the God of great majesty.

- For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry: The third thing to understand in getting right with God is His great love. Here, the LORD shows His mercy to His people, but promises to relent and not be angry forever. Though God disciplined His people, He now says, I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, and restore comforts to him.

- Peace, peace, to him who is far off and to him who is near: In His mercy, God invites all men to peace – both him who is far off and him who is near. Each one can receive God’s shalom, which is more than the absence of hostility; it is the gift of precious well-being.
  - In Ephesians 2:17, Paul speaks of Jesus fulfilling this promise exactly: And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. As revealed through Paul, God shows that him who is far off refers to the Gentiles, while him who is near is the Jewish man. Both can come to peace through receiving God’s gift through Jesus.

- But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest… there is no peace… for the wicked: In contrast to those who return to God, the wicked are still without peace. God’s great mercy is held out to man – but it must be received.
  - “Their minds are restless, being perpetually hurried and tormented with their own lusts and passions, and with the horror of their guilt, and the dread of Divine vengeance due unto them, and ready to come upon them.”
    (Poole)
  - Isaiah 57:20-21 is a good example of how the sea was thought to be a dangerous, dark, restless place in the mind of the ancient Jews. No wonder that in the new heaven and the new earth, there is no more sea (Revelation 21:1).
THE FUTURE GLORY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, THE NEW ZION (Isa 58-66)

ISAIAH 58: THE BLESSING OF TRUE WORSHIP – Hypocritical Religion

- v.1-2 The contrast was that outwardly they sought the Lord, but inwardly they still worshipped their idols.
- v.3-5 They weren't fasting to seek God but to prove a point. Their fast was outward, not inward (Mt. 6:16).
- v.6-8 When they fast as God wants, they should take their substance and give it to someone else.

A. The LORD exposes the shallow worship of His people.

1. (1-3a) God’s people ask: “Why do our prayers go unanswered?”

   “Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
   Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins.
   Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways,
   As a nation that did righteousness, And did not forsake the ordinance of their God.
   They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God.
   ‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and You have not seen?
   Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’

   - Cry aloud, spare not… tell My people their transgression: God speaks loudly and directly. His people need to hear their transgression – but will they hear?
   - They seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways: God first described the appearance of their spiritual life. On the surface, it seemed that God’s people loved Him and were devoted to Him. They had the reputation of a nation that did righteousness, and they looked like people who would take delight in approaching God.
   - Why have we fasted… and You have not seen: With this spiritual veneer, they felt God was unfair to them.
     “LORD, we have fasted, but You still don’t answer our prayer. Don’t you know that we seek you daily, delight to know Your ways, do righteousness, and take delight in approaching You? Yet You do not answer our prayers!”

2. (3b-5) God exposes the shallow worship of His people.

   “In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers.
   Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness.
   You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high.
   Is it a fast that I have chosen. A day for a man to afflict his soul?
   Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
   Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD?

   - In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit all your laborers: Enough with the image; now God exposes the reality. The reality was that His people didn’t fast with the right heart and did it only as an empty ritual. The reality was that even on a day when they fasted, they still exploited their employees. God didn’t accept their fasting when it wasn’t connected with a sincere heart of obedience.
     o “How can any nation pretend to fast or worship God at all, or dare to profess that they believe in the existence of such a Being, while they carry on the slave trade, and traffic in the souls, blood, and bodies of men! O ye most flagitious of knaves, and worst of hypocrites, cast off at once the mask of your religion; and deepen not your endless perdition by professing the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, while ye continue in this traffic!”
     (Adam Clarke, writing in 1823)
   - Indeed you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness: They fasted for needs, certainly; but selfish needs like “LORD, help me win this argument.” “LORD, help me defeat this person.” Though their prayer was accompanied with fasting, it was still a selfish, even wicked prayer – so God did not answer.
   - You will not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high: The purpose of their fasting was to glorify themselves, to make their voice heard on high. God says, “No more. You will not fast as you do this day.”
Is it a fast that I have chosen: The kind of fasting God rebukes here is a hollow, empty, show, without the spiritual substance behind it. This isn’t the kind of fast God has chosen. Even though they do all the right things in fasting (bow down his head like a bulrush... spread out sackcloth and ashes), God does not even call this a fast.

- The people of Isaiah’s day had the same problem as the Pharisees of Jesus’ day. They trusted in empty ritual, apart from the spiritual reality. Real fasting – fasting that is partnered with real repentance, and isn’t only about image – has great power before God (Matthew 17:21). But God sees through the hypocrisy of empty religious ritual, including fasting. In Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, He told how the self-righteous Pharisee made a special point to say, “I fast twice a week” (Luke 18:9-14).

- It isn’t that Isaiah or the LORD are down on fasting. They are down on any empty religious ritual. The answer isn’t to stop fasting, but to get right with God and make your fasting more than superficial. As Jesus said to His people about the empty religious rituals of the Pharisees, These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone (Matthew 23:23).

B. The character and blessings of true worship.

1. (6-7) The kind of worship and fasting most acceptable to God.

   “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?
   Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness: God tells His people, “If you want to fast the way that pleases Me, begin with getting right with your brothers and sisters. Stop oppressing others and reach out to help others.”

Loose the bonds of wickedness... undo the heavy burdens... let the oppressed go free... break every yoke: First, they had to stop acting wickedly towards others. This means that getting right with God begins by stopping the evil we do towards others.

Share your bread with the hungry... cover... not hide yourself from your own flesh: Then, they had to start acting lovingly towards others. This means that getting right with God continues by doing loving things for other people.

2. (8-12) The blessings God promises for the true worshipper.

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

Then your light shall break forth like the morning: If God’s people would couple their fasting with lives of righteousness and love, then they would see their prayers answered. They would have lives full of light, full of healing, full of righteousness, full of the glory of the LORD. When they called out to God, then the LORD will answer.

If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness: Again, the LORD gives them three things to stop doing. They must stop oppressing others, treating them as animals bound with a yoke. They must stop pointing... the finger at others and see where they are to blame. They must stop speaking wickedness.
• These are sins of *commission*. They are sins that we go out and *do* against the LORD and against others. If we will walk right with God, we must stop and guard against sins of *commission*.

• **If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul**: Again, the LORD gives them two things to *start* doing. They needed to minister to the hungry with more than food; they had to *extend* their soul to the hungry. They had to look for the afflicted soul and seek to *satisfy* it.
  
  o Failing to do these are sins of *omission*. They are things that we should have done, yet we have not. If we will walk right with God, we must open our eyes and do what is our loving duty before Him.
  
  o This prayer, “A General Confession of Sin,” from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1559 edition), expresses repentance for both sins of *commission* and *omission*:

  o Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways, like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore thou them that be penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name.

• **Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday**: To the repentant, God promises blessing. Not only will they have light, but even their darkness shall be as the noonday!

• **The LORD will guide you continually**: This is a promise for those who do more than just empty religious rituals. To have the guidance of the LORD, empty religious ritual isn’t enough. We need to seek God with both sincere hearts and sincere actions.

• **And satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones**: Those who serve God with sincere hearts and actions enjoy a health and life of the soul that is impossible for the superficial follower of God to know.

• **Those from among you shall build the old waste places**: Those who serve God with sincere hearts and actions also *accomplish* things for God’s kingdom. They *build*, and are called the *Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell in*. You can’t *build* anything for God’s kingdom on the foundation of a superficial walk with God.

• How there needs to be a rebuilding work today! “We live in a broken world. In every direction there are breaches which are wide and deep. There are broken hearts and broken homes, and that which once was sacred is but a waste place. Whereas once there was a carefully guarded fence around the sanctity of family life, sex life, and the right to personal privacy, now there is just a waste place. The wall of protection is in ruins, and life has lost all its meaning.” (Redpath)

  o All in all, this passage shows several characteristics of a life right with God.

  • It is an enlightened life: Your light shall dawn in the darkness.
  • It is a guided life: The LORD will guide you continually.
  • It is a satisfied life: And satisfy your soul in drought.
  • It is a fragrant life: Like a watered garden.
  • It is a freshly sustained life: Like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.
  • It is a productive, healing life: You shall build up the old waste places.
3. (13-14) True Sabbath keeping and the blessings of it.

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

- Call the Sabbath a delight… the holy day of the LORD honorable: The Sabbath was another empty religious observance for the Jewish people of Isaiah’s day. God calls them to take a delight in the heart and in the purpose of the Sabbath – to honor Him, not doing your own ways.
  - This fits in perfectly with the fulfillment of the Sabbath in light of the finished work of Jesus. We keep the Sabbath when we set aside every day to honor Him, and by not doing your own ways as a means of justifying ourselves.
  - Are Christians required to keep the Sabbath today? The New Testament makes it clear that Christians are not under obligation to observe a Sabbath day (Colossians 2:16-17; Galatians 4:9-11), because Jesus fulfills the purpose and plan of the Sabbath for us and in us (Hebrews 4:9-11).
  - Galatians 4:10 tells us that Christians are not bound to observe days and months and seasons and years. The rest we enter into as Christians is something to experience every day, not just one day a week – the rest of knowing we don’t have to work to save ourselves, but that our salvation was accomplished in Jesus (Hebrews 4:9-10).
  - The Sabbath commanded here and observed by Israel was a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ (Colossians 2:16-17). We have a rest in Jesus that is ours to live in every day. Therefore, since the shadow of the Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus, we are free to keep any day – or no day – as a Sabbath after the custom of ancient Israel. However, though we are free from the legal obligation of the Sabbath, we dare not ignore the importance of a day of rest – God has built us so that we need one.
  - If anyone would insist on the Sabbath, they must also insist on the six-day work week. Exodus 20:9, in the command regarding the Sabbath, says Six days you shall labor and do all your work. Adam Clarke says on that passage, “He who idles his time away in the six days is equally culpable in the sight of God as he who works on the seventh.” (Clarke)

- Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD: When we keep the meaning of the Sabbath, not merely as an empty religious ritual, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD. God will bless us, and we shall delight, not only in the blessings, but in the LORD Himself. We know it is sure, because the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
  - In this chapter, God exposed the emptiness of two religious rituals as practiced in Isaiah’s day: fasting and Sabbath keeping. Both of these are expressions of not doing things. In fasting, you don’t eat. In Sabbath keeping, you don’t work. An important aspect to this chapter is showing us that what we don’t do isn’t enough to make us right before God. Our walk with God shouldn’t only be defined by what we don’t do. What do we do for the LORD?
ISAIAH 59: THE REALITY CHECK – Sins

- v.1-2 Answers to prayer are hindered by our sin. Our sin separates us from the Lord (Ps. 66:18).
- v.11-15 Describing the perversity of man.
- v.19 There is no man to help, but the Spirit of the Lord is our defense.

A. The sin God sees.

1. (1) The problem of God’s people: what the cause is not.

   Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save;
   Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

   **Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save:** God’s people wondered why God did not seem to rescue them from their trials. They wondered if perhaps God had diminished in strength – if His **hand** had become **shortened**. Isaiah the prophet assures them that this is not the case.
   - This touches on one of the greatest problems in practical theology: how can there be a God of love and all power when there is human suffering? If we loved someone and had the power to end their suffering, wouldn’t we do it? Isaiah addresses those who wondered if God wasn’t all powerful, and that is why their suffering continues.
   - Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a remarkably wide-selling book titled *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. It sold more than a half a million copies before going to paperback and was on the New York Times best-seller list for a whole year. The whole point of his book is to say God is all loving but not all powerful, that God is good, but not sovereign. So, when bad things happen to good people, it is because events are out of God’s control. Kushner advises his readers to “learn to love [God] and forgive him despite his limitations.” This certainly is not the God of the Bible, because **the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save**. Isaiah simply says, “**Behold** this. See this.”

   **Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear:** Perhaps the problem isn’t that God lacks power. Perhaps He lacks **knowledge** of our problem, or **interest** in our problem. But this isn’t the situation at all, as Isaiah reminds us. God’s **ear** is not **heavy**. He can **hear** us just fine.

2. (2) The problem of God’s people: what the cause is.

   But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
   And your sins have hidden His face from you. So that He will not hear.

   **But your iniquities have separated you from your God:** The problem isn’t with God’s power, His knowledge, or His interest. The problem is with our **iniquities**. Sin has **separated you from your God**.
   - In what way does sin separate us from God? Sin does not necessarily separate us from the **presence** of God, because God is present everywhere (Psalm 139:7) and even Satan can have an audience with God (Job 1:6). Sin does not separate us from the **love** of God, because God loves sinners (Romans 5:8). But sin still does separate.
     - Sin separates us from fellowship with God, because at least at the point of our sin, we no longer think alike with God.
     - Sin separates us from the blessing of God, because at least at the point of our sin, we are not trusting God and relying on Him.
     - Sin separates us from some of the benefits of God’s love, even as the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) was still loved by the father but didn’t enjoy the benefits of his love when he was in sin.
     - Sin separates us, in some way, from the protection of God, because He will allow trials to come our way to correct us.
3. (3-8) A detailed description of the sins of God’s people.

For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.
No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth.
They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
They hatch vipers’ eggs and weave the spider’s web;
He who eats of their eggs dies, And from that which is crushed a viper breaks out.
Their webs will not become garments, Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works are works of iniquity, And the act of violence is in their hands.
Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths.
The way of peace they have not known, And there is no justice in their ways;
They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

- Your hands are defiled with blood: They practiced and approved of violence and murder.
- Your lips have spoken lies: They lied with ease and regularity.
- No one calls for justice: They did not share God’s heart for what was fair and good; everyone simply thought in terms of their own good. Both justice and truth were distant concepts, and instead of justice there were empty words, instead of truth there were lies.
  - Motyer on empty words: “Isaiah is not describing but diagnosing. They may think they are acting sensibly but actually it is all nonsense.”
- They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity: as if they were snakes giving birth to more evil serpents, bringing forth nothing but death (he who eats of their eggs dies) and more evil (from that which is crushed a viper breaks out).
  - Clarke on weave the spider’s web: “By their plots they weave nets, lay snares industriously, with great pains and artifice, whereby they may entangle and involve their poor neighbors in intricacies and perplexities, and so devour them, as the spider weaves her web to catch flies, and then to feed on them.” But their webs will never cover them before God: Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works.
- The act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil: Both hands and feet are given to sin. But it doesn’t end there; even their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity.
- They have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace: Their choice and the consequences are plain. Their crooked paths will never lead them into the way of peace, meaning peace in the full sense of shalom.
  - Paul quotes Isaiah 59:7-8 in Romans 3:15-17. He uses this passage, connected with other Old Testament passages, to demonstrate that man is a sinner from “head to toe.”
  - In light of all this sin, it is amazing – absolutely amazing – that God’s people could still believe (as they did in Isaiah 59:1) that the problem was with God, and not them!
B. The effects of sin the people see.

1. (9-11) Because of their sin, darkness comes.

Therefore justice is far from us, Nor does righteousness overtake us;
We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness!
We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight; We are as dead men in desolate places.
We all growl like bears, And moan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but there is none; For salvation, but it is far from us.

- **Therefore justice is far from us, nor does righteousness overtake us**: Because God’s people had no interest in justice, God did not bless them with it. Because God’s people did not care about righteousness, God did not bless them with it. This is the principle of Jesus stated in Matthew 13:12: whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

- **We look for light, but there is darkness**: Now, having given themselves over to darkness, when they want the light, it isn’t there. When you always have the light to go to, the darkness feels “fun.” It seems mysterious and adventurous. But when the light is taken away, we despair in the darkness.

2. (12-15a) Confessing their sin and admitting their guilt.

For our transgressions are multiplied before You, And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions are with us, And as for our iniquities, we know them:
In transgressing and lying against the LORD, And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.
Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.
So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.

- **Our sins testify against us… righteousness stands afar off**: Now God’s people are in a better place. They have had their reality check and see things as they are. No longer do they blame the “shortened hand” of God, or His “heavy ear.” They know it is because of their own sins that righteousness stands afar off.

C. The salvation and redemption the LORD sees.

1. (15b-16a) What the LORD saw.

Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice.
He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor.

- **The LORD saw it, and it displeased Him, that there was no justice**: The state of God’s people was no mystery to the LORD. They cried out in Isaiah 59:12-15a, stating how desperate their condition was – and the LORD knew it all along.

- **He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor**: Not only was the state of God’s people bad; but no one among them took the lead in getting it right. Where was the man would lead the people in righteousness? He could not be found. Where was the intercessor who would plead God’s case to the people, and the people’s repentance to their God? No intercessor could be found.
Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.
For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak.
According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies; The coastslands He will fully repay.
So shall they fear The name of the LORD from the west, And His glory from the rising of the sun;
When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

**Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him:** God waited and waited for a disobedient Israel to turn to Him. He waited and waited for a man to lead them back to Him, or an intercessor to plead before Him. None arose; so the LORD did it Himself. If a man or an intercessor would have stepped forth, it would have saved Israel a lot of calamity. But the fact that no man, or no intercessor stepped forward didn’t derail God’s plan. He waited to work in partnership through a man. He waited to work through an intercessor. But God’s work would still go forth if none arose!

**He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head:** No man stepped forward to work with the LORD, so the LORD puts on his armor and goes forth to destroy His enemies, protect His people, and glorify His name!

  o Most people don’t pick up the connection between Isaiah 59:17-18 and Paul’s comments on our spiritual armor in Ephesians 6:10-17. In that passage, Paul calls that armor the whole armor of God, and it is God’s armor in the sense that it belongs to Him – after all, He uses it here in Isaiah 59:17-18 – and He allows us to use it to fight for Him.
  o We may see a connection. If we don’t put on the armor of God and fight for Him, then eventually God will put it on Himself and fight for His glory. But God’s preference is to work in and through us, with us using His armor.

**So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun:** This shows that the end result will be wonderful. In His ultimate victory – which He wants us to share in but will accomplish with or without us – the glory of the LORD will be known and respected from east to west.

**When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.** The enemies of the LORD will never triumph over Him. Even if they come in like a flood, and seem unstoppable, the LORD will lift up a battle-standard against him, and he will be stopped. God gives His people the glorious privilege of being more than conquerors (Romans 8:37) but will win it with or without us.
3. (20-21) **What the LORD said.**

“The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,”

Says the LORD.

“As for Me,” says the LORD, “this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,” says the LORD, “from this time and forevermore.”

- **The Redeemer will come to Zion:** After speaking in the third-person through the prophet, now the LORD speaks in the first-person through the prophet. When He speaks, He declares: the Redeemer – the goel – will come to Zion.
  - The goel – sometimes translated kinsman-redeemer, here simply as Redeemer – had a specifically defined role in Israel’s family life. The kinsman-redeemer was responsible to buy a fellow Israelite out of slavery (Leviticus 25:48). He was responsible to be the “avenger of blood” to make sure the murderer of a family member answered to the crime (Numbers 35:19). He was responsible to buy back family land that had been forfeited (Leviticus 25:25). And he was responsible to carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). In these, we see that the goel, the kinsman-redeemer, was responsible to safeguard the persons, the property, and the posterity of the family.
  - When the New King James Version capitalizes Redeemer, it does so rightly – because our goel is Jesus Christ. He is our near kinsman because He has added perfect humanity to His deity. He is the one who buys us out of slavery. He is the one who avenges wrongs done to us. He protects our inheritance, and blesses and guards our posterity. This promise of the LORD in Isaiah 59:20 could be reworded, “I will send My Messiah, the Redeemer for all humanity, Jesus of Nazareth!”

- **To those who turn from transgression:** Who does the Redeemer come to? To those who turn away from transgression. The goel only worked for those who asked for His services, and knew they needed Him.

- **My Spirit who is upon you, and My words... shall not depart from your mouth... from this time and forevermore:** The covenant God makes with His people promises an abiding Spirit and an enduring word. God accomplishes His purpose in people and through all creation through both the Spirit and the word.
ISAIAH 60: THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF GOD’S KINGDOM – The Deliverer out of Zion

• v.1-13 The glorious events that will come to Israel when the Messiah comes. The Jews had difficulty in recognizing Jesus because of the suffering in His life. The Jews had spiritualized the Scriptures that had foretold the suffering that the Messiah would endure (Mt. 16:16-23).
• v.18 Many people will be coming to worship the Lord in great annual celebrations.
• v.21-22 The Lord declares His glorious restoration will be taking place in His time.

A. The glory of Israel in the Kingdom of God.

1. (1-3) The glorious light of God’s Kingdom.

   Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.
   For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people;
   But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.
   The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

   • Arise, shine; for your light has come: After the thick and desperate darkness described in Isaiah 59:9-10, this is the glorious rescue from the Redeemer. Light has come – so God tells His people to respond to it, and to arise and shine!
     o Darkness is for lying down; light is for rising up. Darkness is for gloom and sleep; light is for shining. When the light has come, we must respond, and arise, shine!
     o First, we receive God’s light (your light has come), and then we have a service to put forth (arise, shine). You can’t shine until your light has come, but once it has come, there is something wrong if you don’t arise and shine!

   • And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you: This is no earthly light; this is light that emanates from the glory of the LORD. This is like the light of Jesus in the Transfiguration, when His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light (Matthew 17:2). Sometimes harsh, bright light can be disturbing or uncomfortable – but not this warm, wonderful light that pulsates from the glory of the LORD.

   • Gentiles shall come to your light: When the LORD lifts up His glorious light over Israel, the Gentiles nations shall see it and be attracted to the light. Even kings will be attracted to the brightness of Israel’s rising. This will be ultimately fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus when Israel is lifted up among all nations.
     o While in principle this chapter has application to all God’s people, it is specifically directed to Israel, and will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. Not all have seen this. Adam Clarke writes, “The subject of this chapter is the great increase and flourishing state of the Church of God by the conversion and accession of the heathen nations to it.” But the fact that the LORD speaks of the Gentiles here in opposition to the subjects of the prophecy shows He speaks to Israel as Israel. Replacement theology just doesn’t work here, or anywhere.
2. (4-13) Great treasures come to Israel in the Kingdom.

“Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side.  
Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy;  
Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.  
The multitude of camels shall cover your land, The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;  
All those from Sheba shall come; They shall bring gold and incense,  
And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.  
All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;  
They shall ascend with acceptance on My altar, And I will glorify the house of My glory.  
“Who are these who fly like a cloud, And like doves to their roosts?  
Surely the coastslands shall wait for Me; And the ships of Tarshish will come first,  
To bring your sons from afar, Their silver and their gold with them,  
To the name of the LORD your God, And to the Holy One of Israel, Because He has glorified you.  
“The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, And their kings shall minister to you;  
For in My wrath I struck you, But in My favor I have had mercy on you.  
Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night,  
That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession.  
For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, And those nations shall be utterly ruined.  
“The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, The cypress, the pine, and the box tree together,  
To beautify the place of My sanctuary; And I will make the place of My feet glorious.

- **Your sons shall come from afar**: Through this passage, one of the great themes is *regathering*. We may suppose that in the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus, every Jewish person remaining on the earth will be gathered into the land of Israel from every nation on earth. The present-day regathering of Israel is a precious preview of this ultimate and complete regathering.

- **The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you**: Not only will they receive the treasure of their people, but also the literal treasure of the *Gentiles shall come to* Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. The nations will willingly give them their *wealth*, much as the Egyptians willingly gave the Israelites riches when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:35-36). So much will be given that they will need to keep the gates of the city *open continually*!

- **They shall bring gold… their silver and their gold with them**: Why do the nations bestow such riches on little Israel? First, they recognize that they thereby give it to God. They bring their *silver and their gold with them, to the name of the LORD your God, and to the Holy One of Israel*. Second, they do it because they see the work of God in Israel: *because He has glorified you*. So they willingly give to and serve Israel (*The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you*).

- **To beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious**: Another reason the riches of the nations pour into Jerusalem in the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus will be to build and support the Millennial Temple. The Millennial Temple – described in great depth in Ezekiel 40-47 – stands as a place memorializing God’s presence and work in history. There will apparently also be priests and sacrifices at the temple, but not for atonement – because atonement was finished at the cross. The sacrifices are for worship, consecration, and perhaps historical reenactment.

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B. The glory of Israel in the Kingdom contrasted with their previous state.

1. (14-18) How the nations treated Israel, and how they will treat them in the Kingdom.

Also the sons of those who afflicted you Shall come bowing to you,
And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet;
And they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
“Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, So that no one went through you,
I will make you an eternal excellence, A joy of many generations.
You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles, And milk the breast of kings;
You shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.
“Instead of bronze I will bring gold, Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace, And your magistrates righteousness.
Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders;
But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise.

• **The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you:** Those who previously persecuted Israel, and specifically Jerusalem, will have a different heart and mind in the Millennial Kingdom. Then they will **come bowing** to Jerusalem; they will recognize it as **The City of the LORD**.

• **Instead of bronze I will bring gold:** God will take what was old – and perhaps functional, but not full of glory – and replace it with far better things. More than a miracle than turning **bronze to gold** is turning **magistrates** to **righteousness**!

• **Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise:** What a glorious transformation! From the violence and unrestrained bloodshed of Isaiah 59:6-8, to walls called **Salvation** and gates called **Praise**!
  - The ultimate fulfillment of these things waits because the Millennial Kingdom is not yet here. But the King of that Kingdom is here and wants to do some of that work on a different level. For example, a **home** can see a beautiful transformation right now. It can be said of a Christian home, **violence shall no longer be heard in your home, neither wasting nor destruction within your walls; but you shall call your walls Salvation and your doors Praise**.

• **You shall know:** This explains why God does this. It is not because Israel is so great and has earned this as an achievement through hard work. He does it that **You shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.** He does a work so great that all know it is His doing.
2. (19-22) How the LORD will treat Israel in the Kingdom.

“The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory.
Your sun shall no longer go down, Nor shall your moon withdraw itself; For the LORD will be your everlasting light, And the days of your mourning shall be ended.
Also your people shall all be righteous; They shall inherit the land forever,
The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified.
A little one shall become a thousand, And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time.”

- The sun shall no longer be your light by day… but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light: This is like the light of the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21:23, where the LORD Himself is the light. But just as important as having the LORD as your everlasting light is having your God your glory, and to glory in no one or nothing else.
  o “In the old order of creation, life was governed rigidly by night and day and unpredictably by the fitfulness of sun and moon. But in the new order of salvation, the ruling principle is the changeless presence of the Lord.” (Motyer)

- They shall inherit the land forever: When we remember the context of Isaiah’s prophecy, it makes it even more precious. In much of this book, he speaks from before the time of the Babylonian captivity and exile, to the time of the exile. To those dispossessed people of God, He points them to a day when they shall inherit the land forever.
  Why? Because they are so good? No, but the LORD says it will be; so it will be seen as the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.

- I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time: God didn’t say it would happen soon, though in an eternal scale we might consider it soon. But God would hasten it – hurry it along, expedite it – in its time. When its time has come, the LORD will hasten it, but not before its time.
  o The promise seems too good to be true, and we are conditioned to think that if it seems too good to be true, it is. But God is too good not to be true!
ISAIAH 61: OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE MESSIAH – Christ’s Two Advents in One View

- v.1-2 Prophecy of Jesus and His ministry. Jesus quoted this as a description of Himself (Mt. 11:4-5; see note Isa. 26:19). The "day of vengeance" still has yet to take place during the Great Tribulation. The "wrath" is not for the Church. The tribulation the Christian goes through is from Satan and a part of living in this world. The wrath that the non-Christian will go through is from God (1 Thess. 5:9; Jn. 16:33; Heb. 10:30).
- v.6 The word "minister" means "servant" (Mt. 20:27).

A. What the Messiah will do.

1. (1a) The empowerment of the Messiah’s ministry.

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me.

- The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me: Here, Isaiah prophetically speaks for the Messiah, and the Messiah announces that He is blessed and empowered by the Spirit of the Lord GOD.
- Because the LORD has anointed Me: This identifies the speaker as the Messiah, because Messiah means “Anointed One.” Passages such as 1 Samuel 2:10 refer to the Messiah as His anointed.

2. (1b-3) The ministry of the Messiah.

To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

- To preach good tidings to the poor: The Messiah announces that He is here to heal the damage that sin brings. Sin has done great damage, so there needs to be a great work of redemption.
- He has sent Me: Because sin impoverishes, He will preach good tidings to the poor. Because sin breaks hearts, He will heal the brokenhearted. Because sin makes captives, He will proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. Because sin oppresses, He will proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.
- He has sent Me: Because sin is a crime that must be avenged, He will proclaim... the day of vengeance of our God.
3. (7) God's people will rejoice at God's great blessings.

Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

• Instead of your shame: What a change under the anointing of the Spirit and the ministry of the Messiah! No more shame. Now, you shall have double honor. No more confusion. Now, they shall rejoice in their portion. Indeed, everlasting joy shall be theirs, a joy that can never be taken away.

B. What God's people will do.

1. (4) God's people will rebuild what is ruined.

And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.

• They shall rebuild the old ruins: God loves to restore ruins. He wants to use His people to restore and rebuild things that are broken down and ruined. Under the empowerment of the Spirit, and the ministry of the Messiah, God's people will be rebuilders.

• The desolations of many generations: Even if the rubble has stood for many generations, God can still use His people to rebuild. A beautiful example – and partial fulfillment – of this is Nehemiah, who took the decades-old rubble of Jerusalem's walls and rebuilt the walls.

2. (5-6) God's people will be set apart to serve the LORD.

Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, And the sons of the foreigner Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast.

• You shall be named the Priests of the LORD, men shall call you the Servants of our God: God's people, under the anointing of the Spirit and the ministry of the Messiah, have a holy occupation. They are Priests of the LORD, and Servants of our God. God provides others to take care of the flocks and to be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

3. (7) God's people will be set apart to serve the LORD.

Significantly, Jesus stopped reading before this sentence. He stopped in the middle of the prophecy, because to proclaim… the day of vengeance of our God is relevant to His Second Coming, not to His first coming. The comma in year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance has stood for almost 2,000 years. This shows us something of the nature of Biblical prophecy: it may “shift gears” and time frames quickly, and without warning.

• We can compare a whole year of grace to a single day of vengeance.

• He has sent Me: Because sin brings grief, He will comfort all who mourn.

o The extent of the comfort and restoration is beautifully described. Instead of the ashes of mourning, He gives His people beauty. Instead of the mourning itself, He gives His people the oil of joy. Instead of the spirit of heaviness, He gives His people the garment of praise. Why do we sit in the ashes, why do we mourn, why do we indulge the spirit of heaviness when Jesus gave us something so much better?

o The word beauty has in mind a beautiful crown or head ornament. It is translated exquisite hats in Exodus 39:28 and headaddresses in Isaiah 3:20. In mourning, ashes would be cast upon the head (2 Samuel 13:19). Here, the ashes are replaced with a beautiful crown.

• That they may be called trees of righteousness: The restored place of God's people is glorious. They are as strong, beautiful, and useful as trees – and trees of righteousness at that. Most wonderfully, when people look at the trees, they see they are the planting of the LORD.

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C. The everlasting covenant.

1. (8) The heart behind the covenant.

“For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering;
I will direct their work in truth. And will make with them an everlasting covenant.

- For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering: The LORD explains how sacrifices such as a burnt offering can really just amount to robbery if the heart isn’t right. Instead, the LORD loves justice. Sacrifices alone, and the sacrificial system in itself, are not enough.

- I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant: God has an alternative to the sacrificial system. As God directs the work, and as He makes an everlasting covenant, then His heart will be fulfilled among the people.

2. (9) The covenant brings prominent blessings.

Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, And their offspring among the people.
All who see them shall acknowledge them, That they are the posterity whom the LORD has blessed.

- They are posterity whom the LORD has blessed: This everlasting covenant brings blessing, and blessings so prominent that the blessed shall be known among the Gentiles. In fact, all who see them shall acknowledge them.

- Whom the LORD has blessed: The writer to the Hebrews pronounces a blessing regarding this everlasting covenant: Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)


I will greatly rejoice in the LORD. My soul shall be joyful in my God:
For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

- I will greatly rejoice in the LORD: The blessed one’s joy isn’t in the blessing itself, but in the LORD. He must have been reading Philippians 4:4, where Paul writes Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

- For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness: The granting of salvation and righteousness to God’s people is represented by the picture of clothing them.
  o These are glorious garments: As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
  o These are given garments: For He has clothed me... He has covered me.

- As the earth brings forth its bud: The blessing of God grows. It isn’t manufactured, but it grows. Even so, the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.
  o There is a sense in which we can never make something grow. No one can get inside of a seed and “turn on” the genetic component that makes the seed spring forth, and bud. The blessing of life and growth is miraculously within the seed. But we can provide the right environment for the seed to bud, grow, and be fruitful. That’s also how we receive and flourish in God’s blessings. We can’t “make” or “manufacture” them. But we can put our hearts and minds in the right environments of faith, fellowship, and obedience, to see blessing grow and flourish.
ISAIAH 62: A GLORIOUS FUTURE FOR ZION – Divine Unrest Until Israel Restored

- v.1 God will not rest until it is accomplished.
- v.4 The people have felt forsaken, especially those who were part of the Holocaust.
- v.5 God relates to Israel as in a marital relationship. In the New Testament Christ and the Church are likened this way as well (Eph. 5:22-33).
- v.8-9 No longer will outsiders who invade the land take advantage of all the profit from the work the Jews have done for it.

A. Jerusalem is loved and protected.

1. (1-3) The coming righteousness and glory of Zion.

For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,
Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns.
The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory.
You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name.
You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD,
And a royal diadem In the hand of your God.

I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness: Isaiah prophesied in a time when Jerusalem was still a functioning city but was spiritually corrupt. Here, he looks forward to the time when Jerusalem is desolate because she has been conquered by the Babylonians, and prophetically speaks comfort and assurance to her discouraged and downcast citizens. The LORD assures them that He will not rest until Jerusalem is restored in a shining righteousness.

- This prophecy is directed towards Zion and Jerusalem. Although God is concerned with that area as an actual material place, it also stands as a representation of Israel, and in an even more general sense, as a representation of all God’s people.

The Gentiles shall see your righteousness: When God lifts up Zion, then the nations see it and are brought to trust in the LORD themselves. The work God would do for Jerusalem was intended to have an effect for more than just Jerusalem but would extend to the Gentiles and unto all kings.

You shall be called by a new name: Jerusalem will be so transformed that she will be called by a new name. Since the LORD is the author of the transformation, He is also the author of the new name (which the mouth of the LORD will name).

- The thought is extended in Isaiah 62:4, where the LORD “exchanges” the old names of Jerusalem for her new names of glory and security.
- The idea of a new name also extends to Christians, in passages like Revelation 2:17 and 3:12. In heaven, when our transformation is complete, we will receive a new name that matches our completely transformed nature.

You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD: Jerusalem will be so special to God that He will regard it as a crown of glory. We may be familiar with the idea that we will receive a crown; it is deeper and more wonderful to consider that we will be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD.

- Paul uses a similar twist on a familiar idea in Ephesians 1:8, where he says that the believer should understand what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. The idea is not of our inheritance in the LORD, but in His inheritance in us. We often have only a superficial understanding of how precious we are to God.

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2. (4-5) The LORD loves Zion as a bridegroom loves a bride.

You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate;
But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah;
For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married.

For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you;
And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.

- **You shall no longer be termed Forsaken:** Jerusalem knew the experience of war and defeat and desolation. God’s people knew what it was like to feel Forsaken and Desolate, so it is as if they could take those names.

- **But you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah:** The days of Forsaken and Desolate will one day pass. There will come a day when Zion and God’s people will know that God delights in them (Hephzibah means “My delight is in her”). There will come a day when Zion and God’s people will know the unbroken presence and love of God, as a wife should know the presence and love of her husband (Beulah means “Married”).
  
  - “With such economy of words and beauty of imagery Isaiah depicts the loving unanimity that characterizes Zion and her intimate union with the Lord – which Revelation 19:7 foresees as the marriage of the Lamb.” (Motyer)

- **And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you:** Zion and God’s people will know how much the LORD loves them. His feeling towards them is more than an obligation-type love; instead, He will rejoice over you!
  
  - The same idea is beautifully communicated in Zephaniah 3:17: The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. No wonder Paul made a special prayer that we could somehow begin to comprehend such love, that we may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. (Ephesians 3:18-19)

3. (6-9) The LORD promises to protect Zion.

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,
And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
The LORD has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength:
“Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies;
And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored.
But those who have gathered it shall eat it, And praise the LORD:
Those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts.”

- **I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem:** Because God loves and rejoices over Zion, He will protect them. Though they were conquered before by the Babylonians, the day will come when He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

- **Watchmen on your walls:** The watchmen have a constant duty. They shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest until He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The watchmen are not critics; they are prayer warriors, who constantly pray, giving God “no rest” until God’s people and His city are restored.
  
  - Bultema on I have set watchmen… who shall never hold their peace day or night: “There is a threefold rich thought: (1) The Lord Himself does not rest with regard to Zion; (2) He does not want His petitioners to keep silence in their prayers for Israel; (3) and He does not want His people to leave Him alone concerning Israel’s deliverance.”
  
  - “A restless Savior calls upon his people to be restless, and to make the Lord himself restless – to give him no rest till his chosen city is in full splendor, his chosen church complete and glorious.” (Spurgeon)
  
  - “‘Give him no rest’ is our Lord’s own command to us concerning the great God. I do not suppose any of you ever advised a beggar to be importunate with you. Did you ever say, ‘Whenever you see me go over this crossing ask me for a penny. If I do not give you one, run after me, or call after me all the way down the
street. If that does not succeed, lay hold upon me, and do not let me go until I help you. Beg without ceasing.’

Did any one of you ever invite applicants to call often, and make large requests of you?... He does in effect say, ‘Press me! Urge me! Lay hold on my strength. Wrestle with me, as when a man seeks to give another a fall that he may prevail with him.’ All this, and much more, is included in the expression, ‘Give him no rest.’” (Spurgeon)

- **The LORD has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength**: No more will Jerusalem be plundered by those who would steal here **grain** or **new wine**. Instead, **those who have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD**.

**B. The LORD will visit Jerusalem.**

1. (10) **A way prepared for the coming of the LORD.**

    Go through, Go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people;  
    Build up, Build up the highway! Take out the stones, Lift up a banner for the peoples!

- **Prepare the way for the people**: Isaiah prophetically looks forward to the time for the LORD to fulfill these promises. Since His salvation is coming, they must **prepare the way for the people**. They need to **build up the highway**, so a smooth road without obstacles is ready to usher people to the LORD’s salvation.

  o Previously through Isaiah great promises were made of a massive pilgrimage to Jerusalem, so roads must be built and the way must be prepared.

- **Lift up a banner for the peoples**: Not only must the way be prepared, but it must also be **marked by a banner for the peoples**. Then not only will they be able to come, but they will also be attracted to come.

2. (11-12) **The Messiah comes to Zion.**

    Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world:  
    “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your salvation is coming;  
    Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.’”  
    And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD;  
    And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

- **Say to the daughter of Zion, “Surely your salvation is coming”**: The way has been prepared and marked; now is the time for the LORD’s salvation and Savior to emerge, and to come to Zion.

  o The Saviour came to Zion, but not only to Zion. Isaiah makes it clear: **Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world** this great news of the coming Savior.

- **Behold, His reward is with Him**: When the Messiah comes to Zion, **His reward is with Him**. Revelation 22:12 is a quotation from this verse: **And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work**.

  o Paul continues this idea in 1 Corinthians 3:8-14, saying how when we appear before the Lord, we will be judged according to our work for and with Him. On that day, **each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor**. (1 Corinthians 3:8)

- **And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken**: Through her history, Jerusalem knew what it was like to be Forsaken. But in that day, she will be called **Sought Out**; everyone will know she was valued and chosen by God.
ISAIAH 63: PRAYER FROM CAPTIVITY – Day of Vengeance

- v.1-4 The Lord will be spreading the fierceness of His anger upon the earth (Rev.14:10, 19:11-16).
- v.4-6 God’s coming judgment upon the earth.
- v.9 Our persecutions are actually faced and suffered for Jesus Christ.

A. The day of vengeance.

1. (1) A question and an answer: “Who is this?”

   Who is this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah,
   This One is glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—
   “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

   - Who is this who comes from Edom: This prophecy describes the day of the LORD’s vengeance. He has come from Edom in the sense that He has judged there first, and now comes to the land of Israel. As the LORD arrives, He is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength.
     
     - With dyed garments from Bozrah is also significant. Bozrah was the capital city of ancient Edom, and “The important city of Bozrah is singled out because its name means ‘grape-gathering,’” and Isaiah developed a detailed comparison between treading grapes and pouring out blood.” (Wolf)
     - “God’s act of judgment against Edom is clearly conceived to be a putting right of the wrongs done to Zion, especially since the Edomites took advantage of Judah’s weakness after the Fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.” (Grogan)

   - I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save: This is the LORD’s reply to the question in the prophecy. He identifies Himself by what He says (I who speak in righteousness) and what He does (mighty to save). Even in the midst of judgment, in His glory and strength, He wants men to know He is mighty to save, not only mighty to judge.

2. (2-6) A question and an answer: “Why are Your clothes red?”

   Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?
   “I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me.
   For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury;
   Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes.
   For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.
   I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold;
   Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me.
   I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury,
   And brought down their strength to the earth.”

   - Why is Your apparel red: The prophet asks why the garment of the LORD is red, and the LORD answers, “I have trodden the winepress alone… their blood is sprinkled upon My garments.” This promise is fulfilled when Jesus returns to the earth, and this passage is clearly behind passages like Revelation 19:13 and 15: He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God… Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

   - I have trodden the winepress alone: This reminds us that this work of judgment belongs to Jesus Christ and He alone. Though we will be part of the heavenly armies that accompany Jesus (Revelation 19:14), the work of judgment belongs to Him alone. The point is even emphasized by Isaiah: From the peoples no one was with Me… My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me.
     - In God’s great plan of the Ages, Jesus will accomplish two things alone. First, He atones for our sin alone. He alone hung on the cross, bearing the weight of all our guilt. Second, He judges the world alone. God does not need us to execute His ultimate judgment; we leave that to Him.
     - “You will hear one say, that such-and-such a good man was punished for his transgressions; and I have known believers think that their afflictions were punishments sent from God on account of their sins. The
thing is impossible; God has punished us, who are his people, once for all in Christ, and he never will punish us again. He cannot do it, seeing he is a just God. Afflictions are chastisements from a Father’s hand, but they are not judicial punishments. Jesus has trodden the wine-press, and he has trodden it alone: so we cannot tread it.” (Spurgeon)

- **The day of vengeance is in My heart**: These words, prophetically spoken by Jesus, sound almost foreign to us. We rarely think of vengeance being in the heart of Jesus, but He said the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22).

- **And the year of My redeemed has come**: In this, Isaiah prophetically explains why the Messiah can say, “vengeance is in My heart.” It isn’t because God loves punishing sinners; but He does love vindicating His redeemed.
  - Notice also the comparison: it is a mere day of vengeance, but an entire year of My redeemed. Each phrase is simply a poetic way of saying “time,” but God fittingly uses the picture of a day in communicating His vengeance, and a year in expressing His grace.

**B. The exile’s prayer.**

**1. (7-14) Remembering the mercy and the might of the LORD.**

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD And the praises of the LORD, According to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, And the great goodness toward the house of Israel, Which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, According to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses. For He said, “Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie.” So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: “Where is He who brought them up out of the sea With the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, Who led them by the right hand of Moses, With His glorious arm, Dividing the water before them To make for Himself an everlasting name, Who led them through the deep, As a horse in the wilderness, That they might not stumble?” As a beast goes down into the valley, And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest, So You lead Your people, To make Yourself a glorious name.

- **I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD… according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us**: This prayer is prophetically placed in the mouth of one of Judah’s Babylonian exiles. Despite the agony expressed later in the prayer, the praying one first will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD. This is a glorious example of how, even in the lowest place, we can praise the LORD and remember His goodness.
  - Look at all that the troubled one has to thank God for: great goodness… mercies… He became their Savior… His love… His pity… He bore them and carried them. If this vocabulary of praise can come from an afflicted one, what excuse can we have for not praising God?
  - Lovingkindnesses “is the Hebrew word hesed, the love that is faithful to the covenant.” (Grogan) It can also be translated “steadfast love.” It is one of the great words of the Old Testament, probably the closest Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word agape.
  - Surely these are My people, children who will not lie: “The Hebrew word for lie contains even more than our word. It was applied to a fountain, pit or brook that contained no water any more and so disappointed the thirsty person, and to a fruit tree that no longer yielded any fruit (Habakkuk 3:17). With this one significant word, the Lord meant to say that His people will not deceive and disappoint Him.” (Butlema)

- **In all their affliction He was afflicted**: Isaiah knows the nature of God; that in the afflictions of His people, He is afflicted also. God is not a dispassionate, unfeeling observer when His people suffer. He suffers with them when they are afflicted.
In all their affliction He was afflicted is another reason why anti-Semitism is so wicked. When the Jewish people are persecuted and afflicted, the LORD is afflicted also. How tragic that institutional Christianity, pretending to act in the name of Jesus, afflicted the LORD Himself by persecuting the Jewish people!

And the Angel of His Presence saved them: This refers to the presence and work of Jesus among ancient Israel, especially among those delivered from Egypt.

““The angel of His presence is the Messiah… Calvin sees in this angel merely a serving angel. But of this Angel it is said that He by His love and pity saved Israel; this can hardly be said of a created angel. It is the Christ who is meant here.” (Bultema)

“Angel of his presence: literally ‘of his face’. We recognize people by face; ‘face’ is the Lord’s very one presence (Psalm 139:7), among them in the person of his angel – that unique ‘Angel of the Lord’ (as in Genesis 16:7ff; 21:17; 22:11, 15; Exodus 3:2; 14:19; 23:20-23; Malachi 3:1) who speaks as the Lord and is yet distinct from him.” (Motyer)

But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit: Despite this outpouring of love and mercy from God, His people responded with cold, rebellious, unresponsive hearts. God had to deal with this in His people, so He fought against them.

In these few verses, we hear from God the Father (My people, children who will not lie), God the Son (the Angel of His Presence), and God the Holy Spirit (His Holy Spirit). Clearly, “There are Trinitarian overtones in the passage.” (Grogan)

Then he remembered the days of old: In the midst of the LORD’s discipline – in this case, prophetically speaking, the Babylonians exile – the praying one remembered the days of old. He remembered the mighty hand of God in days of old and knew that mighty hand could be raised again for His people.

Specifically, in this case, he remembered what the LORD did in the days of Moses and the Exodus. Since now they were in a place of exile (Babylon), the story of God’s deliverance from Egypt had special relevance. The praying one wasn’t there for the Exodus; he had to read about it in God’s Word. But he saw how God’s great works in the past had meaning right now.

As a horse in the wilderness… as a beast goes down into the valley: Isaiah speaks of the ease of progress that Israel made during the Exodus, and how God will bless Israel again in their regathering and restoration. The result will be that the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest.

As a horse in the wilderness should be understood in this sense: as a horse in open country. The idea is of unhindered, rapid progress.

“In both these verses there is an allusion to the Israelites going through the Red Sea in the bottom of which they found no more inconvenience than a horse would in running in the desert.” (Clarke)


Look down from heaven, And see from Your habitation, holy and glorious. Where are Your zeal and Your strength, The yearning of Your heart and Your mercies toward me? Are they restrained? Doubtless You are our Father, Though Abraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father; Our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name. O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways, And hardened our heart from Your fear? Return for Your servants’ sake, The tribes of Your inheritance. Your holy people have possessed it but a little while; Our adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary. We have become like those of old, over whom You never ruled, Those who were never called by Your name.

Where are Your zeal and Your strength: The prophet speaks honest words in the mouth in the praying one. Sometimes it feels that the zeal and the strength of the LORD are far away, and when we feel like that we should do just what the praying one did: cry out to God.

Return for Your servant’s sake: “The word ‘return’ may suggest the return of the shekinah glory to the temple as the symbol of God’s dwelling among his people (as in Ezekiel 43:6-12).” (Grogan)
• **We have become like those of old, over whom You never ruled**: The praying one looks at the condition of God’s people and cries out in agony. Why has God allowed this? The praying one isn’t accurate in all his theology, but he is an expert in expressing the pain of the human heart.
ISAIAH 64: THE REMNANT PRAYS – The Remnant’s Prayer

- v.1-4 Prayer requesting that God manifest Himself as He had in the past. Our problem is that we don't wait on God but feel that we must help Him to carry out His work (1 Cor. 2:9-16; Eph. 1:17-19).
- v.8 Whatever the potter decides for us is best. As we yield to Him, we know what His desires for us are.

A. Requesting and remembering God’s great works

1. (1-4) God’s people plead for Him to come in power and glory.

   Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down!
   That the mountains might shake at Your presence—As fire burns brushwood, As fire causes water to boil—
   To make Your name known to Your adversaries. That the nations may tremble at Your presence!
   Then You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down,
   The mountains shook at Your presence. For since the beginning of the world
   Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
   Who acts for the one who waits for Him.

   Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down: The prayer of the remnant continues from Isaiah chapter 63; here, the plea is for God to intervene from heaven.

   The mountains shook at Your presence: Earlier in this prayer (Isaiah 63:11-13), the praying one remembered God’s great work for Israel in the days of the Exodus. Here, the praying one also remembers how the LORD shook Mount Sinai when Israel camped there on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land (Exodus 19:17-18).

   Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him: The praying one now trusts that since he is one who waits for the LORD, he also will see God act on his behalf.

      o The one who waits for Him: “There is, however, a special blessing connected with waiting for the Lord. Men, even church-going men, would rather work than wait. They also love the legalism more than the holiness of waiting. Church leaders of today think waiting for the Lord is foolish dreaming.” (Bultema)

2. (5-7) The obstacle to God’s great works: our great sinfulness.

   You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, Who remembers You in Your ways.
   You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—In these ways we continue; And we need to be saved.
   But we are all like an unclean thing. And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;
   We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.
   And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;
   For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities.

   You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness: The praying one asks the question, “What kind of man does the LORD answer in prayer?” In Isaiah 64:4, he noted that it was the one who waits for the LORD. Now the praying one expands the idea, and notes that the LORD will answer the prayer (meet) the one who rejoices and does righteousness. The LORD will answer the prayer of the one who remembers the LORD in his ways.

   For we have sinned – in these ways we continue; and we need to be saved: This explains the problem. The praying remnant knows that God only answers the prayers of the righteous man, yet it isn’t the righteous man who needs to be saved from the disaster he has brought on himself. And we need to be saved is translated well by the NIV here as, How then can we be saved? The praying one then goes on to eloquently describe our state of sin.

      o First, our sin makes us like an unclean thing; it makes us unacceptable and unworthy before God. “Under the Jewish law you know that when a person was unclean he could not go up to the house of the Lord. He could offer no sacrifice. God could accept nothing at his hands; he was an outcast and an alien so long as he remained unclean.” (Spurgeon)

      o Even all our righteousness are like filthy rags. The good we may try to do is unacceptable and unclean before the LORD. Because we are all like an unclean thing, even the good we do is polluted. “Brethren, if our righteousnesses are so bad, what must our unrighteousnesses be?” (Spurgeon)
• **We all fade as a leaf.** Our sinful condition has made us weak and unstable, with no lasting power before God.

• **Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away** means that we have no power to stand against temptation. Our sins carry us along like a hurricane wind.

• **And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You:** Even in our unclean, unstable condition, we didn’t seek the LORD the way we should. We were lazy and complacent before the LORD.

• “The verbs *sin* and *angry* are perfect tenses — it was your fixed mind to be angry and ours to continue in sin.” (Motyer)

• Taken together, this is a fearful description of our fallenness: “You must not merely know that you are lost, but you must feel it. Do not be content with simply feeling that it is so, but *mourn before God* that it is so, and *hate yourself* that it is so. Do not look upon it as being a misfortune, but as being your own wilful sin, and look upon yourselves, therefore, as being guilty sinners.” (Spurgeon)

• **Filthy rags:** “Filthy rags is ‘a garment of menstruation’; bodily discharges were considered a defilement because they were the ‘outflow’ of a sinful, fallen human nature. So, even what we might consider to be in our favour, *righteous acts*, partake of the defilement of fallenness.” (Motyer)

• Preachers of previous generations thought this passage so extreme in its graphic description of sin’s likeness that it should not be preached honestly. “If preachers knew properly the meaning of this word, would they make such a liberal use of it in their public ministry?” (Clarke) “The expression, ‘filthy rags,’ in the Hebrew, is one which we could not with propriety explain in the present assembly. As the confession must be made privately and alone before God, so the full meaning of the comparison is not meant for human ear.” (Spurgeon)

• However extreme the phrasing, the point is important. Even the works that seem holiest from the outside can be corrupt and unrighteous. “Sirs, there is sin in our prayers; they need to be prayed over again. There is filth in the very tears that we shed in penitence; there is sin in our very holiness; there is unbelief in our faith; there is hatred in our very love; there is the slime of the serpent upon the fairest flower of our garden.” (Spurgeon)

• “Those that seek to be saved by their works, Luther fitly calleth the devil’s martyrs; they suffer much, and take great pains to go to hell… We must do all righteousnesses, rest in none by Christ’s, disclaiming our own best as spotted and imperfect.” (Trapp)

• **You have hidden Your face from us:** This is the first of two reactions God makes to the sinful condition of man. First, fellowship is broken, or at the very least, damaged. Second, the LORD has **consumed us because of our iniquities.** Our sinful condition has invited — even *demanded* — the righteous judgment of God.
B. A plea for the mercy of the LORD.

1. (8-9) Asking God to remember who His people are.

But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand. Do not be furious, O LORD, Nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look—we all are Your people!

- **But now, O LORD, You are our Father:** The praying one is in a desperate place; he needs to mercy of God, because the justice of God condemns him. In his appeal for mercy, he first reminds God, “You are our Father.” Please, LORD, have mercy on us as a loving Father.”

- **We are the clay, and You our potter:** Next, the praying one appeals for God’s mercy because of God’s sovereign power over each life. It is like saying, “LORD we are like clay in Your hands. Deal gently with us, and mold us according to Your mercy.”
  
    o A father is always a father; he can never truly disown his children. A potter cannot disown the pot; it is only there because he made it. This is Isaiah’s way of saying, “You’re stuck with us LORD!”

- **Do not be furious, O LORD, nor remember iniquity forever:** The praying one asks for mercy on account of “time served.” It is as if he prays, “LORD, You had a right to be furious with us for a time. You had a right to remember our iniquity for a while. But please, LORD, do not remember iniquity forever.”

- **Indeed, please look—we all are Your people:** The praying one makes his final appeal for mercy on the simple grounds that “LORD, we all are Your people. We are sinners, and deserve Your judgment, but we are still Your people. In a sense, LORD, You are stuck with us!”

2. (10-11) Asking God to remember the condition of Zion.

Your holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful temple, Where our fathers praised You, Is burned up with fire; And all our pleasant things are laid waste.

- **Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation:** In his appeal for mercy, the praying one asks God to look closely at the terrible condition of His holy cities. As he draws attention to our holy and beautiful temple, he notes that it is burned up with fire. It is an eloquent and powerful way of pleading with God to act.

3. (12) Asking God to act.

Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD? Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?

- **Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD:** The praying one concludes up the prayer with a great question. The these things he refers to are not the desperate condition of Jerusalem and the temple (Isaiah 64:10-11). They are the descriptions of our sinful condition (Isaiah 64:5b-7). The praying one asks, “LORD, You know very well our sinful condition. But will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O LORD?”

- **Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely:** “LORD, please show mercy! Will you always give us what we deserve?”
  
    o In this prayer, the praying one deals with what seems to be an impossible problem. Because of our sin (Isaiah 64:5b-7), we are in a desperate state and need the LORD’s salvation. But the LORD only answers the prayers of a righteous man (Isaiah 64:4-5a) – and a righteous man wouldn’t be in the place we are! Ultimately, the answer is found in the New Covenant, where a righteous Man stands in our place and prays for us. This is why Jesus invited us to pray in His name (John 14:13-14). When we pray in Jesus’ name, He is the righteous Man who appeals to God for us.
ISAIAH 65: THE LORD ANSWERS THE PRAYER OF THE REMNANT – Answer of Jehovah to Remnant of Israel

- v.1-5 God declares how He stretched out His hands to the Gentiles (Rom 10:21).
- v.8-9 God will bring a faithful remnant, His elect, back to the land. This follows along with God's promise to never forsake them.
- v.15 The new name of the servants of God is "Christians" (Acts 11:26).
- v.17 To "create" here means "to create something out of nothing." This takes place beyond the millennial age (2 Peter 3:10-13). Since the material universe will be destroyed, we should not be living for the physical but the spiritual. We will not recall the horrible period of history when man rebelled against God (Mt. 6:19-21).
- v.18-19 In the millennial age the earth will be restored as in the pre-Flood condition, when men lived extremely long periods of time. Those who are already in their new bodies will not be subject to death. They will reign with Christ as enforcers of righteousness. There will be people who will have lived through the tribulation to the second coming of Christ, and they will be subject to death.
- v.25 The earth, man, and animals will all be in harmony with God.

A. The immediate answer: The LORD will indeed bless His genuine servants.

1. (1-7) The LORD sees the shallow repentance of the remnant.

"I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' To a nation that was not called by My name. I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in a way that is not good. According to their own thoughts; A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; Who sacrifice in gardens, And burn incense on altars of brick; Who sit among the graves, And spend the night in the tombs; Who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Who say, 'Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. “Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will repay—Even repay into their bosom—Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together,” Says the LORD, “Who have burned incense on the mountains And blasphemed Me on the hills; Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom.”

- I was sought by those who did not ask for Me: The Jewish exiles in Babylon were examples of those who did ask for the LORD; but they would not find Him, because for the most part they sought Him insincerely. Yet, God would be found by those who did not seek Him – namely, the Gentiles.
  - Isaiah 63:7 through 64:12 is the prayer of the remnant, voiced through the prophet Isaiah. It is one of the most beautiful and moving prayers in the Bible. Yet it does not seem to be representative of the heart of the Jewish exiles in Babylon. Here, God speaks to that heart, a heart with a shallow repentance.
  - Paul quotes this passage in Romans 10:20-21: But Isaiah is very bold and says: “I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.” But to Israel he says: “All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.” These were bold words indeed from Isaiah, “so bold, say Origen and others, that for this cause, among others, he was sawn asunder by his unworthy countryme.” (Trapp)

- I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people: It wasn’t that the LORD had ignored the Jewish exiles in Babylon, and other like them. He stretched out His hands all day long to them. Some responded (like Daniel, or like the one prophetically praying in Isaiah 63:7 through 64:12), but most were a rebellious people.

- Who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts: This defines what it is to be a rebellious people – simply, to walk in a way… according to their own thoughts. To trust in our own wisdom, our own judgment, our own thinking, is to be among the rebellious people.
  - This idea is repeated in several different places in Scripture. The phrase in the book of Judges that characterized the wickedness of that age shows it: everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges...
Proverbs expresses the idea like this: *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death* (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25). To live according to their own thoughts may sound like freedom, but really it is bondage. God’s solution to living according to our own thoughts is revealed in Romans 12:2, to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

**A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face:** The walk of these people, according to their own thoughts, expresses itself in the most offensive and unholy ways before the LORD. The people sacrifice in gardens to idols. They sit among the graves, breaking the commands against contact with the dead (Numbers 19:11). They eat swine’s flesh and drink the broth of abominable things.

- Each of these sins were grossly offensive to the LORD. It is tragic, but true, that walking according to our own thoughts will always lead us in to direct, blatant, opposition to the LORD.

**Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you:** They could say this, even in the midst of such extreme offense before God. No wonder God considers such people as smoke in My nostrils. Therefore, judgment is promised to them: I will not keep silence, but will repay… your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together.

- How could anyone think “I am holier than you!” when they are steeped in the sins described in this passage? This is a dramatic display of the blindness pride brings. They could say, “I am holier than you!” and really mean it, because of their deep blindness.

- Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon titled *Self Righteousness – A Smoldering Heap of Rubbish* on this text. In it, he describes how dangerous and insidious self-righteousness is. “Moreover, self-righteous men, like foxes, have many tricks and schemes. They condemn in other people what they consider to be very excusable in themselves. They would cry out against others for a tenth part of the sin which they allow in themselves: certain constitutional tendencies, and necessities of circumstances, and various surroundings, all serve as ample apologies. Besides this, if it be admitted that they are wrong upon some points, yet in other directions they are beyond rebuke. If they drink, they do not swear; and if they swear, they do not steal: they make a great deal out of negatives: if they steal, they are not greedy and miserly, but spend their gains freely. If they practice fornication, yet they do not commit adultery; if they talk filthily, yet they boast they do not lie. They would be counted well because they are not universally bad. They do not break every hedge, and therefore they plead that they are not trespassers. As if a debtor for a hundred pounds should claim to be excused because he does not owe two hundred; or, as if a highwayman should say, ‘I did not stop all the travelers on the road; I only robbed one or two, and therefore I ought not to be punished.’ If a man should willfully break the windows of your shop, I warrant you, you would not take it as an excuse if he pleaded, ‘I did not break them all; I only smashed one sheet of plate glass.’ Pleas which would not be mentioned in a human court are thought good enough to offer to God. O the folly of our race!” (Spurgeon)

- Spurgeon also focused his attention of the most religious of the self-righteous: “Those who come with the language of repentance but without the spirit of it, are sometimes the most self-righteous of all, for they say ‘I am all right because I am not self-righteous.’ They make a self-righteousness out of the supposed absence of self-righteousness. ‘Thank God,’ say they, ‘we are not as other men are, nor even as these self-righteous people.’ Hypocrites all the way through.”

- Man is so corrupt that he can be self-righteous over almost anything. “This weed of self-righteousness will grow on any dunghill. No heap of rubbish is too rotten for the accursed toadstool of proud self to grow upon.” (Spurgeon)
2. (8-16) A promise of blessing for the true servants of the LORD, and a promise of chastisement for the false or shallow servants of God.

Thus says the LORD: “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, ‘Do not destroy it, For a blessing is in it.’

So will I do for My servants’ sake, That I may not destroy them all.

I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, And from Judah an heir of My mountains;

My elect shall inherit it, And My servants shall dwell there.

Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, And the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,

For My people who have sought Me. ‘But you are those who forsake the LORD, Who forget My holy mountain,

Who prepare a table for Gad, And who furnish a drink offering for Meni.

Therefore I will number you for the sword, And you shall all bow down to the slaughter;

Because, when I called, you did not answer; When I spoke, you did not hear,

But did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight.”

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

“Behold, My servants shall eat, But you shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, But you shall be thirsty;

Behold, My servants shall rejoice, But you shall be ashamed; Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart,

But you shall cry for sorrow of heart, And wail for grief of spirit.

You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen;

For the Lord GOD will slay you, And call His servants by another name;

So that he who blesses himself in the earth Shall bless himself in the God of truth;

And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth;

Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My eyes.

- **“Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,” so will I do for My servants’ sake:** Despite the unholy rebellion and pride of some of the remnant, God still has His servants, and He will bless and restore them. The will be regathered into His land, for He says: “My elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there.” He has a special place for My people who have sought Me.

  - The picture of Isaiah 65:8 is striking. The idea is that God finds a few “good grapes” among the corrupt cluster of His people. It is for the sake of these – for My servants’ sake – that the Lord shows blessing and restores. “Found suggests that the grapes were oozing as they were picked and that this was specially prized. Hence there is some good… Marvellously, then, the Lord finds his people a blessing, and he prizes and guards them.” (Motyer)

  - “If the Church had clearly understood this simple example, then, it would not have dared to teach Israel’s total rejection. Even as He would have saved Sodom for the sake of five righteous people, so He will spare Israel, His vine, for the sake of His servants, the cluster of good grapes.” (Bultema)

- **But you are those who forsake the LORD:** Not all are numbered among the servants of the LORD. They are destined for judgment, because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight. On top of all their other sins is the sin of simply refusing to listen to God’s correction.

  - It is one thing for us to fall into sin through weakness or ignorance; such sin is indeed sin, and God must deal with it as such. But refusing to respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit is far worse. It is bad enough to be speeding down the highway; it is worse to ignore the flashing red lights in your rearview mirror.

  - Wolf on God and Meni: “They were presenting offerings to the gods ‘Fortune’ and ‘Destiny,’ so their destiny would be the sword.”

- **Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry:** Because of this, the true servants of God among the remnant will be blessed, but the false servants will be cursed. Why? It is necessary, so that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth. If God does not reward His true servants, and curse His false servants, then God is not shown to be the God of truth.

  - The God of truth is literally “the God of (the) Amen… the God who says ‘amen’ to all his promises, affirming their reality and his trustworthiness to keep them.” (Motyer)
B. The ultimate answer: The LORD will redeem and remake all of creation.


For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing. And her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying.

- **Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth**: As the ultimate answer to the problem of man’s sin, God will create a new heavens and a new earth. This takes place after the millennium, the glorious thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, when this very earth and sky is done away with and God makes a new heavens and a new earth.
  
  - Peter used this promise to encourage believers to holy living: Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). In the book of Revelation, John also sees this: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea (Revelation 21:1).
  
  - From John’s context we see that this new heavens and a new earth comes after the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and is connected not with the millennial earth, but with the eternal state. If all we had to go by was Isaiah’s statement, we would automatically connect this new heavens and a new earth with the millennial earth, because immediately after Isaiah 65:17-19, we clearly find the millennial earth described. But based on what we find in 2 Peter and Revelation, we must see that Isaiah is in the prophetic habit of switching quickly from one time frame to another, speaking of the eternal state in Isaiah 65:17, and of the millennial earth in Isaiah 65:20-25.

- **And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind**: This is another indication that Isaiah 65:17 does not speak of the millennial earth. Other passages of Scripture referring to the millennium show that there will be definite remembrance of former times on the earth. The whole temple ritual existing in the millennial earth (Ezekiel 40-46) will be a remembrance of the former days of Levitical sacrifice. The former nations of the world will remain (after judgment) and will serve the LORD and Israel (Psalm 72).

- **I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing**: There will be a Jerusalem in the eternal state, in the new heavens and a new earth. Revelation describes – in stunning imagery – the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven to the new earth (Revelation 21:2-27). It is in this Jerusalem, the eternal New Jerusalem, that the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.
  
  - John clearly connects this promise to the New Jerusalem: And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:4).
2. (20-25) The blessed state of the millennial earth.

“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. “It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the LORD.

• **No more shall an infant from there live but a few days… for the child shall die one hundred years old:** Quickly – as is the prophetic habit – Isaiah shifts gears, and now speaks not of the eternal state, but of the millennial earth. There will be death in the millennial earth, but in the transformed biology and ecology of the world under the reign of Jesus Christ, people will live incredibly longer, as they did in the days before the flood.
  
  o In the millennial earth, people will live so long that if someone dies **being one hundred years old**, people will consider that one **accursed**.

• **They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit:** The millennial reign of Jesus Christ will not only be a time of biological transformation, it will also be a time of **social** transformation when perfect justice reigns over the earth. Never again will someone be robbed of the fruits of their labor. If you **build** a house, no one will steal it from you. You will **inhabit** that house. If you **plant vineyards**, no one will steal the fruit of it. You will **eat their fruit**. God gloriously promises, **My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands**.
  
  o This may not sound like much, but for those who live in profoundly **unjust** times, this simple justice sounds like a miracle.
  
  o One significant reason there will be such justice on the millennial earth is because Satan will be bound for these 1,000 years, unable to work his destructive mischief on the earth (Revelation 20:1-3).

• **They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them:** There will be babies born and children raised in the millennial earth, and this is another indication that we are not in the eternal state. In the eternal state, we **neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven** (Matthew 22:30). In the millennial earth, those allowed to enter are blessed of the LORD, and they and their **descendants** will populate the earth.

• **It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear:** The millennial reign of Jesus Christ will not only be a time of biological and social transformation. It will also be a time of profound spiritual transformation and intimacy. There will be an immediate and constant sense of the presence of God, and His knowledge will cover the earth (Isaiah 11:9).
  
  o This does not mean that every on the millennial earth will be saved; only that the **opportunity** for such close relationship will be widely enjoyed. We know that not all will be saved during the millennial earth because:
    
    ▪ **At the conclusion of the time of the millennial earth, Satan is released from his confinement and finds many willing servants on the earth** (Revelation 20:7-9), whom he gathers for one last – and strikingly futile – rebellion against God.
    
    ▪ **Zechariah 14:16-19 and Psalm 2** describe the firm rule of the Messiah during the millennial earth, dealing decisively with those who do not surrender to His reign, enforcing righteousness all over the earth.
  
  o Though not all will be saved on the millennial earth, we may suppose that the proportions will be reversed. Today, it is but a remnant that are saved because **many are called but few are chosen** (Matthew 22:14) and **broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it**. Because **narrow is the gate**
and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matthew 7:13-14). In the millennial earth, the few will be those who don’t know the LORD and are not saved.

- One of the reasons why most are saved and know the LORD on the millennial earth is because not all survivors of the Great Tribulation are allowed to populate the millennial earth. After the Great Tribulation – which in judgment reduces the population of the earth by at least a third (Revelation 9:15, 18) – Jesus Christ will return to the earth, and in the judgment of the nations, determine who will be allowed to populate the millennial earth (Matthew 25:32-34). The millennial earth will have a “screened” population, that in terms of righteousness, will not be perfect, but better than the present earth.

- The wolf and the lamb shall feed together: The millennial earth will also see a remarkable ecological transformation. No longer will predators stalk their victims. Instead, even the wolf and the lamb will get along, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

- “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says the LORD: This is the glorious result of the transformation that happens during the millennial earth. The world will be different biologically, spiritually, socially, and ecologically.

- The Bible speaks powerfully to other aspects of the millennial earth. Tragically, the Church through history has often ignored or denied the promise of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. The early church until Augustine almost universally believed in an earthly, historical reign of Jesus, initiated by His return. Tyconius (in the late 300’s) was the first to influentially champion a spiritualized interpretation, saying that this Millennium is now (amillennialism). His view was adopted by Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church and most Reformation theologians. Growing out of amillennialism is the doctrine of postmillennialism is an outgrowth of amillennialism, saying the millennium will happen in this age before Jesus’ return – but that the church will bring it to pass. But the clear teaching of the Bible isn’t amillennialism or postmillennialism, but what is called premillennialism – the teaching that Jesus Christ will return to this earth before the millennial earth, and He is establish and govern it directly. There are more than 400 verses in more than 20 different passages in the Old Testament which deal with this time when Jesus Christ rules and reigns personally over planet earth.

- King David will have a prominent place in the millennial earth (Isaiah 55:3-5, Jeremiah 30:4-11, Ezekiel 34:23-31, Ezekiel 37:21-28, Hosea 3:5).

- There will be blessing and security for national Israel in the millennial earth (Amos 9:11-15).

- The Millennium a time of purity and devotion to God (Zechariah 13:1-9).

- Israel will be a nation of prominence in the millennial earth (Ezekiel 17:22-24).


- In their resurrected state, the saints will be given responsibility in the Millennial Earth according to their faithful service (Luke 19:11-27, Revelation 20:4-6, Revelation 2:26-28; 3:12,22, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3).
ISAIAH 66: REJOICING IN GOD’S ULTIMATE VICTORY – Blessings of the Coming Universal Kingdom

- v.1 We can give nothing to God that does not already belong to Him anyway. God does not require a place built by man to dwell in, for He dwells in the heavens.
- v.22-23 In the new heaven and earth all will be in harmony with the Lord. Those who did not accept Him will have another destiny.
- v.24 God’s wrath or judgment is eternal. Before the great white throne judgment of God, Hades will give up their dead. This verse speaks of the second death. Gehenna, the place of eternal punishment, was originally meant for Satan and his angels, but those who follow him in this life will be placed there also (Mk. 9:44, 46).

A. The LORD will repay His enemies.

1. (1-2) The greatness of God, and proper response of man.

Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?
For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,” Says the LORD.
“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

- Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: Here, the LORD puts things back into proper perspective. We can never understand much of anything until we understand that the Lord GOD is enthroned in heaven, and that the earth is under His command – indeed, the earth is His footstool!

- Where is the house that you will build Me?… But on this one I will look: on Him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word: We may want to serve God – but serve Him our way. We may want to build God something, but what can we build that is worthy of God? Instead, what God really wants from us is a poor and a contrite spirit, and to tremble at His word.
  - o Contrite is literally “lamed’ or disabled, here used with spiritual significance: one who is aware of the damage wrought by sin, of personal inability to stand upright before God.” (Motyer)
  - o Are you one of those who trembles at God’s word? “They tremble at the searching power of God’s Word. Do you never come into this place and sit down in the pew, and say, ‘Lord, grant that thy Word may search me and try me, that I may not be deceived’? Certain people must always have sweets and comforts; but God’s wise children do not wish for these in undue measure. Daily bread we ask for, not daily sugar.” (Spurgeon)

2. (3-4) God’s answer to empty religious ritual.

“He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog’s neck;
He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine’s blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol.
Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,
So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them;
Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear;
But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight.”

- He who kills a bull as if he slays a man: In the empty religious ritualism, God’s people thought they were pleasing God. But the LORD says that when a man kills a bull in sacrifice, it is as if he slays a man. Their religious ritualism added to their sin, it didn’t take it away!
  - o Mice “were eaten as a delicacy by the Romans and other heathen people and were used by others as idolatrous sacrifices.” (Bultema)

- Just as they have chosen their own ways… so will I choose their delusions: God’s people chose their rebellion against Him, and they persisted in it despite His continual warnings. As an extreme display of judgment, God will choose their delusions and send a delusion among them.
• This is a sobering reminder of what God will do on the earth during the Great Tribulation, as described by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:11: *God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.* But what will happen during the Great Tribulation is just the ultimate fruit of what God does all the time among men. When we reject God and seek our own delusion, He may send one to us.

• An example of this kind of delusion are those who believe that the world was created out of *nothing* or by *chance*. What could be more delusional than to believe that something can come from nothing? To believe that *chance* actually has some kind of “power”? Yet for those who insist on believing it, God will give them over to this delusion.

**Because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear:** How can we keep from being given over to a delusion? By answering the LORD when He calls, by hearing Him when He speaks. It’s really that simple.

### 3. (5-6) The LORD repays His enemies.

Hear the word of the LORD, You who tremble at His word:

“Your brethren who hated you, Who cast you out for My name’s sake, said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, That we may see your joy.’ But they shall be ashamed.”

The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple!

The voice of the LORD, Who fully repays His enemies!

**Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name’s sake, said, “Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy.”** Here, Isaiah shows how those with a shallow, empty religion mock those of genuine faith. First, empty religion *hates* genuine faith (*hated you*). Second, empty religion *rejects* true faith (*cast you out*). Third, empty religion *acts in the name of the LORD* (*for My name’s sake*). Fourth, empty religion mocks with spiritual sounding words (*“Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy”*).

**But they shall be ashamed:** Most importantly, empty religion will never ultimately triumph. At the end of days, if not before, they shall be ashamed, when they hear the voice of the LORD, who fully repays His enemies!

### B. The LORD comes with fire.

#### 1. (7-11) Rejoicing in the deliverance of Jerusalem.

“Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.

Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.

Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?” says the LORD.

“Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?” says your God.

“Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her;

Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;

That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom,

That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory.”

**Before she travailed, she gave birth:** Isaiah prophesies a day when the victory will come easily to Jerusalem, when she will be as the promise of Romans 8:37, *more than conquerors through Him who loved us*. Here, she gives birth— but without pain! Truly, **who has heard such a thing?**

**Rejoice with Jerusalem:** All God’s people are called to share in Jerusalem’s joy. The time of deliverance, victory, and vindication have come! **Be glad with her, all you who love her!** If God’s people will do this, it will be a blessing for them also: **that you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom.**

• This intense, great, rejoicing may sometimes make the world uncomfortable and make us the target of mocking. “Very seldom are believers nowadays charged with being fanatical, nor even with being too enthusiastic; and this is a sign that we are below the right heat. When the world calls us fanatics we are nearing that point of ardor which is our Lord’s due.” (Spurgeon)
2. (12-17) The LORD comes in judgment.

For thus says the LORD:
"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; On her sides shall you be carried, And be dandled on her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."
When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, And your bones shall flourish like grass; The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, And His indignation to His enemies. For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many. “Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, To go to the gardens After an idol in the midst, Eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, Shall be consumed together,” says the LORD.

• **Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river**: When the Messiah returns in glory and triumph, the peace of Jerusalem will be like a gentle, powerful river that is never disturbed. But not Jerusalem alone: And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.

• **As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you**: God speaks with supreme tenderness to His faithful servants. No one can comfort like a mother, and God will bring that kind of comfort to His people.
  
  - “This is a peculiarly delightful metaphor. A father can comfort, but I think he is not much at home as the work. When God speaks about his pity, he compares himself to their father: ‘Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.’ But when he speaks about comfort, he selects the mother. When I have seen the little ones sick, I have felt all the pity in the world for them, but when he speaks about comfort, he selects the mother. ‘Like as a mother pitieth her children, so I will comfort you, and make your goggles like the flowing stream.’” (Spurgeon)

• **The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, and His indignation to His enemies**: When the Messiah returns in glory and triumph, for some it will be a great blessing – and for others it will be nothing but judgment. Indeed, the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

• **Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens, after an idol in the midst**: When the Messiah returns in glory and triumph, He will see through those who practice empty religion. They shall be consumed together,” says the LORD.

3. (18-21) The LORD gathers and restores His people.

“For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastslands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says the LORD.

• **I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory**: God has promised a great regathering work among Israel; but He will also do a regathering work among the whole world, some from all nations and tongues to see His glory.
  
  - One place this finds ultimate fulfillment is around the throne of God (Revelation 5:9-10).
  
  - “God says that He will set a sign among the nations. This sign is the same as the sign of the Son of man (Matthew 24:30).” (Bultema)

• **Those among them who escape I will send to the nations… to the coastslands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory**: Isaiah makes prophetic reference to the missionary calling and work of God’s people. Of course, God had a missionary intent for Israel, that they would be a priesthood among the nations (Exodus 19:6) and a light to the Gentiles. But even more pointedly, God has commanded the church to the nations, to declare My glory among the Gentiles.
“They are sent to Tarshish (Spain, France and Italy) to Pul (a region in Africa) and to Lud, which according to some is the same as Lydia, though it seems preferable to take Pul and Lud together for all of Africa. Tubal was a son of Japheth, whose descendants settled in north-eastern Europe or Russia and Javan is the biblical name for Greece.” (Bultema)

In a limited sense, this is fulfilled by the missionary outreach of the church through centuries. But this is only a partial fulfillment. Ultimately, these may be the 144,000 witnesses during the Great Tribulation; they may be Jewish evangelists in the days of the millennial earth.

- **Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations:** As part of God’s ultimate work, as the missionaries go out, the people of Israel ultimately come back, in a magnificent regathering. This is partially fulfilled now in the Israel’s regathered state; but will be ultimately fulfilled in the millennial earth of the Messiah.

  - A remarkable example of modern-day regathering from the Arutz 7 news agency in Israel:

    “Thirty-seven members of the Bnei Menashe tribe in India – believed to be descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes – arrived in Israel on Friday. The new arrivals, many of whom have relatives in Israel among the 450 Bnei Menashe who have arrived within the last five years, were brought to Israel under the auspices of the Jerusalem-based Amishav organization. Amishav is dedicated to locating descendants of the Lost Tribes and returning them to the Jewish people. ‘This is a historic moment for the Jewish people,’ said Amishav founder and chairman Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, who has devoted his life to finding and assisting the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. ‘After a lengthy and difficult separation, the Bnei Menashe are being reunited with the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. This is a triumph of faith. Their return to Zion marks the closing of a historical circle.’”

  The Bnei Menashe, with a rich oral tradition tracing themselves back to the Israelite tribe of Menashe, continue to practice many uniquely Jewish customs. About 3,500 Bnei Menashe decided to formally return to the Jewish people about 30 years ago, and began living a fully Jewish life to the best of their ability in accordance with Jewish law. Rabbi Avichail learned of their existence about 20 years ago, and began to investigate their claims to Jewish ancestry. After making several visits there and carefully studying their claims and the relevant history, Rabbi Avichail consulted with leading rabbinical authorities and concluded that there is convincing evidence linking the Bnei Menashe with the Jewish people. Among the evidence, Rabbi Avichail notes their ancient tradition speaking of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; their custom of circumcising male children on the 8th day after birth; and their sacrificial ceremony on an altar reminiscent of the Jewish Temple in which the Hebrew Biblical name of G-d, Mount Sinai, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion are mentioned.

- **And I will take some of them for priests and Levites:** The idea is that in that day, God will extend the priesthood beyond its previous boundaries. This is ultimately fulfilled in the church because saints are called priests (1 Peter 2:5-9, Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6).

  - “Just as in Isaiah’s day only some were priests and Levites, but through them Israel was constituted as the Lord’s priestly people, so now he foresees Gentiles incorporated on equal terms, into equal privileges.” (Motyer)
4. (22-24) The certainty of the both the LORD’s judgment and His restoration.

“For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD. “And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

- And it shall come to pass... all flesh shall come to worship before Me: Here, God describes His ultimate triumph. Through the majestic book of Isaiah, the nations have been judged and often condemned. But God has an ultimate plan to reach the nations, seen in its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 5:9-10. God will take people from every tribe and tongue, and “all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.
  - Isaiah puts it into context of from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come and to worship before Me. Significantly, Isaiah began the book with a condemnation of the shallow worship of God’s people at the time of the New Moons and Sabbaths (Isaiah 1:12-15). Now, after the greatness of the LORD’s work, all that is different.

- And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me: Some from every tribe and tongue will have a destiny of ultimate triumph; some also will have the destiny – freely chosen – of ultimate tragedy. Using the images of eternal damnation (their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched), Isaiah describes the fate of those who reject God – even if they had the veneer of empty religion.
  - “After this life, and at the day of judgment, they shall go into eternal torments; where they will feel a work of conscience that shall never die, and a fiery wrath of God upon their souls and bodies that shall never go out.” (Poole)
  - The book of Isaiah closes with a sobering contrast, revealing the ultimate, eternal importance of this present life. Each life can choose its destiny: worship or the worm. Which is it for you?
Jeremiah (Jer) – The Weeping Prophet

Jeremiah Overview

### Jeremiah

#### Judah’s Sin and Judgment

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1–45

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**CHAPTERS**

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**CHAPTER**

52

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**Theme**

Judgment is coming; repent!

**Key Verses**

7:23–24; 8:11–12, 21; 9:23–24; 31:1–40

**Christ in Jeremiah**

The fountain of living waters (2:13); the righteous Branch, the coming Shepherd, the Lord our righteousness (23:4–6); the New Covenant (31:31); Redeemer (50:34)

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The book of Jeremiah is Prophetic Oracle and Narrative History, although not completely in chronological order. The prophet Jeremiah wrote it sometime during his ministry about 626-586 B.C. Key personalities are the many kings Judah, Baruch, Ebdemelech, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Rechabites. Its purpose was to warn of the destruction that they were about to face and to urge Judah to return and submit to God. Jeremiah was a priest who God calls to be His prophet. Jeremiah identifies their sins and treachery, as he wants them to realize the serious condition of their sinful ways. He then gives prophecies of the coming king and the New Covenant that would be made.

- In chapters 1-10, God calls Jeremiah and proclaims, “I have put My words in your mouth” (1:9). Jeremiah condemns Judah for their sins and attacks their faithlessness, obviously angry over their blatant sin.

- Chapters 11-28, Jeremiah warned of the destruction that would be poured out on Judah. He writes about God’s hard dispense of holy anger. At one point God says, “I will not listen when they call to Me because of their disaster” (12:14). A lot of the wickedness that angered God was the constant worship of false idols and gods, and the sacrifices they were burning to them.

- From chapters 29-38, Jeremiah writes about the New Covenant and the hope that God would bring when He delivers them after the captivity. King Zedekiah who did not heed his warning throws Jeremiah into prison and then into a cistern. Nevertheless, Jeremiah warned that the King would fall into the hands of the King of Babylon.

- Chapters 39-52, Jeremiah records the events of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. As many prophets had announced in the past, the Empire of Babylon indeed laid siege to Jerusalem and the land of Judah. This completes the exile of both kingdoms, the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. and now the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C. As Jeremiah had declared in 37:17, King Zedekiah was captured and his son murdered in his presence, he was blinded, bound and dragged off to Babylon in captivity.
In chapter 50, God promises to rescue His nation from captivity. In verse 17-18 God declares, “Israel is a scattered flock, the lions have driven them away. The first one who devoured him was the king of Assyria, and the last one who has broken his bones is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am going to punish the king of Babylon and his land, just as I punished the king of Assyria.” The capital of Assyria was destroyed so severely it was not discovered until the 19th century A.D.

The Weeping Prophet

If Isaiah is the Thundering Prophet, Jeremiah is the Weeping Prophet. Called to be a prophet in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (626 B.C.), Jeremiah serves through the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem (586 B.C.).

Jeremiah is one of the few prophets who is both a priest and a prophet, an unenviable—and untenable—position, much like a lawyer representing both parties in a particularly nasty divorce!

Jeremiah did not want to be a prophet; he tries to quit on several occasions; and he regularly weeps over the message God has given him.

- The New Covenant

New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant is a covenant made first with the nation of Israel and, ultimately, with all mankind. In the New Covenant, God promises to forgive sin, and there will be a universal knowledge of the Lord. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17) and create a new covenant between God and His people.

Now that we are under the New Covenant, both Jews and Gentiles can be free from the penalty of the Law. We are now given the opportunity to receive salvation as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jer 31:31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, " declares the LORD. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Mt 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Ep 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Lamentations (La)

Lamentations Overview
## LAMENTATIONS

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The book of Lamentations is book of sorrowful songs or poems. The name implies that the topic is expressing grief over something (to lament). Jeremiah, also known as the “weeping prophet” writes this after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. It was written soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.; he was an eyewitness. He predicted this destruction (as did others), watched it take place, and now in this book he is sadly reflecting on it. Key personalities are the prophet Jeremiah and the people of Jerusalem.

Its purpose was to express despair and teach God’s people that disobedience to the Lord results in immense suffering and distress. Jeremiah pours out his emotions in compassion, and empathy for God’s nation, as he watches them inhabit a foreign land.

- In chapter 1, Jeremiah mourns for Jerusalem and Judea as it lays in ruin by the raid and destruction of Babylon, “How lonely sits the city that was full of people! She has become like a widow who was once great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a forced laborer!” (1:1).
- Chapter 2, He described the anger of the Lord who brought judgment to the wicked land (as God had warned), “In fierce anger He has cut off all the strength of Israel; He has drawn back His right hand from before the enemy…” (2:3).
- Chapter 3, we see Jeremiah expressing his troubled spirit and suffering in gloom. He too is afflicted, as his homeland has been pillaged. On the other hand, he reminds us in verses 19-23, that God is faithful and will restore and bring His promise to pass, “The LORD’S loving-kindness indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail” (3:22).
- Finally, in chapter 4, we read that God has brought justice and ruled mightily. During the siege, the city of Jerusalem suffered incredibly. Starvation was so bad and widespread that the Israelites resorted to eating their own children. The nation was warned about their sin and disobedience and the penalty of the coming judgment of God, and in verse 11 we read, “The LORD has accomplished His wrath..”.

<table>
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<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Context</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Period: 626 – 586 B.C. (set in Judah)</td>
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<td>Events: Babylon attacks Jerusalem: 605, 597, 586-588 B.C.; Jerusalem falls, August 14, 586 B.C.</td>
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Hot Tears

The Babylonians lay siege to Jerusalem in 588 B.C., and the city falls on August 14, 586 B.C. The siege of a fortified city is a dreadful thing to behold. Food and supplies quickly run out: starvation, sickness and death follow.

Jeremiah is inside Jerusalem during the 2-year siege, and Lamentations is his eyewitness account.

- 5 poems that are acrostic poems
  - 22 verses per poem – each beginning with the next letter the Hebrew alphabet
  - 3rd poem is a 66 verses – a triple acrostic (AAA,BBB…)
- 2nd poem
  - The siege has been dragging on for 2 years
  - It’s nighttime – Jeremiah is walking through the streets of Jerusalem
  - It’s winter – the rain is pouring down – running off the roofs of the houses, running down the walls and dripping off the gutters – and to Jeremiah, it looks like the very city itself is weeping
  - Jer 2: 11-22
The book of Ezekiel is Narrative History, Prophetic and Apocalyptic in genre and even contains Parables. The prophet Ezekiel wrote it approximately 571 B.C. (this date is accurately precise because this book contains more defined dates than any other book in the Bible.) Key personalities include Ezekiel, Israel’s leaders, Ezekiel’s wife, King Nebuchadnezzar, and “the prince”.

It was written to announce judgment upon Judah, to allow them one last chance to repent. It also foretells of the coming deliverance of God’s nation from captivity in Babylon. It mainly discusses the events during the Babylonian captivity. Ezekiel is a priest who is called by God to deliver His messages.

- In chapters 1-3, God commissions his servant Ezekiel. He receives visions, and his message is to confront God’s sinful nation, “I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day ” (2:3).

- Chapters 4-24, Ezekiel delivered the message of doom to the captives. He told several parables, one that compared Israel to an adulterous woman (16:1-63). He taught them that God was cleansing His chosen nation, “Fou have borne the penalty of your lewdness and abominations”, the LORD declares” (16:58).

- From chapters 25-32, Ezekiel condemns judgment upon seven particular nations who mocked YHWH, the God of Israel because of the captivity; they too would soon see their fate. These nations are Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt.
In chapters 33-48, a message of deliverance and restoration is written. This includes not only the current nation of Israel but also the future of the coming Messiah, the Temple, and the Kingdom of God in the End age. In chapter 37, he writes the famous vision of the valley of bones, “He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, Thou know” (37:3)
If Isaiah is the Thundering Prophet and Jeremiah is the Weeping Prophet, Ezekiel is the Weird Prophet! Ezekiel is taken captive to Babylon after its second attack on Jerusalem, 597 B.C. Ezekiel’s book is set in Babylon and it consists of thirteen separate “visions” that span twenty years. And they are very strange visions, indeed!

- Written from Babylon and addressed to the people in Jerusalem
- Theodicy - justification for the justice of God
  Jews are trying to understand why they were in exile
  What is going on in captivity is the judgment of God on his people

Ezekiel - born a priest. At 30, God interrupted and made him a prophet

Wheel within the wheel - visible manifestation of the chariot of God
Mobile throne of judgment

- Isaiah – Thundering Prophet – Courtroom drama
- Jeremiah – Weeping Prophet – Sincerity
- Ezekiel – Weird Prophet – Over the top street theater

Son of Man
- Refers to Ezekiel’s mortality – son of Adam
- Not to be equated to Daniel’s reference to son of man (Jesus)

**Apocalyptic literature**
Scroll - same scroll from Revelation
Consume the word of God - words of woe, mourning and lamentation
Sweetness was the word of God
Similar to Jesus telling us to eat and drink his body and blood - consume him
Ezekiel's message – repent
593 BC – 573 BC
Writing from Babylon – Taken in the 1st wave of captives
Writing to the Jews in Babylon and to Jerusalem – Message is repent
Jews response - we don't need to repent

Ex 19:5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.
Dt 28 – Blessings and curses
Dt 30:1-10 Prosperity after returning to the Lord

Covenant disobedience lead to the exile
Babylon = Iraq = Garden of Eden

Ps 137 – Psalm of lament – they are in Babylon

That they may know that I am the Lord - 60 times
Shut up, quit your complaining, and know that I am God

Author
• Written by Ezekiel
  o Whole text except the very beginning is written in the 1st person
  o Specific dates
  o Unity of style and theme signifies the same author

• Was made hard by God
  o Ez 3:8 But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. 9 I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint.

• Only 1 to be called to be a prophet outside of Israel (and possibly Daniel – his calling is unclear)

Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah are contemporaries - all writing at the same time
• Daniel and Ezekiel are at the beginning of their ministries, Jeremiah is at the end of his

Outline
Date: 593-570 B.C.

I. The Visions of God 1-3 (location: River Chebar, July 31-August 6, 593 B.C. )
   A. The appearance of the likeness of the LORD’s glory 1
   B. The commissioning 2-3:15
   C. You are a watchman 3:16-27 (location: Tel Abib, The Vision)

II. Prophecies against Jerusalem 4-24
   A. The 430 day siege, with 8 ounces of food and 2/3rds quart of water each day (apparently in his courtyard 3:24-25) 4
B. The hair (1/3, 1/3, 1/3 and a little) 5
C. “Pound your fists and stamp your feet” Israel’s idolatry shall make them desolate 6
D. “An end,” “a disaster,” “a day,” “violence,” “destruction comes; they will seek peace but none, disaster will come upon disaster” 7
E. The hole in the wall 8 (location: Jerusalem, September 17, 592, The Vision)
F. Six men, a marker, and the battle-axes 9 (The Vision)
G. The glory of the LORD departs from the temple 10 (The Vision)
H. The wicked men and the cauldron 11 (location: Chaldea, The Vision)
I. Dig through the wall and take your belongings 12
J. Foxes and untempered mortar — the false prophets 13
K. Noah, Daniel and Job could not deliver them 14
L. The Vine Branch 15
M. Jerusalem, the harlot 16
N. The great eagles and the vine 17
O. The soul that sins shall die 18
P. Lions and vine — the princes 19
Q. Rebellious Israel 20 (August 14, 591)
R. The sword of God, Babylon 21
S. The sins of Jerusalem 22
T. The two sisters 23
U. The cooking pot and the siege begins 24 (January 15, 588)

III. Judgment on the nations 25-32

A. Ammon 25:1-7
B. Moab 25:8-11
C. Edom 25:12-14
D. Philistia 25:15-17
E. Tyre 26-28:19 (April 23, 587)
F. Sidon 28:20-26
G. Egypt 29-32 (January 7, 587)

1. The River is Mine 29:1-16
2. The Coming captivity of Egypt 29:17-30:19 (April 26, 571)
3. Against Pharaoh 30:20-26 (April 27, 587)
4. The cutting of the great tree of Egypt 31 (June 21, 587)
5. Capturing the lion of Egypt 32:1-16 (March 3, 585)
6. Consigned to the Pit 32:17-32 (March 18, 585)

IV. The Blessing on His People 33-48

A. The Watchman and the Fall of Jerusalem 33 (January 8, 585)
B. The shepherds and Shepherd 34
C. Judgment on Seir 35
D. Israel shall receive a new heart and spirit 36
E. Dry bones 37:1-14 (location: Valley of Dry Bones)
F. Two sticks 37:15-28
G. Battle of Gog and Magog 38-39
H. A New Temple 40-47:12 (location: The Temple, April 28, 573)

1. The measurements 40-42
2. The return of the LORD’s glory and the altar 43 (The Vision)
3. The temple is holy 44-45:17
5. The waters and trees 47:1-12
The Call to Be a Prophet (Ez 1-3)

Visions of God (Ez 1)

July 31, 593 BC

- The coming of the Lord is depicted as a storm (Dt 33:26)
- Cherubim – Arc of the Covenant
- Wheels and their movement – God is not confined to 1 place
  - God is in Babylon with Ezekiel
  - Eyes – God sees and know everything
  - When the spirit of God moved, the wheels moved
  - No matter where you are and what you are doing, God is there
- Crystal expanse
  - God is transcendent – He is the God of the heavens
Ezekiel’s Call (Ez 2-3)

- Holy Spirit lifted Ezekiel to his feet – Holy Spirit in the Old Testament – has been there the whole time
- Ezekiel is commissioned to speak God’s word to the Israelites
  - Ez 2:3 He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites … 7 You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen
- Rebellious people are in both Jerusalem and Babylon
  - You’ve put your hope in the Temple instead of the God of the Temple

Eat this scroll

- Written on front and back – no room to add anything
  - False prophets teach things that aren’t in the Bible
- What was written on the scroll?
  - Ez 2:9 Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10 which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe
- Same scroll as in Daniel and Revelation concerning the end times???

The Watchman

- Was made hard by God
  - Ez 3:8 But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. 9 I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint.

- Ezekiel is made the watchman
  - Ezekiel’s call is reiterated
  - Ez 3:17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 18 When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 19 But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself. 20 "Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die.
Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 21 But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, and you will have saved yourself."

**Signs and Visions (Ez 4-7) – Dramatic Performances About The Coming Siege of Jerusalem**

**Ezekiel tied up in his house (Ez 3)**

- Ez 3:24 Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. 26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them.

**Lay on your side and ley siege to the drawing of Jerusalem (Ez 4)**

- Left side – Israel – 390 days, 1 day for each year that they sinned
- Right side – Judah – 40 days, 1 day for each year that they sinned
- Cooks his meals over cow manure and eats them in small increments
  - Symbolizing the impending siege and exile
  - They will have to eat unclean foods in foreign lands

**Birth of Israel**

Israel will be born on a specific day
- Is 66: 8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.

3 Exiles of the Israelites
- The First Captivity – (Egyptian) – 430 years
  - The Lord prophesied to Abraham precisely when the Jews would return from Egypt from their First Captivity that lasted 430 years of captivity in Egypt (Genesis 15:13; Exodus 12:40-41).
- The Second Captivity (Babylonian) – 70 years
  - Similarly, the Second Captivity of 70 years in Babylon, as prophesied in Jeremiah 25:11, ended precisely in 536 BC when the Jews returned to Jerusalem as decreed by the Persian king Cyrus the Great.
- The Third Captivity (Worldwide) – 2520 years

The Third Captivity (Worldwide) – 2520 years
As Ezekiel lay on his right side for a few hours for 390 days and then for 40 days on his right side the Jews in Babylon learned of God’s remarkable prophecy. God revealed that every day stood for one biblical year. Therefore, Israel would be
punished for a period of 390 years plus an additional 40 years as a result of their disobedience to God’s commands, totaling 430 years.

Out of God’s total decreed future punishment of 430 years for Israel's and Judah's sins (390 years plus 40 years = 430 years). First, we must deduct the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, which Ezekiel and the Jewish exiles were already enduring, which ended in the spring of 536 B.C. Therefore: (430 years minus the 70 years in Babylon = 360 years). This indicates that a further period of 360 years of additional exile remained for the Jews following the end of the Babylonian Captivity in 536 B.C.

The majority (95%) of the Jews never returned from Babylon to Israel. In fact, even the minority of the 42,360 Jews (Ezra 2:64) who did return did so with very little faith or true repentance. Most of the Jewish exiles failed to repent of their spiritual rebellion against God and they chose to remain in pagan Babylon.

Ezekiel’s unusual prophecy revealed the precise duration of the Jewish exiles worldwide Diaspora and the actual time of their prophesied return to the Promised Land in May 15, 1948. The solution to this prophetic mystery was found in a divine principle revealed to Moses and recorded in Leviticus 26. In this chapter the Lord established definite promises and punishments for Israel based on Israel’s subsequent obedience or disobedience to His Divine commands. In four separate but repeated passages recorded in Leviticus 26, God warned Israel that: if, after being punished for her sins, she still failed to repent of her rebellion, the punishments previously declared by God would be multiplied seven times more (the number of divine completion).

360 years of Exile x 7 = 2,520 biblical years of additional Exile for the Jews

- Corrections for the change in calendars gives us May 14, 1948 – the exact date that current Israel was born
The Calculation of the Prophecy of Israel's Rebirth in 1948

Babylonian Captivity Ended in the Spring of 536 B.C.
PLUS
Israel's Exile (2520 biblical years) = 2483.8 Calendar Years

End of the Third Worldwide Captivity in May 15, 1948
2483.8
536.4

1947.4
Minus 1 Year (No Year Between 1 AD and 1 BC)

1948.4
The Nation of Israel Proclaimed on May 14, 1948

The incredible precision of the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy in our generation forces us to marvel at the power of God to both prophesy the future and then precisely cause these vital historic events to be fulfilled exactly as He has declared and thus setting the stage for the return of Jesus Christ the Messiah.
Cut your hair with a sword (Ez 5)

- 1/3 – Burn with fire inside the city
  - Famine and plague in the city
- 1/3 – Strike it with the sword all around the city
  - Those that fall by the sword outside the city walls
- 1/3 – Scatter a third to the wind
  - Those that are scattered throughout during the exile
- Take a few strands of hair and tuck them away in the folds of your garment

A Prophecy Against the Mountains of Israel (Ez 6)

Ez 6:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them 3 and say: 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.

- High places – they were worshipping Baal and Asherah
- Syncretism – They were worship the one true God, but any other gods they chose as well
  - We need to worship God alone
    - Ex 20: 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments.
  - Anything loved apart from God is an idol
    - Love your family – in God
    - Love your gifts that you have been given – from the giver and to the glory of the giver
    - Your money was given to you by the giver
    - Enjoy everything in ways that honor God
- Idolatry did not cease even after the reforms of Josiah
- Recognition formula – and you shall know that I am the LORD

The End Has Come (Ez 7)

Ez 7:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel: The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. 3 The end is now upon you and I will unleash my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. 4 I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will surely repay you for your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

- The Day of the Lord’s fierce wrath is imminent – should make you think of the flood
- Ge 6:12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

Exit: God (Ez 8-11)

September 17, 592 BC
The hand of the Lord is upon me – he is about to have a vision

Vision of Jesus (Ez 8)

Same vision as Daniel and John have of Christ
<table>
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<th>Daniel 10:4-6</th>
<th>Revelation 1:13-15</th>
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<tr>
<td>I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.</td>
<td>“a man dressed in linen” (5a)</td>
<td>“someone like a ‘Son of Man’ dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet” (13b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“with a belt of finest gold around his waist” (5b)</td>
<td>“with a golden sash around his chest” (13b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“his body was like chrysolite” (6a)</td>
<td>“his head and hair were white as wool, as white as snow” (14a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his face like lightning” (6a)</td>
<td>his eyes were like blazing fire” (14b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“his eyes like flaming torches” (6a)</td>
<td>“his hands were like the gleam of burnished bronze” (6a)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze” (6a)</td>
<td>“his feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace” (15a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“his voice like the sound of a multitude” (6b)</td>
<td>“his voice like the sound of rushing waters” (15b)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Idolatry inside the Temple (Ez 8-9)**

The Temple and the church are holy places. If they become unholy, God will destroy them.

**Image of Jealousy (Ez 8:5-6)**

Entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy.

**70 Elders (Ez 8:7-13)**

- Entrance to the court - a hole in the wall that lead to a doorway
- Inside were portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and detestable animals and all the idols of the house of Israel
- 70 elders offering incense (prayers) to false gods on the wall

**Tammuz (Ez 8:14-15)**

- Entrance to the North gate of the house of the Lord
- Women mourning Tammuz
- Tammuz is a female Babylonian fertility goddess

**Sun worshippers (Ez 8:16)**

- Inner court of the house of the Lord - entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar
- 25 men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD (turned on God) and their faces toward the east
- They were bowing down to the sun in the east
Idolaters are killed (Ez 9)

- God marks His people
  - Ez 9:4 “Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.”
  - Rev 7 – 144,000 people are marked on the forehead
- All who did not lament what was happening at the temple were killed
  - Ez 9:5 As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. 6 Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple.
- Ezekiel, like Moses (Ex 32), pleads for mercy
  - God’s destruction of the Temple is just

The Glory departs from the Temple (Ez 10)

Pillar of Cloud and Fire

- First appears when Moses leads the people out of Egypt (1446 BC)
  - Blocks the Egyptians from behind as the cross the Red Sea
  - Crossing the Sea – Ex 13 17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, “If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.” 18 So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea… 21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.
- Ex 40:34 The Pillar of Cloud and Fire came to rest over the Tabernacle (1445 BC)
  - When the cloud lifted, the Israelites moved to a new place
  - The Glory of the LORD – Ex 40 33 And so Moses finished the work [of Setting Up the Tabernacle]. 34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

- When David becomes king, the Pillar of Cloud and Fire comes to Jerusalem to validate David’s kingship
  - Moved the Ark of the Covenant to a tent in the courtyard of David’s palace
  - 2Sa 6 12 Now King David was told, “The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God.” So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. 13 When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14 Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might. 15 While he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets. 16 As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart. 17 They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. 18 After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. 19 Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

- Comes to the Temple
  - The Pillar of Cloud and Fire moves to the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple
  - Validates the Temple
  - The Dedication of the Temple – 2Ch 7 1 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 2 The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. 3 When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the
pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, “He is good; his love endures forever.”

- Leaves the Temple Sept 17, 592 BC
  - Northern gate of the inner court – Close to the Holy of Holies in the Temple
  - Mount of Olives

- Jesus
  - Jesus ascends from the Mount of Olives – Jesus is the Glory of God
  - Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.

**Sequence**

Leaves to the East – Never returns

- Starts at the Holy of Holies above the Ark of the Covenant
- Pillar of cloud and fire moves from near the Ark of the Covenant to the threshold of the Temple
  - Ez 9.3 Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple.
  - Ez 10.4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’s glory.
- From the threshold of the Temple to the Eastern Gate
  - Ez 10.18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. 19 And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.
- From the Eastern Gate to the Mount of Olives
  - Ez 11.22 So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. 23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.
  - Moves over the Kedron Valley, up the Mount of Olives, and down the backside toward Jericho

- Jesus - John 1:14 In the person of Jesus Christ, God puts on a face and walks among us

- Glory of God leaves the temple: Temple → Golden gates → Kedron Valley → Mount of Olives → Jericho
- Jesus returns on Palm Sunday: Jericho → Mount of Olives → Kedron Valley → Golden gates → Temple
  - On the way in, Jesus curses the fig tree, which is a symbol of the temple
  - Fig tree – a tree in full leaf with no fruit. The temple had great things, but bore no fruit, just empty ritual
Phenomenological language – Describing how he saw things
This is a supreme judgement – the people are dead without the Lord present

**False prophets (Ez 11)**

Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah
- Leaders of the people – False prophets
  - 2 The LORD said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who are plotting evil and giving wicked advice in this city.
  - 3 They say, 'Will it not soon be time to build houses? – Rhetorical question referring back to the rebuilding
  - This city is a cooking pot, and we are the meat.'
    - We are the cream of the crop – those that were taken away were saved
- Pelatiah dies while Ezekiel is prophesizing

**Return from Exile (Ez 11)**

- Ez 11:17 I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.
• Exile = Death of the nation  
  o Promise that a remnant will be spared – that is us, the elect  
  o Partially fulfilled in the return from the exile  
  o Fully fulfilled in the Christ – Everything that Israel was supposed to be, Jesus is  

• Points to Jesus  
  o Mercy and resurrection  

_Woe to Israel (12-24)_

**Exile Symbolized (Ez 12) – Dramatic performances**

• Ez 12:4 During the daytime, while they watch, bring out your belongings packed for exile. Then in the evening, while they are watching, go out like those who go into exile. 5 While they watch, dig through the wall and take your belongings out through it. 6 Put them on your shoulder as they are watching and carry them out at dusk.  
  o This is how Zedekiah will flee the city when it is attacked – through a hole in the wall at night  
  o Ez 12:12 “The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder at dusk and leave, and a hole will be dug in the wall for him to go through.
  ▪ King – ultimate ruler – God is the ruler of Israel
  ▪ Prince – regional ruler

• Cover your face so that you cannot see the land, for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel.  
  o Zedekiah’s family will be killed and then his eyes will be gouged out, so he will not see Babylon

• Ez 12:17 The word of the LORD came to me: 18 “Son of man, tremble as you eat your food, and shudder in fear as you drink your water. 19 Say to the people of the land: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says about those living in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel: They will eat their food in anxiety and drink their water in despair, for their land will be stripped of everything in it because of the violence of all who live there. 20 The inhabited towns will be laid waste and the land will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’  
  o There is nothing that the people can do about the oncoming siege

• Ez 12:21 The word of the LORD came to me: 22 “Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel: ‘The days go by and every vision comes to nothing’? 23 Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to put an end to this proverb, and they will no longer quote it in Israel.’ 24 Say to them, ‘The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled. 25 But I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious house, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign LORD.’
  o Proverb – 2Pe:3 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."
  o The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled. … I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay.
  o It is now 592 – 596 (6 years later) the vision comes to be

_Condemnations (Ez 13-14)_

• False prophets (Ez 13)  
  o Prophets for hire – God has not spoken to them  
  o Joel Olsteen – Feel good gospel  
  o Witches  
    ▪ People that practiced witchcraft were putting people to death  
    ▪ Puritans – Condemning witches – governmental law for Israelites to put witches to death  
  o Proverbs from false prophets  
    ▪ Referring to the prophecies of Jeremiah – Jeremiah 14
Days grow long and every vision comes to nothing – God says that the time has come

Idolaters (Ez 14)

- 14:1-11 Focuses on individual idolatry
  - The people are worshipping idols fully and seeking the council of God – 2 religions at the same time
  - God asks (rhetorically) if He should hear the requests of these people
    - Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!
  - Prayer – if you come to God with your heart full of idols, don’t expect an answer
    - If He gives an answer, it will involve Him grabbing your heart
  - Grace – We will be forgiven if we come with a repentant heart
    - If we hold onto our idols, then God will punish us as a means to restore us to him
    - Judgement will come on those who hold onto idols as a sign to everyone → what happens to idolaters at the final judgement
  - We have an image in our hearts of God as we want Him to be as opposed to who He is

- 14:12-23 – Focuses on idolatry of nations
  - Noah, Daniel and Job – Used as examples of righteousness, emblematic holy men
  - In 592, Daniel is a current example to the people
    - May instead refer to a king Dan’el who was a righteous king
  - Even these holy men could only save themselves, not the nation
  - God doesn’t have grandchildren
    - We will not be saved by the faith of our parents – only by the righteousness of yourselves, thereby making you a son/daughter of God
  - Ez 14:21 "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—to kill its men and their animals!
    - Black horse of revelation

Jerusalem as a vine image (Ez 15)

- Jerusalem is a useless vine
  - Abide (remain) in me – Jerusalem has broken the covenant
  - They are no longer connected to the source of their power and protection

- John 15:1-11 – Jesus is the true vine, the true Israel
  - Hosea 10:1
  - Isaiah 5:1-7
  - Psalm 80:8-19

- Romans 11:11

Jerusalem as a bride image – Allegory of unfaithful Jerusalem (Ez 16)

- Revelation 19:6-8
  - Song of Songs
    - Finding you and making you my own – Same allegory as in the 2 lovers in Song of Songs
  - Hosea – Israel becomes a prostitute
  - Psalm 45:10-17

Desecration of the Sabbath (Ez 20)

August 14, 591 BC

- Sabbaths are a sign
  - 12 Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy.
o 20 Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God."

• Desecration of the Sabbath mentioned 4 times
  o 13 "Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the desert. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws … and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths.
  o 15 Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the desert that I would not bring them into the land I had given them… 16 because they rejected my laws and did not follow my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths
  o 21 "But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws—although the man who obeys them will live by them—and they desecrated my Sabbaths.
  o 23 Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the desert that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, 24 because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths

V.

**Oracles Against the Nations (Ez 25-32)**

**The Valley of Dry Bones (Ez 33-37)**

Ez 36 – Preparation of the land of Israel for the mass return of the Jews
Ez 37 – Hope returns to Israel

Ez 37:11 Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. **They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’** 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.’ "
Gog and Magog (Ez 38-39)

Jerusalem Restored (Ez 40-46)

Milleniel Temple

A Renewed World (Ez 47-48)

April 28, 573 BC
Daniel (Da) – The Royal Prophet

Daniel Overview

The genre of the book of Daniel is:
- Narrative history
- Prophetic oracle
- Apocalyptic visions

Key personalities of this book include:
- Daniel
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Shadrach
- Meshach
- Abednego
- Belshazzar
- Darius

The prophet Daniel wrote it around 530 B.C. and his writings records the events of the Babylonian captivity in 560-536 B.C. to which Daniel was a servant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Period: 605 - 539 B.C. (set in Babylon)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Although written c. 165 B.C., the story is set during 605-539 B.C.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Events: Daniel in the court of the king of Babylon during the Babylonian captivity.</td>
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</table>
• Jesus confirms that Daniel wrote it: Mt 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel

The thesis of the book of Daniel – God is at work in the affairs of men, and any man that sees beyond the things that are seen will find that God is with him, supporting him and strengthening him all along the way, bringing him out to the praise of His glory.

Chapters 1-6 An introduction to Daniel and his friends in the land of Babylon – Men of faith in a hostile world
Chapters 7-12 Prophetic chapters – Daniel contains more fulfilled prophecies than any other book of the Bible

Chronology:
Daniel 1 – Honoring God in a world that doesn’t
Daniel 2 – Dream of the Statue (Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream)
Daniel 3 – Image of Gold and the Fiery Furnace
Daniel 4 – Dream of a Tree (Nebuchadnezzar's dream)
Daniel 7 – 4 Beasts (Kingdoms)
Daniel 8 – Ram and a He Goat
Daniel 5 – The writing on the wall
Daniel 6 – Daniel in the Lion’s Den
Daniel 9 – Daniel’s 70th Week
Daniel 10 – Daniel’s Vision of a Man
Daniel 11 – The Kings
Daniel 12 – The End Times

The purpose of this book is to provide a historical account how the Lord God protected and provided for His faithful followers while in captivity. It also includes a vision of future redemption and hope.

• In chapters 1-6, Daniel writes about his own life in captivity. He was selected to work for the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel (or his Babylonian name Belteshazzar), and his friends made bold and tough decisions and several times displayed their integrity to stand for Godliness instead of culture. They rejecting the king’s food, prayed when it was illegal to do so, and refused to bow to the king’s idol, for which they were thrown into a scorching furnace. Daniel interpreted the king’s dreams twice then was promoted as chief over all the wise men in Babylon. Yet, through all the great things that Daniel did He claimed it was God that did it through him and he gave all the glory to God, “It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him” (2:22).

• Chapters 7-12 contain the visions that Daniel received from God and the events that are involved in his prophetic ministry. A portion of these includes the results of the earthly kingdoms that he lived in. They also mention the coming Messiah and the apocalyptic events to come. “As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time” (12:8-9). To be continued...

Dates
• There's no contradiction between Daniel, who says this happened in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim and Jeremiah 46:2, which says that it was the 4th year of Jehoiakim.
• Daniel reckons a king’s years in the Babylonian method: the 1st year of the king's reign begins at the beginning of the calendar year after he takes the throne.
• In the 597 BC deportation, Jehoiachin, Ezekiel, and others were taken away
  ○ This deportation is described in 2nd kings 24:14-16
• In the 587 BC invasion, the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed
  ○ 2Ki 25:9-10
| DANIEL 1: Miracle of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the Kings Food |
| DANIEL 2: The Image of Four Metals |
| BABYLON |
| Nebuchadnezzar Belshazzar |
| MEDIA - PERSIA |
| Cyrus the Great |
| Cambyses |
| Bardia |
| Darius the Great |
| GREECE |
| Alexander the Great |
| 1) Antigonus |
| 2) Ptolemy |
| 3) Seleucus |
| 4) Lysimachus |
| ROMA |
| FIERCE BEAST |
| TEN HORN |
| LITTLE HORN |
| LITTLE HORN GROWS INTO A GREAT HORN |
| THE MESSIAH, GOD'S CHAMPION |
| ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN |
| THE PRINCE OF THE HOST |
| HIS KINGDOM |
| MESSIANIC TEMPLE |
| FORGIVENESS OF SIN |
| EVERLASTING LIFE |
| DANIEL 3: The Golden Image and the Miracle of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace with one like the Son of God. |
| DANIEL 4: Miracle of Nebuchadnezzar being like a Beast. |
| DANIEL 5: Miracle of a Man's Hand and the Fall of Babylon |
| DANIEL 6: Miracle of Daniel in the Lion's Den |
| DANIEL 7: The Four Beasts |
| DANIEL 8: The Ram and the He Goat |
| DANIEL 9: The Seventy Weeks |
| DANIEL 10: The Gloriously Shining Man |
| DANIEL 11-12: The Kings |
| THE COMMAND TO REBUILD JERUSALEM |
| SEVEN WEEKS TO JERUSALEM REBUILT (49 YEARS) |
| SIXTY-TWO WEEKS TO MESSIAH (434 YEARS) |
| MESSIAH KILLED / TEMPLE DESTROYED (GAP OF 7 YEARS) |
| ONE WEEK COVENANT WITH MANY (7 YEARS) |
| THE CONSUMPTION |
| THE RESURRECTION |
| FOUR KINGS (Verse 2) |
| MIGHTY KING (Verses 3-13) |
| KING OF THE NORTH (Verses 14-15) |
| KING OF THE NORTH (Verses 33-39) |
Dreams – 4 kingdoms
1. Babylon
2. Medo Persia
3. Greek
4. Roman Empire

- Assyrian empire rose to power in 8th century
  - 722 BC take Northern tribes – survivors are taken captive to Assyria
  - 721 BC attack Jerusalem – Jerusalem miraculously saved by God
- Babylon defeats Assyria – attack Jerusalem 3 times
  - Attack in 605 – wave the white flag – Daniel taken captive
  - 597 – wave the white flag – Ezekiel taken captive
  - 586 – Jeremiah
- Persia – Rebuilds Jerusalem and lives off the tax base
- Greece – Alexander the Great
- Rome – 68 BC

Would not bow - bow to idols
Babylonians are jealous - want them out of the position of power
Who is the God that will save you?
Nebekinezeer makes a decree concerning the God of the Jews
Da 5-6
Belshazar
Party as the Persians are attacking
Has a feast - uses the sacred vessels of God
Don't know how Persia defeated them
Secular history - Persia walked under the walls through the water ducts after damming up the water supply
But if not... reference to Dan 3 fiery furnace
Central message of the book - God is in charge

Jewish Bibles classify Daniel among the “Writings,” not the “Prophets”; Christian Bibles elevate Daniel to the position of a major prophet. Daniel is taken captive to Babylon after its first attack on Jerusalem in 605 B.C. Daniel’s book is set in Babylon and spans the years 605 – 539 B.C.

A great story, Daniel is also a major source of Christian messianic prophecy, with Jesus taking his self-referential title “Son of Man” from Daniel 7: 13-14 and also referencing Daniel concerning the end times: “So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel . . .” (Matthew 24: 15).

- 605 – The Jews wave the white flag and surrender – they become a vassal state to the Babylonian Empire
  - Captives are taken from the royal family back to Babylon to ensure that tribute is paid
    - Includes the prophet Daniel
      - Daniel is part of the royal family
      - He is a boy (10-12 years old) – spends the rest of his life in Babylon

Prophetic book
- Daniel and Revelation have not been fulfilled yet
  - Revelation explains Daniel
  - Daniel lays the basis for Revelation
- There is a danger in knowing the future, so God has taken precautions
  - He has clothed these prophetic passages in symbolic language – given them to us in figurative form – thus the bizarre imagery
You can’t just sit down and read Daniel and Revelation and have them make sense. You have to study them, taking the whole of the Bible to interpret the symbols. You can not understand what is going on in them without first knowing a great deal about the rest of the Bible.

These symbolic things are signs erected by God, and signs are given to us so that we may understand facts that are otherwise hidden. God’s program for the future is hidden from us until we spend time understanding the signs, and these books are full of signs.

- He doesn’t introduce the prophetic section first, but brings us through an introduction to understand the moral character He requires of the reader before the prophetic program can begin to make sense.
  - There is no way to understand what the prophetic program means unless you first grasp the moral lessons in the introduction.
  - Unless you have incorporated these lessons into your own life, you will discover nothing there to enrich your life.

The thesis of the book of Daniel

God is at work in the affairs of men, and any man that sees beyond the things that are seen will find that God is with him, supporting him and strengthening him all along the way, bringing him out to the praise of His glory.
Daniel and His Friends Obey God

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king’s descendants and some of the nobles, 4 young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. 5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king’s delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.

10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.”

11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 “Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king’s delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.” 14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies. 16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm. 21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

Why did Nebuchadnezzar come against Jerusalem?

Names
- Jehoiakim was a Judean king placed on the throne by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt
  - Jehoiakim means “Jehovah raises up” belied his illegitimate ascendency
- Nebuchadnezzar – A Hebrew translation of the Babylonian name Nebu-kudduri-utzur
  - Means “Nebu protects the crown”

Why did Nebuchadnezzar come against Jerusalem?
- Historically
Because the pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon. The young Prince Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Charchemish; and then pursued the fleeing Egyptian army all the way down to the Sinai. Along away (or on the way back), he subdued Jerusalem who had been loyal to Pharaoh.

- God’s will
  - There were 2 main reasons for the captivity:
    - Idolatry
    - Israel’s failure to observe the sabbaths for the land (Leviticus 25:1-7 and 26:2-35)
  - God always settles His accounts with those who refused to heed His warnings.
    - Articles of the house of God
      - Nebuchadnezzar did not take all the furnishings of the temple – the rest were brought to Babylon later
      - The confiscation of these items, and their deposit in a Babylonian temple, was a dramatic declaration of the opinion “my God is better than your God”
      - Would the God of Israel be able to vindicate himself?
      - This was a low time for Judah and God’s people
      - It seemed that the God of Israel had lost to the gods of Assyria, Egypt, & Babylon
      - Daniel shows God vindicating Himself, at a time when the conquering of Israel might have brought His reputation into disrepute
  - God's hand is obvious he is in command this was prophesied in Isaiah:
    - Is 39:7 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”
    - This prophecy is led some to think that Daniel and his companions were made eunuchs.
    - Certainly the Hebrew term ‘saris’ was used of literal eunuchs; but the word derives from a phrase and simply means to be a ‘servant of the king’ – it wasn't necessarily exclusively applied to literal eunuchs.

Name changes:

Daniel “God is my judge” to Belteshazzar “Bel’s prince”
Hannaniah “Beloved by the Lord” to Shadrach “Illumined by Sun-god”
Mishael “Who is as God” to Meshach “Who is like Venus”
Azariah “The Lord is my helper” to Abednego “Servant of Nego”

- Calvin says that Nebuchadnezzar knew that the Jews were a stiff-necked and obstinate people, and that he used the sumptuous food to soften up these captives. In the same way, Satan wants to indoctrinate us into the world system – he wants us to feed on what the world offers, to identify (name) ourselves according to the world, and to educate ourselves in the ways of the world.

Faithfulness – Refusing to Compromise

Daniel and his friends refuse to eat the king’s food – Daniel’s decision to be faithful.
- The word for ‘defile himself” carries the thought of polluting, staining, defiling (see also Isaiah 59:3, Zephaniah 3:1, Malakai 1:7)
- That Daniel requested that he might not defile himself implies that he explained the religious basis for his request. He didn’t justify what he was doing on the basis of good health or any other thing, except godliness.
- Wine was not forbidden by God, but in pagan cultures, like many meats, it was dedicated to the gods.
Why would Daniel and his friends consider the king's food defiled?
- Undoubtedly, it was not kosher
- It was probably sacrificed idols
- It implied fellowship with Babylon's culture system
  - By Eastern standards, to share a meal was to commit oneself to friendship
  - It was a covenant of significance
  - This is why this was such a courageous decision

The king had ordered the menu
- To disobey could result in very severe punishment
- The food itself was no doubt pretty attractive and seem pretty good compared to vegetables and water for 3 years

Daniel and his friends refused to compromise
- Separated from family and home it would have been easy to compromise
- They were very young when they were taken captive – and subject to all the normal teenage peer pressures
- It would have been easy to think that God had let them down by allowing them to be carried away into Babylon
- Why should they risk their necks for a God who let them down?
  - Many Christians have the mentality that says “God, you do right by me and I'll do right by you”
  - Of course, God always does right by us; but we don't always know what is right for us!
- Self-denial must be sought
  - Be ready for a bad name
  - Be willing to be called a bigot
  - Be prepared for the loss of friendships
  - Be prepared for anything so long as you can stand fast by Him who bought you with his precious blood
- A Christian man should be willing to be tried he should be pleased to let his religion be put to the test
  - ‘There, hammer away if you like’
  - Do you want to be carried to heaven on a feather bed?
  - God will never abandon us when we stand for him.

The results of Daniel's courageous decision
- What God did – God gives Daniel favor and good will with the authorities.
  - God moved upon the authorities to regard Daniel with good will; but also worked through the wise actions of Daniel to cultivate this good will.
- What Daniel did – Daniel wisely, and with great trust in God, suggests a plan
  - Daniel was willing to put himself, and his faith in God, to the test
  - He was sensitive to seeing the situation through the steward’s eyes & addressing his legitimate concerns
    - Martyrs by proxy, who have such strong convictions that they think it's somebody else's duty to run risk for them, are by no means unknown.
  - Vegetables refer to all kinds of grains and plants, not strictly vegetables.
- The long term result
  - Daniel and his companions are blessed and promoted because of their faithfulness
  - The special intellectual ability of Daniel and his companions was not due to their diet, but to the special intervention of the Lord.
  - These young men from Jerusalem were immersed in the study of Babylonian culture, literature and religion – yet they remained faithful to God.
  - The work of the prophets like Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk had not been in vain – these boys were in the world, but not of it.

Isn't Daniel making a big deal of our little thing?
- Yes – but the only way to go on with God is by being faithful in the little things
- Daniel and his friends must have been trained well by their parents – we must train our children this way
Why bring religion into it?
- Daniel realized that his relationship with God touched every area of his life, even when he ate.
- It is significant that the very roots of sin go back to the eating of forbidden food.
- Purity of heart and faithfulness to God come before enlightenment in divine mysteries.
  - Daniel will later receive great revelations, but now he simply shows himself a dedicated follower of God.
Dream of the Statue (Nebuchadnezzar’s 1st Dream) (2)

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

2 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 3 Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 4 And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”

4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

7 They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.”

8 The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9 if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

10 The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. 21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. 22 He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. 23 “I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king’s demand.”

Daniel Explains the Dream
24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.”

25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.”

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?”

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, “The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 29 As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. 30 But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

31 “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 “This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

Daniel and His Friends Promoted
Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. The king answered Daniel, and said, “ Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

4 Metals (4 Kingdoms)

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of the Statue – Possibly 602 BC

He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:
Nebuchadnezzar demands to know the dream and its interpretation

- Upon pain of death, the wise men had to tell him both the dream as well as the interpretation
  - Nebuchadnezzar harsh posture as well as the method of execution he describes is perfectly consistent with an ancient Eastern monarch
    - Archer describes one method of dismemberment in which the victim was tied to 4 trees with a rope at each limb. The trees were bent inwards and tied together at the top. The top rope was cut and the body was snapped into 4 pieces.
  - He may have remembered that he had a significant dream, but maybe only had a sense of it and was fuzzy in remembering the details

Wise men – It’s their job to be able to contact the divine and get secrets from the spirit realm

- They confess that true revelation comes from God down to man – It is not the achievement of man
- The strategy of the wise men was to convince the king that he was being unreasonable – not that they were being incompetent.
  - They were like some modern ministers of our own day who spend their time studying philosophy, psychiatry, sociology, social science, political science, and then continue under the pretense of being god's messenger to men.
- A furious Nebuchadnezzar sentences all his wise men to death
  - Nebuchadnezzar knew that false religion was worse than useless – It was a curse
As a new king, Nebuchadnezzar may have been using this situation to test the suitability of his father's old advisors – they seem to be lacking

God reveals the dream to Daniel

- Daniel reacts to Nebuchadnezzar’s decree by asking for a brief extension
  - Daniel was obviously innocent in all this, yet he calmly and discreetly deals with the situation
  - Daniel's calmness at this crisis showed what kind of man he really was – crises do not make the man, they revealed the man
  - He asked the king to give him time – It takes time to listen to the Lord and to wait upon him, and Daniel knew this
  - Was Satan trying to manufacture Daniel’s execution and all this?
- Daniel asks his companions for prayer
  - Daniel was in the type of situation where God truly works – one of human impossibility with the stress on urgency
  - The battle was won when Daniel prayed with his friends
    - It is a privilege to have praying friends in prayer meetings such as this, history has been made
    - No doubt their prayers were extremely earnest and God listens to earnest prayer
    - Daniel has confidence that God could do an unprecedented miracle
    - Joseph had interpreted dreams with God's help, but did not reconstructed the dreams
- God reveals Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation to Daniel
  - This was not religion but revelation – It came as a night vision, a dream, a vision at night
  - Daniel praises for this revelation – God is praised for his might and for his desire to speak to man
  - Daniel has the certainty of faith to believe that God has given him the answer even when he is not confirmed it before Nebuchadnezzar yet
The dream of Nebuchadnezzar

- Daniel is ushered into the king’s presence and gives glory to God for revealing the dream
- Arioch tries to glorify himself (verse 25: I have found a man), but Daniel gives all the glory to God
- Daniel's description of the dream is clear
  - This is a massive image or statue made of different materials.
  - The image is destroyed by a stone made without hands, and is blown away like worthless chaff, while the stone comes to dominate the whole Earth.
- The interpretation of the dream
  - Nebuchadnezzar is clearly said to be the head of gold
  - After him will come 3 other kingdoms
    - The Empire’s succeeding Babylon were the Medo-Persian, the Greek, and the Roman
    - They are not inferior in the sense of size or duration – quite the opposite
      - Babylonia stood for 66 years
      - Medio Persia for 208 years
      - Greece 185 years
      - Rome was so strong that it stood for more than 500 years
    - They were inferior in the sense of centralization of absolute power
      - The metals become less valuable and weighty (according to specific gravity) but they do become stronger in value – We see a de-evolution not evolution
  - Then the final Kingdom set up by God
  - Federation of 10 kings
    - The feet seemed to describe a confederation of kings during which Jesus will establish his Kingdom on Earth
      - Dan 2:42 10 toes
      - Dan 7:24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom.
      - Rev 17:12 “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast.
    - There is no fulfillment of this federation of 10 kings in ancient Roman history, therefore this prophecy must still be future
    - Therefore, the final super power of the world is thought to be a revival of the Roman Empire
      - A continuation of the image this will be the final world empire that the returning Jesus will conquer over
- Analysis – This is a human image representing man's rule in this Earth
  - That day will end this is an amazing prophecy
  - God can tell us the future because he controls all of history
  - We do well to remember that Rome was nothing but a little village on the banks of the Tiber when Nebuchadnezzar dreamed his dream.
Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction

- Praises Daniel, and his God, and he promotes Daniel and his friends
- It is fitting the Danielle's friends who had accomplished much of the victory through their prayers get to share in Daniel’s advancement
The Image of Gold

3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”

7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Image of Gold

In response to his dream of the image in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar builds a 90’ statue entirely of gold

- Signify that his kingdom of Babylon would never end
- It is probably not pure gold, but wood overlaid with gold – a customary method of construction in OT times
- A large pedestal was found in the plains of Dora, Iraq (ruins of Babylon) that very well have been the stand for this statue

He declares that every time the musical instruments play, all must bow down and worship

- All the Babylonian dignitaries are gathered at the dedication ceremony of the image
- Nebuchadnezzar’s motive was to use the worship of this image as a unifying pledge of allegiance to his god (Nebo), and thus to him and his state
  - Politicians have always wanted to use any type of religion to strengthen their grip on the people
    - In 1936, Baldur von Schirach, head of the youth program in Nazi Germany, said “If we act as true Germans we act according to the laws of God. Whoever serves Adolf Hitler, the führer, serves Germany, and whoever serves Germany serves God.”
    - In 1960, the president of Ghana erected a slightly larger than life size statue of himself in front of the Nation’s House of Parliament. The inscription on the side of the statue read “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto you.”
- The command is empowered by a naked threat – refusal would be interpreted as high treason
  - Nebuchadnezzar was not a man to allow a law-breaker to go unpunished
    - In a cuneiform writing, Nebuchadnezzar is described as so devoted to justice that “he did not rest night or day.” This document also tells of a criminal guilty of a second offense who was decapitated, and a stone image of his head was displayed as a warning.
- The crowd reacts to the command.
  - Literally Dan 4:7 reads “as soon as they were hearing, they were falling down”
  - There was total and immediate obedience to Nebuchadnezzar

Daniel’s Friends Disobey the King

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. 9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; 11 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery
There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.”

“Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

Fiery Furnace

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel’s friends) are accused

• Some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews – told on them
12 But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

There was political motivation against these Jews who had been promoted to high office

Nebuchadnezzar asks them if it is true

So these men were brought before the king, 14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? … if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

To his credit, Nebuchadnezzar will not accept the accusation against these men on hearsay – he wants to make sure of it - but there was no way that Nebuchadnezzar was going to lose face at such an important occasion

His pride made him declare ‘you shall have no other gods than me’

Nebuchadnezzar thinks nothing of insulting all gods - “who is the God who shall deliver you from my hands”

He is more of a secularist or a humanist than a theist – the God he really believes in is himself, not the gods of Babylon

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse and are thrown into the fiery furnace

These 3 men insist that they would not worship the image no matter what the consequences

They have no need to defend themselves – their guilt in this matter is clear – they will not bow down to this image

They have a clear grasp of God's omnipotence

Dan 3:17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

He will deliver us, but if not … These men show both faith and submission

They decided to make a stand and let their fate in God’s hands

Often Christians whine too much about their rights and what is fair. It is sometimes preferable to make a stand and take your lumps – leaving your fate in God's hands.

They did not doubt God’s ability, but they also did not presume to know God’s will – these men recognized that God's will might be different than their desires

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;

They had great faith to be able to say this

The furnace is heated to 7 times the normal heat

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are tied up and cast violently into the furnace

Everything is done to make sure they are quickly and completely burned

The guards that threw them in were incinerated instantly

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were unharmed – only their bonds were destroyed

Nebuchadnezzar tells us that Jesus was with the men in the furnace

Dan 3:25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

Did the 3 men know that Jesus was there? Sometimes Jesus’ presence with us during trial is very real, but quite invisible
Obedience

Obedience – It’s better to be dead and obedient to God than alive and disobedient

- God uses the smaller things of obedience to prepare us for the bigger things
- They stood firm when they were challenged to eat food that was deemed polluting according to their law, and God blessed their obedience – This gave them the courage to obey now when the stakes are much higher

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the greatness of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

- Dan 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."
- Notice it is clearly their God, not his
  - The miraculous work right in front of his eyes impressed him, but his heart was still not changed
  - Jesus means little to us until we can say with Thomas “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28)
- His response “the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble” is not entirely sane or stable

Prophetic implications

- Nebuchadnezzar
  - Type of antichrist – forces the whole world into one religion of idolatrous worship
    - Rev 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life
  - Type of Satan – Trying to force the believer to bow down to his own image of what men and women should be, instead of God’s image
- Fiery furnace – Type of tribulation – Great affliction for the Jews – the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 10:7)
- Hebrew men – Type of Israel who will be preserved through the tribulation
- Executioners who perished – Type of those in league with the antichrist, who Jesus will slay at His return
- Daniel – Type of the church
  - Where was he? Ill? away on state business? – whatever the reason, his absence is significant
  - Daniel was not present during their tribulation, just as the church will not be present during the tribulation
Dream of a Tree (Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd Dream) (4)

Pride broken

This is the story of how God broke the greatest king that ever lived, the greatest tyrant that ever ruled. It is the story of how God broke the pride of his heart, humiliated him, humbled him, allowed his to exercise his pride until it resulted in what always results when men live in pride – madness. He went out and ate grass in the field for 7 years. His throne was preserved, but he acted like an animal. This is what always happened to man when he chooses to walk out of fellowship with the living God – He becomes animal-like, beastly, brutish. King Nebuchadnezzar became like an animal.

The king tells how his reason was restored to him by the grace of God, and his closing word is a great testimony of his faith – of how God humbled and brought him back:

Dan 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

- Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd dream.
- The conversion of Nebuchadnezzar. This unique chapter is the testimony of a gentle king – about how God changed his heart.
- Nebuchadnezzar is a good example of a witness one who relates what he has seen and experienced.

Statement of intent: To glorify God
- Dan 4:2 It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

Statement of praise to God
- Dan 4:3 How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.
- Nebuchadnezzar immediately sets the stage God's Kingdom and dominion is completely unique in its eternal duration.

The Dream

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

4 Nebuchadnezzar the king,

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

3 How great are His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!

His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion is from generation to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. 8 But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him is the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, saying: 9 “Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God is in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

10 “These were the visions of my head while on my bed:
I was looking, and behold,  
A tree in the midst of the earth,  
And its height was great.  
11 The tree grew and became strong;  
Its height reached to the heavens,  
And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.  
12 Its leaves were lovely,  
Its fruit abundant,  
And in it was food for all.  
The beasts of the field found shade under it,  
The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches,  
And all flesh was fed from it.

13 "I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.  
14 He cried aloud and said thus:

‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,  
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.  
Let the beasts get out from under it,  
And the birds from its branches.  
15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,  
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,  
In the tender grass of the field.  
Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,  
And let him graze with the beasts  
On the grass of the earth.  
16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man,  
Let him be given the heart of a beast,  
And let seven times pass over him.  
17 ‘This decision is by the decree of the watchers,  
And the sentence by the word of the holy ones,  
In order that the living may know  
That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,  
Gives it to whomever He will,  
And sets over it the lowest of men.’  
18 “This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.”

- Only Daniel can explain the dream to Nebuchadnezzar.
- Nebuchadnezzar had the false rest and security of the ungodly. God soon shook him from his false peace.
- In verse 8, Nebuchadnezzar clearly says that Bel is my God.
  - The Lord God that he had previously seen with Daniel and 3 Hebrew young men was enough to impress him, but not enough to convert him.
- Content of the dream – the rise and fall of a great tree
  - In the ancient world, the tree was a frequent symbol for a government or a ruler
  - The watcher – seemingly a general or specific angelic being – explains that fate of the tree
  - In explaining his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw the tree as an it. The angel explains it as a person.
  - The bands of iron or bronze are either for the stumps confinement or its protection.
- Intent of the dream
  - Dan 4:17 "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.'
The Interpretation

Daniel Explains the Second Dream

19 Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.”

Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

20 “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home—

21 it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

22 And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’;

23 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king:

24 They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

25 And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”

- Nebuchadnezzar calls upon Daniel for interpretation of the dream
  - Nebuchadnezzar readily recognizes Daniel as a man filled with the spirit of the holy God, though he himself has not yet yielded to the holy God
- Daniel explains the rise and coming fall of Nebuchadnezzar
  - Daniel genuinely cared for Nebuchadnezzar and was clearly affected by the meaning of the dream
    - Dan 4:19 …Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!
  - He applies the point without ambiguity – Dan 4:22 you, O king, are that tree!
    - Much like Nathan’s statement: 2Sa 12:7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!
  - Dan 4:25 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.
    - When Daniel explained this to Nebuchadnezzar, the king probably couldn't have guessed just how literally it would be fulfilled
  - Daniel a good preacher presses home the application – repent, perhaps it is not too late
    - The right reaction to the threat of judgment is a humble repentance – something that Nebuchadnezzar did not do
    - The repentance of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah is a good example of radical repentance in light of a warning of judgement
Fulfillment of the Dream

Nebuchadnezzar’s Humiliation

28 All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

31 While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

- Nebuchadnezzar is stricken with madness
- God gave Nebuchadnezzar 12 months to repent – and he probably had forgotten about the dream during that time, but God didn’t forget.
- Insania zoanthropica – The form of insanity in which men think of themselves as animals and imitate the behavior of an animal
  - Boanthropy – The delusion that one is an ox
  - Walvoord quotes a Dr. Raymond Harrison of Britain, who in 1946 had a patient suffering from boanthropy as Nebuchadnezzar had
- There is, understandably, no preserved secular record of this b
  - Abydenus, a Greek historian, wrote in 268 BC that Nebuchadnezzar had been “possessed by some God” and that he had “immediately disappeared”
  - Some dismiss this account of Nebuchadnezzar’s madness as unhistorical, but there is no historical record of his governmental activity between 582 and 575 BC - this silence is deafening especially when we keep in mind how Near Eastern leaders liked to egotistically trumpet their achievements – and hide their embarrassments

A repentant Nebuchadnezzar is restored and praises God

- This is knowledgeable testimony from the horse’s mouth
- Perhaps we might learn from Nebuchadnezzar’s plight and be spared a lesson in humility from God’s school of hard knocks

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.
35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, “What have You done?”
36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.
**Prophetic significance**

- “Babylon” is used in the scriptures as a figure of the world system at large
- Nebuchadnezzar's madness foreshadows the madness of Gentile nations in their rejection of God
- His fall typifies Jesus’ judgment of the nations
- His restoration foreshadows the restoring of some of these nations in the millennial kingdom

The abiding lesson – God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)

- There have been many who have risen from humble origins to great glory and then have fallen
- I think that it would be better to have never been raised up then to be raised up and then fall
- Most, if not all, fall through pride
  - A proud look is number one on the list of God's most hated sins (Pro 6:16-19)

God glorifies himself among the nations

- When Nebuchadnezzar took some of the treasures of the Jerusalem temple and put them in the temples of his gods, he had reason to believe that his gods were stronger than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- By the end of Daniel 4, God has shown Nebuchadnezzar which God is the true God
- When Nebuchadnezzar knew it, he wasn't shy about telling people what he had learned – he was a true witness giving testimony to God's great works
The Writing on the Wall (5)

Belshazzar’s Feast

5 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 3 While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. 3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. 4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

5 In the same hour the fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. 6 Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. 7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” 8 Now all the king’s wise men came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation.

9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

10 The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. 11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. 12 Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.”

The Writing on the Wall Explained

13 Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? 14 I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. 15 Now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. 16 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

17 Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19 And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed.
from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

24 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

25 "And this is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; 27 TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; 28 PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." 29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Belshazzar’s Fall

30 That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. 31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

King Belshazzar

Who was King Belshazzar – The chronology of the ancient historian Berosus:

- Nebuchadnezzar dies after a 43 year reign
- His son, Evil-Merodach, rules for only 2 years when he is assassinated by his brother-in-law Neriglassar, because his role was arbitrary and licentious
  - Described in 2Ki 25:27-30 and Jer 52: 31-34
- Neriglassar (mentioned as Nergalsharezer in Jeremiah 39:3,13) rules for 4 years until he dies a natural death
- His son, Laborosoarchod, only a child and of diminished mental capacity, rules for only 9 months when he is beaten to death by a gang of conspirators
- The conspirators appoint Nabonidus, one of their number, to be the king
  - He rules until Cyrus the Persian conquerors Babylon
- Belshazzar was Nabonidus eldest son
  - For a long time historians and archeologists knew that Nabonidus was said to be the last king of Babylon – not Belshazzar.
    - The solution to this so-called discrepancy was apparent when evidence was uncovered
      - Indicating Belshazzar’s association with Nabonidus on the throne
      - Demonstrating that, during the last part of his reign, Nabonidus resided in Arabia and left the conduct of the Kingdom of Babylon to his eldest son Belshazzar
      - There was no additional mention of Belshazzar, the eldest son and co-regent with Nabonidus, until the Nabonidus cylinder was discovered in this century (now in the British museum)
        - According to Babylonian records, Belshazzar became co-regent in the 3rd year of Nabonidus’ reign (553 BC) and continued in that capacity till the fall of Babylon (539 BC)
  - It is most likely that, at the time of Daniel 5, Nabonidus had gone out to fight the Medo-Persian army and had already been captured. Those armies now surrounded Babylon and we're looking for a way into the strongly defended city. Belshazzar was not afraid -- mostly because of Babylon’s defenses and his supplies.
    - Conservative dimensions of Babylon:
• Outer walls 17 miles long, 22' thick, 90' high with guard towers another 100' high
• The gates were made of bronze
• A system of inner and outer walls and moats made the city very secure
  o The scene of partying while a hostile army surrounds the city is reminiscent of the spirit of our age: “Two-thousand zero zero, parties over, whoops out of time; so tonight I'm gonna party like it's 1999.” (Prince)
• Nebuchadnezzar was not the direct father of Belshazzar - Either he was his grandfather through his mother's side, or he was his father in the sense of having previously occupied the throne that Belshazzar now sat on – either usage of the term father was customary in ancient times.
• This explains why Daniel was offered the 3rd place in the Kingdom (Dan 5:7)
  o The real king was Nabonidus
  o His son, Belshazzar, ruled as 2nd in the Kingdom
  o At that time, the best he had to offer was the 3rd place

The story of King Belshazzar
• Note the luxury and licentiousness and the lust of that kingdom – a degenerating, deteriorating kingdom
• As the Persians are attacking, Belshazzar is so confident that they will not succeed, that he is having a big party
• During the party, Belshazzar calls to have the sacred vessels taken from Jerusalem brought in to use
• Belshazzar was foolish enough to not only lose all semblance of self-control in this party, but also to openly mock God while doing it.
  o This shows God's opinion of the sin of sacrilege – something rarely spoken of today
  o Gathering the vessels from the Jewish temple served the purpose of reminding the partiers of a previous victory and would hopefully (in Belshazzar’s eyes) be a morale booster.
  o In Babylon, a large court – 56 x 170' – has been unearthed. It’s decorated with Greek columns. This was probably where the feast of Daniel 5 took place.
• Belshazzar reaction to the message and his call for someone to interpret it
  o For the king, the difficulty was not to give the dictionary definition of the terms, but to see what significance they had for him.

Daniel
• Daniel, having now lived through 3 empires, is still Prime Minister
  o It seems that Daniel was semi-retired, still holding a government post, yet out of the loop
• Daniel is recommended as an interpreter of the message
  o This Queen or Queen mother is hard to identify with certainty – probably it is Belshazzar’s mother, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar
  o Notice that she refers to Daniel by his Jewish name – she respects his faith and background
• Remember that Daniel was troubled when he had to give Nebuchadnezzar bad news – not so here with Belshazzar
  o Daniel is not impressed with him
  o Why is Daniel so harsh? Because all men know of God through creation – and more through God's dealings with others. We are all responsible to honor God according to what revelation we have.
  o “If God held Belshazzar responsible, my friend, for the ray of light which shone across his pathway, what will He say to men living in the blaze of light which illuminates the world today? Every unconverted man in this country has more light than Belshazzar had.” (Talbot)
• God uses Daniel to interpret this strange figure of the hand that appears & writes upon the wall
• Daniel is promoted
  o In rewarding Daniel for such harsh words immediately, either:
    ▪ Belshazzar knew that Daniel was right and was bravely trying to do the best under inevitable circumstances
    ▪ He disbelieved the whole thing and promoted Daniel in a display of big hearted fun

The interpretation – God’s judgment is at the door
• Daniel described Belshazzar’s sinful pride
The fall of Babylon

The fall of mystery Babylon will be like the fall of real Babylon – sudden, sure, and in the midst of her worse blasphemies

“Empires do not stand by human might, man-made machines and missiles. There is not at wall high enough nor thick enough to prevent a nation from falling when God pronounces that nation's doom.” (Strauss)

The death of Belshazzar and the rise of Darius the Mede

Darius was a sub king under Cyrus the Persian

He is referred to in secular history as Gubaru

The Kingdom of Babylon is over

Dan 5:25 "This is the inscription that was written: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin

26 "This is what these words mean:

Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.
27 Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.
28 Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

The fall of Babylon will look like before it happened

Is 44:28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'

Is 45:1 "This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: 2 I will go before you and will level the mountains [a] ; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. 4 For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, 6 so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. 7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

Jer 51:57 I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well; they will sleep forever and not awake," declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty. 58 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Babylon's thick wall will be leveled and her high gates set on fire; the peoples exhaust themselves for nothing, the nations' labor is only fuel for the flames."

Herodotus – Cyrus conquered the city by diverting the flow of the Euphrates into a nearby swamp; thus lowering the level of the river so his troops could March through the water and under the river gates. But they still would not have been able to enter, had not the bronze gates of the inner walls been left inexplicably unlocked.

The revelry in the city of Babylon on the night of its capture is also well documented

The fall of mystery Babylon will be like the fall of real Babylon – sudden, sure, and in the midst of her worse blasphemies

“Empires do not stand by human might, man-made machines and missiles. There is not at wall high enough nor thick enough to prevent a nation from falling when God pronounces that nation's doom.” (Strauss)
The Plot Against Daniel

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. 3 Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. 4 So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then these men said, “We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”

6 So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever! 7 All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

Daniel in the Lions’ Den

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

11 Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?”

The king answered and said, “The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.”

13 So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

14 And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”

16 So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.” 17 Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Daniel Saved from the Lions

18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to
Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

21 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.”

23 Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

Darius Honors God

24 And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

25 Then King Darius wrote:

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God,
And steadfast forever;
His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed,
And His dominion shall endure to the end.
27 He delivers and rescues,
And He works signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

• This is the same story told in another way.
• Darius throws Daniel into the lions’ den, but God has sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths.
• Daniel is delivered by the hand of God.
• Daniel prays, praises, persistently serves; he is persecuted, protected, persevered, preferred and prospered.

This has long been a but loved Bible story - and no wonder! There are so many dramatic features in this story:

• Jealousy of political subordinates
• The vanity of a king
• The integrity of a man
• The power and preservation of God
• And some wild animals and violence

Darius

• Darius, by that name, is unknown in secular history of this era
• There are 3 possible explanations for the Darius of this chapter
  o Darius is simply another name for Cyrus who was the ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire during the period
  o Darius was actually Cambyses, son of Cyrus, who served under his father as a ruler of Babylon and later inherited the throne
  o Darius is an ancient official known as Gubaru in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture
Ancient documents show that the man Gubaru had the power to make such appointments, and the power to assemble an army, levy taxes and to possess palaces. Gubaru (Darius) was, in a very real sense, the king over Babylon.

- The term ‘Darius’ may be in honorific title, meaning “holder of the scepter”

**Daniel**

- An excellent spirit, Daniel had a good attitude in his work and life; and this would make him the object of attack
- Daniel’s own enemies testify to his integrity and character – he lives a truly blameless life.
  - They had examined his life and found nothing to attack so they made something up.
    - This should be expected treatment for Christians – we do not expect justice or fair play from this world. Yet we trust in a God who could defend us in all circumstances.
  - The writer isn't implying that Daniel was actually sinless, but that he was a man of integrity
    - His sins were inward – sins of omission, not sins of commission
- These men could predict Daniel’s behavior, and they had a right to
  - Can the world predict your behavior? The world is a very poor critic of my Christianity but is a very sufficient one of my conduct. They don't know the intricacies of doctrine, or the intimacies of worship with God, but they can tell a bad temper, selfishness, conceitedness or dishonesty when they see it.
- Daniel was an object of attack because of his prominence
  - The devil directs special attacks against prominent believers

**Daniel was condemned to the lion's den**

- A plot against Daniel is conceived and initiated.
  - Their strategy sounds very much like the way politicians campaign against each other today – all right, let's see what dirt we can dig up on this guy - but there were no skeletons in Daniel’s closet
- Daniel’s enemies appeal to Darius’ pride and his desire for a unified domain
  - “The suggested mode of compelling every subject in the former Babylonian domain to acknowledge the authority of Persia seemed a statesmanlike measure that would contribute to the unification of the Middle and Near East. The time limit of 1 month seemed reasonable.”
  - They lie when they claim all the governors of the kingdom have agreed to such a degree.
  - The great sin of Daniel’s enemies is envy.
- Daniel’s faithfulness to God causes him to be condemned to the lion's den
  - Daniel was confronted with a test of loyalties – he wanted to render unto Caesar things that rightfully belong to Caesar, but he would not give to the government that which belongs to God alone
    - It isn't hard to see why people are men-pleasers it seems as if people have the power to:
      - Hire or fire us to
      - Break our hearts
      - Slander us
      - Make our lives generally miserable
  - It might have seemed the Daniel was not playing it safe in his refusal to pray as was his custom, but in fact the safest thing he could do was radically obey God.
    - Daniel simply prayed as was his custom – It would have been compromised or pride to change in any direction
    - The power to obey God and stand for him comes from a settled understanding the God is really sovereign and in control of our lives
  - This was not the act of a person courting martyrdom, but the continuation of a faithful ministry of prayer which had characterized his long life
- Daniel in prayer
  - Kneeling is a begging posture – we must all come to God as beggars
    - Kneeling is done throughout Scripture
      - Jesus (Luke 22:41)
      - Stephen (Acts 7:60)
• Peter (Acts 9:40)
• Paul and the other leaders in the church (Acts 20:36)
• Luke (Acts 21:5)
  o Facing toward Jerusalem was symbolic of his hope that some day the children of Israel would be able to return to this city of God
  o Notice that Daniel prayed and gave thanks – our prayers should be offerings of Thanksgiving
    ▪ Is not the greatest sin of our age ingratitude
  o In verse 13, Daniel’s enemies are clearly coloring their report of the matter – Daniel intended no disrespect only a higher respect for his God

**Daniel is preserved in the lion’s den**

• Darius tried to save Daniel
  o He labored till the going down of the Sun – according to Eastern custom, the execution was carried out on the evening of the day on which the accusation was made and found valid
  o The decrees of a Persian king were unchangeable because he was thought to speak for the gods who could never be wrong and who would never need to change their minds.
  o As our various foolish decisions often haunt us many times – all we can do is pray and ask God to mercifully miraculously intervene when we make such foolish decisions
• Darius had faith – your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you
  o This was a faith that was born out of Daniel’s faith in the Lord
  o What a compliment to your God, whom you serve continually! Most of us serve God in spasms.
  o The idea Darius's communicating in verse 16 is ‘I have tried to save you, but I failed. Now your God must save you’
  o Undoubtedly, Daniel had a better night's rest than Darius
• Daniel is found to be alive – preserved miraculously by God
  o Daniel gets his name into the Hall of Faith as one who stopped the mouth of lions (Hebrews 11:33)
  o God can save when human help is useless – both in a lion’s den and in our salvation
• Darius decrees that all must honor the God of Daniel
  o Was Darius saved? Perhaps, but in this decree, God is still the God of Daniel. Saving faith says the God of Darius.

The fate of the wicked

• The fate of those who plotted against Daniel
  o The punishment of the wives and children was in accordance with Persian custom
  o An ancient writer named Ammianus Marcellinus says “The laws among them are formidable … by which, on account of the guilt of one, all the kindred parish.”
  o It is likely Darius would have done this to the other officials even if Daniel had perished – they simply weren’t wise enough to see that Darius had the power to not be out-tricked
• Principle of spiritual warfare – God will cause our enemy to be impaled on the very snare he set for us
  o Haman is impaled naked on a pointy-pole that he built for Mordecai (Est 7:10)
  o Ps 7:14 He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. 15 He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. 16 The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.

**Prophetic Implications**

• Some see in this passage of picture of God’s preservation of a faithful remnant of Israel even through the tribulation
• Talbot sees that type of Israel’s deliverance from the ‘beasts’ of Revelation 13
• The assumed infallibility of the Persian monarch also makes him a type of Anti-Christ
4 Beasts (Kingdoms) (7)

This chapter begins the prophetic section.

- Jesus wants us to understand the prophecies in Daniel
  - Matthew 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,'[b] spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—

- 553 BC

Vision of the Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.

5 "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Vision of the Ancient of Days

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;

10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel’s Visions Interpreted

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 "Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."
19 “Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

20 “I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

21 “Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces.

22 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

23 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

24 But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever.

25 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

28 ‘This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart.’"
Four Beasts in Daniel 7

1. Like a Lion
   - With eagle’s wings
   - Wings plucked later
   - Lifted up from earth
   - Man’s heart given

2. Like a Bear
   - Raised up on its side
   - Had 3 ribs in its mouth
   - Was told to arise and devour much flesh

3. Like a Leopard
   - With 4 fowl’s wings
   - Had 4 heads
   - Given dominion

4. Exceedingly dreadful, terrible beast
   - Iron teeth, brass nails
   - Had 10 horns
   - A little horn, which plucked 3 horns

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SEVEN WORLD EMPIRES

EGYPT (c. 2100 B.C. to c. 1400 B.C.)
A son of Ham was the first king of Egypt.
When Joseph went to Egypt, foreign “shepherd kings” may have been in control.
The Hambes were back in power at the time of the Exodus.

ASSYRIA (c. 1100 B.C. to 606 B.C.)
The ancient city of Nineveh finally rose to power over her rival Babylon.
The Assyrians ruled the world with force and fear, and demanded great sums of tribute money.

BABYLON (606 B.C. to 538 B.C.)
Babylon was even older than Nineveh, Daniel lived in this great, impregnable city and saw it fall to the Medes and Persians. —Dan. 2:37, 38, 7:4; & Daniel 5.

MEDO-PERSIA (538 B.C. to 333 B.C.)
Cyrus the Great freed the Jews to return and rebuild the Temple. About 454 B.C., Artaxerxes let them rebuild Jerusalem. Dan. 9:25

GREECE (333 B.C. to 146 B.C.)
Alexander the Great conquered the world in only 10 years! The Greek culture and language later greatly helped spread the Gospel. Dan. 2:39, 7:6; 8:5-8

ROME (44 B.C. to 455 A.D.)
By the time Jesus was born, Augustus Caesar ruled the world with almost complete control. This period of world peace allowed the message of Jesus to go into all the world more easily.

TODAY
The last is today, a mixture of national, city democracies and anti-Christianism. Dan. 2:41-43

ANTI-CHRIST
The last is the time of the final 10 kings of the Anti-Christ. —The most terrible time in the history of the creation, but also the greatest finish with the return of Jesus Christ to rule the Earth with His saints for the next thousand years. Dan. 2:41-45
• Summary of the vision – 4 kings are conquered by God and their kingdoms are given to the people of God
• These 4 beasts covers the same material as the 4 divisions that Nebuchadnezzar had of the statue in Chapter 2.
  o They represent the same kingdoms, but from God’s point of view
    ▪ When man writes his own history, there is much self-congratulation and we would seem to be on the
      verge of paradise. When God rights human history, a different vision is presented.
    ▪ This vision shows that God sees these kingdom as nothing but beasts growling and fighting and
      quarreling with each other – Far from the majestic statue of a stately and noble man
    ▪ Animals have no conscience
    ▪ These beasts are so different in a character than the representative of Jesus Kingdom – the lamb
      • Rev 5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the
        throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven
        eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He came and took the
        scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken it, the four
        living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp
        and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And
        they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you
        were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language
        and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
        and they will reign on the earth.”
  o The vision of Nebuchadnezzar stressed the continuity of the world empires, the vision of the beasts chose
    their diversity
• The 4 great beasts are large ferocious wild animals – each one is distinct from the other:
  o The lion devours
  o The bear crushes
  o The leopard springs upon its prey
• Repeated in Rev 13
  o Rev 13:1 And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten
    horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2 The beast I
    saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. … 11 Then I saw
    another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon.
• There are many symbols of modern nations here – struggling together, culminating in the powerful reign of a single
  individual over the whole of the Western world.
  o USA – Eagle
  o British Empire – Lion
  o Russia – Bear
• This vision is the most comprehensive of Daniel’s prophetic visions
  o The other 3 visions deal with aspects of this
  o Daniel could have given as more detail, but the Holy Spirit only wanted him to write the main facts (though
    we might have wanted to know more detail)
  o Daniel’s request for understanding – Daniel had seen all this, and in more detail than he describes for us.
    ▪ He did not really understand all that he saw and was troubled because of his lack of understanding.
    ▪ Daniel is greatly bothered by the vision – especially the ferocity of the attack that would come against
      his people from the conspicuous horn
• This great prophetic passage outlines history from Daniel’s day clear past our own day, to the end of time and the
  return of Jesus Christ.

The great sea – likely the Mediterranean
• “To the Hebrews the sea was both dangerous and mysterious, a restless element but not beyond the Lord’s power
to tame” (Baldwin)
• The sea is sometimes used as a picture of Gentile nations
  o Ps 74:13 It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the
    waters.
  o Ps 89:9 You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.
  o Is 57:20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud.
Every one of the empires that will be mentioned by Daniel bordered on the Mediterranean Sea

The winds
- Some see the winds as a picture of the sovereign power of God's striving with men
  - Ps 35:5 May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away;
  - Ps 48:7 You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish shattered by an east wind.
  - Ps 107:25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.
- Strauss suggests that the 4 winds might be satanic forces
  - Rev 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.

The Ancient of Days
- The Ancient of Days is seen, and the conspicuous horn is conquered by the Son of Man
- In this vision of heaven, Daniel sees many thrones but only one occupant.
  - Is he blind to the 24 elders (church representatives) because the church is an unrevealed mystery to him?
  - Eph 3:2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.
- The ancient of days is obviously God
  - Whether it is specifically the father or the son is debated
  - Most believe it is the father
    - The figure stresses his eternal character, such as white hair
    - The distinction made in verse 13 between the ancient of days and the son of man argues best that it is God in the person of the father, not the son
      - Da 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.
      - Son of man – a favorite self-designation of Jesus – used more than 80 times in the Gospels
  - “We ought not to imagine God in his essence to be like any appearance to his own Prophet and other holy fathers, but he put on various appearances, according to man's comprehension, to whom he wished to give some signs of his presence.”
- The fiery flame
  - Represents a brilliant manifestation of God's splendor and the fierce heat of His judgment
  - There is something “lava-like” in the stream of fire pouring from the throne - It is a river of vast destructive power
  - Isaiah 66:15-16 describes the judgment of God in terms of fire
    - Is 66:15 See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For with fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the LORD.
- The wheels of God's throne
  - Many say that Eastern thrones were often on wheels
  - But it is just as likely that they are pictures of the endless activity of God
- The multitude
  - Da 7:10 … Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.
  - Those observing this judgment are either angels or saints or both
- Which books are open?
The Bible describes several of God's books:

- **Book of Truth**
  - Da 10:20 So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; 21 but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)

- **Book of Life**
  - Ps 69:28 May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.
  - Ph 4:3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.
  - Rev 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.
  - Rev 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.
  - Rev 17:8 The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.
  - Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
  - Rev 21:27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
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1st beast – Babylon – Winged lion

- The beast is quite majestic
- Lions and eagles are kings of their realm, but it is both humbled and humanized

- The Eagle and Lion are both used by Jeremiah as pictures of Nebuchadnezzar
  - Jer 49:19 "Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets to a rich pastureland, I will chase Edom from its land in an instant. Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this? Who is like me and who can challenge me? And what shepherd can stand against me?" 20 Therefore, hear what the LORD has planned against Edom, what he has purposed against those who live in Teman: The young of the flock will be dragged away; he will completely destroy their pasture because of them. 21 At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble; their cry will resound to the Red Sea. 22 Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down, spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom's warriors will be like the heart of a woman in labor.
- Babylon's winged lions can be seen in the British museum today
- The majestic figures of the lion and Eagle are fitting symbols for the head of gold

2nd beast – Medo-Persia – Bear

- Much less majestic
- It is slow, ponderous and crushing
  - The slow, crushing armies of the Medo-Persian Empire were well known – they simply overwhelm their opponents with superior size and strength
- It has a voracious appetite for conquest
- This one is imbalanced in some way
- Most think the 3 ribs are the 3 great conquests – Babylon, Egypt and Libya
- Dan 7:5 ...It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'
  - This command indicates the extreme cruelties often practiced by the Persians and the wide extent of their conquests
- Medo-Persia, but dominated by the Persians
  - Liberal commentators have a vested interest in identifying the bear with only the Median state, not the Medo-Persian Empire.
  - They assign the 3rd beast to the Persian Empire and the 4th to Alexander's Greek Empire, so as to remove, even for a second century author, any element of predictive prophecy. Their analysis doesn't fit.
  - Reasons why the 2nd Kingdom could not be exclusively the Median Empire:
    - The Median Empire did not follow the Babylonian in historical sequence but was contemporary with it - even rising to strength before the Neo-Babylonian period
    - The Median Empire never had a world position that would rank it with the Persian, Grecian or Babylonian empires
    - The motivation for the interpretation is solely to remove any reference to Rome and predictive prophecy
3rd beast – Greece – Leopard

- The leopard is known for its sudden unexpected attacks
- This one is especially swift with 4 wings and as 4 heads
- Alexander the Great's rapid conquest – the entire civilized world by age 28
- The 4 way division of the Empire to his 4 generals after his death are shown the 4 heads:
  - Casander
  - Lysimachus
  - Seleucus
  - Ptolemy
- Possible interpretations for the leopard spots
  - Alexander's variations in character
  - The many nations and tongues under his control
- Josephus relates a story where Alexander came to Jerusalem. And being shown the book of Daniel by the high priest, whom Alexander had previously seen in a vision, he spared Jerusalem and granted it religious toleration

  Alexander visits Jerusalem (good read)
  http://www.livius.org/sources/content/josephus/jewish-antiquities/alexander-the-great-visits-jerusalem/

  [11.337] And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended.\textsuperscript{note} And as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present.

  But the next day he called them to him, and bid them ask what favors they pleased of him;

  [11.338] whereupon the high-priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year.\textsuperscript{note} He granted all they desired. And when they asked him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired.

4th beast – Rome – A dreadful horned beast with one conspicuous horn

- This beast is indescribable and uniquely horrific in its power and conquest
- The Roman Empire was the largest, strongest, most unified and enduring of them all
- Daniel is especially interested in this most terrible beast – and especially about its conspicuous horn
- This beast is of interest to Daniel because of its great destructive power – the conspicuous horn because of its fight against God's people.

10 horns

- There is an unmistakable correspondence between these 10 horns and the 10 toes of the statue (Chapter 2)
  - The mention of iron in the teeth suggest the legs and toes of iron in that image
- The 10 horns may be 2 5-pointed antlers rather than 10 separate horns
The prominent horn – the antichrist

- A little horn is conspicuous for:
  - Its dominance
  - Its intelligence
  - Its boastful talk

- The final human dictator we commonly call the antichrist will be characterized by his boastful blasphemous speech
  - Rev 13:5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. 6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.

- Because of the distinction between the 4th beast and the horns, some of conjectured that the beast of revelation 13 is not the antichrist, but his state. If so, it is a small distinction.
  - To a large extent, a man does represent and personify in entire government or system.
  - When we think of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the figures of Hitler as an individual and Nazi Germany as a state are virtually the same

- He speaks pompous blasphemous words perhaps like the fascist creed of Italy
  - It is Benito Mussolini’s famous remark — “Everything for the state, nothing outside the state, nothing above the state” — that truly sums up the essence of fascism. The good of the Nation, as defined by the fascist leader, surpasses all other concerns and allegiances. The fascist speaks of the Nation with a religious reverence. An Italian fascist youth movement in the 1920s composed the following creed:

    I believe in Rome the Eternal, the mother of my country,  
    and in Italy her eldest Daughter, who was born in her virginal bosom by the grace of God;  
    who suffered through the barbarian invasions, was crucified and buried;  
    who descended to the grave and was raised from the dead in the nineteenth century;  
    who ascended into Heaven in her glory in 1918 and 1922 (by the march on Rome);  
    who is seated on the right hand of her mother Rome;  
    and who for this reason shall come to judge the living and the dead.  
    I believe in the genius of Mussolini, in our Holy Father Fascism,  
    in the communion of its martyrs, in the conversion of Italians, and in the resurrection of the Empire.

- If this horn is the antichrist – and he fights against the saints – does this mean that the church will be here to be a target of the antichrist during the tribulation?
  - Not necessarily – saints can indicate the church or a Jewish remnant in the tribulation
  - Rev 12:17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
  - Rev 13:7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

- The antichrist persecutes
  - It speaks of cruel and systematic pressure coming from the word to “wear away” or to “wear out” as friction would wear clothes or shoes
  - “To wear out the saints means to harass them continually so that life becomes a wretched existence.”
  - “Such continual and protracted pressure far more effectively breaks the human spirit than the single moment of crisis that calls for a heroic decision. It is easier to die for the Lord then to live for Him under constant harassment and strain.” --Archer
  - “The Bible predicts no peace-loving world ruler for the last days. We can expect nothing more than greedy commercialism and political imperialism under the most beastly and barbaric type of warfare.”

- He wants to change times and law
Dan 7:25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws.

Perhaps as at the French revolution where radicals wanted to institute a 10-day work week and declared 1792 (the year of the revolution) as “Year 1”

Seventh-Day Adventists have historically taught that it was the papacy which “changed the times and laws” by moving the Lord's day from Saturday to Sunday

- His power over the saints is limited – It will last for 3.5 years
  - Refers to 1/2 of the last 7-year period of man's rule on this Earth – the 70th week of Daniel
  - Versions of 3.5 years
    - 42 months
    - time, times and half a time
    - 1,260 days
  - Scripture
    - Rev 11:2 But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. 3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."
    - Rev 12:6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.
    - Rev 13:5 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months.

**Prophetic Implications**

### 10 Kings

These 10 kings do not have a literal fulfillment in historic Rome

- The only way to say this has been fulfilled is to spiritualize these prophecies. Many, like Calvin, merely spiritualize.
  - Calvin insists that what happens in this chapter was fulfilled in history up into the time of Jesus’ 1st advent
    - Supposes that the 10 horns merely represent a multiplicity of kings under the Roman emperor and
    - Believes that the conspicuous horn is Julius Caesar and the other Caesars who succeeded after him.
  - The books were opened (verse 10) refers to the preaching of the gospel
    - “We need not be too anxious about the number as we have already explained it” as merely denoting multiplicity
  - But who are we to spiritualize what God has said in at least 4 different places!
    - 10 kings are associated with the rule of this final world ruler
    - 10 toes (Dan 2)
    - 10 horns (Dan 7, Rev 13, Rev 17)
  - The same “spiritualizing” problems apply if one believes that this is fulfilled in the early church and the passing of the Roman Empire
    - Unlike Calvin, who saw fulfillment before the 1st advent of Jesus

- If they are literal, they are still in the future
  - The conspicuous horn must be the antichrist – arising out of a confederation of 10 nations which is in some way a revival of the Roman Empire

### Millennial Kingdom

- It is in the day of the persecuting blasphemous ruler (antichrist) that Christ will establish his Kingdom for His people
  - Because the 4th Kingdom is immediately succeeded by the Kingdom of Jesus, no event in the past that answers in the smallest degree to this prediction
  - But isn't Rome gone already? What happened? This is what prompts many to look either for:
    - A spiritualized interpretation fulfilled in history
    - A revival in some form of the Roman Empire in the last days – one that will literally fulfill the prophecy of the 10 horns and the little horn as well
There are 3 options in interpreting the Kingdom being established here:

- There is no fulfillment, Daniel was in error
- The fulfillment is symbolic in church history
- The fulfillment is literal and yet future

- The Son of Man receives all dominion previously held by the beasts and His reign will be permanent
  - When Jesus sets up His Kingdom, the empire of the antichrist will be completely crushed, yet there will be nations which continue into the millennium
    - The 4th beast is slain, but the others may continue without dominion of their own
  - Jesus will rule over this Earth (before the New Heaven and New Earth) with Satan bound for 1000 years
    - The reign of Jesus does not last 1000 years – It is permanent

- Dan 7:27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'
  - Certainly, the church did not cause a sudden and catastrophic fall of the Roman Empire
  - This must be describing the millennial Earth – not our current age or heaven
    - The Kingdom and dominion of the Earth certainly does not belong to the righteous now
    - If it is the eternal state, then what dominion would there be to serve and obey Jesus?
  - Then the saints of the Most High received the Kingdom
    - Notice the saints receive the Kingdom – It is something received, not achieved
      - It is given to them at the return of Jesus
      - The church does not convert the world to Jesus’ Kingdom and give the Kingdom Jesus
Ram and a He Goat (8)

Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. 3 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. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

5 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. 6 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. 7 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.

8 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. 9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. 10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”

14 And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.” 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, “Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.”

18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be. 20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. 22 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.

23 “And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.
24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully. And shall prosper and thrive;
He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.
25 “Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;
And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity.
He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.
26 “And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future.”
And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

The vision happened while Babylon was securely in power – the 3rd year of the reign of king Belshazzar
- The vision deals with the emergence of the Greek Empire, though Greece was not much of anything at the time the prophecy came to Daniel
- It is possible that Daniel was bodily transported to Susa, but most think he was merely carried there in his vision

This depicts the movements of Western history – The ram and the he-goat come together
- This is a picture (as we are told in chapter 11) of the conquest by Alexander the Great
- Also a picture of the rise of the Kingdom of the Seleucids in Syria as opposed to the Ptolemies in Egypt.
  - These 2 families occupied the center of history for centuries after that – the struggle between Syria and Egypt, with little Israel caught in the middle. The battle rages back-and-forth, and today Israel is the most fought over country in all of history. More battles have occurred in the land of Israel than any other spot on the face of the Earth, and it is in that very same area where the last great battle – the battle of Armageddon – is yet to be fought.

**Ram – Media-Persia**

Daniel sees a mighty ram with 2 uneven horns pushing West, North and South.
• Dan 8:20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.
• Ammianus Marsalis, a 4th century historian, states that the Persian ruler bore the head of a ram as he stood at the head of his army (Wood)
• In their alliance, the larger and stronger horn (Persian) emerged from the smaller horn (Media)
• The Medo-Persian Empire exerted its power easily to the North, South and West, but it made little gains toward the East.

Goat – Greece

Daniel sees a male goat that challenges and conquers a ram
• Dan 8:21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. 22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.
• The 1st king must be Alexander the Great
  o The goat comes from the West
  o He moved with great speed – It seems to fly without touching the ground
  o Alexander's rapid of conquest of the civilized world was proverbial – and he began by defeating the Persians, and with furious power.
• There was deep animosity between the Persians and the Greeks
  o The conquest of Alexander, and in his determination to spread Greek culture, made koine Greek the common language of the civilized world – and the language of the New Testament.

Alexander's Empire was a eventually divided among his 4 leading generals, but none of these generals had the same power that Alexander had:
• Cassander
• Lysimachus
• Seleucus
• Ptolemy

Greek History
• 331 B.C. – Greece
  o Alexander the Great (Greece) defeats Darius (Persia), ending 200 years of Persian rule.
  o They adopted the Greek language and many of the Greek customs and manners
• 323 B.C. – Alexander dies on his return from Persia and his four generals divide the kingdom:
Divided the kingdom
  ▪ Antipater and Cassander get Macedon and Greece
  ▪ Lysimachus gets Thrace and Asia Minor
  ▪ Seleucus gets Syria (King of the North)
  ▪ Ptolemy gets Palestine and Egypt (King of the South)

- The Old Testament was translated into Greek.
- That translation, the Septuagint, came into widespread use (and is quoted frequently in the New Testament)

- 204 B.C. Greece – Antiochus the Great of Syria – recaptured Palestine
  - He and his successor, Antiochus Epiphanes, persecuted the Jews and sold the priesthood

- 167-160 BC – Maccabean Revolt
  - 167 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes IV, a Seleucid king of Syria, attacks Jerusalem and desecrates the temple Holy of Holies by offering pig flesh on the altar
  - Mattathias, a priest of Judea, raises a revolt against Syria, which is led by his son, Judas Maccabaeus
  - 165 B.C. the Jews recaptured Jerusalem, cleansed the Temple and rededicated it
    ▪ Judas Maccabees – leader of the revolt – Maccabees means hammer
    ▪ The revolution results in a brief period of Jewish independence.
  - Rededication of the Temple
    ▪ Only enough oil for the Menorah to last 1 day but miraculously, the Menorah kept burning for the entire week of the rededication festival
    ▪ Hanukkah (Festival of Lights) – Remembers this miracle
  - Fighting continued between the Jews and the Syrians until the Romans gained control

Little horn – Antiochus IV Epiphanes – Maccabean Revolt

A strong little horn comes from the 4 horns of the male goat
- He-boasts and opposes sacrifice and truth
- This “little horn” opposes and casts down the host and the stars
  - These are symbols used in the Old Testament for angels kings and leaders – or the people of God at large
  - The stars of heaven and the hosts of the Lord are terms used of god's people in general
  - “Undoubtedly, it is the design here to describe the pride and ambition of [the “little horn”], and to show that he did not think anything too exalted for his aspiration”

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (“illustrious”)
- This little horn clearly answers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (“illustrious”) who ruled over Syria and Palestine under the Seleucid dynasty
- Palestine had been a region of dispute between the dynasties of Seleucid and Ptolemy, but the Seleucids gained power over the region in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes’ father, Antiochus III (198 BC)
- Antiochus IV took the throne by murdering his brother, the former kings Seleucus Philopator.
  - The son of Philopator was the rightful heir to the throne, but Antiochus IV had him held hostage in Rome.
  - Antiochus legitimized his rule mainly through flattery and bribery.
- Antiochus was an infamous persecutor of the Jews, whom he wanted to submit to Greek culture
- History tells us that Antiochus Epiphanes died of disease, not by the hand of man.

Maccabean Revolt (167-160 BC)
- Antiochus’ suppression of the Jews came to a head in December of 168 BC
  - When returning in defeat from Alexandria, he ordered his generals to seize Jerusalem on a Sabbath
  - There he erected an idol of Zeus and desecrated the altar by offering swine on it and sprinkling the broth in the sanctuary
  - Sacrifice was ceased because the temple was desecrated
• The Jews, especially their leaders, invited God’s judgment upon them through Antiochus because of their sins and transgressions
  o Antiochus’ 1st attack was to settle a rivalry for the high priesthood
    ▪ A pious high priest, Onias III, was removed from office and replaced with his brother Jason, because Jason had bribed Antiochus
    ▪ In 172 BC, another brother, Menelaus, gave Antiochus an even bigger bribe and replaced Jason.
    ▪ In 171 BC, Menelaus started selling many of the gold utensils of the temple to raise money to pay off the bride.
      • Onias III rebuked him, and Menelaus had him murdered
      • Meanwhile, Jason marshaled armies and tried to oust Menelaus by force; Antiochus came in 171 to defend his appointee

2,300 days
• Many think that the nameless holy one who spoke was Jesus, but certainty is impossible
• Literally, Daniel heard a holy one say “two thousand three hundred mornings and evenings.”
  o Bible students debate if this means 2,300 days or 1,150 days. 2,300 days is almost seven years.
    ▪ Days seems more likely – “year-day” schemes with this passage have ended in ruin
• 2,300 days
  o Figures to about 6 1/3 years
  o The date when the temple was cleansed is well established as December 25, 165 B.C. If we count back 2,300 days from then, we come to the year when Antiochus Epiphanes began his persecution in earnest (171 B.C.).
  o This prophecy was fulfilled before the birth of Christ, during the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). Antiochus desecrated the temple in Jerusalem and severely persecuted the Jews from about September 171 BC to December 165 BC. When Antiochus died, the Jews purified and rededicated the temple, just as Daniel had predicted. These events are commemorated in the celebration of Hanukkah.
    ▪ Jesus himself recognized that the temple was properly cleansed and rededicated by his attendance at the feast of lights, commemorating this event (John 10:22)
• 1,150 days
  o If we take it to mean 1,150 days, it can refer to the time the temple was actually desecrated.
  o Philip Newell makes this case: “For a duration of time during which 2300 daily sacrifices would ordinarily have been offered, one at evening and one in the morning, as specified in Exodus 29:38-43. Since there are two of these daily, the actual time period involved is 1150 days, or slightly over three years. This, in fact, was the time of the Maccabean tribulation, 168-165 B.C., at the end of which the sanctuary was ‘cleansed’ by Judas Maccabeus in his restoration of the evening and morning sacrifices (2 Maccabees 10:1-5).”
• 2,300 years
  o A popular and tragic interpretation of this passage took one year for every day
    o William Miller
      ▪ William Miller used 2,300 “year-days” to calculate that Jesus would return in 1844 (2,300 years after Cyrus issued the decree to rebuild the temple).
      ▪ His movement ended up giving birth to the Seventh-Day Adventists, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and several other movements.
    o Adam Clarke’s
      ▪ Adam Clarke’s comments show what a hold the year-date approach had to many of his time: “Though literally it be two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings, yet I think the prophetic day should be understood here, as in other parts of this prophet, and must signify so many years. If we date these years from the vision of the he-goat, (Alexander’s invading Asia), this was B.C. 334; and two thousand three hundred years from that time will reach to A.D. 1966, or one hundred and forty-one years from the present A.D. 1825.” There is no foundation for Clarke’s approach, and it has led many others off into serious error.
We can know that Miller and other “year-day” theories are wrong because this passage was fulfilled before the time of Jesus.

- Jesus recognized that the temple was properly cleansed and rededicated when He attended the Feast of Dedication, commemorating the cleansing and rededication of the temple after the desecration brought by Antiochus Epiphanes (John 10:22).

- This amazingly specific prophecy was written some 3½ centuries before Antiochus.

**Prophetic Implications**

- Gabriel’s message – this vision refers to the time of the end, to the latter time of the indignation
  - Some have said that this only means the end of Antiochus’ terror against the Jews
  - But these terms are not customarily used in that fashion
  - The prophecy is fulfilled in Antiochus, yet it also has a later fulfillment in the antichrist

- Antiochus is sometimes called the antichrist of the Old Testament
  - He certainly prefigures the antichrist of the end times
  - From what Antiochus did to Jews in his day, therefore, one may know the general pattern of what the antichrist will do to them in the future
  - Greece with all his refinement, culture and art produced the Old Testament antichrist while the so called Christian nations produced the New Testament antichrist

- The rise and fall of the strong little horn is described
  - The description reads equally true of both Antiochus and antichrist
    - It is a type of prophecy that has both a near and far fulfillment
  - Not by their own power, both Antiochus and antichrist were empowered by Satan through his cunning
    - Antiochus was known for his flattery and smooth tongue
      - The coins of Antiochus actually bore the title theos epiphanes, “God manifest”
    - Antichrist will be able to strike a covenant with Israel (Daniel 9:27)
      - He shall magnify himself in his heart
  - Satan, through Antiochus and antichrist, is rising against the Prince of princes
    - Their (His) ultimate real enemy is God, not the Jews
    - They (He) hate the Jews because they hate God
  - Broken without human hand
    - The place of Antiochus’ death is unclear, but the manner isn’t. He died of intestinal disease, not the hand of man.
    - In a similar way no man will defeat the antichrist, but he will be broken by the hand of Jesus
      - Revelation 19:20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. … The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

- Daniel was told to seal up the vision he refers to a period far distant. For us, the time is near and the book is unsealed.
  - Revelation 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.
  - Revelation 22:10 Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.
  - Daniel's reaction to the vision – physical shock and astonishment
    - He may well have been puzzled about why Yahweh would permit even this brief time a brutal oppression under the little horn
"AND INDEED IT SO CAME TO PASS, THAT OUR NATION SUFFERED THESE THINGS UNDER ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, ACCORDING TO DANIEL'S VISION, AND WHAT HE WROTE YEARS BEFORE, THEY CAME TO PASS...."

DANIEL 8

Antiochus IV Epiphanes came to power
"In the latter time of their kingdom."
He came to power in 175 B.C.
7 years before the demise
of the Grecian Empire.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes
only sought to enlarge his
territories, "toward the south,
toward the east, and toward the
pleasant land."

Antiochus IV Epiphanes came
"out of one of them." He "ruled
the Seleucid Empire from 175BC
until his death in 164BC." Wikipedia.

Grecian Empire
331 - 168 BC

Antiochus Epiphanes IV outlawed the sanctuary services
171 B.C., 2300 days later on the well-established date of
December 25, 165 B.C., the temple was cleansed and its services were restored
Daniel’s 70 Weeks (9)

In the midst of this, in chapter 9, is Daniel's wonderful prayer as he pours his heart out to God. The answer to his prayer, in the last section of the chapter, is one of the most remarkable prophecies in all the Bible: the prophecy of the 70 weeks. This is the timetable of prophecy concerning the nation Israel. It gives us the principle that is called “the great parenthesis” – God has interrupted his program for Israel and has inserted between the 1st coming and the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus the present age in which we live. This indeterminate period, which has now spanned more than 1900 years, comes between the 69th week of years and the 70th of the prophecy. The 70th, week a week of 7 years, is yet to be fulfilled for Israel. As you read of this, you will see that this is what the book of Revelation and other prophetic passages call “the great tribulation”, the time of Jacob's trouble. It lies ahead. It has been broken off from the other 69 and is yet to be fulfilled.

Daniel’s Prayer for the People

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

8 “O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13 “As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

16 “O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. 17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

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Daniel’s Prayer

Literal prophecy fulfillment

Daniel believed in a literal prophecy fulfillment

- This prayer was prompted by Daniel’s study of prophecy – He understood prophecy literally
  - Daniel understood the number of years specified by the word of the Lord
  - To Daniel, 70 years meant 70 years

- Daniel saw from Jeremiah’s prophecy that the captivity would be 70 years
  - Jer 25 – 70 years of captivity – Jer 25:11 ‘This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 “But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the LORD, “and will make it desolate forever. 13 I will bring upon that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations.
  - Jeremiah 29:10 This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.

Why pray if God said it would happen?

If Daniel knew that God had said the captivity would be for 70 years, and if he believed God's word would be fulfilled literally, why did he pray He would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem?

- Gods promises invite, not exclude, our participation
  - “Nothing, therefore, can be better for us, than to ask for what He has promised.” (Calvin)
  - If you want Jesus to come soon, there is something you can do about it!
    - We can hasten the Lord's coming by our holy only conduct and godly lives
      - 2Pe 3:11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.
    - We can also hasten the Lord's coming through evangelism
      - Paul says that god's prophetic focus on Israel would resume when the fullness of the gentiles has come in
      - Romans 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.
    - We can also hasten the Lord's coming through prayer
      - Even as Daniel asked for a speedy fulfillment of prophecy regarding captive Israel (Daniel 9), we can also pray: Even so, come Lord Jesus
      - Rev 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

- Daniel prayed that God, in His mercy, would take the earliest of all possible starting points – Daniel's abduction – for determining the beginning of the 70 years
  - There were 3 waves of captivity
    - 605 – The Jews wave the white flag and surrender
      - They become a vassal state to the Babylonian Empire
      - Captives are taken from the royal family to ensure that tribute is paid
        - Includes the prophet Daniel
    - 597 – Tribute has not been paid.
      - Nebuchadnezzar attacks again and again the Jews wave the white flag and surrender
      - More captives are taken, including the prophet Ezekiel
      - Nebuchadnezzar appoints a Jewish king (Zedekiah) as a vassal king
- 588 – Zedekiah (the last king of Judah) finally rebels
  - Zedekiah sends envoys to Egypt to form a coalition with Egypt
  - Nebuchadnezzar gets word of this and launches a full-scale siege against Jerusalem
- If God uses the earliest starting point to determine 70 years, then His mercy comes to Israel 17 years earlier
  - At time of the prayer, Daniel was still 3 or 4 years short of 70 years since 605 BC, but it was not too soon to begin praying

**Intercessory Prayer**

Daniel was not uniquely qualified for a ministry of intercession
- He did not belong to a priestly family
- He was not, in the ordinary sense, a prophet like Isaiah and Ezekiel
- Yet he, like all of us, could pray
  - “Too often our interests in the prophetic scriptures is of a curious and speculative nature, or else we conclude that God will carry out his sovereign purpose no matter what we do, and so we do not concern ourselves with these matters.”
  - But even in God's eternal decrees, human agencies are essential:
    - Jeremiah made a prophecy
    - Daniel made a prayer
    - Cyrus made a proclamation

**The prayer**

Daniel confesses the sin of his people and glorifies the goodness and righteousness of God
- The attitude of his prayer: earnestness, humility in mourning
  - Daniel was determined to do whatever it took to get this job done in prayer
  - He “left nothing undone that might possibly make his prayer more effective or more persuasive.”
- Daniel begins where we all should – by recognizing the greatness and goodness of God
  - Sometimes we approach God as a stingy person who has to be persuaded to give us something.
  - But Daniel knows the problem is not with God. God keeps his covenant and mercy with those who love Him.
- Daniel knew that is real sin was not God’s fault
  - God was utterly righteous and blameless. Any shame of face belonged to Israel, not to God.
  - Daniel does not make the slightest excuse for Israel’s sin – The fault belongs to Israel and Israel alone
    - We love to make excuses for our sin – and often do, even in our “confessions”
      - Remember that either it is sin or it isn't
      - If it is sin, there is no excuse
      - If there is an excuse, there is no sin, and why are you confessing at all?
  - Daniel makes no excuses, no explanations, he simply confesses their guilt
- God has confirmed His words … as that is written in the law of Moses
  - Daniel realizes that God, even in his judgment upon Israel, has been totally faithful to His word
    - He promised that curses would come upon a disobedient Israel (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28)
- God’s power – As Daniel prays, he remembers that the Lord brought His people out of the land of Egypt
  - The Old Testament standard of God's power was the deliverance from Egypt
  - The New Testament standard of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus
    - Ephesians 1:19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
Prayer in the name (power) of Jesus

- Those aren't words we tack onto the end of a prayer, but they should express the fact that we are praying in merits and righteousness of Jesus, not our own

- What Daniel wants God to do – listen, forgive, hear and act to restore Jerusalem
  - As he calls upon the mercy of God, he asks God to forgive and to restore Jerusalem
  - Daniel prays on firm New Testament ground – we do not present our supplications before Him because of OUR righteous deeds, but because of HIS great mercies
    - Daniel's confidence is not in that HE is so good, but because GOD is so good
  - What is he asking for?
    - That God would mercifully turn his kind attention to Jerusalem and the temple (cause your face to shine upon Your sanctuary)
    - That God would do this without delay (Do not delay for your own sake)
    - This is a fitting prayer to pray when we see God's modern sanctuary – His people – are in a bad state

- The purpose of Daniel’s prayer is to see God's work accomplished and His cause glorified
  - It is all because Your city and Your people are called by Your name
  - A great secret to effective prayer is truly praying to see God's will done, not ours.

- Great prayers of the Bible – This is one
  - Plural pronouns – Every great prayer in the Bible has plural pronouns (we, they, our), not personal (I, me, my)
  - Confessing guilt – Not explaining it, not walking around it, but confronting it head on, admitting what it is
  - Asking God for forgiveness and mercy

- Gabriel comes to bring an answer to Daniel's prayer at the time of the evening offering
  - Daniel's prayer is interrupted by an angelic visit – this is one of the few places we are told that angels fly
  - Gabriel came quickly – because there is no great distance between heaven and Earth
  - The time of the evening offering was a special time
    - This was when Moses offered the Passover lamb
      - Exodus 12:6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.
    - Jesus was crucified
      - Matthew 27:45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
      - As a young man in Jerusalem, Daniel would see the smoke from the temple arising every afternoon indicating the evening oblation
  - Gabriel announces that he has come to bring Daniel an answer to his prayer
    - Daniel is greatly beloved, just like the apostle John
      - John 13:23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.
    - Both Daniel and John received amazing prophetic messages
The Seventy "Sevens"

The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy

20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.” At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24 “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.
25 “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.
26 “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

Daniel is given the prophecy of the 70 weeks – 70 weeks are determined for the Jews and Jerusalem

Dan 9:25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

City Messiah Time Trouble

What are 70 weeks?

It is almost universally agreed that this refers to 70 sets of 7 years – or weeks of years

- Israel was just as familiar with a unit of 7 years as they were a unit of 7 days
- There is nothing unusual in the way this is presented

When do the 70 weeks begin?

- From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem – There are 4 possible decrees
  - Artaxerxes’ decree in 458 BC (Ez 7:11-26)
  - Artaxerxes’ decree in 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:1-8)
  - Cyrus’ decree in 538 BC (Ezra in 1:1-4 and 5:13-17) to rebuild the temple
  - Darius’ decree in 517 BC (Ezra 6:6-12) to rebuild the temple
Prophecy about the Coming of the Messiah

- “anointed one?” – Hebrew translation of this word literally means “mashiach” or “the Messiah”.
- This is a prophecy about the timing of the coming of the Messiah to the earth.

1 “7” remains unfulfilled

- 7 Years of tribulation for the Jewish people

Purpose of the 70 weeks – 6 Things to be done

The 70 weeks focused upon Daniel’s people (the Jews) and his holy city (Jerusalem)

- Talbot calls the 70 weeks “God’s calendar for Israel” – It has nothing to do with the Gentiles or with the Church
- All this is promised to happen in the period of 70 weeks, but it all can hardly be said to have happened already

God promises that certain things will be accomplished in this period of 70 weeks:

- Finish transgression (rebellion)
  - Taken literally, this is the establishment of an entirely new order on Earth
  - The ending of man’s rebellion against god
  - To bring this whole sad sorry story of sinful humanity to a close
- Put an end to sin
  - Sin – A condition of alienation and separation from God
  - Not merely the guilt of sin, but the sin itself. It looks to a new world.
  - There will be no more sin
- Atone for wickedness (Reconciliation for iniquity)
  - To atone for the things that you’ve done
  - This was clearly fulfilled at the cross
- Bring in everlasting righteousness
  - To bring in a new kingdom, a new heaven, a new earth
  - A new order of society brought in by the Messiah
- Seal up vision and prophecy
  - Concluding the final stage of human history, when the Son of Man rules
  - It must include his enthronement
- Anoint the most holy
  - Literally this refers to a place, not a person
  - Likely to the millennial temple of Ezekiel 40-44
**Messiah comes (end of 69 weeks)**

- The OT prophesized that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem on the exact day – and in the exact way – that he did!

  Dan 9:25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

- The seventy ‘sevens’ are divided into three separate units:
  1. 7 sevens (weeks) 49 years until the city walls are rebuilt
  2. 62 sevens (weeks) 434 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince
     - 69 sevens (weeks) 483 years till the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing
  3. 1 seven (week) 70th week to complete the picture

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem came in 445 BC, in the month of Nissan (Passover)

  Ne 2:1 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes (March 14, 445 BC) … 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." 6 … It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

  
  483 Years
  * 360 days /yr Jewish years were lunar = 360 days (not 365 days)
  173,880 days

  173,880 days Days from the issuing of the decree until Messiah is cut off
  / 365.25 days Convert to the Julian calendar (the .25 adjusts for the leap years)
  476 years Julian years from the issuing of the decree until Messiah is cut off

  -445 BC The decree to rebuild Jerusalem is passed on Passover 445 BC
  +476 years Julian years from the issuing of the decree until Messiah is cut off
  + 1 year There is no “0” BC or AD
  32 AD Passover 4/6/32 AD – the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing

This is consistent with the remainder of Scripture:

  14 AD Tiberius started his reign
  15th year of Tiberius Jesus started his ministry

  Lk 3:1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar… the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. 6 And all mankind will see God's salvation.' "

  Jesus celebrated for Passovers during his ministry (age 29, 30, 31 and 32)

  April 6, 32 AD Date of Passover in 32 AD as calculated from lunar charts

Other proposed dates:

  Wednesday April, 25th, 31 AD
  April 7, AD 30, and April 3, AD 33.
The total number of days from March 14, 445 BC to April 6, 32 AD = 173,880 days
The number of days prophesied in Daniel 9:25 = 173,880 days

- What happens after the 69 weeks are completed?
  - Some say the completion came at Jesus' birth 5 or 4 BC, but there is little chronological support for this date
  - Some say it was his baptism, the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (if dated at 26 AD)
    - This is possible if one begins with the earlier decree of Artaxerxes’ and figures with normal solar years
  - Some say it was Jesus’ triumphal entry - April 6, 32 AD
    - Sir Robert Anderson's 'The Coming Prince' follows this argument in detail
    - Anderson used a 360-day year – which Israel used in Daniel's day – to calculate 173,880 days from the decree to the triumphal entry
    - Fulfills the prophecy literally to the day in the year 32 AD
    - Based on Luke 31 for Jesus death
    - Controversial: most chronologists favor 30 or 33 AD
    - Recent attempts to discredit this have failed – “No one today is able dogmatically to declare that Sir Robert Anderson’s computations are impossible “
  - Some have agreed that the 1st 69 weeks end at the exact time of the crucifixion
    - After the 69 weeks are completed, the Messiah is cut off
    - A term that is sometime use for execution
      - Genesis 9:11 I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."
      - Exodus 31:14 " 'Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people.
        - But he will be cut off for the sake of others, not because of himself
  - After the messiah is cut off, Jerusalem is destroyed
    - This was fulfilled in 70 AD by the people of the Prince who is to come
  - Desolations are determined – A chilling description of Jewish history since their rejection of Jesus as Messiah
DANIEL’S SEVENTY WEEKS (Daniel 9:24-27)

- **Daniel’s 69 Weeks (Daniel 9:25)**: 483 Solar Years
- **7 Weeks of Years**
- **62 Weeks of Years**
- **49 Years**
  - Rebuilding of Jerusalem
  - Period of time leading up to “Messiah the Prince” (Daniel 9:26)
- **434 Years**
- **3½ Years**
- **3½ Years**
- **The Second Advent of the Messiah** (Daniel 7:13-14)
- **Daniel’s 70th Week (Dan. 9:27)**: 7 Lunar Years
  - **1 Week of Years**
  - **Prophetic Gap**
  - **The Present Church Age** (A mystery not revealed to Daniel. See Ephesians 3:4-10)
- **27 AD**: Date of the beginning of Jesus’ ministry
- **BC 457**: Date of the edict of Artaxerxes to Ezra (Ezra 7:11-26; 9:9)
- **A covenant between Israel “and the One who is to come”** (Daniel 9:26-27)

31 AD
- The Crucifixion
**Tribulation (70th week)**

- God's redemptive plan
  - Now, there is no special focus on Israel in God's redemptive plan – this is the time of the church
  - But there will be when the church is taken away (at the rapture) and God returns his special focus on Israel again for the last 7 years of man's rule on this earth
  - “The 70th week will begin when the Jewish people are restored in unbelief to their land and city; and among them will be found a faithful remnant, owning their sin, and seeking Jehovah's face (Ironside 1911)
  - These “gaps” or “pauses” in prophecy may seem strange to us but they are somewhat typical
    - Is 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
    - Luke 1:31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

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### Daniel's Seventieth ‘Seven’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The man of lawlessness</th>
<th>The man of lawlessness sets up abomination that causes desolation and ends sacrifice and offerings</th>
<th>All Israel is saved</th>
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<tr>
<td>makes a seven year covenant with many</td>
<td><a href="https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel%209:27">Dan. 9:27</a></td>
<td>Finish transgression</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel%209:27;2%20Thessalonians%202:3-4">Dan. 9:27; 2 Thess. 2:3-4</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anoint the Most Holy Place</td>
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</tbody>
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- The Prince who is to come is not specifically revealed to us here, but his people are
  - They are the people who would put Jesus to death in a human legal since – the Romans
  - Prince who is to come matches with the little horn of Daniel 7
  - Therefore the Prince who is to come (antichrist) will in some way be an heir to the Romans (even as the final world government is an heir to the Roman Empire)

- He (the Prince who is to come) confirms the covenant with the many (Israel) for the final 7-year period
  - He breaks the treaty in the middle of the 7 years
  - It had not yet happened in 90 AD
    - All the things that God promised would happen in the 70 weeks (verse 24) have not yet happened
    - Therefore, we know that the 70 weeks have not yet been completed
    - Yet apparently there is a “pause” in the 70 weeks, between the 69th week and the 70th week
• Since the Jewish rejection of Jesus, and now ready to begin again when they antichrist shall confirm a covenant with the Jews

○ The book of revelation sees this 7-year period, with both its halves, as yet future
  ▪ Rev 12:6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.
  ▪ Rev 12:13-14 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.
  ▪ Rev 13:5-9 The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. 6 He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.
  ▪ Rev 13:14-15 Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.

○ With this covenant, Israel probably embraces the antichrist as a political messiah, if not the literal Messiah
  ▪ This was predicted by Jesus
    • John 5:43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.
    • It is as if God has appointed 490 years of special focus on Israel in His redemptive plan, then the years were “paused” by Israel’s rejection of Jesus

• He will bring an end to sacrifice and establish an abomination (idol) which will bring desolation
  ○ Jesus and Paul got this event (the abomination of desolation) was essential in understanding prophecy
    ▪ Mt 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—
    ▪ 2Th 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
  ○ This is when the antichrist “turns” on the Jews, halfway through the last 7-year period
    ▪ Rev 12:6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.
    ▪ Rev 12:13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus..
  ○ However, God has a consummation which will make all his enemies desolate
    ▪ No doubt about it, God wins!
The Abomination of Desolation

Daniel’s 70th Week -- Midpoint

Matthew 24:15
So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand--

Daniel 8:13, 9:27, 11:31, 12:11

The Primary Sign

Antichrist will seek to destroy all who do not worship him

People will worship the Beast

We will see his blasphemous image standing in God’s Holy Place

The clear signal of the beginning of the Great Tribulation

A super-natural statue/idol in the Holy place that breathes and speaks

The Abomination will lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and desecration of the Tribulation Temple

Antichrist will make war with the Saints, blasphemes, persecution begins in Jerusalem

The worst abomination to God in all history

Antichrist will claim to be God initiating the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble” Jeremiah 30:7

The Abomination is the result of signing the Covenant of Death Isa 28:15-20

His fatal head wound will be healed. The world is astonished and follows. Forces mark of the Beast, 666. Revelation 13

Antichrist will stop the sacrifices in God’s Temple in Jerusalem after 3 1/2 years

From the time the Abomination is set up there will be 1290 days (Christ’s return)

The Abomination of Desolation

Timeline of Daniel Chapter 9, God’s Time

Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

Gold head

The fall of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar

Babylon

Silver arms and hands

Gentile Age

Medo-Persia

Greece

Early Rome

Rome

Silver legs and feet

7 years Tribulation

Revived Rome

10 toes clay & iron

The mountain

The Little Horn

The Rapture

Early Rome

7 years

Church Age

Israel as a nation again

Messiah cut off

The second fall of Jerusalem by Rome

The Rapture

Gentile Age

The Messiah

Decree to rebuild Jerusalem’s wall (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

536 B.C. 444 356 B.C.

THE RAM

THE GOAT

The open Gentile Age

Time zones not to scale

7 weeks building 62 weeks, afterwards, the Messiah is cut off

Daniel 9, the 70 weeks

1 week

2 Pet 3:6 ... that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day

Daniel 12:12

1 week

God’s Time

Hosea 6:1-2

After two days will He revive us

on the third day

He will raise us up
Daniel’s 70 Weeks of Years (David Reagan)

When did it start? Has it ended, or is there a gap in it? – David Reagan

One of the most remarkable and important prophecies in the Bible is found in Daniel 9:24-27. It is the cornerstone of Messianic prophecy because it establishes the timing of both the First and Second Advents of the Messiah. The prophecy is usually referred to as “The 70 Weeks of Years.” This name derives from the opening words of most English translations: “Seventy weeks have been decreed” (Daniel 9:24). In the Hebrew, the word translated “weeks” is actually the word “sevens.” So, the text actually says, “Seventy sevens have been decreed…”

Just as the English word “dozen” can refer to a dozen of anything, the Hebrew word shavuim, meaning “sevens,” can refer to seven of anything. Its exact meaning is dependent upon the context. In this key passage from Daniel, the context makes it clear that he is speaking of years — seventy sevens of years, which would be a total of 490 years. It is therefore appropriate to refer to the prophecy as “The 70 Weeks of Years” even though those exact words are not found in the passage itself.

The Jewish Context and Goals

Another important thing to keep in mind about the context of the passage is that it is directed to the Jewish people. The opening words of the prophecy make this clear: “Seventy weeks have been declared for your people and your holy city…” (Daniel 9:24). The focus of the prophecy is the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The prophecy begins by stating that six things will be accomplished regarding the Jewish people during a period of 490 years:

- “Finish the transgression”
- “Make an end of sin”
- “Make atonement for iniquity”
- “Bring in everlasting righteousness”
- “Seal up vision and prophecy”
- “Anoint the most holy place”

Let’s take a moment to consider the meaning of these six prophecies. The first, “finish the transgression,” refers to the Jew’s rejection of God. The Hebrew word translated “transgression” connotes the idea of rebellion, and the rebellion of the Jewish people is their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Jesus said He would not return until the Jewish people are willing to say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:37-39). The Jews will open their hearts to their Messiah before Daniel’s 490 year period ends.

The period will also witness an “end of sin” for the Jews. The word translated “sin” refers to the sins of daily life — sins of dishonesty and immorality. This end of sin will occur at the time the Jews accept their Messiah and His earthly reign of righteousness begins.

An atonement for Israel’s sins is the third thing that will happen during Daniel’s 70 weeks of years. This atonement occurred, of course, when Jesus shed His blood on the Cross for the sins of the world. But that atonement will not actually be applied to the Jews until they appropriate it by accepting Jesus as their Messiah.

The 490 year period will also “bring in everlasting righteousness.” This undoubtedly refers to the establishment of the Messiah’s earthly reign when the earth will be flooded with peace, righteousness and justice as the waters cover the sea.

The fifth achievement will be the fulfillment of all prophecy concerning the Messiah. The Apostle Peter referred to two types of Messianic prophecy — those related to “the sufferings of Christ” and those concerning “the glories to follow” (1 Peter 1:11). The suffering prophecies were all fulfilled at the Cross. The prophecies concerning “the glories to follow” are yet to be fulfilled. Just as Jesus was humiliated in history, He is going to be glorified in history. This will occur when the Jews accept Him, and He returns to reign over the world from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.
The final goal to be achieved at the end of the 70 weeks of years is “the anointing of the most holy.” Most English translations say “the most holy place.” The Hebrew simply says, “the most holy.” Commentators therefore differ as to whether this is a reference to the anointing of the Messiah as King of kings or whether it is talking about the anointing of the Millennial Temple described in Ezekiel 40-48. Either way the anointing will not take place until the Lord returns in response to the national repentance of the Jews.

The Starting Point
Daniel says all these spiritual goals will be accomplished within a special period of 490 years. When did that period begin, and when did it end? It is when Daniel addresses these questions that he begins to give clues as to the timing of the First and Second Advents of the Messiah.

The prophecy says that the starting point of the 70 weeks of years will be “the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:25). Keep in mind that this prophecy was given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel during the time of Israel’s exile in Babylon. The approximate date was 538 B.C., shortly before the first remnant of Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. under Zerubbabel. Jerusalem was in ruins at this time, having been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 70 years earlier in 586 B.C. (The captivity had begun in 605 B.C., before the destruction of Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and other “youths” to Babylon as hostages — Daniel 1:1-4.)

The crucial question relates to when the decree was issued “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.” There are three possible dates:

- 538 B.C. — Cyrus, King of Persia, issued a decree to Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-3; and Ezra 6:1-5).
- 457 B.C. — Artaxerxes, King of Persia, issued a decree to Ezra authorizing him to reinstitute the Temple services, appoint judges and magistrates, and teach the Law (Ezra 7:11-26).
- 445 B.C. — Artaxerxes issued a decree to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8).

On the surface, the third decree, the one issued to Nehemiah, seems to be the most obvious candidate for the starting date of the prophecy, for it is the only one that specifically relates to the rebuilding of the city. For that reason, most commentators have selected it as the beginning of the 70 weeks of years.

The Events of the 70 Weeks of Years
Daniel’s prophecy next states that the 490 years will be divided into three periods as follows: seven weeks (49 years) plus sixty-two weeks (434 years) plus one week (7 years). He states that at the end of the first two periods (69 weeks or 483 years), the Messiah will be “cut off,” a seemingly clear reference to the crucifixion. He then states that both Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed.

The prophecy concludes by focusing on the last week of years. It says that following the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, “the prince who is to come” will make a covenant with the Jewish people that will enable them to reinstitute their sacrificial system. This prince will come from the same people who destroyed the Temple (the Romans).

We know from 2 Thessalonians 2 that this “prince who is to come” is the Antichrist, the “man of lawlessness” who is “the son of destruction.” The same passage makes it clear that his covenant will enable the Jews to rebuild their Temple.

Both passages — Daniel 9 and 2 Thessalonians 2 — establish the fact that in the middle of this 70th week (3 1/2 years into it) this “prince who is to come” will double cross the Jewish people. He will march into the rebuilt Temple and declare himself to be God. He will stop the sacrifices and he will erect “an abomination of desolation,” most likely an idol of himself. The book of Revelation specifies that the Messiah will return to earth 3 1/2 years after this desolation of the Temple takes place.
Now we have the timing of the two advents of the Messiah. He will come the first time at the end of 483 years and will be “cut off” before the Temple is destroyed. He will return the second time at the end of a seven year period that will begin with a treaty that allows the Jews to rebuild their Temple and reinstitute the Mosaic system of sacrifices.

Calculating Dates
The first person in modern history to calculate the 483 years to the “cutting off” of the Messiah was Sir Robert Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince* (1894). Using the decree to Nehemiah issued in 445 B.C. as his starting point, and using what he called “the 360 day prophetic year,” Anderson calculated that it was exactly 173,880 days or 483 lunar years from the day the edict was issued to the day Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His calculations placed the crucifixion in the spring of 32 A.D.

These calculations have remained almost sacred in Christian thinking for the past one hundred years. But they need to be examined carefully because the fact of the matter is that there are two serious problems with Anderson’s calculations.

**Sir Robert Anderson’s Calculations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>445 B.C. to 32 A.D. (476 x 365)</td>
<td>173,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14 to April 6&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap years</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>173,880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>Anderson calculated that the decree was issued on March 14, 445 B.C. and that Jesus died on April 6 in 32 A.D.

**The Prophetic Year Problem**
The first is his assumption that the years in the prophecy are lunar years of 360 days. That assumption is based upon the fact that the book of Revelation defines the 70th week of Daniel as lasting a total of 2,520 days (*Revelation 11:3* and *12:6*). The only way that can translate into seven years is by using lunar years of 360 days.

Now, on the surface, it seems logical to apply this Revelation principle to Daniel. If the years of the final week of Daniel’s prophecy are lunar years, then surely the first 483 years must also be lunar years.

But there is a flaw in this logic. Daniel’s prophecy was written to the people of his time to give them, among other things, an insight as to when the Messiah would come. And the fact of the matter is that Daniel does not even so much as hint that he is speaking of anything other than regular solar years.

Some would counter by saying that the Jews used a lunar calendar and therefore thought only in lunar terms when calculating time. But that simply is not true. The Jews have never relied on a pure lunar calendar, like the Muslims do. The Jews have always used a lunar/solar calendar. Their months are 30 days long, but they insert what is called an intercalary month every so often to make adjustments for the true solar calendar.

For the Jews this is an absolute necessity because their major festivals (Passover, Harvest and Tabernacles) are all directly related to the agricultural cycle. If they did not make the solar adjustments, their festivals would migrate around the calendar, resulting in harvest festivals falling during seed planting times! This is exactly the case with the Muslim calendar which is a pure lunar calendar. And thus, the sacred festival of Ramadan circulates around the year. One year it will be in August, the next in September, and the next in October.

The point is that the Jews in Daniel’s time did not think in terms of 360 day years. Nor did Daniel. If you will look at *Daniel 9:1-2* you will see that shortly before he was given the 70 Weeks of Years prophecy by Gabriel, he discovered Jeremiah’s prophecy that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years. He realized immediately that he was very near the end of those 70 years.

The indication of this passage is that Daniel interpreted Jeremiah’s prophecy of 70 years to be 70 regular years as defined by the Jewish lunar/solar calendar. And again, if his subsequent prophecy about the 70 weeks of years was to have any meaning to the Jewish people, it had to be understood in terms of regular years, not “prophetic years” of 360 days each.
Why then would there be a difference between the first 483 years and the last seven? I suspect it may relate to a statement made by Jesus in Matthew 24. He said the 70th week of Daniel will be “cut short” lest all life on earth be destroyed during that terrible period of tribulation (Matthew 24:22).

The Terminus Problem
The second problem with Anderson’s calculations is their terminus date of 32 A.D. This just simply is not an acceptable year for the death of Jesus since it would place the crucifixion on either Sunday or Monday. Even Anderson recognized this problem, and as one author has put it, Anderson engaged in some “mathematical gymnastics” to arrive at a Friday crucifixion.

In his book, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Harold Hoehner of Dallas Theological Seminary shifts the date of Nehemiah’s decree from 445 to 444 B.C. and then calculates the 173,880 days to the spring of 33 A.D., when the crucifixion would have fallen on a Friday. But this creates more problems than it solves. The 444 B.C. date is suspect and the 33 A.D. date is very late. Luke 3:23 says Jesus was “about 30 years of age” when He began His ministry. His ministry lasted 3 1/2 years. Hoehner’s chronology would make Jesus 32 years old at the start of His ministry and 35 at the time of his death.

An Alternative Viewpoint
I believe a better solution is to interpret Daniel’s prophecy as speaking of lunar years adjusted periodically and thus amounting to regular years. I also believe that the best starting point for the prophecy is the decree issued to Ezra in 457 B.C.

I have already explained why I believe regular years should be used. Let me now explain why I think the decree issued to Ezra should be used as the starting point for the calculation of the first two periods totaling 483 years.

The decree given to Zerubbabel authorized the rebuilding of the Temple. The decree issued to Nehemiah concerned the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra’s decree was more general in nature, covering a variety of subjects. But we know from Scripture that he interpreted it to mean that the Jews were authorized to launch a general rebuilding campaign that included the temple, the city, and the walls. His interpretation is stated in Ezra 9:9 — “God has not forsaken us, but has extended loving kindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem” (Ezra 9:9).

Now, using Ezra’s decree as the staring point (457 B.C.), if we count forward 483 years we will arrive at 27 A.D. (There is only one year between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D.) According to the translator of Josephus, the Jewish new year that began in the fall of 27 A.D. marked the beginning of the last Jubilee Year that the Jews enjoyed in the land before their worldwide dispersal by the Romans in 70 A.D. This is most likely the year that Jesus began His public ministry. This is hinted at in Luke 4 where it says that when Jesus launched His ministry at the synagogue in Nazareth, He did so by reading a passage from Isaiah 61 about the way in which the Messiah would fulfill the spiritual essence of the Jubilee. After finishing the reading, Jesus proclaimed, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

The Relationship of the Resurrection
Further evidence that this date is correct is the fact that it would place the end of Jesus’ 3 1/2 year ministry in the spring of 31 A.D. And that happens to be the most likely year of the crucifixion.

Most scholars have tried to place the crucifixion in either 30 or 33 A.D. because these are the only two years in the time frame of Jesus’ death when Passover fell on Friday. The belief that Jesus was crucified on a Passover that fell on Friday is based on a statement in Mark 15:42 which says the crucifixion took place on “the day of preparation before the Sabbath.”

But this statement does not necessarily mean that the crucifixion took place on a Friday. Such an assumption is rooted in Gentile ignorance about Jewish feast days. What the Gentile church has failed to recognize over the centuries is that the first day after Passover is a feast day, or “High Sabbath,” because it is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is considered to be a Sabbath regardless of what day of the week it falls on (Numbers 28:16-18).
The Gospels make it clear that the crucifixion week had two Sabbaths. Mark 16:1 says a group of women bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus after the Sabbath was over. But in Luke 23:56 it says they bought the spices before the Sabbath and then rested on the Sabbath before proceeding to the tomb.

In the year 31 A.D. Passover fell on Wednesday. Jesus was crucified that morning and buried that evening. The next day, Thursday, was a High Sabbath. On Friday, after the High Sabbath, the women bought the spices and then rested on the regular Sabbath (Saturday) before going to the tomb on Sunday morning.

Further Collaboration
The time span I am proposing from 457 B.C. to 27 A.D. is also supported by another amazing piece of evidence. Do you remember how Daniel divided the first 483 years into two periods of time, first 49 years and then 434 years? Why did he do that? Go back and re-read Daniel 9:25 and notice that he makes specific reference to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Did he divide the period into two parts to indicate that the rebuilding of the city would occupy the first 49 years?

In a recent booklet entitled “The Daniel Papers,” a publication of the Radio Bible Class, the author, Herb Vander Lugt, notes:

"According to Barnes and several other trustworthy Bible commentators, the historian Prideaux declared Nehemiah's last action in rebuilding the city occurred in the 15th year of the Persian ruler Darius Nothus (423-404 B.C.). His 15th year was the 49th year from the 457 B.C. decree. Josephus seems to support this idea in his remarks about the death of Nehemiah."

A Prophetic Gap
One puzzle remains about Daniel’s prophecy. What about the 70th week? Is it past or future? I believe there is no doubt whatsoever that it is future. The reason for that conclusion is simple. The prophecy begins by stating that the 490 years will produce six consequences among the Jewish people.

I began this article by outlining those six prophetic events in detail. If you will look back at them, you will readily see that they are still unfulfilled. The Jews are still in rebellion against God, they are still caught up in their sins, they are still refusing to accept the atonement for their iniquity, everlasting righteousness has not come to the earth, all prophecy concerning the Messiah has not yet been fulfilled, and “the most holy” has not been anointed.

There must, therefore, be a gap in the prophecy. This may seem strange to the casual reader. But students of prophecy are familiar with prophetic gaps. They are very common in prophetic literature because of the peculiar nature of the prophetic perspective. God would show His prophets great future events and the prophets would present them as if they were happening in rapid succession because that’s the way they appeared. The prophet was like a person looking down a mountain range seeing one mountain top after another, seemingly pressed up against each other, but in reality separated by great valleys which could not be seen.

Jesus Himself recognized this characteristic of prophecy when He read a prophecy from Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth. If you will check what He read (Luke 4:18 - 19) against what Isaiah wrote (Isaiah 61:1-3), you will see that Jesus stopped reading in the middle of a sentence because the rest of the sentence had to do with His Second Coming.

The Implications
For Christians, Daniel’s prophecy should serve to underscore the supernatural origin of the Bible. It should also serve as confirmation that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah.

For Jews, the prophecy should be deeply disturbing for two reasons. First, it clearly teaches that the Messiah had to come before the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. That means that either God failed to keep His promise or else the Jews missed recognizing their Messiah. Second, the prophecy clearly teaches that a terrible time of tribulation for the Jews still lies ahead.
Moses said it would be a time of “distress” that would occur in “the latter days” (Deuteronomy 4:30). Jeremiah called it “the time of Jacob’s distress” (Jeremiah 30:7). Daniel characterized it as “a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time” (Daniel 12:1). Zechariah says two-thirds of the Jews will “be cut off and perish” during that terrible time (Zechariah 13:8). The process will be horrible. But the result will be glorious, for the remaining remnant will at long last turn their hearts to God, accept their Messiah, and cry out, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”
End-time vision – The angel (10)

Then chapter 10 presents the things unseen which are behind the things that are seen. This is another great revelation of God’s sovereign government in the affairs of men and is the explanation for the events of history. What causes the things that happen today? Well, there are unseen forces at work, and these forces are here clearly revealed to Daniel.

Vision of the Glorious Man

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! 6 His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

- 3rd year of Cyrus = 539 BC
- the anointed time was long
  - “The implication is that the period in view is a long and strenuous one the booby great conflict and troubled for the people of God.” (John Welford)
  - The latter days – the vision of chapters 11 and 12 is focused on the latter days, although it may also relate to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes
- Why was Daniel in mourning?
  - Some think it was because so few Jews had returned with Ezra from exile
  - Others believed it was because Ezra was facing severe opposition in rebuilding the temple
  - Daniel had not gone back with Ezra’s group of exiles because he was very old (about 84) and could serve them just as well in his high government position
  - Daniel’s conspicuous self-denial was coupled with intense prayer

Angel (Glorious man)

Daniel sees at glorious man on the banks of the Tigris River

- Some say the certain man is an unnamed angel of high rank, noting that Jesus would not need the assistance of Michael (mentioned in verse 13) and that Ezekiel also saw angelic figures dressed in linen (Ez 9:2)
  - Ez 9:2 And I saw six men coming from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with a deadly weapon in his hand. With them was a man clothed in linen who had a writing kit at his side. They came in and stood beside the bronze altar.
- Some say this certain man is Jesus, noting that the description is remarkably like one John saw in Rev 1:12-16 and Ezekiel
  - Eze 8:2 I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal.
Dan 10:4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, 5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. 6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

Rev 1:12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ezekiel 8:2</th>
<th>Daniel 10:4-6</th>
<th>Revelation 1:13-15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal</td>
<td>“a man dressed in linen” (5a)</td>
<td>“someone like a ‘Son of Man’ dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet” (13b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“with a belt of finest gold around his waist’” (5b)</td>
<td>“with a golden sash around his chest (13b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“his body was like chrysolite” (6a)</td>
<td>“his head and hair were white as wool, as white as snow” (14a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his face like lightning” (6a)</td>
<td>his eyes were like blazing fire” (14b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze” (6a)</td>
<td>“his feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace” (15a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“his voice like the sound of a multitude” (6b)</td>
<td>“his voice like the sound of rushing waters” (15b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Their reaction to the angel
  - Daniel's companions
    - Terrified, yet unseeing. Like Saul's companions on the road to Damascus, one could be close to the presence of power of God yet miss the message through lack of spiritual perception.
  - Daniel's reaction to the sight of the man – frailty
    - The word suggests a deathlike paleness combined with a grotesque wrenching and facial features
    - Daniel's experience shows us that even the holiest of men fall short before God and even his closest associates
    - To judge by the description the trance experienced was not one to envy

Prophecies Concerning Persia and Greece

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.
Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision referrers to many days yet to come.”

When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, “My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me.”

Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. 19 And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”

20 Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

Demonic opposition (Prince of Persia)

- The angel explains the opposition he faced on the way
  - God had responded to Daniel’s prayer the very moment he had made his request known
    - But the answers were delayed by the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia
  - Michael is often associated with the battle between good angels and evil angels
    - Revelation 12 and Jude 9
  - The correlation between Daniel’s time of self-denial and prayer (Dan 10:3) and the duration of the battle (Dan 10:13) establishes a link between Daniel’s prayer and the angelic victory
    - Dan 10:3 I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.
    - Dan 10:13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.

- Prince of the Kingdom of Persia
  - Not a man, but an evil angel – A demonic being associated with a human government
  - A demon, working for Satan, who is influencing the Persian Empire

- On 3 occasions, Jesus referred to Satan as the Prince of this world
  - Jn 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.
  - Jn 14:30 I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me,
  - Jn 16:8 When he [Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

- The New Testament recognizes that demonic forces are organized and have a hierarchy
  - One group is called ‘principalities’ or literally ‘governments’
  - Scriptural references to demonic powers associated with human governments
    - Ep 1:21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
    - Ep 3:10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,
    - Ep 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.
▪ Col 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.
▪ Col 2:10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.
▪ Col 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.
▪ Tit 3:1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,

**Persistent Prayer**

- There may be hindering factors of which a praying Christian knows nothing, as he wonders why the answers to his requests are being delayed
  - Why did God allow such a conflict?
    - He certainly could have blasted away at any demonic opposition which dared raise its head
    - God's plan probably was to use the time of delay to train and developed Daniel as a man of persistent prayer
- Persistent Prayer – Nevertheless, he is to keep on praying
  - It may be that he will not receive an answer because he is given up on the 20th day when he should have persisted for the 21st day
  - Jesus mentioned that prayer and fasting have special place in spiritual battles
    - Mt 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." 21 [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”]
  - Jesus taught that men ought always to pray and not give up
    - Lk 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
  - Persistence is not necessary because God's reluctance needs to be overcome; it is necessary to train us
  - How much in angelic assistance or insight has never been realized, or greatly delayed, because of a lack of persistence in prayer . . .

**Why is the angel there?**

- Daniel is strengthened in his weakness
  - “Sorrows” in verse 16 has with it the thought of twisting or writhing pain
    - It is also used several places for labor pains in childbirth
    - Daniel can barely breathe, much less deal with prophetic complexities
  - God touch Daniel through an intermediary
    - Daniel was touched by God and received strength
    - “But many churches today are marked by a well-organized, heavily staffed and adequately financed impotency.”
    - God's commands are his enabling
- The angel introduces his message to Daniel
  - The heavenly warfare is to be directed first against Persia and then Greece, because each of these in turn will have power over God's people
  - The Prince of Greece is not Alexander the Great, but another demonic principality over Greece
  - God is watching out for Israel – working behind the scenes in the spiritual realm
- Why is the angel there?
  - Dan 10:20 So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? … 21 … I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth.
  - God’s plan of certain and true designs for men and nations, which He can reveal according to His discretion
    - Referring to Dan 11 and 12?
• There is some spiritual backstory going on that we are unaware of except some references to it
  o Dan 10:20 Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come;

**Archangel Michael**

• Michael seems to be the angelic representative of Israel, battling against the demonic representative of Persia
  o On Earth, Israel seemed lowly and weak
  o But in the heavens, Israel had the mightiest representative of all
• The example of angelic cooperation is instructive for the body of Christ, who praise “Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.”
• Dan 10:21 (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.) Dan 11:1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)
  o Against them – the demonic forces of the backstory
  o 1st year of Darius the Mede = 539 BC
    ▪ Same as the earlier statement of 3rd year of Cyrus
  o Protect him – This angel is helping to protect Michael
**End-time vision – The vision (11)**

- The angel from Dan 10 is still speaking here
  - He helped established Darius as king in the 1st year of his reign
- Chapter 11 is one of the most remarkable chapters in the Bible
  - It records prophecy that, for the most part, has been fulfilled in detail.
  - It foretells the struggle between the king of Syria and the king of Egypt which took place after Daniel’s day.
  - It is prophetically and historically fulfilled.
  - These historic events are described in great detail and cover 200-300 years of history.
  - You can see the prophecies here have been worked out exactly in the pattern of history.
  - Among other outstanding individuals, Cleopatra appears in this chapter, prophetically foretold.
- Chapter 11 has very specific details about a whole set of historical events
  - Specific people, specific dates, specific events
  - Rise of Alexander the Great
  - Death of Alexander the Great
  - Dividing of his kingdom among his 4 generals
  - What happens to the descendants of General Ptolemy (Egypt) and General Seleucus (Syria)
    - Great conflict between these 2 groups
    - The descendants of Seleucus will emerge as the victors who will control Israel and ultimately trigger the Maccabean Revolt in 167 BC

**Warring Kings of North and South**

11 “Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.) 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. 3 Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4 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.

**Warring Kings of North and South**

5 “Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion. 6 And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times. 7 But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail. 8 And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North.

9 “Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land. 10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.

11 “And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy. 12 When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail. 13 For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

14 “Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall. 15 So the king of the North shall come and build a
17 “He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him. After this he shall turn his face to the coastslands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

20 “There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. 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. With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. 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; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.

25 “He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. Both these kings’ hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table: but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time. 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.

The Northern King’s Blasphemies

29 “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 Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage.

“So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 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. 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. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

36 “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

The Northern King’s Conquests

40 “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall
follow at his heels. 

But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

### The Kings of the South and the North

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 &quot;Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • There were 3 kings of Persia after Cyrus:  
  o Cambyses II (530-522)  
  o Bardiya (522)  
  o Darius I (522-486)  
| • These were followed by a 4th, Xerxes I (486-465)  
  o Xerxes trained in army of 2 million men.  
  o After training his army, he attacked and conquered Greece |
| When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. |
| • Xerxes I was the king from the Book of Ester  
  o Had a big party to gather the support for his invasion of Greece |
| 3 Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. |
| • The mighty king here is Alexander the Great (336-323)  
  o Alexander the Great inherits the kingship when he was 20 years old from his father, Phillip II, who was assassinated  
  o There is no Greek nation at this point  
  o They are more like a loose confederation of tribal warlords  
  o Alexander brought them all together by identifying a common enemy – Persia – and was able to centralize power |
| 4 After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others. |
| • The prophecy here says that Alexander would be cut off in his prime.  
  • His Kingdom did not go to his descendants – it was divided between 4 of his generals  
  o Antipater & Cassander get Macedonia & Greece  
  o Lysimachus gets Thrace and Asia Minor  
  o Seleucus gets Syria  
  o Ptolemy gets Palestine and Egypt |
| 5 "The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. |
| • The king of the south was Ptolemy, the general who ruled Egypt  
  • The king of the North was Seleucus, the general who took Syria  
  • Israel was between the two kingdoms and suffered from the continual warfare between them |
| 6 After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her. |
| • The kings of Egypt and Syria make a peace pact after Ptolemy II helped Seleucus regain control of Syria  
  • To seal the bargain Ptolemy, gave his daughter Berenice to Seleucus for his wife  
  o Seleucus divorced his wife and married Berenice  
  o However, when Ptolemy died Seleucus left Berenice and took back his former wife |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| 7 "One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious. He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone. | - She (the former wife) poisoned Seleucus and had Berenice and her son assassinated  
- Then the former wife’s son became the new Syrian king |
| 9 Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress. | - Egypt invaded and defeated Syria  
  - Berenice’s brother (Ptolemy III) was now the Egyptian king  
  - He invaded and defeated Syria (Seleucus II) to avenge his sister's death  
  - He took the fortresses and plundered Syria of its gods, gold and costly vessels |
| 11 "Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant. | - Syria invaded Egypt  
  - The king of Syria and his brothers attacked Egypt  
  - Egypt again defeated Syria  
  - But the Egyptian king didn't follow up his victory by strengthening his position  
- His sons – Syria – Seleucus III and Antiochus III |
| 13 For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped. | - King of the South – Ptolemy IV  
- King of the North – Antiochus III |
| 14 "In those times many will rise against the king of the South. The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success. | - Syria mustered its armies and again attacked Egypt  
  - Some of the Jews turned against their brothers to help the Syrian king  
  - This time Syria defeated Egypt |
| 15 Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it. | - The invader – Antiochus  
- Beautiful land is Israel |
| 17 He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him. | - The Syrian king (Antiochus) gave his daughter, Cleopatra I, to the young Egyptian king (Ptolemy V) in 194 BC in order to overthrow the kingdom  
  - However, Cleopatra turned against Syria and stood with Egypt  
  - She was very ambitious for Egypt and began to make political deals with Rome, a rising power |
| 18 Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a | - The Syrian king began to attack Rome along the shores of Asia minor |
commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him. 19 After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20 &quot;His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• His successor – Seleucus V</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The son of the Syrian king was mysteriously poisoned</td>
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<tr>
<th>21 &quot;He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Antiochus Epiphanes IV was the next king of Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He usurps the throne, he is not of royal blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cities of Syrian Antioch and Pisidian Antioch are named after Antiochus Epiphanes IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Read about this is 2Maccabees 3:1-40</td>
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<tr>
<th>22 Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. 23 After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Prince of the covenant – The High Priest in Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A pious high priest, Onias III, was removed from office and replaced with his brother Jason, because Jason had bribed Antiochus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Antiochus Epiphanes killed many people that he perceived were a challenge to his reign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>24 When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Antiochus Epiphanes hated the Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He killed and enslaved thousands of them</td>
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<tr>
<th>25 &quot;With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• King of the South – Ptolemy VI</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Antiochus Epiphanes attacked Egypt and defeated her</td>
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<tr>
<th>26 Those who eat from the king’s provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. 27 The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. 28 The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• His own people will try to destroy him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The two kings – Antiochus and Ptolemy</td>
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<tr>
<th>29 &quot;At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. 30 Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ships of the western coastlands – Roman vessels under the command of Popilius Lænas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Antiochus Epiphanes again tried to attack Egypt but the Roman navy fought him off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Roman Republic is now on the rise</td>
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</table>

Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and
show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.

- He lashed out at Israel and on God's temple
- His sacrifice of a pig on the holy altar was the abomination which makes desolation
- Antiochus was a symbolic antichrist
  - The antichrist will also stop the daily sacrifices and prayers in the temple and will pollute the sanctuary with the demand that he be worshiped
  - This will be the abomination of desolation

32 With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

- Judas Maccabeus and other young Jewish men were angered by the pollution of the temple – Triggers the Maccabean Revolt
- They took revenge on Syria

33 "Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. 34 When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. 35 Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

- Transition to the end times – Daniel’s 70th week
- Those who are wise – The godly leaders of the Jewish people
- This prophecy concerns the plight of the Jews and the sufferings they have endured
  - They will still be a great danger until the end of the great tribulation
- Little help
  - Though the United States has been a close ally of Israel, our country has lately been moving away from this position (because of our dependence on Arab oil)
  - When we finally abandon Israel, Russia will feel free to attack without any retaliation from the US

**The King Who Exalts Himself – 70th week of Daniel**

When you come to Dan 11:36, a noteworthy break occurs.

It is introduced by the previous verse, in which the angel says to Daniel:

Dan 11:35 Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

Here begins a passage that deals with that 70th week of Daniel that is yet to be fulfilled – the time of the end, the last days, the ultimate arrangement of Earth's kingdoms just before the return of Jesus Christ. This remarkable passage predicts an invasion of Palestine and a counter-invasion from Egypt in the South, and then the meeting of 2 great armies in the land of Israel and the ultimate destruction of those armies there on the mountains of Israel. This is also clearly described in the Ezekiel 38-39 and Joel 2. And you will find other prophetic references to this as well.

The current context of the Maccabean Revolt foreshadows something MUCH bigger that is still to come.

36 "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.

- The king described here is the antichrist
  - He will put himself forward and seek the people's worship and praise just as Satan has always craved worship
    - Is 14:12 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
Mt 4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

2Th 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

- Wrath refers to the great tribulation
  - It's God's indignation against a sinning world
    - Isaiah 26:20 Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. 21 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer.

- What must take place?
  - Paul answered this question in 2Thessalonians when he addresses the question that some say that the Lord has already returned
    - 2Th 2:1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

37 He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all.

- This scripture is led many people to believe that the antichrist will be in apostate Jew
  - In Judaism, apostasy refers to the rejection of Judaism and possible defection to another religion by a Jew.
  - The term apostasy is derived from Ancient Greek: ἀποστάτης, meaning "rebellious"
  - He may be homosexual
  - The desire of women could refer to every Jewish woman's hope that she would bear the child who would bruise the serpent's head
    - Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
  - Jesus was the child and fulfilled this prophecy with his atoning death on the cross so this verse could mean that the Anti-Christ will not regard God or Jesus

38 Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.

- Other translations say 'he will honor a god of forces'
- The antichrist will worship and be obsessed with military force
  - He’ll build a huge and expensive army equipped with tremendous military hardware

39 He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.

- The antichrist will make a covenant with Israel.
  - He’ll work out a Middle East peace plan that will divide the land of Israel for his gain
  - The covenant will be broken by the antichrist after 3½ years, when he stops the sacrifices in the temple and demands that he himself be worshiped as God
At this point, those Jews who are close to God will flee to the Jordanian rock city of Petra.

- Sela is the Edomite capital – Petra
- Matthew 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.
- Isaiah 16:1 Send lambs as tribute to the ruler of the land, from Sela, across the desert, to the mount of the Daughter of Zion. 2 Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. 3 "Give us counsel, render a decision. Make your shadow like night— at high noon. Hide the fugitives, do not betray the refugees. 4 Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you; be their shelter from the destroyer." The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease; the aggressor will vanish from the land.
- Revelation 12:14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood.

The chariots will be tanks

He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. 42 He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. 43 He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission.

The Beautiful Land is the land of Israel.
- Ammon is Jordan and Iraq
- The antichrist will be at the borders of Libya and Ethiopia
- It will probably be a planned attempt to conquer the continent of Africa

But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many.

The antichrist's 10 nations begins to move against Africa – passing through Israel & taking Egypt
- The Chinese will send their armies, along with the remnant of the Russian army, to battle his forces
  - Rev 16:12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.
- These armies will meet in The Valley of Megiddo for the great and final battle of Armageddon.
45 He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain.

- The antichrist will set up his throne in Jerusalem and will seek to rule the world from there.

Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

- Jesus will destroy the antichrist with the words of his mouth
  - Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.
  17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
  - Colossians 3:4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
  - Jude 1:14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Other scriptural references to what will happen at the end

Jesus talks about this future event in AD32 – a catastrophic event
This vision in Daniel foreshadows these events in a very specific way in the Maccabean Revolt

Mt 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. 23 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. 25 See, I have told you ahead of time.
Prophecy of the End Time

12 “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

4 “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?”

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?”

9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

11 “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

13 “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

• The beginning of chapter 12 introduces the greatest event of history yet to be fulfilled – the coming again of Jesus Christ. It is not mentioned as such here, but this is what Daniel hears:

Dan 12: 1 ”At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people [Israel], will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

• This is followed by a resurrection:

Dan 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

• and the final judgment of God:

Dan 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

• Then Daniel is given a sign of when this will occur:
Dan 12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

- Many Bible scholars understand this to be an indication that we are near that time
  - Transportation and knowledge will rapidly increase just as they have in our own time.
- The Holy Spirit has opened up our understanding of the book of Daniel in these last days, because the information in it wasn't for earlier days.
  - God told John not to seal the book of Revelation – and even promised a blessing to those who would read and understand it
    - Revelation 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.
    - Revelation 22:10 Then he told me, 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.

**Good vs Bad**

One last thing about this final chapter is important. Daniel asks certain questions of the angel who has revealed this to him, and then he is given to understand 2 great principles that are at work in human life.

You and I often hear people discussing what is happening in the world, with newspaper commentators and others constantly pouring into our ears reports of terrible things. People often say what is happening? Is the world getting worse and worse or is it getting better and better?

- On one hand you will help hear people describe things in such a way that you are bound to say, “Well, the world is getting worse and worse.” Then someone replies, “No it isn't. Look at this, and this, and this. I will believe the world is getting better and better. We are progressing.” Now the book of Daniel makes it very clear that we will never understand God's word and God's work until we believe both of those principles.
  - Dan 12:10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

- Jesus said that the good seed has been sown, but the enemy has come and sown tares among the wheat. “Let both grow together,” he says, “until the harvest.” (Matthew 13:30) I think this is certainly true in history. Today evil was worse than it has ever been. It is more subtle, more devilish, more satanic, more difficult to detect than it has ever been before in human history. But good is better than it has ever been before. Good as more powerful. Its effect in human society in relationship to the evil around it is far greater than it has ever been before.

- These two principles are at work in human society, but neither shall overpower the other. Good is not going to become so triumphant that even evil finally disappears, as once was thought at the turn of the century. Nor is evil going be so powerful that good finally disappears. Both are going to come into a headlong conflict, and the Bible everywhere records that at that precise moment in history God shall again intervene in human affairs. Of the ultimate clash of these two great principles working in human society, Daniel is told
  - Dan 12:12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. 13 "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

**The Tribulation – Trouble for Israel**

- Also known as the time of Jacob’s trouble
- Michael is the angel who oversees Israel
- Michael and his angels will fight Satan and his angels – and they will cast Satan and his angels out of heaven
  - Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The
great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

- Satan he returned to earth in fury, for he knows that his days are numbered
  - At this time, the antichrist sets up his throne in Jerusalem and breaks the covenant with Israel
  - The great tribulation will begin
    - It will last for 3½ years, and will be the 2nd half of the final 7 years prophesied earlier
      - Daniel 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."
    - It will be the worst time the world will ever know
      - Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

**Resurrection**

Dan 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

This verse may refer to the 2nd resurrection

- Eph 4:8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)
- 1st Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,
- Matthew 27:52 The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 'They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.
- Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,
- 2 Corinthians 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
- Revelation 20:5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

This verse could refer instead to the resurrection of the nation Israel

- Ezekiel 37:1-14 The valley of the dry bones

**75 extra days after the end of the Great Tribulation**

- Great Tribulation lasts 1260 days

  11"And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days."
• 30 extra days (1290 days)
  o 11 “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.
  o Daniel 12:11 mentions 1,290 days, which is 30 days more than the second half of the tribulation.
  o The Bible doesn’t reveal what will happen during the 30 days between the 1260th and 1290th day at the end of the great tribulation. Different ideas have been put forward to explain what happens in those 30 extra days.
    ▪ The land of Israel will be rebuilt in that month after the devastation it endured during the tribulation.
    ▪ Removal of the Abomination of Desolation
    ▪ Cleansing of Jerusalem and the land after the Battle of Armageddon (e.g., burying the dead)
    ▪ Resurrection of the OT and Tribulation saints
    ▪ Construction of the 4th (Millenial) temple described in Ezekiel?

• An additional 45 extra days (1335 days)
  o 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.
  o In the 45 days between the 1290th and the 1335th day, Jesus will judge all the nations of the Earth.
    ▪ Those who are spared until the 1335th day will be allowed to enter into the glorious Millenial Kingdom age with Jesus
  o Matthew 25:31-46 Sheep and Goats
  o What will take place during those 45 days?
    ▪ Very likely, this is when the judgment of the Gentile nations, described in Matthew 25:31–46, will take place. In this judgment, also called the judgment of the sheep and the goats, the Gentiles are judged for their treatment of Israel during the tribulation. Did they aid Jesus’ “brothers and sisters” (Matthew 25:40), or did they turn a blind eye to the Jews’ troubles or, worse yet, aid in their persecution?

So, those who survive the tribulation and survive the sheep and goat judgment will enter the millennium. This is a blessing, indeed.
The Minor Prophets

- The Minor Prophets are minor because they are shorter in length, not because they are less important
  - Isaiah is 66 chapters long
  - Obadiah is 1 chapter

- All of the Minor Prophets write:
  - During the time of the kings, 1050 – 586 B.C.
  - After the return from Babylonian Captivity, 539 – 430 B.C.

- Most tell us when they are active.
  - Hosea, for example, begins: “The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah . . .” (Hosea 1: 1). That is the same time during which Isaiah takes place, and the historical context for Hosea is the same as that of Isaiah: the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. and the Assyrian attack against Judah and Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

- A prophet always writes into his own historical context, and the primary meaning we draw from what he says always emerges from that historical context.
  - Although the primary meaning of what a prophet says always emerges from the historical context in which he writes, what he says will sometimes foreshadow messianic or eschatological (“end time”) events. It is our responsibility as educated readers of Scripture to determine when such foreshadowing occurs and when it does not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophet</th>
<th>Context</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Minor prophets</td>
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</table>
Events: Assyria defeats Israel, 722 B.C.; Assyria attacks Jerusalem, 701 B.C. |
| Joel | Period: Not dated (9th century – post exilic)  
Events: Not explicit |
| Amos | Period: 767-753 B.C. (set in Israel)  
Events: Corrupt Israel, prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. |
| Obadiah | Period: After 586 B.C. (Set in Judah)  
Events: Edom collaborates with Babylon, 586 B.C. |
| Jonah | Period: Before 793 B.C. (set in Assyria)  
Events: Jonah is prophet in the generation before Jereboam II, king of Israel, 793-752 B.C (2 Kings 14: 23-25)  
Events: Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh repents and is spared. |
| Micah | Period: 739 - 686 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Corrupt Israel, prior to its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. |
| Nahum | Period: Before 612 B.C. (set in Israel)  
Events: Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh falls to Babylon in 612 B.C. |
| Habakkuk | Period: c. 626 – 586 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem |
| Zephaniah | Period: 640 – 609 B.C. (set in Judah)  
Events: Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem |
<p>| Haggai | Period: 520 B.C. (set in Judah) |</p>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Zechariah Post-exilic</td>
<td>520 B.C. (set in Judah)</td>
<td>Post-exilic rebuilding of Jerusalem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malachi</td>
<td>c. 430 B.C. (set in Judah)</td>
<td>Prophecy against post-exilic Jerusalem</td>
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**Hosea (Hos) – God’s Faithful Love to an Unfaithful People**

God tells us how He feels by Israel’s unfaithfulness

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**Hosea**

**PERSONAL**

The Agony of an Unfaithful Mate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Separation</th>
<th>Reunion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>God:</strong> “Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry.” (1:2)</td>
<td><strong>God:</strong> “Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress.” (3:1)</td>
<td><strong>Nation is guilty.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nation is guilty.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>God is holy.</strong></td>
<td><strong>God is holy.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nation needs judgment.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nation needs judgment.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>God is love.</strong></td>
<td><strong>God is love.</strong></td>
<td><strong>God is just.</strong></td>
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Adulterous wife yet faithful husband

Adulterous nation yet faithful God

**NATIONAL**

The Tragedy of an Unfaithful People

Series of sermons declaring the sin of the people and the character of God

Model of the message as Hosea remains true to his wife in spite of her infidelity

**CHAPTERS 1–3**

God’s faithful love toward His unfaithful people

**CHAPTERS 4–14**

Key Verses

2:19–20; 3:1; 11:1–12

Christ in Hosea

Christ’s being “called out” from hiding in Egypt as a child is pictured in Hosea’s record of Israel’s exodus from Egypt (11:1; see also Matthew 2:15). In Hosea’s redemption of Gomer from the slave market, Christ is pictured as the loving, faithful Redeemer of sinful humanity.

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**Prophet**

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**Hosea Overview**

The book of Hosea is a Narrative History and Prophetic Oracle. Hosea is the first book in the sections of Minor Prophets. They are called Minor Prophets not because their material is less important or insignificant, but because of the size of the book they wrote was shorter in length. The prophet Hosea wrote it at approximately 715 B.C. It records the events from 753-715 B.C. including the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722. The key personalities are Hosea, Gomer, and their children. Its purpose was to illustrate the spiritual adultery of Israel and God’s boundless love for His sinful people. Hosea brings God’s message to the wicked Northern Kingdom.

During this time, they are active in oppressing the poor in slavery and worshipping idols. God, because of His grace, sent another opportunity for Israel to repent and turn to Him. Shortly thereafter, the Northern Kingdom went into permanent captivity.

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• In chapters 1-3, God gives Hosea instructions to marry an unfaithful woman and he obeys. His unfaithful wife Gomer leaves him and finds another man. Hosea is faithful; he finds her, redeems her and brings her back home to him. “Then I said to her, ‘You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; so I will also be toward you’” (3:3).

• Chapters 4-14 Hosea describes how Israel has been unfaithful to God. God wants Israel to repent and turn from their wickedness. He wants to restore Israel however, they continue to disobey and follow their own ways, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (4:6).

Timeframe & Historical Context
Hos 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel

• 753-715 BC in the Northern Kingdom (Samaria)
• Fall of the Northern Kingdom (722 BC)
• Other prophets operating at the same time – Isaiah (Southern kingdom)
• Only one of the minor prophets that is from the north
• Prophesies about the destruction of Israel
• Adultery = Idolatry

Purpose
• Prophets used object lessons - this is the biggest object lesson

Hos 1:2 …the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."

(Hosea, go and marry the town whore. And she will betray you over and over again. And you will learn what it feels like, so you will learn how I feel when Israel does this to me. And then tell the people how it feels.)

• Illustrate the spiritual adultery of Israel and God’s boundless love for His sinful people
  o The Israelites are active in oppressing the poor in slavery and worshipping idols

• Takes us into the heart of God and how He feels when He’s betrayed by those He loves
  o God’s heart broken in 2 – We see God’s emotions swinging back and forth between fierce anger against Israel to broken hearted about what’s happening – Whether it is Israel, Judea, or any of us

• Focus is mercy and hope

• Helps us to learn why the trials of life happen, as well as discover how to gain the faith that repairs the broken pieces of your heart

• On the surface, it appears as if Yahweh had set poor Hosea up for failure by dooming him to a terrible marriage with a wayward woman. The reader can then jump to the conclusion that God must be heartless, even believing He is even now deliciously plotting our own eventual downfall and subsequent shattered heart. As one reads deeper into the life story of Hosea, though, it becomes abundantly clear that Israel was the heartless one, and not God, for in every conceivable way she was at fault for shattering her own heart.
  o The faithless bride Gomer was the living symbol, a type, of the faithless bride Israel.
Hosea became a living symbol, just like Gomer, for he modeled the very faithfulness and forgiveness that God was demonstrating to Israel.

Hosea's job was messenger for Yahweh. For Hosea to most effectively share the heartache God was enduring with His wayward people, Hosea needed to also experience the same betrayal firsthand. As one commentator explained, "Not until a heart is crushed by love's indescribable agony is it truly fitted to preach the deeper things of God's matchless love."

Hosea, relating to his Lord's suffering, actually imbued him with the ability to effectively communicate God's heartache. Yahweh's and Hosea's hearts were bound together by the same heartache, and united together by the same love for a wayward wife.

Hosea's family

Gomer

- She had a wandering eye, which would eventually get her into serious moral trouble
- She was quite vain, which lead to a self-centered materialism that ached for the finer things in life.
- She was totally greedy and never satisfied
- Her wandering eye turned into full-blown adultery, and like a dog in heat, she chased after her long list of boy toys who could give her the goods she craved. For a gold anklet or the next high, Gomer prostituted her body as payment.

By chapter 3, two things happened to Gomer

- First, after a wild ride of a life, she was doused by the cold, hard reality that living in such a manner provided her with absolutely no joy whatsoever. No matter how much she had filled her life with material and sexual pleasures, she still felt utterly miserable. Nothing seemed to fill that empty hole in her heart.
- Second, hard living had taken its toll on her body, and only the dregs of the back alleys wanted to be with her.
- Eventually she owned nothing but debt. She'd sold her body for mere pleasures and trinkets, and then eventually to survive, because that's all that she had left to offer. She became impoverished, hopeless, pitiless, defiled and unwanted by all those around her. Gomer had made herself toxic to her own people, and they rightly wanted nothing to do with such a wretched individual. Having betrayed everyone in her treachery, and inevitably now all alone, she was left with nothing but a broken, shattered heart, and all of her own making.

Hosea

Name Hosea means 'God is salvation'

Hosea was faithful

- Whereas Hosea's wife Gomer was utterly faithless, those same first three chapters show Hosea was the complete opposite. He was a man whose life was dedicated to being totally faithful. Hosea placed Yahweh God first in his life, and so lived defined by his faithful service to Him.
- God called Hosea to be a Nabi, which in Hebrew means Prophet, to his own people in that Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- Even with his heart shattered into a million pieces by his failed marriage, and also by his own people who could care less about his prophetic warnings, Hosea knew that the only real choice was to keep the faith and just trust in God’s divine purpose.

Hosea’s message

- As a prophet of God, Hosea would share God's messages to the people.
- Sometimes God would have Hosea write out His messages in letters
- Sometimes shout them from the balconies in speeches
- Sometimes act out God's messages using his own life as a type of living symbol

1009
Kids

**Jezreel (Hosea’s son)**
- Jezreel meant ‘God scatters; the threatened judgement’
- Hos 1:4 …"Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."
- The birth of this child will memorialize what God is about to do to the Northern Kingdom

**Lo-Ruhamah (means ‘not loved’)**
- Lo-Ruhamah meant ‘Not pitied; mercy not obtained’
- not Hosea’s daughter
- Hos 1:6 … Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God."
- God is finished with the Northern Kingdom

**Lo-Ammi (means ‘not mine’)**
- Lo-Ammi meant ‘cast out; not my people’
- not Hosea’s son
- Hos 1:9 Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.
- God isn’t rejecting his people, this is how God feels – He takes Israel back over and over again

**Israel/Gomer’s Faithlessness**
- Hosea prophesized to the northern kingdom of Israel at a very difficult time
  - This time period is quite succinctly described as: "Anarchy, chaos, feuds and broken covenants were visible on every side." This is the tumultuous political atmosphere in which Hosea had to survive to serve as God's "prophet of Israel's zero hour."
  - Internally
    - Suffered through an ever-changing list of unstable kings who rose to power through assassination
    - Their leaders were self-serving
  - Externally – Assyrian Empire
    - Political pressure came from the ruthless Assyrian Empire, based in what is today Iraq.
    - They were constantly breathing down the necks of Israel's kings, demanding allegiance and extorting protection money. If the oppressed nation didn't submit, in Mafioso style the cruel Assyrians would then ride down into Israel's lands and have their thugs beat up mercilessly on the people.
  - Economically the nation was prosperous, but spiritually it was their darkest hour.
    - Israel may have been as prosperous as any Western nation is today, but its soulless people were continually shaken by ceaseless turmoil and frequent foreign attacks.
    - Corrupt leaders have always been a symptom corrupt people, and Israel's people had by then devolved morally. When that happens, inward corruption in a nation is more dangerous to its existence than their external enemies.
- Angry and hurt (Hos 2:2-13)
- Divorce - symbolizes gods divorce of Israel
Hos 2:2 "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her,
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband.
Let her remove the adulterous look from her face
and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.

- But He knows that He will lure/take them back (Hos 2:14-23)

Hos 2:23 I will plant her for myself in the land;
I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.'
I will say to those called 'Not my people, [b] 'You are my people';
and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

Faithlessness – Gomer/Israel

The parallels of Gomer to Israel in personality and behavior were remarkably uncanny, as in truth they were meant to be, for Gomer was a living symbol of Israel. The faithless bride Gomer was a living symbol, a type, of the faithless bride Israel.

Proud

- The more Yahweh blessed Israel, the more the Israelites began to think of themselves as too good for everyone else, even for God. They stopped thinking of Him as their provider and instead pridefully patted themselves on the back for their good fortunes. Just like a socialite with a titanium MasterCard, Israel's focus was solely on what new things they could buy for themselves.
  - Hos 5:5 The pride of Israel testifies to his face;
    Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity;
    Judah also stumbles with them.
  - Hos 7:10 And the pride of Israel testifies to his face,
    But they do not return to the Lord their God, Nor seek Him for all this.
  - Hos 13:1 When Ephraim spoke, trembling, He exalted himself in Israel;

- As God dejectedly bemoaned, "Me she forgot"
  - Hos 2:13 I will punish her For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.
    She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry, And went after her lovers;
    But Me she forgot,” says the Lord.

Greed

- It wasn't enough for the Israelites that God had given them their own lush land, rich agricultural bounty, military protection, good health, and most importantly a special place in His heart. Never having enough to satiate their cravings, Israel had the gall to ask their evil enemy neighbors for more of those things and pretended the bill would never come due
  - Hos 2:5 …She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.
    For she said, ‘I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my water,
    My wool and my linen, My oil and my drink.’
  - Hos 10:1 Israel empties his vine; He brings forth fruit for himself.
    According to the multitude of his fruit He has increased the altars;
    According to the bounty of his land They have embellished his sacred pillars.
  - Hos 12:7 “A cunning Canaanite! Deceitful scales are in his hand; He loves to oppress.
    8 And Ephraim said, ‘Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself;
    In all my labors They shall find in me no iniquity that is sin.’
**Drunkenness**

- Israel partied like the world was coming to an end. The people didn't just drink, they were inflamed with wine morning, noon and night
  - Hos 4:11 Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart.
  - Hos 4:18 Their drink is rebellion.
  - Hos 7:5 In the day of our king Princes have made him sick, inflamed with wine;
  - Hos 7:14 They did not cry out to Me with their heart When they wailed upon their beds. “They assemble together for grain and new wine, They rebel against Me;

**Shamelessness**

- The lack of inhibition and stupidity that drunkenness invariably produces caused the people to behave shamefully, just like the wild donkeys to which Hosea compared them.
- The people, even their own supposedly holy men—the priests—debased themselves with public nudity and engaged in every form of lewdness
  - Hos 2:5 For their mother has played the harlot; She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.
  - Hos 2:9 “Therefore I will return and take away My grain in its time And My new wine in its season, And will take back My wool and My linen, Given to cover her nakedness.
  - Hos 4:6 Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. 7 “The more they increased, The more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.
  - Hos 6:8 Gilead is a city of evildoers And defiled with blood.
  - Hos 8:11 “Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin, They have become for him altars for sinning.

**Lustfulness**

- The people's passions burned without any marital or social constraint whatsoever. The old taboos of fornication, adultery, homosexuality, pedophilia and bestiality were torn down and replaced by San Francisco-style gay pride parades.
  - Hos 2:13 I will punish her For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry, And went after her lovers; But Me she forgot,” says the Lord.
  - Hos 5:3 I know Ephraim, And Israel is not hidden from Me; For now, O Ephraim, you commit harlotry; Israel is defiled. 4 “They do not direct their deeds Toward turning to their God, For the spirit of harlotry is in their midst, And they do not know the Lord.

- Israel went after her lovers, and when she couldn't find any consenting parties, she hired lovers.
  - Hos 2:7 She will chase her lovers, But not overtake them; Yes, she will seek them, but not find them.
  - Hos 8:9 For they have gone up to Assyria, Like a wild donkey alone by itself; Ephraim has hired lovers.

- The people made love openly on every threshing floor for all to see.
  - Hos 9:1 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, For you have played the harlot against your God. You have made love for hire on every threshing floor.
  - Hos 4: 13 Therefore your daughters commit harlotry, And your brides commit adultery.
14 “I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry,
Nor your brides when they commit adultery;
For the men themselves go apart with harlots, And offer sacrifices with a ritual harlot.

- The rampant sexual promiscuity resulted in begotten pagan children who rarely knew who their fathers were.
  - Hos 5:7 They have dealt treacherously with the Lord, For they have begotten pagan children.

- So defiled were the people, and so unable to quench their sexual lusts, they devolved into kissing calves, both beast and graven image. The people had degenerated into nothing more than wild, rutting animals
  - Hos 13:2 Now they sin more and more, And have made for themselves molded images,
    Idols of their silver, according to their skill; All of it is the work of craftsmen.
    They say of them, “Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!”

**Wickedness**

- The question when playing the game Limbo is, "How low can you go?" And, for Israel, there was just no low to their rottenness.
  - Hos 7:1 Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, And the wickedness of Samaria.
    For they have committed fraud; A thief comes in; A band of robbers takes spoil outside.
  2 They do not consider in their hearts That I remember all their wickedness;
    Now their own deeds have surrounded them; They are before My face.
  3 They make a king glad with their wickedness, And princes with their lies.
  - Hos 9:15 “All their wickedness is in Gilgal, For there I hated them.
    Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house;
    I will love them no more.

- Hosea compared their stubborn hearts to an oven that burned for every kind of wickedness.
  - Hos 4:1 Hear the word of the Lord, You children of Israel,
    For the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land:
    “There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land.
  2 By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery,
    They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed.

- Every one of them were cursing liars who brazenly bragged that they were in reality "good" people.
  - Hos 8:1 He shall come like an eagle against the house of the Lord,
    Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law.
  2 Israel will cry to Me, ‘My God, we know You!’
  3 Israel has rejected the good; The enemy will pursue him.
  - Hos 10:13 You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity.
    You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way, In the multitude of your mighty men.
    …15 Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, Because of your great wickedness.
    At dawn the king of Israel Shall be cut off utterly.

- They voted in or bribed leaders who would let them skirt the laws so that they could sin as often as they wanted and with great abandon
Hos 9:7 The days of punishment have come; The days of recompense have come. Israel knows! …
9 They are deeply corrupted, As in the days of Gibeah.
He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins.

**Murderous**

- To satiate their selfish desires, treachery was business as usual. What they wanted they got; most often by committing fraud, through lying, moving property lines, swearing false testimony, breaking covenants, or just plain murdering.
- The populace were killing, stealing, committing adultery and engaging in bloodshed upon bloodshed until they were "utterly defiled with blood." Even their own priests were murderers!
- All laws were broken, and any judge who took a stand was found hanging on his own gallows.
- Murderous bands of thieves lay in wait on every road seeking their next victim. Nobody helped those in need, and anyone who dared act righteously were openly mocked. Never sorry for whatever treachery they engaged in, the people absolutely refused to repent, and so continued committing every dirty deed possible under the sun as if some Clint Eastwood Western B-movie bad guy

(4:8,18; 5:1-2,10; 6:7-10; 7:1,5,7,16; 10:4; 11:5; 12:1,14)

- Hos 1:4 Then the Lord said to him: “Call his name Jezreel, For in a little while
  I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu,
  And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.
- Hos 4:1 Hear the word of the Lord, You children of Israel,
  For the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land:
  “There is no truth or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land.
  2 By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery,
  They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed.

- Hos 6:9 As bands of robbers lie in wait for a man, So the company of priests murder on the way to Shechem;
  Surely they commit lewdness.

**Idolatrous**

- Israel was set apart for Yahweh God alone, but the people quickly dumped Him to engage in the pagan acts that Gomer was so frequently found committing in her vindictiveness towards Hosea.
- They left God in the dust and instead put all their energies into worshiping the abominable Baals. The more they worshiped the Baals and other false gods—these false lovers —the more the people shamed themselves by burning incense on the hills, asking counsel from their wooden idols, constructing shrines and temples, and participating in cruel human and animal sacrifices on stone altars atop the mountains.
- Instead of joining in a mutually loving relationship with the one true living God, the people cratered into becoming pagans enslaved to loveless blocks of wood

(2:8,11; 4:12-13,17; 5:4; 8:4,13-14; 9:10; 10:1; 11:1 )

- Hos 13:1 But when he offended through Baal worship, he died.
  2 Now they sin more and more, And have made for themselves molded images,
  Idols of their silver, according to their skill; All of it is the work of craftsmen.
  They say of them, “Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!”
- Hos 4:17 “Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.
  18 Their drink is rebellion, They commit harlotry continually. Her rulers dearly love dishonor.
  19 The wind has wrapped her up in its wings, And they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

**Adulterous**

- There didn't appear to be a good marriage among the Israelites. Adultery was rampant. The divorce rate must have been up in the high 90th percentile. Even the brides were committing adultery on their own wedding day!
Despite all the references to female prostitutes in Hosea's messages, God didn't leave out the men. They could be found after hours up at the Baal shrine red light district offering "sacrifices" by having sex with the temple harlot, the very job Gomer took as her fortunes declined.

Adultery committed against one's spouse is bad enough, but the people as a whole committed greater harlotry by cheating on their Lord. By going after manmade idols fashioned in the form of demonic forces and creatures of nature, the "bride of God" played the harlot against her husband.

God compared Israel's faithfulness to a morning cloud, which like the early dew, evaporates away.

(1:2; 2:2; 4:12-13,18; 6:4; 7:4; 8:9; 10:2)

- Hos 7:4 “They are all adulterers.

Rebellious

God gave His cherished Israel the Ten Commandments and other precepts in the Mosaic Law so right and wrong and good and evil could easily be identified. Knowing how to choose what's right would save them from heartbreak. But, for Israel to engage in their sinful desires and then attempt to justify their evils, they would have to do away with God's Law and the boundaries that it set. Ultimately, so too must the Lawgiver be done away with. And so, for the sake of their sin, Israel treacherously rebelled against their Heavenly Father.

Much of the book of Hosea is filled with tear-stained page after tear-stained page as Yahweh God in first person explains the rebellious nature of His covenant "bride" Israel. In fitful pains of mournful agony, wailing and weeping and raging, and at times even seemingly disjointed ranting, the reader can only be struck by how staggeringly hurt God truly was by the devastating betrayal by His people.

- Read the very words God bemoaned to Hosea when describing Israel's rebellion. The reason God's people "ceased obeying the Lord" and "transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law" was because they considered the "great things of My law... a strange thing." God's law didn't fulfill the selfish desires, lusts and impulses of their sinful hearts, so in response Israel from peasant to prince rebelled against their Heavenly Father (4:10,18; 7:14; 8:1,2; 9:1,15; 13:16)
- Dealing a devastating blow, Israel in their desire to reject God's law also rejected Him personally. Like the chest-thumping Atheists of today, they even went as far as pretending God no longer existed. In response, God cried out, "They forgot Me!" Yes, Israel had "forgotten his Maker" (4:1,6; 7:7; 8:14; 11:3; 13:6).

Deeply wounded, God, like a parent who's just heard their tween yell "I hate you!," lamented over Israel's betrayal.

- " They do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek Him."
- No longer having a healthy respect for the Lord, they did not obey Him and so "did not cry out to Me" in their distress.
- Craven and ungrateful, "they have fled from Me" and "transgressed against Me, though I redeemed them."
- The betrayers were only ever "bent on backsliding from Me."
- God just wouldn't go away, so the people went on the offense and sought to "devise evil against Me." They have "spoken lies against Me," and "encircled Me with lies and deceit" so as to tarnish and smear the name of the Lord (5:7; 6:7; 7:10,13-15; 9:17; 10:3; 11:7,12)

Rejecting God as their king, Israel installed their own flawed and worthless leaders, an act hauntingly parallel to today's nations which leave us with presidents who make confusing decisions, congresses being stuck in gridlock, and activist judges who just make up laws as it suits them. Israel had put all their trust in their military and endlessly tried to appease their two-faced enemies by making peace treaties not worth the clay tablets they were etched on (8:4,14; 10:13; 12:1).

As the rejection of God progressed over the decades, soon a youth culture arose who barely even knew the name of the Lord as anything but a curse word. Those who did know God held Him in absolute contempt and tried to provoke Him to anger most bitterly by their language, music and lifestyle choices. They could care less if God was offended, forgetting that in His all-knowingness the Omniscient always remembers (7:2; 11:7; 12:14; 13:1).

- Hos 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
  Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me;
  Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.
Unhappy

- Israel thought a rebellious heart would bring them all God had ever denied them, but other than a fleeting kick, they just couldn't feel a contentment and satisfaction that lasted. None whatsoever! For, like Gomer, Israel after a life of committing every evil possible under the sun could only heave a dejected, "For then it was better for me than now."
  - Their response seems strange, but only at first, for when one realizes that without God's knowledge and the wisdom He provides, mankind becomes trampled down by our own lack of discernment until finally we're destroyed.
- When selfishness enslaves the heart, senseless people can only blindly stumble about through life making bad decisions. As Hosea so colorfully stated, "When one sows the wind, they reap the whirlwind."
- Rebelliousness in reality is a sickness that devours one's strength. The very sinful pleasures the people of Israel craved were sapping their youth and vitality, essentially destroying them. And, crazy enough, the people didn't even realize their emaciated condition until they were too far wasted away.
- God's denials were in truth protection, not sadism (2:7; 4:6,1,14; 5:5,13,15; 7:9,11; 8:7; 14:1).

God's faithfulness

Communicative

- The heart of God communicates
- One of the most common complaints from skeptics today is that God, if He's real, is distant and never talks to His creations. Even the Deists of the early years of America thought this, believing God had wound up the universe and then stepped away. Not true! We find ample examples throughout the Bible where God has communicated about who He is to Man.
- SIN – God wants to communicate with us, but sin stands in the way.
  - When the eternal state comes, mankind will be reunited with God once more. There we'll walk, talk and fellowship one-on-one with our Heavenly Father, just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden before sin separated humanity from Him.
  - God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to do the Good Work of restoring that relationship.
- While we wait for that heavenly state, God uses other avenues to communicate to us about who He is and what good He desires for us. One such avenue is through the speeches, writings and symbolic lives of Israel's prophets, such as Hosea.
  - Many times the rebuking messages given to Israel were to help keep them from making the wrong choices, but more often it was to reveal the person and character of Yahweh.
  - Those messages to Israel became a conduit for revealing God to the larger world, so that every person in every land in every age since can know about our Creator.
  - When God commanded Hosea and the other prophets to hear the words of the Lord, He was speaking not just to the prophet or Israel, but to you and me as well.
  - Our Father God communicates to us through these messages, and when we call out to Him, He responds, "I will answer"
- (1:2; 2:21; 3:1; 4:1; 6:5; 9:8; 12:4,10,13)

Loving

- The heart of God is loving.
  1Jn 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. …16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

- The book of Hosea reveals that God is loving and seeks those who will love Him in return.
- Drink in the poetry of God's love for His people
  11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son … 4 I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.
Faithful

- The heart of God is faithful.
- When Yahweh makes a promise, He is faithful and will never, ever, ever break it.
- When God says, "I will make a covenant," the recipient can be 100% absolutely sure that the promise of God will never be altered, stretched, forgotten, or rescinded.
- So, for God to declare, "I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness," His loving character remains totally faithful to the covenant He has established.
- All 66 books of the Bible pour forth testimony of God forever remaining faithful to the promises He has made.
- Promises matter to God.

2:18 In that day I will make a covenant for them …
19 “I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice, In loving kindness and mercy;
20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the Lord.

Pained

- The heart of God can be pained.
  - That so massive a deity concerns Himself over being betrayed by so small a people is because God also has the most massive of hearts. God's giant heart tears and shatters greatest of all.
  - As unfathomable to us mere mortals is God's capability for love, for God is love, so too is His susceptibleness to pain.
  - Those who love the most feel pain the hardest.
    - And so, in hair-pulling and teeth-clenching fiery, righteous anger, the Broken-Hearted handed down a series of judgments upon Israel.
    - For that generation,
      Hos 9:15 …Because of the evil of their deeds
      I will drive them from My house;
      I will love them no more.

- And yet, even though Israel provoked Yahweh to anger most bitter, God through His anguished rage cried out as from the heart of a parent forced into disciplining His wayward child,
  Hos 11:8 “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? …
  My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.
  9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim.

- As an anonymous wise man once shared
  "By chastening, the Lord separates the sin that He hates from the sinner whom He loves"

Sovereign

- The heart of God is sovereign.
- That God had the right to be angry over Israel's backstabbing betrayals should by now go without saying, but then that brings up the matter of His right to be angry over our own rebellion today. It's easier to understand God's anger over past wrongs, but oddly so much harder when we ourselves today are personally committing those very same wrongs. We then begin to question just what kind of authority God holds. First, the authority God holds dwells within the very nature of who God is. "For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst... I will be your King, the Lord God of hosts." So, as King of the Universe, there's nobody higher, and so therefore God possesses ALL authority. Second, Hosea reveals God's power is supreme. Yahweh has all knowledge and power. Nothing is hidden from God, for He sees all. Nothing might! nothing—can stand against God's Third, because of God's holiness and sovereign position,
He invariably holds the only right to judge us. God's decision to end the kingdom of Israel was indisputable, for God reigns supreme.

- (1:4,5; 4:6; 5:3; 7:2; 11:9; 12:2,5,9; 13:4,10)

**Just**

- The heart of God is just. Not only is God a loving God, but He is also a just sovereign. Hosea revealed that God rules with righteousness and justice because the ways of the Lord are right. What a blessing! For every evil committed, every wrong deed done, every injustice that escapes man's earthly justice, the Righteous Judge will deal with each in fairness, either in the present or at time's end during the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20: 11-15).
- At least 35 judgments are stated within the book of Hosea, too many to list here, but they pour forth justice for the wrongs Israel committed against God and His universal moral law by their refusal to repent. "My God will cast them away, because they did not obey Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations." And, God did just that. By 722 BC, within Hosea's own lifetime, God had allowed the Assyrian King Sargon to conquer and carry off Israel into exile (2 Kings 17:24). Foreigners were brought in to settle in Israel's abandoned homes. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed and its people forced to become wanderers among the nations, exactly as God warned Hosea would happen. Many believe God to be an impotent judge, but He's only being patient, for judgment inevitably comes as swiftly and destructively as a Category 5 hurricane.
- (1:4; 2:13,19; 3:4; 6:5; 9:3,9,17; 10:2; 14:1,9; 2Peter 3:9)

**Forgiving**

- The heart of God is forgiving.
- If only Israel had heeded Hosea's messages by asking for forgiveness and repenting of their rebellion and other evil deeds, God would have been merciful. Loving-kindness and mercy are at the heart of our Heavenly Father. The Righteous Judge declared, "I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy." If Israel would have repented, God promised, "I would have healed Israel".
- (1:7; 2:19,25; 3:5; 6:6; 7:1)

**Saving**

- The heart of God saves.
- God's mercy towards Israel has not been extinguished, even to this day, for He promised His people: "Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint for themselves one head; and they shall come up out of the land." In that future day, God will turn His anger away and the "fatherless" people of Israel will be regathered back in the Promised Land to proclaim, "For in You the fatherless find mercy." This very day, we are first-hand witnesses of the beginnings of that promised time of mercy, for the Lord God declared with total absoluteness, "For there is no savior besides Me." God alone saves.
- (1:7,11; 2:1,17-18; 13:4,14; 14:3-4; 6:1)

**Generous**

- The heart of God is generous.
- When one is restored to a right relationship with God, they are continually bathed in His generosity. When a believing remnant of Israel is fully restored to Yahweh and the Holy Land once more, "O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you, when I return the captives of My people." No longer will Israel be under constant attack by world powers, for God will make them lie down safely, for God will be refreshing "like the dew to Israel." When God's Son, Jesus Christ, returns to set up His Kingdom on earth, great will be the day for those who have accepted Him as Savior! "The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil." A believing remnant of Israel will finally dwell in their houses in peace and safety.
- (1:10-11; 2:18,22; 6:11; 14:5)

**Hosea’s Faith Lessons**

- The book of Hosea offers invaluable life lessons concerning how to maintain faith when the heart is shattered. These lessons can be applied to four groups: Israel, the Nations, the Church, and you personally.
Lessons for Israel

• The nation of Israel today can maintain faith when its heart is shattered. For many Jews who've made aliyah back to the land of Israel, they continue to feel the sting of the nations raging against them. In their dismay they wonder why the Jews over the centuries have been so hated. It just seems so illogical. And so, they wonder if God has totally abandoned them.

• Israel must realize that God continues to see their nation as a wayward wife, like Gomer, who broke her covenant relationship. The modern day nation of Israel continues to lack the very faithfulness, devotion and knowledge of God which condemned her in Hosea's time. Every day Jews are coming out of exile and back to the Holy Land just as the prophets said they would, but the nation remains wholly uncommitted to God. It wavers suspended in that purification time Hosea described before she can be reunited with her husband (3:3-5). Though Israel was reborn as a nation on May 14, 1948, she awaits that glorious day when God will move her to have a heart that will truly and fully love Him once more. And what a day that will be! Hosea described that future day, the "latter days" as he called them, when the nation of Israel will be once again reconciled to God and remain faithful to their covenant: "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (3:5). No longer rebellious, they "will know the ways of the Lord are right and walk righteously in them. They shall love the Lord, pursue the knowledge of the Lord, prosper in His goodness, and finally understand how to keep His covenant. Once redeemed and restored to a right relationship with Yahweh God, Israel in these not-so-distant days Hosea so colorfully describes will have God's love lavished upon them once more. They'll know joy, for "she shall sing there in their land as in the days of her youth." True safety will finally exist, for Israel will "lie down safely" and "live in His sight." Spiritual growth will define them, for the people of Israel will "grow like the lily," "lengthening her roots " and their "branches shall spread." Israel will be a thing of beauty to the whole world, like a fragrance whose "scent shall be like wine"

• (1:11; 2:15, 18; 3:5; 6:2;
• By embracing Israel's promised, glorious and soon to be realized future, the nation of Israel today can survive the shattering and place their faith in their God.

Lessons for the Nations

• The nations of today can maintain faith when their collective hearts are shattered by natural disasters, wars, financial problems, social unrest and other traumas. Hosea gives no comfort when reminding the nations that their days are numbered. No matter how powerful or successful, or how many centuries a nation has stayed on top, God's prophetic word reveals that all human nations are in rebellion against Him and so will not last. One day human government will be supplanted by the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the nations as we know them today will cease to be. As long as the nations remain in rebellion, so too will they continue to experience a shattering. But, citizens of the nations can have hope by becoming citizens of a kingdom not ofthis world—the spiritual kingdom Jesus now reigns, culminating in the day when He will return to set up His Millennial Kingdom here on earth. They can embrace that eternal citizenship and the hope that brings by accepting King Jesus as Savior.

Lessons for the Church

• The Church can maintain faith when its heart is shattered by external persecutions and inward troubles. While God in the book of Hosea compares Himself to a groom and Israel to a bride, so too does His Son, Jesus Christ, compares Himself to a groom and the Church to a bride. The Church is, as Ephesians 5:22-33 explains, the universal body of believers who have accepted Jesus as Savior, from the day of Pentecost up until the coming day when the Church is raptured up to Heaven. This special group of believers, which if Jesus is your Savior you belong to, are set aside by Him and for Him, like a bride is for a groom. Knowing this, Hosea would warn that we must be very careful that in our privileged position of redemption we not grow proud and self-reliant. Doing so will cause the Church to fall into the same trap as Israel did when they forgot God's sustaining hand and believed they could cut themselves off from the power that sustained them.

• Church brethren, remember your condition when you were saved. Heed the command of Jesus in John 8:11 to the woman caught in adultery: "Go and sin no more." Never forget how terribly low we had once fallen, and only through salvation in Christ how we are now lifted up to such incredibly new heights. Only when the Church is fully connected to our Lord can it maintain its faith and effectively do the Good Work as a messenger bearing Good News.
Lessons for You

- You can remain faithful to your Heavenly Father when your own heart is shattered and all hope seems lost. To understand how, let's look at the broken heart as if it was a physical condition. When your body gets hurt, you go to the doctor, right? The doctor then performs two actions: 1) discerns the problem, and 2) prescribes a cure. So, first, let's discern the problem. God and Hosea both suffered because of what was done to them, but in contrast, Israel and Gomer both suffered because of what they did to themselves. In all cases, though, the underlying cause of all their suffering was a disease most today loath to even whisper—SIN. Sin is the problem. Sin erodes the foundation of your faith until nothing more is left than a few grains of sand. Sin tears, it washes away, it shatters your heart and all the hearts of those your sin collides against. Now, let's prescribe the cure. Hosea teaches us the cure to healing both our broken heart and our tattered faith is the restoration of the relationship back to its former mutually loving and trusting condition. That is accomplished through our repenting of our sins and by God granting forgiveness, which is called reconciliation. Once reconciled, great will be the day of your salvation! Hosea compares it to passing through a door of hope. We are promised by God that mercy will be shown. "And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy." For forgiveness will be granted, made possible through Jesus' sacrifice which He bought at the cost of His own life. We are restored into a mutually loving and trusting condition with God. The relationship transforms from enmity to affinity. We become sons of the living God whom He calls "My people." As God promises, "And it shall be in that day you will call Me 'My Husband,' and no longer call Me 'My Master'" (1:10-11; 3:2). Maybe, like Hosea, you are going through a painful marriage ordeal that challenges you to maintain your faith in God. Maybe you find yourself in the same disastrous marriage as Hosea and Gomer had which was battered by unfaithfulness and failed trust, leaving your heart broken and shattered. If that is the case, look to how both God and Hosea handled it. Remember that as faithless as Gomer was, no matter how badly she betrayed Hosea, Hosea remained faithful and loving to her. Likewise, Jesus Christ has always remained faithful and loving to you and is ready to forgive any lack of faith. When it comes to marriage, remain as faithful as Hosea was, even if you are in a terribly difficult situation. Show God's unconditional love to your spouse no matter what. When others are faithless, you remain faithful and committed, just like your Heavenly Father. Wait patiently and expectantly for when God restores the shattered heart, for when faith is restored, the blessings will follow.

Hosea’s Story

Hos 3 – Hosea has to take his adulteress wife back, despite the broken heart and betrayal

- Hosea bought her — paid her as a prostitute — just as God did with Israel (and I want you to feel it)

  Hos 3:1 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes." 2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. 3 Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you."

Hos 4 – How God feels about His relationship with Israel – The life that we’ve had together is dying

- Love/Hate relationship – God loves His people so much that He can’t let go, but at the same time, being utterly destroyed by them.
- Hosea is being torn to pieces by what Gomer is doing, as is God by what Israel is doing
- Hos 4:19 A whirlwind will sweep them away – Assyrian empire coming out of north

Hos 5 – Judgement of Israel

- Those who move boundary stones
  - Boundary stones — the stones that separate your property from your neighbors
  - They go and move the stone in the darkness of the night 6” every few weeks – You can’t tell that there’s a difference, but soon you have considerably more space – very subtle and dishonest
They appear to be doing what they are supposed to do, but in the darkness of the night, they are not

- God will make life so miserable for Israel that they will turn to him as a last resort

**Hos 6 through 9 – God is really upset**

- Predicted the military defeat of Israel in the land of Jezreel 30-40 years before the fall of Israel

**Hos 11**

- God recalls His love for Israel, and His heart breaks as He considers what He is about to do

  Hos 11:8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? … 9 I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim.

- Then God thinks more clearly – He remembers how Israel has treated Him – Israel is determined to hate God

  Hos 11:12 Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, the house of Israel with deceit. And Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful Holy One.

**Hos 14 – Hope at the end - restoring the bride - beginning of that imagery of the church as a bride**

- God’s love is always there – there is nothing that you can do to make God stop loving you or forsake you, but your behavior can disappoint Him and make Him mad
The genre of Joel is Narrative and Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Joel wrote it around 841-835 B.C. sometime before the fall and exiles of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Key personalities are Joel and the people of Judah. Its purpose was to call the Southern Kingdom to repentance or prepare for the coming judgment. Joel describes the locust that inflicts severe damage to everything in their paths, and warns that it is only the beginning of what is to come.

- Chapter 1, Joel compares the destruction and judgment of God like a plague of locust. This is the warning and penalty for disobedience and evilness, “For a nation has invaded my land, mighty and without number; its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and it has the fangs of a lioness” (1:6).

- Chapter 2-3, God calls His people to repent and return, if not, they will all be judged. The promise and deliverance of the Lord is waiting and He will restore the land, Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and
mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments.” Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness And relenting of evil” (2:12-13).

Timeframe & Historical Context
- No timeframe provided, nor is there anything in the book of Joel that can be used as an internal reference
  - Good evidence for the 9th century BC (841-835 B.C.) making him the oldest of the writing prophets
    - Before the fall and exiles of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms
    - Others date him after the Babylonian captivity
- If he is the 1st of the writing prophets, then he introduces the term “Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord”
  - Other prophets pick it up and use it

Purpose
- Call the Southern Kingdom to repentance
- Joel means ‘the Lord is God’

Story
Comparing the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord to a locust swarm

- Prepare for the coming judgment
  - The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord (catastrophic event)
    - Day of enormous catastrophe
    - Foreshadows end-time (eschatological) events
  - Locust Swarms (catastrophic event)
    - Desolate everything – Strips the land completely bare
      - Plants destroyed
      - Famine – People and animals starve
      - Rain comes and wash away the soil
      - No more offerings to be made at the Temple (plants & animals don’t survive)
    - Could be:
      - Literal locust swarm
      - Symbolic/emblematic of a great army that sweeps in & destroys like a locust swarm
        - Assyrian and Babylonian armies that desolate the Israelites
  
  Joel 1:4 What the locust swarm has left (Assyria) the great locusts have eaten; (Babylon)
  what the great locusts have left
  the young locusts have eaten; (Persia)
  what the young locusts have left
  other locusts have eaten. (Greece, then Rome → culminates in the end times when all the nations attack)

  Joel 1:6 A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number;
  - Metaphorically – Locust swarm
  - Reality – Assyria is coming

  The Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord will be devastating like a locust swarm
  - Joel 2:31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
- Joel 3: 15 The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.
- Rev 6:12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth.

**Redemption (Joel 2:18-27)**

- After the great, catastrophic event, God will restore everything to the way that it should be – He will redeem His people once again
  - Joel 2:18 Then the LORD will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people. 19 The LORD will reply to them: "I am sending you grain, new wine and oil.
  - Rev 21: 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away … There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

- Redemption – The people are far from God and God brings them back into a covenant relationship with Him
  - Redeemed – There are rights and responsibilities associated with the relationship
  - Archetypical redemption story – Exodus from Egypt
    - Blood – Angel of death passes over the Israelites – the blood saves them from death
    - Water – Pass through the waters of the Red Sea into the promised land
    - 10 plagues
  - Bible – Redemption story
    - Adam & Eve started in a covenant relationship with God, then they turn their backs and go their own way. Whole rest of the Bible deals with the redemption of God’s people. Ultimately, God will bring His people back to where they belong – in a covenant relationship with Him (Rev 21)
    - Adam & Eve → Cross → Rev 21
      - Blood and water are key elements
      - We are saved by the shed blood of Christ on the cross – the blood is the operative action that enables our redemption
      - We pass through the water of baptism in the process of that redemption
  - Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord

**The Day of the Lord**

- Act 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. … 14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

  Joel 2: 28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

**Judgment foreshadowed**

- Joel 3:1 "In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them
- Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.
Joel 3:16 The LORD will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.

Zec 12:3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. 4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. 5 Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'

Joel 3:13 Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!"

Rev 14:14 I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15 Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. 17 Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." 19 The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. 20 They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.
Amos (Am) – Judgement to Israel (Justice to all)
The country bumpkin comes to town

**Amos**

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**CHAPTER 1:1–2**

**CHAPTERS 1:3–2:16**

**CHAPTERS 3–6**

**CHAPTERS 7:1–9:10**

**CHAPTER 9:11–15**

**Theme**

Israel’s coming judgment for treating others with injustice

**Key Verses**

3:1–2; 4:12; 5:15, 24

**Christ in Amos**

Jesus Christ, who has all authority to judge, is also the One who restores His people.

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Not a prophet - Nabi - canonical prophets and professional prophets for hire
Gates - the judges are accepting bribes
30-40 years before the fall of Israel
Both conclude their book with a quick note of hope
Greed, oppression, idolatry – social justice issues – lack of compassion for poor
When you stop following the Lord, everything else falls apart
Act 15:15-18 James quotes Amos
**Amos Overview**

The purpose of the book of Amos was to announce God’s holy judgment on the Kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom), call them to repentance, and to turn from their self-righteous sins and idolatry. God raised up the prophet Amos, as an act of His great mercy to a people who repeatedly shunned and disobeyed Him.

- Chapter 1-3, Amos came as the days of the wicked Northern Kingdom were winding down. The people were religious but it was sadly superficial. Amos announces that the neighboring nations would be punished. There were many of these wicked nations including Damascus, Gaza, Edom, and Tyre.

- In chapters 4-8, Amos warns that Israel will be destroyed, and gives examples of this judgment. Amos comes, announces God’s coming judgment to the Northern Kingdom and uses the phrase, “the day of the Lord” referring to God intervening to punish and judge the wicked city, which would eventually be exile by the Assyrians.

> “Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and thus may the LORD God of hosts be with you, just as you have said!” (5:14).

- In chapter 9, Amos tells of the restoration and hope of Israel, “In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old” (9:11).

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

- 753 BC – 740 BC
  - Am 1:1 …two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel
    - Kingships overlap 753 BC – 740 BC
    - Zec 14:3 You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
      - Zechariah notes this earthquake in 520 BC – 220 years later, the earthquake is still remembered as a marker for a catastrophic event

- Shepherd from Tekoa (Southern kingdom)
  - Tekoa is south of Bethlehem, near Hebron and
  -ian
  - Other stories from Tekoa
    - Davis hears a wise woman from Tekoa – Story was about his own son Absalom who murdered his brother
  - Amos was one of the few prophets that did not prophesize in their own land
    - He was from Judah, but prophesized in Israel

**Purpose**

- Announce God’s holy judgment on the Kingdom of Israel (the Northern Kingdom)
- Justice – Call Israel to repentance, and to turn from their self-righteous sins and idolatry
Story

• Amos is apparently a shortened form of a name like Amasiah (2Ch 17:16), meaning “The Lord carries” or “The Lord upholds.”

Judgement (Am 1 & 2)

• Am 1:2 … "The LORD roars from Zion and thunders from Jerusalem
  o Prayer call can be heard echoing down the valley for many many miles

• Am 1 – Judgement of the neighboring nations
  o These countries see weakness in Israel and Judah
    ▪ They see a power vacuum about to occur – and they are all positioning themselves to move in
    ▪ These countries are all local threats to Israel and Judah, but the big threat is Assyria
  o God start by pronouncing judgement against the neighboring nations (who the Israelites are afraid of)
    ▪ As He condemns the surrounding nations, the Israelites are getting excited
    ▪ At the height of their excitement, it turns on them - I will not turn away your judgment either

  o Damascus (north) – Because she threshed Gilead with sledge having iron teeth
    ▪ Damascus is the capital of Aram (Syria)
    ▪ Isaiah 7 – 735 BC Ahaz is worried because the Northern Kingdom of Israel is forming an alliance with Syria to fight against Judah
    ▪ Also foreshadowing 18 years later (722 BC), the Assyrians take the Northern Kingdom into captivity

  o Gaza (south west) – Because she took captive whole communities and sold them to Edom
    ▪ Philistine territory – 5 major fortified cities
    ▪ Controlled the Via Maris
    ▪ Re-emerging now is alliance with Egypt

  o Tyre (north west) – Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a treaty of brotherhood
    ▪ Lebanon of today
    ▪ Natural deep-water port
    ▪ When David takes control of the trade routes, Hiram king of Tyre is the 1st person outside of Israel to acknowledge him as king. They form an economic alliance – David controls the land trade routes and Hiram controls the maritime trade routes. Together, they control the entire distribution system for the economy of the ancient world.

  o Edom (east) – Because he pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion, because his anger raged continually and his fury flaunted unchecked
    ▪ Controls the King’s Highway
    ▪ Descendants of Esau – refused to let the Israelites pass through to the promised land after the exodus
    ▪ Raided Jerusalem after the Babylonian siege

  o Ammon (east) - Because he ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to extend his borders
    ▪ Jordon of today
    ▪ Capital is Rabbah
      ▪ Very important city on the King’s Highway
      ▪ Important trade route – you control the King’s Highway and one of the major linking roads
    ▪ 2Sam 11 – Bathsheba story – David’s men were attacking Rabbah

  o Moab (east) – Because he burned, as if to lime, the bones of Edom's king

• Am 1 – Judgement of Judah
God is going to deal with all the surrounding areas that are a threat to Judah and Israel

- He is also going to deal with Judah and Israel, because they are no better than any of the others
- The Israelites are rejoicing as God says that He will judge the surrounding nations, but then pause as
  He pronounces judgement against His own people

Judah – Because they have rejected the law of the LORD and have not kept His decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed

- He will accomplish this judgement through the Babylonian Empire

- Am 2 – Judgement of Israel

  Am 2:6…They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. 7 They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. 8 They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. In the house of their god they drink wine taken as fines.

  - Now the judgement is directed at Israel itself
    - He will accomplish this judgement through the Assyrian Empire

**Israel was the Chosen People**

Am 3:1 Hear this word the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: 2 "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins."

- Ex 19 – 1446 BC – God has redeemed His people from Egypt
  - God has not liberated or freed the people – they are not free to do whatever they want to do
  - As redeemed people, He is bringing them back into a covenant relationship with Him and it has obligations and responsibilities on both parties

Ex 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

  - Israel’s obligation is to obey God fully
  - God’s obligation is to recognize Israel as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation

**Reasons for Judgement (Am 3 & 4)**

**Israel has not returned to God**

God brought drought, famine, agricultural disaster, plagues, disease and war, attacks from Assyria, but the Israelites have not returned to Him

Am 4:6 "I gave you empty stomachs in every city and lack of bread in every town, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

Literally – I gave you clean teeth in every city – no crumbs stuck between your teeth

7 "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. …8 People staggered from town to town for water but did not get enough to drink, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.
Many times I struck your gardens and vineyards, I struck them with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

"I sent plagues among you as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with the sword, along with your captured horses. I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

"I overthrew some of you as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. You were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, yet you have not returned to me," declares the LORD.

Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel."

Oppression

Am 5:7 You who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground
10 you hate the one who reproves in court and despise him who tells the truth.
11 You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain.
12… You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts. 13 Therefore the prudent man keeps quiet in such times, for the times are evil.

Call to repentance

Am 5:4 This is what the LORD says to the house of Israel: "Seek me and live;
6 Seek the LORD and live…
14 Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is.
15 Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.

Day of the Lord (Am 5)

- The day of the Lord – Generally thought of as the visiting of Gods mercy, grace, salvation
- In Amos, it is an oracle of doom - woe to you who desire the day of the lord
  - Speaking about the coming judgment against Israel
- Most pessimistic version of the day of the lord - Very grim

Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light.

19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.

20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light— pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

- The Lord is not interested in the offerings of the Israelites

Am 5:21 "I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.
22 Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.
23 Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.
24 But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

- Am 5:26 You have lifted up the shrine of your king,
  - Ahab built the Temple of Baal
**Woe to the complacent (Am 6)**

- Am 6:1 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria
  - Polytheistic culture – In addition to the Lord, the Israelites are worshiping:
    - Golden calf – Egyptian goddess Hawthor
    - Baal – God of the Canaanites – At the Temple of Baal, built in Samaria

**Israel will be saved**

Am 3:12 This is what the LORD says: "As a shepherd saves from the lion's mouth, only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites be saved…"
Obadiah Overview

The book of Obadiah is a book of Prophetic Oracles. The prophet Obadiah wrote it. Its authorship is difficult to date but was possibly written about 853-841 B.C. or 605-586 B.C. The key personalities are the Edomites. The purpose of Obadiah is to show that God will judge all those who are against His children, His chosen people; Edom is used as the example of this truth.

Obadiah is only one chapter (the shortest book in the Old Testament) yet it tells of God’s prophet Obadiah as he announces God’s powerful and authoritative judgment on the nation of Edom. This is the fateful end of the nation of Edom. They had been in conflict with Israel since ancient times, in reality Edom is the descendants of Esau, Jacobs’s brother.

- In verses 1-9, Obadiah declares the wickedness of the Edomites and gives examples of their pride, “In the loftiness of your dwelling place, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to earth?” He proclaims God’s judgment on Edom, “Will I not on that day,” declares the LORD, “Destroy wise men from Edom and understanding from the mountain of Esau?” (vs 8).

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**Obadiah**

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**Content**

- “The arrogance of your heart has deceived you... I will bring you down.” (1:3–4)
- “Because of violence to your brother Jacob” (1:10)
- “As you have done, it will be done to you.” (1:15)

---

**Theme**

The coming judgment of Edom

**Key Verse**

1:10

**Christ in Obadiah**

God’s judgment of Edom and deliverance of Israel prefigure Christ’s salvation and end-times judgment.

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**Prophet**

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<tr>
<td>Events: Edom collaborates with Babylon, 586 B.C.</td>
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• Verses 10-14 tell of the transgressions and offenses of Edom. Implying that they should have acted like a brother who would stand for them, since they descended from the brothers; Jacob and Esau. “Because of violence to your brother Jacob, You will be covered with shame, And you will be cut off forever” (vs. 10).

• In verses 15-21, we read about the victory of Israel in the end, “Esau’s house will be as stubble” and “The house of Jacob will be afire” (vs. 18). Edom was utterly nonexistent by the 1st century A.D.

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

•

**Purpose**

•

**Story**

•
Jonah Overview

The book of Jonah is Narrative History and a Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Jonah wrote it approximately 785-760 B.C. before Assyria conquered Israel’s Northern Kingdom. Key personalities include Jonah, the captain and the ship’s crew and the people of Nineveh.

The purpose of this book is to show that God is a merciful and gracious God. Although the wicked city of Nineveh deserved to be crushed immediately, God was patient towards them. A reluctant prophet, Jonah originally ran from God before delivering a message of repentance to the nation of Nineveh.

- In chapter 1, God directed Jonah to go to Nineveh however; Jonah disobeyed, boarded a ship and headed for Tarshish. The sailors of the ship became concerned because of the great storm that brewed and Jonah explained that God was bringing judgment upon him. The sailors threw him into the sea where he was swallowed by an enormous fish. “And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights”(1:17).
• Chapter 2-3, After God had the fish cough him up, three days later; Jonah obeyed God and went to Nineveh to fulfill his mission. Jonah preached a message of repentance and to his surprise, the sinful city repented. “Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them” (3:5).

• In chapter 4, God deals with Jonah and teaches him about His love and compassion.

“...knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, and one who relents concerning calamity” (4:2). Nineveh’s repentance must have been short-lived; it was destroyed in 612 B.C.

Jonah means ‘the Lord is gracious’
Major theme = grace
Pointless to go against the will of God
40 days – period of probation/testing

Assyrians – humility is not one of their attributes – they are arrogat
Vine – Parable of God’s grace for Nineva

Parallels to Jesus
Sleeping on the boat during the storm
Death of 1 for the many
Resurrection
Comparison to the prodigal son - grace

*Timeframe & Historical Context*

*Purpose*

*Story*
Micah (Mic) – Judgement and What God Requires of Men

No one is Like the Lord!
Micah means “Who is like the Lord?”

Micah Overview

The book of Micah is a Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Micah wrote it 742-686 B.C. shortly before the Northern Kingdom’s fall in 722 B.C. Key personalities are all the people of Samaria and Jerusalem.

The purpose of the book of Micah was to proclaim warning and judgment to both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. His message was similar to that of Isaiah and was written at about the same time. Micah described the impending judgment that would eventually exile the nation.

- Chapters 1-5 specifically explain the judgment for the wicked nations, “For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down into the valley and will lay bare her foundations”(1:6). Then chapter five Micah miraculously predicts the birthplace of the Messiah in Bethlehem. Also in verse 2, he teaches that the Messiah is an infinite Savior, from everlasting. “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity” (5:2).
In chapters 6-7, Micah declares what God requires of men, “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (6:8). Micah then proclaims God’s restoration and salvation to His people, “Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love”(7:18).

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

- Ends on a positive note (Mic 7:18-20)
- Micah means ‘who is like the LORD’
- Barefoot and naked – to make the people uncomfortable
- 1:10 – Clever play on words – Gath = tell,
- 2:8-9 – Social injustice
- Lot of messianic prophecies (ch 5) – Names Bethlehem as the birthplace of messiah
- Very similar to Isaiah – same time and place
  - Ch 4 – Same exact words
- 6:8 see notes

**Purpose**

- 

**Story**

- 

Nahum (Na) – Impending Doom of Ninevah 2
Kick Some Assyria!

Nahum Overview

Nahum

Prophet

Context

Table:

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<th>Prophet</th>
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<td>Before 612 B.C. (set in Israel)</td>
<td>Prophecy against Nineveh, capital of Assyria; Nineveh falls to Babylon in 612 B.C.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The book of Nahum is a Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Nahum wrote it approximately 663-612 B.C. just before the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. He was raised up to preach God’s judgment for a second time to Nineveh. Jonah was the first about 120 years earlier.

Its purpose is to pronounce the final warning and judgment upon Nineveh, and he also addresses the rest of the Assyrian empire. They returned to wickedness shortly after they repented back in Jonah’s day. They would neglect Nahum and his message.

Within fifty years, Nineveh would be completely decimated and utterly wiped from the face of the Earth.

- In chapter 1, Nahum warns of Judgment, and describes the awesome power of God, “Mountains quake because of Him and the hills dissolve; indeed the earth is upheaved by His presence, the world and all the inhabitants in it” (1:5). He then goes on to encourage a hope for the Southern Kingdom because of the coming judgment of Nineveh. “Thus says the LORD, "Though they are at full strength and likewise many, Even so, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer” (1:12).
Chapter 2-3, Nahum predicts the annihilation of Nineveh, “And it will come about that all who see you will shrink from you and say, 'Nineveh is devastated! Who will grieve for her?' Where will I seek comforters for you?” (3:7). It was damaged so severely that it was lost in time. It wouldn’t be until the 19th century that the remains of Nineveh would be identified.

Name means ‘comfort’
Message is judgement, power of God

Compare Nahum & Jonah
Doctrine of God – J (Jn 4:2), N (Na 1:2-3)

Na 1:8-10 Metaphors for judgment
100 years after Jonah
Obadiah and Nahum are symbols of judgement day – wrath of God against sin

Timeframe & Historical Context

Purpose

Story
HABAKKUK

Habakkuk’s Dialogue with God

The Burden
Wrestling with:
God’s silence
Judah’s sinfulness
God’s character

Questions: How long?
   Why? Who?

CHAPTER 1

The Watch
Waiting for
an answer

CHAPTER 2:1

The Vision
Record the vision!
Wait for it!
Woe to the Babylonians!

CHAPTER 2:2–20

Habakkuk’s Praise to God

Lord, I’ve heard
. . . I stand in awe
. . . I wait
. . . I praise
. . . I rejoice

CHAPTER 3

Habakkuk Overview

The book of Habakkuk is Narrative History and displays Prophetic Oracle. Habakkuk wrote it approximately 612-589 B.C. just before the fall of Judah in the Southern Kingdom. Key personalities are Habakkuk and the Babylonians. As is true of the many other prophets, Habakkuk is a short book. The information in it was vital since it carried God’s message to His people. Its purpose was that Habakkuk was announcing a familiar message of judgment. He was identifying the wickedness and sin of Judah before them. Habakkuk declared that God is the “Rock” (1:2) and that they would be judged.

- In chapters 1-2, Habakkuk poses some difficult questions to God. He was wondering why evil was prevailing. God claimed that He would do amazing things that, “you would not believe if you were told” (1:5). All of the surrounding neighbors who were super powers at that time would fall in ruin, as no one expected. Babylon was a growing empire that would rule over everything, for a time. In chapter two, God answers Habakkuk’s question. He urges everyone to be patient and ultimately trust in Him. "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith” (2:4).
Chapter 3, Habakkuk gives God the glory and praise for faithfully responding to his questions, “LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy” (3:2).

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

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**Purpose**

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**Story**

- 
Zephaniah (Zep) – Warning of Coming Judgment and Encourage Repentance for Judah

Caution to Complainers

ZEPHANIAH

Judgment and Doom
“I will completely remove all things from the face of the earth,”
declares the Lord. (1:2)

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<tr>
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<th>INVITATION</th>
<th>SURE DOOM OF NATIONS</th>
<th>SURE DOOM OF JERUSALEM</th>
<th>KINGDOM PROMISES TO REMNANT</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Scope: Judah, Nations, Remnant

Subject: Sin, Hope, Desolation, Restoration

Key Words: “The day of the Lord,” “Seek,” “Woe,” The Lord is with you

Theme: Judgment and doom are certain unless there is repentance before God. Only then can there be hope and restoration.

Key Verses: 1:14; 2:3

Christ in Zephaniah: Jesus Christ hides us from God’s wrath, and is the One who will someday rule the earth as King of Israel (Zephaniah 3:15–17; see Colossians 3:3–4).

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<td>Zephaniah</td>
<td>Period: 640 – 609 B.C. (set in Judah)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Events: Prophecy against Judah and Jerusalem</td>
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</table>

Zephaniah Overview

The small book of Zephaniah is Narrative History and Prophetic Oracle. Zephaniah wrote it circa 630 B.C. very soon before the fall of Judah in the Southern Kingdom. The purpose of this book was to show that God raised up his prophet Zephaniah to proclaim a warning of coming judgment and to encourage repentance.

The Southern Kingdom was complacent in their wicked lives. They not only suffered under wicked kings they also would suffer under the holy judgment of God. Zephaniah was God’s method in bringing a stern warning of the day of the Lord “Near is the great day of the Lord...a day of wrath is that day” (1:14-15). He also brought a message of hope, when the nation would be restored.

- In chapters 1-2, Zephaniah, 20 years prior to their captivity, foretells about the looming judgment that was awaiting Judah if they did not turn back to YHWH. He also predicted the desolation of Nineveh the capital city of Assyria in 612 B.C. “And He will stretch out His hand against the north And destroy Assyria, And He will make Nineveh a desolation, Parched like the wilderness” (2:13).
Chapter 3, God demonstrates how He gives the sinner what they do not deserve... Mercy. Zephaniah wrote that there would be a day of hope, when the remnant of Israel would come back out of captivity under the YHWH’s protection, to fulfill His promise. “The LORD has taken away His judgments against you, He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; You will fear disaster no more” (3:15).

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

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**Purpose**

- 

**Story**

- 


Haggai (Hag) - Encourage the Construction of the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem
Put a Ring on it

Haggai Overview

HAGGAI

First Message:

- Rebuild God's temple
- Rebuke
- Reflection
- Divine discipline
- Repentant response
- "I am with you"

CHAPTER 1

Second, Third, and Fourth Messages:

- Encouragement and Hope
  - "Take courage!"
  - "I will bless you!"
  - "I have chosen you!"

CHAPTER 2

Time

- Twenty-three days
- Over two months

Emphasis

- Practical, negative, confronting
- Spiritual, positive, comforting

Scope

- Present condition of Jerusalem temple
- Future glory of God’s house

Theme

- We must put God first in order to experience His blessings.

Key Verses

- 1:4–5; 2:7–9

Christ in Haggai

- Christ’s presence in this temple, which was further expanded and adorned by Herod, is “the latter glory . . . greater than the former” (2:9). Jesus is “our peace” (Ephesians 2:14). His death on the cross has made us at peace with God now, and His future rule in His glorious kingdom will establish worldwide peace (Haggai 2:9). The righteous leader Zerubbabel is also a type of Christ and part of Jesus’s genealogy.

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<td>Haggai</td>
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<td>Events: Post-exilic rebuilding of Jerusalem</td>
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The book of Haggai is Narrative History and Prophetic Oracle. The prophet Haggai wrote it approximately 520 B.C. Haggai is among the most carefully and precisely dated books in the entire Bible. It is a post-exilic book, meaning it was written after (post) the captivity (exile) in Babylon. Key personalities are Haggai, Zerubbabel, and Joshua.

The purpose of this book was that Haggai was called by God to encourage the people to finish the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. The construction had ceased because of opposition and because the neighboring countries, and the Jews were frightened.

- In chapter 1, God called on Haggai to deliver His message. The Jews were living in their comfortable houses while the temple, the house of God, sat unfinished, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'This people says, "The time has not
come, even the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt” (1:2). The Jews began working 24 days after Haggai’s message (vs. 15).

- In chapter 2, Haggai motivated the Jews to continue building the temple, and that God will bless them, “As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!” (2:5). The building of the temple in Jerusalem was completed in 515 B.C.

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

- 

**Purpose**

- 

**Story**

- 3 prophesies
- Message of encouragement—don’t focus on the discouragement, focus on
- Simeon’s song – Haggai’s prophecy is fulfilled
Zechariah (Zec) - Encourage the Remnant

**Zechariah**

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**CHAPTERS 1:1–6**  
**CHAPTERS 1:7–6:15**  
**CHAPTERS 7–8**  
**CHAPTERS 9–14**

**Zechariah Overview**

The book of Zechariah is Narrative History, Prophetic and Apocalyptic in genre. It is a post-exilic book, meaning it was written after (post) the return from captivity (exile) in Babylon. The prophet Zechariah wrote chapters 1-8 approximately 520-518 B.C. (Before the temple completed), and then wrote chapters 9-14 approximately 480 B.C. (After the temple is completed). Zechariah is among the most precisely dated books in the Bible. Key personalities are Zechariah, Zerubbabel and Joshua.

The purpose of this book is that Zechariah wrote to encourage the remnant, who had recently returned from exile. Their faith in God was weak and they were not motivated to build the temple. They needed to learn and conform to the law of God again.

- In chapters 1-8, Zechariah recorded his visions, encouraged the people to reinstate the priesthood, and other religious laws that were forgotten during the 70-year exile. Zechariah gives great hope and encouragement about the coming Messiah Jesus Christ, who will set up His throne and rule as the mighty Branch, the High Priest, who will offer up the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. “Then say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. “Yes, it is He who will
build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices” (6:12-13).

- Chapters 9-14 are difficult passages to understand, many are prophetic and apocalyptic. Zechariah writes judgment against the neighboring enemies. Most importantly he declared the first coming of the Messiah who would be mounted on a donkey (9:9), His betrayal (11:12), and His crucifixion (12:10). Finally, he writes about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ descending from heaven the same way He had left in Acts 1:11, in the clouds. “In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south” (14:4).

Zechariah is considered to be the ‘major’ of the minor prophets
- Zechariah earned his claim to fame by being the sharer of prophetic passages that would surpass in detail and clarity those of many of his Old Testament peers.

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

- Chapters 1-8 – Approximately 520-518 B.C. (Before the temple completed)
- Chapters 9-14 – Approximately 480 B.C. (After the temple is completed)

- God’s stern promise foretold by the prophets to exile the people of Judah over their unceasing rebelliousness and unrepentant wickedness had finally been fulfilled.

- The years passed until the time of 538 BC. Some 50 years had elapsed since Jerusalem's demise. The Jewish people in exile had tried to thrive and survive under their captor's rule, but they had been relegated to second class citizenship, and were always a politician's scheming plot away from total annihilation.

- In Cyrus' very first year as king, God moved on his heart to favor the Jewish people. Cyrus wrote a proclamation, called an edict, which would allow the Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem. They were to rebuild the temple to Yahweh, and with money generously granted from the king's own treasury.
  - Cyrus' Edict was a profound declaration, for it fulfilled a prophecy given through the Prophet Isaiah over 150 years earlier.
  - Isaiah prophesied that one day a "shepherd" of God—and amazingly he even foretold Cyrus ' name—would grant permission to the Jewish people to return from their exile and rebuild (Isaiah 44:24-28; 45:1-13).
  - Jeremiah also had decades earlier foretold the same homecoming of the Jewish people (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10-14)

- Leadership
  - The leader of this First Return expedition was Zerubbabel. He was a descendent of King David and legitimate heir to his throne, Zerubbabel was granted governorship over what was once known as Judah.
  - To provide spiritual guidance and direction in rebuilding the Temple, the High Priest Joshua and the Prophet Haggai would join the leadership team.

- The journey to Jerusalem was difficult for these Post-Exilic Pilgrims, but once they reached their destination, life living in the ruins of Jerusalem became far, far more challenging.
  - The Samaritans, those descendants of the Jews who had been left behind and then intermarried with Gentile squatters, did not want to give up their scraps of control over to a newly restored Jerusalem. They interfered with the reconstruction of the Temple and made life miserable in every possible way.
  - Ezra 34 records that no sooner had the Jews managed to get the foundation laid and restart the Levitical sacrifices did the Samaritans succeed in halting their work. They'd sent a slanderous letter to a new Persian king accusing the Jews of trying to rebel, and he believed them. Only two years in and the work was ordered stopped.

- Zechariah was a young boy when they returned from exile. Now young Zechariah had grown into manhood.
Zechariah – name meant "whom Yahweh remembers"
Zechariah was the son of Berechiah, meaning "Yahweh blesses"
Zechariah was the grandson of Iddo, the head of their priestly family, whose name meant "the appointed time"
Zechariah's priestly lineage of names would become the living embodiment new message: "God remembers and blesses at the appointed time" (1:1)

- The appointed time had finally come. Even if the Persian Empire wasn't ready to allow the Jews to finish the reconstruction of Temple, God certainly was ready. Zechariah was called to assist the aged prophet Haggai in rallying the people to reaffirm their faith in Yahweh by the act of restarting the construction of the Temple, apparently even without permission from their Persian overlords.

- The God of hope – leave the details up to Him!
  - Ezra 5-6 records the tattletale attempt to bring the wrath of another new Persian king, Darius Hystaspes, down upon the Jews for restarting the Temple reconstruction without permission.
  - All their previous efforts to halt Governor Zerubbabel had failed because "the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius"
  - The Samaritans actually challenged Darius to prove that King Cyrus had once written an edict promising the Jews they could rebuild the Temple.
    - Maybe they thought the edict was long forgotten, or the document was buried in some dark, backroom archive, never to be found. Either way, they seemed to believe that Darius would inevitably fail, so they schemed, "and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this
    - Darius actually took on their conniving request and issued a search of his archives. His librarians were relentless in their quest, and the sought-after scroll was found and dusted off in Palace of Achmetha, far off in the Media province. It was rushed to the king.
  - After reading it over and over, he issued a crafty response to the Samaritans.
    - One can almost picture a gleam in Darius' eyes and a smirk on his face as his scribe recorded a letter back to the busybody
    - After confirming Cyrus' command to rebuild the Temple out of the royal treasury, Darius ordered the Samaritans and any Persians to "keep yourselves far from there."
    - He ordered, "Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site."
    - To rub salt on the Samaritan's wounds, Darius ordered the troublemakers themselves to fund the reconstruction out of their own tax revenues, and to even provide the animals that would be sacrificed "day by day without fail."
    - And, to make sure he was clear and absolutely obeyed, King Darius ordered anyone who dared interfere with the reconstruction of God's Temple be hung from a timber ripped off their own house, just before it was demolished into a refuse heap.
    - "May the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem." The new edict was signed, "I, Darius, issue a decree; let it be done diligently."
  - Once the Samaritans received the king's letter, one could almost hear the deafening sound of the combined slapping of Samaritan foreheads along with the grinding of teeth echoing across the Judean hillsides.
  - The Jews celebrated wildly at this permission given amazingly by a Gentile king.
    - The fear of a dreadful punishment by the Persians, like a weighted vest, had been lifted off their shoulders.
    - God had moved the heart of Darius, just as he had with Cyrus almost two decades earlier.
    - The hand of God was indisputably with His people. They were finally fired up!

**Purpose**

- Haggai and Zechariah were there to rally the people and reaffirm their faith in Yahweh by the act of restarting the construction of the Temple
  - For two whole months Haggai ripped into the people for putting their own needs above the building of house.
- Haggai chastised, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins? Consider your ways!" (Haggai 1:4).
- Zechariah, emulating his mentor's stern style, reminded the people, "The Lord has been very angry with your fathers" (1:2).
- Haggai rocked his listeners with the cold, hard fact that God was causing the drought as long as His house remained in ruins. "You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away" (Haggai 1:9).
- Zechariah punctuated God’s tongue-lashing with His final ultimatum: "'Return to Me,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and I will return to you (1:3).

• How did the people respond to these stern messages?
  o Haggai recorded that "the people feared the presence of the Lord" (Haggai 1:12).
  o Zechariah recorded their conciliatory response, "Just as the Lord of Hosts determined to do to us, according to our ways and according to our deeds, so He has dealt with us" (1:6).
  o Zerubbabel and Joshua responded in obedience to the command to begin reconstruction of the Temple and led their people back to work.
  o But, something was clearly wrong.
    ▪ Enthusiasm was still at an all-time low.
    ▪ Great fear chilled the air coverwer what would happen if their Persian overlords found out construction had restarted without their permission. Those infuriating Samaritans were ever watching and sending their lawyers to the king.
    ▪ Food was still sparse, leaving them weak.
    ▪ As one commentator described this sad and defeated remnant, "Their strength was sapped; their zest for life had ebbed; their hope of future glory was dimmed.”
  o Though the people were dutifully working, they remained desperate for any real hope that would rekindle the fiery enthusiasm they'd once possessed when they'd first set out from Babylon. They needed to see a real victory. They needed to know that when God said, 'I am with you," that He really meant it (Haggai 1:13). Their faith had ebbed because the future looked so bleak. What they needed was real hope for the future. Zechariah’s call was to give them that future hope.

### Call to Repentance (1:1-6)

1 In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, 2 “The LORD has been very angry with your fathers. 3 Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. 4 ‘Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.” ’ But they did not hear nor heed Me,’” says the LORD.

5 “Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? 6 Yet surely My words and My statutes, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, Did they not overtake your fathers?

“So they returned and said:

‘Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us, According to our ways and according to our deeds, So He has dealt with us.’”
8 Visions – God gives hope, encouragement and motivation

To keep that fire fanned, Ezra 6:14 records that While the Jews rebuilt, "they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah."

- The whole tone of Zechariah's messages also seemed to change, as if coaching was more to his own personal style of ministering than the harshness he'd earlier had to show.
  - Words like inspirational, hopeful, encouraging, comforting, and visionary best describe how this young prophet now guided once disillusioned people forward.
  - Zechariah knew the pains of his people first-hand. He was there with them from the beginning. He was on the scaffolding with his peers, getting his hands dirty as he built alongside them. With graphic vividness and skill and pluck, Zechariah was truly in his groove when encouraging God’s people onward towards completion.

- God continued to provide faith-boosting hope by granting Zechariah amazing and far-reaching visions that once shared would energize His people.
  - These would be no garden-variety visions from God, but significant glimpses into a great and glorious future for His people Israel.
  - That far, far distant future would revolve around one key event—the coming of the Messiah. When the Savior came, "the Lord shall be King over all the earth" (14:9).

In the dark night hours of February 15, 519 BC, Zechariah sleeplessly tossed and turned in his bed as the word of the Lord came to him. God would show His prophet eight visions, one right after another, as if Zechariah was a spectator at some surreal indie film fest. He was then supposed to share these visions with His people, and through these, God would give the Jewish people hope for the present and for the future.

**Vision 1 – The Horses (1:7-17)**

7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: 8 I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him were horses: red, sorrel, and white. 9 Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they are."

10 And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are the ones whom the LORD has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth."

11 So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly."

**The LORD Will Comfort Zion**

12 Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?"

13 And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words. 14 So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts:"

  "I am zealous for Jerusalem
  And for Zion with great zeal.

15 I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease;
  For I was a little angry,
  And they helped—*but* with evil intent.”

16 ‘Therefore thus says the LORD:
“I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it,” says the LORD of hosts, “And a surveyor’s line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.” ’

17 “Again proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; The LORD will again comfort Zion, And will again choose Jerusalem.” ’

- The Angel of the Lord (Jesus Christ Himself in the Old Testament), explained what these horses were doing. “We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly.”
- The Lord then proclaimed His zealousness for Zion. God was returning to Jerusalem with mercy to build His house. A time of peace and rebuilding had come to Israel.

**Vision 2 – The Horns (1:18-21)**

18 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns. 19 And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these?”

So he answered me, “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”

20 Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. 21 And I said, “What are these coming to do?”

So he said, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

- 4 Strong nations (animal "horns") had scattered the Jewish people into exile – Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Persia
- But "four craftsmen" had arrived "to terrify them" and "to cast out the horns of the nations" – God would send avengers to beat them back.
- A time of regathering and safety had come to Israel.

**Vision 3 – The Man with a Measuring Line (2)**

Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 So I said, “Where are you going?”

And he said to me, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length.”

3 And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, 4 who said to him, “Run, speak to this young man, saying: ‘Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. 5 For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’ ”

Future Joy of Zion and Many Nations

6 “Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the LORD; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the LORD. 7 “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.”

8 For thus says the LORD of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the [b]apple of His eye. 9 For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become [b]spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me.

10 “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD. 11 “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. 12 And the LORD will take
possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!"

- Zechariah encounters a man who is measuring the city of Jerusalem in preparation for the return of its King.
- An angel tells the Measuring Man to inform Zechariah that “Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for I,” says the Lord, “will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.”
- Yahweh warns any nation that tries to mess with His "Holy Land" that, "he who touches you [Israel] touches the apple of His eye."
- The Messiah promises that eventually, "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst." A time when the King of the world would rule gloriously from Jerusalem was coming.

Vision 4 – The High Priest (3)

Vision of the High Priest
3 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?”

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.

4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And to him He said, “See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes.”

5 And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.”

So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

The Coming Branch
6 Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, 7 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘If you will walk in My ways, ＊
And if you will keep My command, ＊
Then you shall also judge My house, ＊
And likewise have charge of My courts; ＊
I will give you places to walk ＊
Among these who stand here.

8 ‘Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, ＊
You and your companions who sit before you, ＊
For they are a wondrous sign; ＊
For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. ＊
9 For behold, the stone ＊
That I have laid before Joshua: ＊
Upon the stone are seven eyes. ＊
Behold, I will engrave its inscription,’ ＊
Says the LORD of hosts, ＊
‘And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. ＊
10 In that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ＊
‘Everyone will invite his neighbor ＊
Under his vine and under his fig tree.’ ”

- This vision was prepared directly for Joshua, the High Priest.
- Zechariah witnessed Joshua standing in filthy rags before the Angel of the Lord while Satan performed his vile work of accusing him and the saints.
Jesus the Messiah is the "Branch" who will rescue Joshua and His people from their sins, cleansing them so that they are pure before the Father. His saving works declared, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes. A time for cleansing God's people from their sins was coming.

**Vision 5 – The Lampstand and Olive Trees (4:1-14)**

4 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, “What do you see?”

So I said, “I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.” 4 So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, “What are these, my lord?”

5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?”

And I said, “No, my lord.”

6 So he answered and said to me:

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel:
Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’
Says the LORD of hosts.
7 ‘Who are you, O great mountain?
Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!
And he shall bring forth the capstone
With shouts of “Grace, grace to it!”

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

“The hands of Zerubbabel
Have laid the foundation of this temple;
His hands shall also finish it.
Then you will know
That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.
10 For who has despised the day of small things?
For these seven rejoice to see
The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.
They are the eyes of the LORD,
Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”

11 Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?” 12 And I further answered and said to him, “What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?”

13 Then he answered me and said, “Do you not know what these are?”

And I said, “No, my lord.”

14 So he said, “These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.”

- This vision was prepared for Zerubbabel, the governor.
- Zechariah is shown a seven branched menorah flanked by two olive trees which fueled the flames.
- To the discouraged governor, Yahweh reminds, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit." The power to rebuild the Temple came from God, and no man can stand against the Almighty.
- God promises Zerubbabel that the project would indeed be finished, powered by "the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."
- A time when God's plans would march unstoppably forward had arrived.
**Vision 6 – The Flying Scroll (5:1-4)**

5 Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll.

2 And he said to me, “What do you see?”

So I answered, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.”

3 Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: ‘Every thief shall be expelled,’ according to this side of the scroll; and, ‘Every perjurer shall be expelled,’ according to that side of it.”

4 “I will send out the curse,” says the LORD of hosts; “It shall enter the house of the thief
And the house of the one who swears falsely by My name.
It shall remain in the midst of his house
And consume it, with its timber and stones.”

- Zechariah is shown something most strange—a flying scroll some thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide.
- Noticing his curiosity, an angel explains to the prophet that the scroll is in truth, “the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth All thieves and those who take the Lord's name in vain will face a fiery finish.
- A time when the wicked will be judged for their rebelliousness against God was coming.

**Vision 7 – The Woman in a Basket (5:5-11)**

5 Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, “Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth.”

6 So I asked, “What is it?” And he said, “It is a basket that is going forth.”

He also said, “This is their resemblance throughout the earth: 7 Here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket”; 8 then he said, “This is Wickedness!” And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth. 9 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.

10 So I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they carrying the basket?”

11 And he said to me, “To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base.”

- Zechariah was shown a woman stuffed into a large basket. She is the personification of wickedness.
- Two female angels, a rarity in the Bible, carry the basket to the “land of Shinar,” which is Babylon. To the land where Mankind rebelled against God at the Tower of Babel, to the epicenter of all evil, she will go. There she will wait for her time to strike.
- A time was coming when evil will be forever removed from the Holy Land and be defeated in one final battle.

**Vision 8 – The Four Chariots (6)**

6 Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. 2 With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, 3 with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong steeds. 4 Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”
And the angel answered and said to me, “These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. 6 The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country.” 7 Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, “Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth.” So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. 8 And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, “See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country.”

The Command to Crown Joshua
9 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

“Receive the gift from the captives—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. 11 Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12 Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: ‘Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.’”

14 “Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the LORD [10] for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

• The final vision portrayed four chariots, each pulled by a different colored horse, and each traveling to the four points of the compass. The one that traveled to the north country found the Holy Spirit at rest.
• Joshua the High Priest was then given an elaborate crown as if he were king. He shall build the Temple.
  o But, Joshua is only an example, a symbol, a type of Christ. The Messiah would be the true Priest and King who would unite the two roles into one.
  o Not only will the Messiah build the Eternal Temple, but He will also "bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
• A time was coming when the offices of priest and king would be united in the One who will rule the earth forever.

The future glory of the Holy City (7-8)
• The 8 astounding visions did their job of firing up the workers. Construction on the Temple was now progressing at breakneck speed. The Returnees were psyched up with hope in the unstoppable power of Yahweh God combined with the lesser blessing of the Persian king.

• But, the city of Jerusalem—that shining jewel of God's kingdom on earth was still as black and sooty as a lump of coal. Zechariah could only have looked around at the tumbled down ruins of Jerusalem which surrounded him and wondered when that man with the measuring line would be arriving to prepare Jerusalem for its restoration to its former glory. But, God wasn't interested in the city's former glory, for He was instead about to share with Zechariah an epiphany about its future glory. This epiphany that follows is recorded by Zechariah in chapters 7 and 8.

Obedience Better than Fasting
7 Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass that the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Chislev, 2 when the people sent Sherezer, with Regem-Melech and his men, to [4] the house of God, to pray before the LORD, 4 and to ask the priests who were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and the prophets, saying, “Should I weep in the fifth month and [6] fast as I have done for so many years?”
Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 5 “Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? 6 When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves? 7 Should you not have obeyed the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited?’ ”

Disobedience Resulted in Captivity
8 Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, 9 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Execute true justice,
Show mercy and compassion
Everyone to his brother.
10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,
The alien or the poor.
Let none of you plan evil in his heart
Against his brother.’

11 “But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. 12 Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. 13 Therefore it happened, that just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen,” says the LORD of hosts. 14 “But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate.”

Jerusalem, Holy City of the Future
8 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, 2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.’

3 “Thus says the LORD:

‘I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.’

4 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Old men and old women shall again sit In the streets of Jerusalem,
Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age.
5 The streets of the city Shall be full of boys and girls Playing in its streets.’

6 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,
Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?’ Says the LORD of hosts.

7 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east And from the land of the west;
8 I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.’

9 “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Let your hands be strong, You who have been hearing in these days
These words by the mouth of the prophets, Who spoke in the day the foundation was laid
For the house of the LORD of hosts, That the temple might be built.
For before these days There were no wages for man nor any hire for beast; There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in; For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.

But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ says the LORD of hosts.

For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase, And the heavens shall give their dew— I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these.

And it shall come to pass That just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.’

For thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Just as I determined to punish you When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,’
Says the LORD of hosts, ‘And I would not relent,
So again in these days I am determined to do good To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
Do not fear.
These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor;
Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;
Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; And do not love a false oath.
For all these are things that I hate,’
Says the LORD.

Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

‘The fast of the fourth month, The fast of the fifth,
The fast of the seventh, And the fast of the tenth,
Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts For the house of Judah.
Therefore love truth and peace.’

‘Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities;
The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying,
“Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts.
I myself will go also.”

Yes, many peoples and strong nations
Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem,
And to pray before the LORD.’

‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” ’

• On December 7, 518 BC, Zechariah was about his family's priestly duties when a delegation from Bethel arrived to inquire if keeping the four non-Law fasts commemorating past calamities were still worth practicing.
  o Zechariah answered by shooting right at the heart of the matter with this question: "When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves?” (7:6)
  o He reminded the people that their ancestors had abused commemorative festivals for their own selfish pleasure, a wickedness that in part was the cause for the suffering of their exile.
  o God didn't want fasting, but obedience. What He wanted was for the people to "execute true justice" and "to show mercy and compassion, everyone to his brother" (7:9).

• If Jerusalem was to be that great and shining capital city over the world, its inhabitance must not make the same awful mistakes that their ancestors had committed.
  o A heart of obedience towards God must be the defining characteristic of its population.
o When the people had the right kind of heart, God would then unleash His splendor upon His city and its people.

- Zechariah gazed past the ruins of a failed city to behold a distant future when Jerusalem would be shining in full glory.
  - Yahweh Himself would in person return with great zeal to His city.
  - Jerusalem would be renamed "The City of Truth" and "The Holy Mountain."
  - Not a tiny remnant, but a great throng of people both young and old who'd been regathered from around the world would play in its streets.
  - Truth and righteousness would define its peoples.
  - Peace would be its eternal condition.
  - "Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord" (8:22).
  - The once despised and defeated Jew would become the new global celebrity as, "In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (8:23).

2 Oracles Concerning the 2 Comings of Messiah

- The power of hope was driving the Jewish returnees forward in rebuilding the Temple.
  - The promise of God's love focused His people towards the day when that glorious chapter in Jerusalem's future would finally be realized.
- Now what the people needed was the blessing of faith in the One who would make all of this possible—the Messiah.
  - Chapters 9-11 prophesy the story of the rejection of the Messiah
  - Chapters 12-14 prophesy the victorious reception of the Messiah
- These two oracles would puzzle readers for many generations to come, because they foretold not just one advent of the coming of the Savior, as everyone had expected, but two advents.

**Oracle #1: The Rejection of the Lamb (9-11)**

Israel Defended Against Enemies

9 The burden of the word of the LORD Against the land of Hadrach, And Damascus its resting place (For the eyes of men And all the tribes of Israel Are on the LORD);

2 Also against Hamath, which borders on it, And against Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

3 For Tyre built herself a tower, Heaped up silver like the dust, And gold like the mire of the streets.

4 Behold, the Lord will cast her out; He will destroy her power in the sea, And she will be devoured by fire.

5 Ashkelon shall see it and fear; Gaza also shall be very sorrowful; And Ekron, for He dried up her expectation. The king shall perish from Gaza, And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

6 “A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod, And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

7 I will take away the blood from his mouth, And the abominations from between his teeth. But he who remains, even he shall be for our God, And shall be like a leader in Judah, And Ekron like a Jebusite.

8 I will camp around My house Because of the army, Because of him who passes by and him who returns. No more shall an oppressor pass through them, For now I have seen with My eyes.

The Coming King

9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’

God Will Save His People

11 “As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

12 Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you.
My soul loathed them, and their soul also a
called 7 and into the hand of his king. They shall
longer pity the inhabitants of the land,” says the
those who sell them

Prophecy of the Shepherds

Wail, O oaks of Bashan, For the thick forest has come down.

Then 6 they shall fight because the

I will 5 bring them back, Because I

Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, And their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.

Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; Their heart shall rejoice in the L ORD.

I will whistle for them and gather them, For I will redeem them; And they shall increase as they once increased.

“ I will sow them among the peoples, And they shall remember Me in far countries;

They shall live, together with their children, And they shall return.

I will bring them back from the land of Egypt, And gather them from Assyria.

Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, And the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

So I will strengthen them in the L ORD, And they shall walk up and down in His name,” Says the L ORD.

Desolation of Israel

Open your doors, O Lebanon, That fire may devour your cedars.

Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen, Because the mighty trees are ruined.

Wail, O oaks of Bashan, For the thick forest has come down.

There is the sound of wailing shepherds! For their glory is in ruins.

There is the sound of roaring lions! For the pride of the Jordan is in ruins.

Prophecy of the Shepherds

Thus says the L ORD my God, “Feed the flock for slaughter, 5 whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt;
those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be the L ORD, for I am rich’; and their shepherds do not pity them. 6 For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land,” says the L ORD. “But indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor’s hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver them from their hand.”

So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the flock. 8 I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then I said, “I will not feed you. Let what is dying die,
and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other’s flesh.” 10 And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. 11 So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. 12 Then I said to them, “If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.” So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.

13 And the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. 14 Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15 And the LORD said to me, “Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. 16 For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

17 “Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded.”

The first coming of the Messiah - Rejected

- The first coming of the Messiah would come as a shock, for He would enter Jerusalem, not as a king would riding high upon a white steed, but "lowly and riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (9:9).
  - Nearly 550 years later, on what is now called Palm Sunday, Jesus Christ would fulfill this prophecy by making His triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding a young colt (Matthew 21:1-11; John 12:15).
  - The Lord Their God had come to "save them in that day." If His people would only accept Him in faith as Savior, the Messiah would pour down salvation like the latter rains and empower the people like mighty men.
    - "'So I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in His name,' says the Lord" (10:12).
  - Alas! The people rejected the Messiah.

- Their hails of "Hosanna in the highest!" one week later turned into the harsh cries of "Crucify him! Crucify him!"
  - Zechariah in chapter 11 prophesied this tragic turn of events.
  - Stricken by His people's eventual rejection, the Messiah would lament, "My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me" (11:8).
  - With the imagery of breaking staffs, so Yahweh declared that He might "break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples" (11:10).

- Zechariah even prophesied the exact amount of money over which the King would be betrayed.
  - "So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver... so I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter" (11:12-13).
  - Again, nearly 550 years later, Judas Iscariot, who was one of Jesus' 12 Apostles, would accept 30 pieces of silver from the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus. Eventually feeling guilty, Judas would cast the money in the Temple, which as blood money would be used to buy a potter's field (Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-10).

The people are left in the care of the “Worthless Shepherd”

- Rejected by His people as King and sacrificed on the cross for mankind's sins as an offering lamb, the Messiah leaves the treacherous people in the care of the "Worthless Shepherd."
- These Gentile rulers, culminating in the Beast King of Revelation 13, "will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand" (11:15-17).
- Left to this Worthless Shepherd, the Jewish people would suffer under the tyranny of Satan for many generations.
  - The Jews would be expelled out of their land a second time, this time by the Roman Empire in 70 AD.
  - They would wander the world for centuries as a people without a home in this their second exile.
  - Everywhere they went they would be despised and rejected and persecuted.
That is, until one day when a holocaust of such horrific proportions carried out by the Nazis would soften the hearts of the nations' denizens just enough to allow the Jewish people to reclaim a small portion of their ancestral land.

Zechariah, not even in his wildest speculations, could have imagined the date for the reestablishment of the nation of Israel would occur so many centuries later on May 14, 1948.

But, Zechariah was told another holocaust would be coming some time afterwards, one God revealed would come when Satan's Beast King the Antichrist—would one dark and distant day unleash all of his master's rage upon the tiny nation of Israel.

Oracl#2: The Acceptance of the Lion (12-14)

The Coming Deliverance of Judah

12 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: 2 ‘Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3 And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. 4 In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.’ 6 In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

7 ‘The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. 8 In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. 9 It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Mourning for the Pierced One

10 ‘And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. 11 In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

Idolatry Cut Off

13 ‘In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

2 ‘It shall be in that day,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. 3 It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.’ And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.

4 ‘And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. 5 But he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I am a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.’ 6 And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your [a]arms?’ Then he will answer, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’
The Shepherd Savior
7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.
8 And it shall come to pass in all the land,” Says the LORD,
9 “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it:
I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’ ”

The Day of the LORD
14 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
3 Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.
4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.
5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You.
6 It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish.
7 It shall be one day Which is known to the LORD—Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light.
8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The LORD is one,” And His name one.

10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s winepresses.

11 The people shall dwell in it;
And no longer shall there be utter destruction,
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:
Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

13 It shall come to pass in that day That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.
Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, And raise his hand against his neighbor’s hand;
14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.
And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together:
Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

15 Such also shall be the plague
On the horse and the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps.
So shall this plague be.
The Nations Worship the King

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Apocalypse of the Old Testament

- Because of Zechariah's spectacularly detailed description of the time surrounding the Second Coming of the Messiah, commentators have come to label chapters 12-14 as the "Apocalypse of the Old Testament."
  - This Apocalypse, this "unveiling" or "removal of something that hides," is so detailed that Zechariah's prophetic writings have been elevated among theologians to those of the great prophets such as Daniel in the Old Testament and the Apostle John with the book of Revelation.
  - This Tribulation coming to the world is known throughout the prophets as "The Day of the Lord."

Jerusalem

- For the Messiah to return a second time in order to claim His throne in Jerusalem as prophesied, the city of Jerusalem must be back in the control of the Jewish people.
  - Israel is indeed a nation once again, but the control of Jerusalem is victim of an ongoing tug-of-war by the nations of the world, all of which struggle for control over that city for their own selfish ends.
    - In response, God promises He will at that time, "make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples" and "a very heavy stone for all peoples."
    - For all the nations of the world who are gathered against Jerusalem and vie for its control, the Lord promises that "all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces" (12:2-3).

- When the nations that comprise the Antichrist's empire descend upon Jerusalem to force control over it, Zechariah in chapter 14 explains how this one-world ruler will at first be successful.
  - The city will be initially taken and many Jewish men will be captured and the women raped.
  - And yet, God still empowers its fighters, for "in that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem" by making each of its people as mighty in battle as King David once was (12:8).
  - Then the daylight oddly will grow eerily dark. The Messiah declares, "It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (12:9). And so He does!
    - The Savior will descend out of Heaven like a roaring lion, with His armies following like a flood behind Him. Jesus will land on the Mount of Olives across from Jerusalem with such force that the mountain will split in two. The Lord will then strike the armies attacking the city so that "their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet" (14:12). With just His spoken word, the Savior melts the armies away as if He were a nuclear furnace! Revelation 19 adds more details to Christ's glorious return, as Jesus throws the Antichrist and his False Prophet into the Lake of Fire and casts Satan into a deep pit.

- While the inhabitants of Jerusalem are being crushed by the onslaught of the combined armies of the nations of the world and are staring down their utter annihilation, its people grieve and mourn.
  - The grieving isn't because they think they're all about to die, but because when they see the Messiah coming to defend them, they'll realize just who He is.
    - "They will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son" (12:10).
Every family still standing against the onslaught will recognize the Messiah to be Jesus Christ, the One who was "pierced" by nails on the cross outside the walls of Jerusalem some 2,000 years earlier. If only they had accepted Jesus as King then, two millennia of terrible suffering would have been avoided.

- And so the people will weep and mourn, even with their salvation at hand.
- By the time this new holocaust of the Jew by Satan and his Antichrist is stopped due to the Second Coming of the Messiah, Zechariah reveals in chapter 13 that two-thirds of the Jewish people will have been slaughtered.
- But, God promised that, "I will bring the one-third through the fire... They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God'" (13:9).

Finally, the Jewish people as a nation will have accepted their Messiah.
- All adultery to false gods through idolatry and the following of deceitful prophets will be eliminated.
- A people saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ will become pure and holy, thereby gaining entrance into the Messiah's Kingdom.
- Zechariah describes that glorious Kingdom as the time of peace, safety, holiness, and heartfelt celebration of its King. The longed-for Messianic Age will have arrived!

**One Temple Stands**

- The Prophet Zechariah probably had the best assignment of all the Minor Prophets.
  - His compatriots mostly saw sin and judgment and defeat. Subsequently, they also experienced much of the resulting sorrow and persecution as the result of their faithful delivery of God's messages.
  - Zechariah, on the other hand, while reciting God's given visions and oracles, got to witness repentance and rising hope and future victory. He took a people who'd fallen into the depths of defeat, with their faith barely hanging on by a thread, and infused into them an ocean-sized measure of God's unfailing love.

- Ezra 6:13-22 contains the jubilant report that the construction of the Temple was completed in four years. It was finished in 516 BC, exactly 70 years from when the Jews were exiled from Jerusalem, as prophesied.
  - "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."
  - The people held a great celebration, "for the Lord made them joyful... to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel."
  - With a newly supercharged faith and a bright hope for the future, the enlivened Post-Exilic Pilgrims finally knew success. Their success would inspire two more great waves of Jewish returnees from Babylon who would join them in the purpose of rebuilding a nation.

**Zechariah’s Faith Lessons**

**Lessons for Israel**

- How does the Israel of today maintain faith in God when the future looks bleak?
  - Bleak may be too mild a word, for the nation of Israel is surrounded by over 350 million hostile Arabs who wish to "wipe them off the map."
  - They also remain accosted by incessant condemnation from the United Nations.
  - The whole world has gathered against Israel, as Zechariah foretold, and the pressure is only going to worsen.

- The message Yahweh gave Israel's ancestors continues to apply to their current life-and-death struggles.
  - Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.' But they did not hear nor heed Me."
  - You, instead, heed the call of God to put your trust in Him. "'Return to Me,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and I will return to you.'" (1:2-3).

- Israel can accept Jesus the Messiah in faith now, or "mourn for Him" later at His Second Coming after the next holocaust has killed so many (12:10).
Jesus desires to restore His covenant with the Jewish people, if only they would embrace the glorious future God has promised. If only Israel would do that, their faith would grow from the size of a mustard seed into a mountain. And, just as the first Post-Exilic people did, they will become inheritors of that glorious future God has so lovingly described through the Prophet Zechariah.

**Lessons for the Nations**

- How can the nations maintain faith in God when the future looks bleak?
  - The future does indeed look very bleak for the nations.
  - Zechariah's prophecies tell of a day coming when all the nations will gather in rebellion against Jesus Christ for the futile purpose of preventing Him from becoming King. And yet, they will fail miserably.

- Though the sands of human government have all but slipped through the neck of the hourglass, there are still a few national leaders today who have kept their faith in Jesus Christ.
  - They do so by placing their allegiance squarely for God over human government.
  - They keep their faith aflame by looking forward to the day when the world's true King will return.
  - They yearn for the age God has promised through Zechariah 14:9 when, "The Lord shall be King over all the earth."
  - They rule with the comforting knowledge that, because they are faithful followers of Jesus Christ, they will also hold authority in Christ's Kingdom, serving in roles such as governors and mayors and teachers.
  - They rejoice in a future when they will lead the peoples God will one day entrust to them to a great annual celebration, which as Zechariah 14:16 describes so wonderfully, "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."
  - The future of government will go to those who have accepted Jesus as Savior.

- But, in the meantime, for those in power, they need to embrace the "deepest truth" of national greatness as revealed by famed preacher Dr. G. Campbell Morgan: "A nation is only great as it sees God behind events, and finds the way He is going, and moves along in step with Him."

**Lessons for the Church**

- How can the Church maintain faith in God when the future looks bleak?
  - With terrible persecution on one side, and spiritual apathy and apostasy emanating on the other, the future at this time does indeed look terribly bleak for the Body of Christ.

- To rectify these challenges to the faith, the Church needs to recapture what the Jewish people of Zechariah's time learned to embrace when building their "City on a Hill."
  - As Pastor D. Stuart Briscoe describes, "A sense of divine majesty and power, righteousness, and justice needs to be recaptured in the modern church so that we can take God seriously."

- No people group has embraced this truth as well as the Puritan Pilgrims did back in American history.
  - Taking God seriously was so evidently afire in their hearts and souls that it led them to take an unpopular stand against unbiblical teachings, leave all they knew behind, and travel to a vast unknown.
  - Even with sickness decimating their numbers daily, and enduring hardships beyond measure, the Pilgrims were defined by their sensing of God's divine power. It drove them on against seemingly unbeatable odds to build their own "City on a Hill."
  - And, the Lord rewarded the Pilgrims for their stalwart faith, for these seemingly defeated people went on in victory to birth a new nation. This new nation, christened the United States of America, because it was founded on the tenants of God's moral law, would grow to become the new apex of world evangelism.

- The Church can maintain its faith when it remains in awe of God, and through faithful obedience allows Him to work miracles. "And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God" (6:15).
Lessons for You

• How then can you maintain faith in God when your future looks bleak?
  o Well, after reading the book of Zechariah, does the future really look so bleak?
  o Didn't Zechariah "prepare the road along which the celestial King was to ride in solemn grandeur" when he
    painted in spectrum colors the absolute majesty of the Messiah's coming victory?
  o Sure, there are difficulties today which must be endured, but they wax quite pale in the light of God's glory and
    grace. Today's trials will soon be forgotten when the King returns.

• For the believer in Christ, the future is all about hope. So, in the meantime, says the Lord of Hosts, live "not by might
  nor by power, but by My Spirit" (4:6).

• Take the lessons from the Vision of the Lampstand and Olive Trees and keep the channels of your life lamp clean from
  sin and unbelief.
  o Don't choke out your faith with spiritual decadence and backsliding.
  o Remain in purity and prayer, and the light of God's glorious future will shine through your life, restore your
    faith to a blinding brightness, and help kindle that fire in others.
Malachi (Mal) – Failure to Keep the Covenant, Hope of Messiah

Authenticity
Malachi means my messenger

Malachi Overview

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament and is a book of Prophetic Oracle. It is a post-exilic book, meaning it was written after the return from captivity in Babylon. The prophet Malachi wrote it approximately 430 B.C. Key personalities include Malachi and the priests. The purpose of this book is that Malachi wrote to ensure that the hearts of the Jews was right and that they were keeping God first in their lives.

- In chapters 1-3, Malachi identified the sins of the Jews, including their priests.
- He prophesied that God would send a messenger to prepare the way (this is John the Baptist), “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts” (3:1). Finally, he addressed the topic of tithes and offering and that God is stolen from when people disobey it.
In chapter 4, the last chapter of the Old Testament, Malachi addressed, “the great and terrible day of the Lord” (vs. 5). He teaches about the coming judgment when God will set them ablaze in His holy anger. He also gives hope to the faithful with the Book of Remembrance. Those who do the will of God and are righteous will be spared.

Malachi, the last book of the Bible, ends very differently than it began in the book of Genesis. Let us compare them:

- **Genesis 1:1**, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This was a beautiful and perfect relationship with God.
- **Malachi 4:6**, “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”
- Consider the large contrast between the very first verse and the very last verse. Afterward, consider that “the sin of mankind” made all the difference. The Old Testament begins with the magnificent power of God’s creation and ends with fear and separation from God and in need of a Savior.

The Old Testament closes with a sad dreary clunk...

**Timeframe & Historical Context**

- **Purpose**
- **Story**

**Book of Remembrance**

Mal 3 – A Book of Remembrance

16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them;
So a book of remembrance was written before Him
For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name.
17 “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels.
And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.”
18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked,
Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.

- The book of Malachi is a detailed account from the Lord to Israel about their disobedience.
  - His charges against them includes:
    - Offering defective sacrifices (1:8)
    - Teaching error (2:8)
    - Being unfaithful to their wives (2:13–14)
    - Complaining that it was futile to serve the Lord (3:13–14).
  - God pronounces strict judgments upon those guilty of such offenses (Malachi 2:2, 9).
  - He then makes it clear that He hears and knows the intent of every heart and desires to honor those who honor Him. He knows those who refuse to murmur against Him (Numbers 14:27, 36; Deuteronomy 1:27; Psalm 106:25).

- Several places in Scripture refer to God’s “book”
  - Exodus 32:32
  - Psalm 56:8
  - 69:28
  - Daniel 7:10
  - Daniel 12:1
• Revelation 13:8
• Revelation 20:15

• In His infinite knowledge, God does not need a written record in order to keep track of human deeds. However, when He speaks to us, He often uses metaphor or parable to help us understand (Mark 4:33).
  o As Malachi presented God’s words to the people, they would have understood what a book of remembrance represented. The kings of Persia kept such books, records of those who had rendered service to the king, that those servants might be rewarded. The book of Esther contains a good example of this (Esther 6:1–3).

• It is also important to note that the reward was often delayed. That’s why books were needed, so that no worthy deed for the king went unrewarded.
  o In Malachi 3:17 the Lord says, “On the day when I act . . . .” He is indicating that faithful service may go on for years with no apparent reward, but He is taking note.
  o There is coming a day when He will act.
  o One reason the Israelites had grown lax in their obedience and were becoming jealous of evildoers was that they thought the Lord did not see or care (Malachi 3:14–15; cf. Psalm 94:7; Ezekiel 8:12).

• However, Scripture is clear that loyalty to God does not go unnoticed or unrewarded.
  o Jesus spoke of this many times (Matthew 10:42; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:23; Revelation 22:12).
  o He spoke of storing up treasure in heaven, as though making deposits into a bank account (Matthew 6:20).
  o The implication is that what is done on earth is forever recorded in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:10).
  o The book of remembrance is simply a concept God used to encourage His faithful ones that their love and service for Him was appreciated. It is His promise that, when His judgment comes against those who reject Him, He knows His own and will preserve them. The account of righteous Noah is a good illustration of God’s preserving those who honor Him (Genesis 6:9).

• Jesus encouraged His followers to “rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).
  o Even as He said it, Jesus knew that their faithfulness to Him would result in earthy trouble, heartache, and even death (Matthew 24:9; Acts 9:16; 12:2). But knowing that their names were written in God’s book helped the disciples persevere to the end (Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:13).
  o Galatians 6:9 continues the theme of future reward: “Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” Those who continue to honor the Lord when many around them fall away can rest in the confidence that their names are written in God’s book of remembrance.