

**OT Bible Characters - 3**  
**Kings and Prophets**  
(The Divided Kingdom)

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# Contents

Jeroboam - 1 <sup>st</sup> King of Israel . . . . .	1
The Divided Kingdom . . . . .	17
Rehoboam . . . . .	18
Ahab . . . . .	28
Elijah . . . . .	32
Elisha . . . . .	44
Asa & Jehoshaphat . . . . .	61
Jehu . . . . .	65
Jehu's Four Generations . . . . .	73
Jonah . . . . .	76
The Prophets . . . . .	86
Amos — The Last Days of Israel . . . . .	91
Hosea . . . . .	101
Joash . . . . .	109
Uzziah, Jotham & Ahaz . . . . .	113
Hezekiah . . . . .	117
Isaiah . . . . .	131
Manasseh . . . . .	138
Josiah . . . . .	145
Josiah's Sons . . . . .	156
Jeremiah . . . . .	166



# Jeroboam - The First King of Israel(10 Tribes)

Jeroboam became the first king of the newly formed nation of Israel which consisted of the ten tribes God had given to him. As he began his reign, he had three former kings to give him guidance and counsel. The first was an evil king who was deposed for not keeping God's commands. The second was David, a man after God's own heart who kept all his commands. The third was Solomon who embodied both the previous kings. In the beginning of his reign he followed in the steps of his father David and was greatly blessed. But at the end he rejected God's commands and became an idolater. It was for that very reason that Jeroboam had been given the opportunity to reign. Carefully consider what God had said about these three kings.

## SAUL - A Bad King

When Samuel sent word to Saul wait for seven days at Gilgal(1Sam 13:6-14), when Samuel did not immediately appear, Saul offered the burnt offering in violation of the Law of Moses.

*And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. **The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.**" 1Sam. 13:13-14*

After his failure to with the Amalekites, fully keep another command, God told him the kingdom would be torn from him and given to another.

*Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 11 "**I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.**" ... 28 So Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. 1Sam. 15:10-11; 24-25 28*

Saul went down in the history of God's people as an evil king.

## DAVID - A Good King

When God removed Saul, He raised up David. Many years later the apostle Paul quoted God as saying He was "a man after My own heart, who will do all My will."

*And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**' ... 36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; Acts 13:22,36*

Many years after his death, it was testified that David did what was right in God's eyes except in the matter of Uriah.

*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. 1Kings 15:5*

## SOLOMON - A Good King for most of his reign, but Apostasy in the End.

Solomon began well, He asked for wisdom to rule over Israel and perfectly discharged his duty to built the House of the Lord. It is the final chapter nearing the end of his life that God became angry because he allowed foreign women to turn his heart from God. He had not listened to God's specific commands. Deut 17:17; 1Kings 11:1-11 After Solomon's fell into idolatry, God began the necessary steps in Solomon's lifetime to remove Israel from the line of David.

*Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but **he did not observe what the LORD had commanded.** 1 Kings 11:9-10*

First, God revealed to Solomon exactly what he had done and what God would do to punish him.

So the LORD said to Solomon, **“Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. 12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen. 1 Kings 11:11-13**

At this point in Solomon’s reign, God raised up adversaries against him. The peace Israel had enjoyed was based on faithful service to God. Since they were no longer faithful, the curses Moses had warned against in the Law began to occur.

*Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. ... 15 But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: Deut 28:1, 15*

The problems related to the curses God had warned them would come began with God raising up three adversaries who created problems and began to destroy the peace and prosperity Solomon had built.

*Now the **Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite**; he was a descendant of the king in Edom. 1 Kings 11:14*

*And **God raised up another adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah**, who had fled from his lord, Hadadezer king of Zobah. 1Kings 11:23-24*

*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. 1 Kings 11:26***

## **God sent Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam**

Unlike Hadad and Rezon, God explained exactly how Jeroboam became an adversary. It was a direct revelation to him for the prophet Ahijah. Jeroboam is described as a mighty man who had come to Solomon’s attention because he was industrious and zealous in his work. Initially Solomon had placed him into a position over authority over both tribes of Joseph(Ephraim and Manesseh).

*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. 28 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. 1Kings 11:27-33***

All went well until God decided to raise up adversaries. God sent the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam. We don’t know much about Ahijah. He is mentioned here and in 1Kings 14. He came to reveal to Jeroboam what God had planned as a result of both Solomon’s and Israel’s departure from Him to worship idols. Ahijah tore up a new garment and tore it into twelve pieces. He then told Jeroboam to take 10 pieces to himself and told him that these ten pieces represented ten tribes in Israel and that he would be given them. One tribe(Joseph) along with his own tribe(Judah) remained with Solomon’s children because of David’s faithfulness. This clearly emphasizes to Jeroboam the role their service to God played in how he had received this opportunity.

*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), 1Kings 11:29-32***

God then made it even more specific to Jeroboam. It was the sins of Solomon and their impact on Israel. Not only had Solomon refused to serve the Lord, but he had also become a great stumbling block to the people of Israel. Due to his building of idol’s temple in Jerusalem (*Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians’ Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites; Chemosh the abomination*

of Moab; and for Molech). All Israel had followed him in these sins.

*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. 1Kings 11:33*

## **God's Promise to Jeroboam**

God gave Jeroboam the same conditional command/promise he had given to Saul, David and Solomon. If Jeroboam wanted to avoid that fate of Saul and Solomon, he must choose the path of David. If we wanted to prosper and make his rule permanent, he must be faithful to God's commands. It was never Jeroboam's kingdom. He was only the steward who had been charged with protecting and leading God's people to do the truth.

*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." 1 Kings 11:37-39*

God made it so clear that Jeroboam could not possibly misunderstand what He was saying. It is of the highest importance that we learn from this. Although Jesus is king in heaven, each local church must make the same decision that God gave to Jeroboam.

1. If you heed all that I command you
2. Walk in My ways
3. Do what is right in My sight
4. Keep My statutes and My commandments
5. As My servant David did

As we look at the above list, we all need to make the same application. First, God wants all to heed all He commands. He has repeated this command over and over again in the gospel. Consider a few of the man commands that were similar to those given to Jeroboam.

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Mt. 7:21-23*

*"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Mt. 15:8-9*

*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds. 2John 9-11*

If Jeroboam had listened and followed the course of David God had promised "I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David." He had many years to consider these things before the decision had to be made.

## **Solomon Sought to Kill Jeroboam**

There is so much we want to know and would like to discuss, but all we have been given are a few final details.

*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. 41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42 And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place. 1 Kings 11:40-43*

Everything depends on how we interpret “therefore.” Whatever the “therefore” is referring back to will result on our final view of Solomon. There are two possibilities.

1. Solomon knew that Ahijah had gone to Jeroboam and had given him the promise that he would reign over ten tribes of Israel. He knew it was God’s will that Jeroboam be the next king over the ten tribes while his son would only have two tribes and “therefore” he sought to kill Jeroboam. If this be the case then it appears that even God’s final judgment did not lead to Solomon’s repentance. Arguments in favor of this conclusion are:

A. God had told Solomon this is exactly what he was going to do.

*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. 12 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. 1 Kings 11:11-12*

2. Solomon only knew that Jeroboam had become an adversary and guilty of treason. Jeroboam had overstepped his bounds since God had told him that he would not begin his reign until the death of Solomon.

*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. 1 Kings 11:34-35*

Yet it is difficult to give the much confidence since it was expressly stated that this was the reason why Jeroboam had become an adversary.

*And this is what caused him to rebel against the king: ... Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way... 1 Kings 11:27-29*

Hence he became an adversary because of what Ahijah said, yet Ahijah told him to wait until after the death of Solomon.

Clearly it is a very difficult question. The weight seems to be on the first one. It appears that Solomon knew that Jeroboam was to be the successor who would take the kingdom away from his son and because of that he sought to kill him. Yet there is just enough doubt, that it is difficult to charge Solomon with such a crime.

## **Ecclesiastes**

The reason this has been such a contentious question centers on the book of Ecclesiastes. One of the favorite interpretations that has found some to champion is that Solomon did in fact repent and that he wrote this book after his repentance. While this could be the case, the above reasons keep us from being certain enough to state it as a fact.

## **Rehoboam Began to Reign**

After Solomon’s death, Israel gathered at Shechem. Shechem was located on the lower portion of directly opposite to Mount Ebal. No one has offered a clear reason why this was chosen. Some say it was a more convenient place for all to meet which is as good a reason as any, but doesn’t have anything but human wisdom to prove it. Yet for that or another reason, all Israel came to Shechem to make Rehoboam king.

*And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2 So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), 3 that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, 1 Kings 12:1-3*

It is evident there was enough time between the death of Solomon and coronation of Rehoboam to give Israel the opportunity to call Jeroboam. It appears that Jeroboam was at least with those



who were speaking of Rehoboam if not the one doing the speaking. One has to wonder how much these ten tribes know about the prophecy to Jeroboam. Remember that Solomon had made him a ruler over the house of Joseph, so he was already well known to these people and that may have been the reason he was there. Though it is hard not to conclude that since Solomon had tried to kill him and he had fled to Egypt that no one had wondered at what led to Jeroboam's rebellion.

Israel takes this opportunity to seek relief from the onerous taxes that Solomon had placed them under during his reign. They give a simple and logical request to Rehoboam.

*"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." 5 So he said to them, "Depart for three days, then come back to me." And the people departed. 1 Kings 12:4-5*

Rehoboam requests three days. Remember many have traveled many day to reach there and it was not an easy matter for them to remain three days. But the representative departed and went back to whatever camp they had while they waited for the answer.

## **Rehoboam's Decision**

Rehoboam first asked the elders to give him their advice. What they said was clearly sound advice that would have resolved any conflict.

*Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" 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." 1 Kings 12:6-7*

Although this was wise and sound counsel, Rehoboam rejected it. He sought instead the counsel of the young men. Their advice was arrogant, rude and selfish. Yet it evidently pleased Rehoboam to think he had this much authority.

*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! 11 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!'" 1 Kings 12:10-11*

As an interesting inference, this is one of the few places where a clear distinction is made between the elders and the young men. It is stated that Rehoboam had grown up with these young men. Since he was 41 at this time, we get a clear idea that somewhere after the age of 40 is when the distinction between the elder and the young occur.

## **Jeroboam - 2**

After Rehoboam's decision to follow the counsel of the young men who had grown up with him instead of the elders, Israel rejected Rehoboam as king. Their anger is directed at the house of David, since it was Rehoboam who had made this decision.

*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. 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. 1 Kings 12:15-17*

We see the providence of God at work here. The way this turned out was exactly how the Lord had wanted it. If Rehoboam had been praying for wisdom and was seeking the Lord, the Lord could have found a way to overturn the foolish counsel and help him to take the right one. These are the amazing ways of our Lord that are past tracing out (Rom. 11:33-36).

Jeroboam's long relationship after Solomon appointed him to lead the house of Joseph (1 Kings 11:28), along with the near certainty they had now heard Ahijah's prophesy, led Israel to

immediately make him king. God made his own desires clear that He wanted Jeroboam as king and Israel also wanted him as king. It was a decision that at that time no one seemed to have any reason to oppose. No one in the ten tribes followed the house of David except Judah.

*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. 1Kings 12:20*

Rehoboam however was ready for action. He immediately gathered together 180,000 men who were prepared warriors. In his mind this was treason and rebellion and he was going to stop it by resorting to war.

*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. 1 Kings 12:20-22*

God chose a different prophet than Ahijah and sent him to Rehoboam. He chose Shemaiah to bring these words to Rehoboam. Note that although the previous verse had said only the tribe of Judah, God now speaks of Judah and Benjamin as two separate houses. He revealed to Shemaiah that He wanted everyone to know this division between Israel and Judah was directed by Him. At this time Judah was still submissive to the commands of the Lord so peace continued and Judah went one way and Israel another.

*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. 1 Kings 12:22-24

## **Jeroboam takes Counsel and Makes a Decision**

Jeroboam had been given years to consider and plan for the moment that was now before him. God had sent the prophet and been very clear. God had already revealed that this moment would come. His promise to Jeroboam was not fulfilled.

*So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel.*

But how things would unfold from that moment on was completely up to the freewill decisions that Jeroboam would make. God had given him the same promises he had given to Solomon.

*Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. 1 Kings 9:4-7*

Jeroboam now sat on the throne just as Solomon had. He now had to make the same decisions that Solomon had made:

*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." 1 Kings 11:37-39*

Hence Jeroboam had everything he needed to make the right choice. He had the example of David and Solomon. He had the promise of God and the clear commands that needed to be followed to get what God had promised. But Jeroboam stumbled over the same stumbling block that Solomon did. Instead of following God's commands to the letter and trusting in His promises, he leaned upon his own understanding.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body, and refreshment to your bones. Pr 3:5-8*

This passage is one of the most important in the Scriptures when we stand at the crossroads as Jeroboam did here. On the one side are the clear commands and promises of God. On the other the benefits that human wisdom can bring. Jeroboam was led astray by two critical elements. First, he was leaning on his own understanding.

*And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 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." 1 Kings 12:26-28*

Jeroboam's lack of faith is evident in this reasoning. God had plainly told him that if he would put God's needs and commands above his own, God would create an enduring house and there was nothing to fear. But he trusted in what he could see. He was "*wise in you his eyes*" and "*leaned on his own understanding*." He was afraid that going back to Jerusalem three times each year to sacrifice and serve the Lord would give Rehoboam an opportunity to influence them. To him the outcome was obvious. They would kill him and go back to Rehoboam.

The second thing that led to his downfall was in asking others what he should do. This is never a good idea when we are wavering between doing God's will and taking our own path, we need to consult God and not others.

***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!" 1 Kings 12:27*

Jeroboam fell because he leaned upon his own wisdom! He allowed himself to be fooled into believing that human wisdom was more appealing than obedience to God. In his reasoning, God could not possibly fulfill His word. What a sad and limited view of God this man had. His solution to the problem showed how little respect he had for God's authority and will. His "better plan" founded upon his own wisdom would keep the children of Israel away from Jerusalem and the influences he believed would be exercised upon them.

## **Jeroboam's Plan after Getting Counsel/Advice**

To solve this difficulty he discussed it with others. It is very probable that this was the decision of all the the elders of the ten tribes. Since no one stood opposed to it in any way. First and perhaps the most egregious of his plan was to set up the "**two calves of gold**" and proclaimed, "**these are your gods O Israel**." In doing this, he clearly broke the first two of the ten commandments.

*"You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, Ex 20:2-5*

These words and the calves so closely resemble what happened with Aaron that it is amazing they could have made such a choice.

*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" 2 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. 4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god(These are your god's - ESV) , O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" Ex 32:3-4*

Once Israel allowed this great departure to occur without any words of warning or any effort to stop

it, the rest of the things they did came about as a matter of course.

- A. Made "**two calves of gold**" and proclaimed, "**these are your gods O Israel.**"
1. It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.
2. He set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.
3. This thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.
4. He made shrines on the high places
5. Made priests from every class of people, not of Levi.
5. Ordained a feast on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month, like the feast that was in Judah
6. Offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made.
7. At Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made.
8. He made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel
9. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 8<sup>th</sup> month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart.
10. He ordained a feast for Israel, offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

This was his "*solution*" to a political expediency. He feared the people more than he feared God. Jesus had some strong words about this attitude toward His own disciples.

*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Mt 10:28-29*

The affects of these actions began immediately. First, with the loss of the priests and Levites who felt compelled to leave their common lands and go back to Judah.

*And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him. 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. 2Chron 11:13-14*

There are two possible reasons for this. First, they were loyal to God and did not wish to stay in this environment. Sadly if that was the case within three years, even Judah fell away from God. Second, they were no longer being supported by the tithes and needed to return to the faithful to maintain their lives.

Jeroboam was not concerned in the least. He just kept appointing more priests. Additional details of his wickedness were also given. Not only did he set up the calf-idols, but also sacrificed to demons.

*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. 2Chr. 11:15*

This is one of the four times demons are mentioned in the Old Testament. They were mentioned twice in the books written by Moses and again in the Psalms. It is difficult to discern exactly what they knew about demons. Even with Paul's additional explanations, it is still difficult for us to understand.

*And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the Lord. 7 **They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot.** This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." Lev 17:6-7*

*They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 17 **They sacrificed to demons, not to God,** To gods they did not know, To new gods, new arrivals That your fathers did not fear. Deut 32:16-17*

*They did not destroy the peoples, Concerning whom the Lord had commanded them, 35 But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works; 36 They served their idols, Which became a snare to them. 37 **They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to demons,** Ps 106:34-37*

Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that **the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.** 21 **You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.** 1 Cor 10:18-22

## **Jeroboam - 3 - Consequences**

After Jeroboam made his decision to lean on his own understanding and not to trust in the Lord with all his heart, everything he feared would happen if he did not follow the Lord was now going to happen to him because he sinned.

### **God's Promises to Jeroboam:**

- ◆ heed all I command & walk in My ways
- ◆ do what is right in My sight,
- ◆ keep My statutes and commandments,
- ◆ as My servant David did,
- ◆ I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David,
- ◆ and will give Israel to you.

### **Jeroboam said in his heart,**

- ◆ 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
- ◆ the heart of this people will turn back to their lord,
- ◆ they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam

It is always a sad reminder whenever this happens in Scripture. When people trust in the Lord with all their heart and do exactly what God says to do, then God will fulfill His promises and whatever power is needed for it to happen will come from the omnipotent God. But if we choose to ignore God's conditions for Him to fulfill His promises, then all the power has to come from us.

Noah, Abraham, and Moses chose to trust in the Lord. Cain, Saul and now Jeroboam chose to lean on their own understanding, using their own wisdom and relying on their own power. What happened next is a lesson to us all, and we are commanded to carefully take it to heart, learn it, and be admonished.

*For whatever things were written before were **written for our learning**, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* Rom 15:4

*4 Now these things **became our examples**, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.... 11 Now all these things **happened to them as examples**, and they were **written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.* 1 Cor 10:4, 11

*39 But we are **not of those who draw back to perdition**, but **of those who believe to the saving of the soul**.* 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it **the elders obtained a good testimony**.* Heb 10:39-11:2

*But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are **able to make you wise for salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that **the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**.* 2Tim. 3:14-17

## **God Gave Jeroboam the Opportunity to Repent**

Since the chapter breaks were not given did not come in until many years:

*A man named Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters in the year A.D. 1227. Langton was a professor at the University of Paris and later he became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Robert Stephanus (Stephens), a French printer, divided the verses for his Greek New Testament. It was published in 1551.*

We need to take both passages together

**33 So he(Jeroboam) 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. 12:1 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. 1 Kings 12:33-13:1**

So at one of these feasts(possibly even the first one), on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month, while Jeroboam was performing his self appointed duties at the altar, something startling occurred. Since this was the feast day, there were others present so this is a public event.

With the term “**behold**,” we are given the idea of a sudden startling event that caught the eyes and attention of everyone. With the people all assembled and Jeroboam standing before the altar, he is suddenly interrupted.

Prior to the event, God had appeared to a young prophet and commanded him to come and warn Jeroboam and all Israel of the consequences of their actions that day.

***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.'" 3 And 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." 1 Kings 13:2-3***

So we picture the calm and dignified proceedings created by Jeroboam’s wisdom, stopped by the cries of this young prophet. Jeroboam is furious. First, because the young man had dared condemn his new religious plans and goals. Second, because he stated it would be a son from the house of David(his greatest fear) who would do this. Third, because it condemned all who had volunteered to work as priests(including himself as being wicked and deserving this fate.

Although prophesied of things that would happen 100's of years in the future, even naming the king of the house of David who would do it, it was fulfilled exactly as revealed here.

***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. 2 Kings 23:15-18***

King Jeroboam is very angry at this outburst and intends to deal with the wrongdoer, but God had other plans. This was such a critical period in the history of the ten tribes. Subsequent history shows they never repented of this sin and it led to their destruction and being carried away by Assyria. So God chose to give two power signs

The first had already been mentioned but had not yet occurred, the second was a direct judgment on Jeroboam.

***So 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. 5 The 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. 1Kings 13:4-5***

There was no way for Jeroboam to ignore this second sign. Although he might have argued away the broken altar and immediately fixed it, his hand and arm(could not draw it back) were withered and the muscles no longer working. This was a serious sign that would have been with Jeroboam the rest of his life. This too was witnessed by all who had come to celebrate this feast.

This second sign got Jeroboam’s “*short term*” attention.

***Then the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please entreat the favor of the Lord your***

**God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before. 1 Kings 13:6-7**

He pleaded with the prophet to heal his hand. Although God restored his hand, Jeroboam did not get the true message of both the signs. God is very clear that Jeroboam did not repent. His worldly sorrow over the loss of his hand did not lead him to true repentance even when God in mercy restored it to him.

**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. 1 Kings 13:33-34**

This is a classic example of the meaning behind the words that Abraham spoke to the rich man.

*Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"* Lk. 16:29-31

So many of God's people witnessed amazing signs and wonders. Israel left Egypt after witnessing the ten plagues and the opening of the Red Sea. They witnessed all the signs on Mt Sinai then became idolaters.

## **The Fate of the Young Prophet(it **DOES** matter what you believe even if sincere)!**

The young prophet easily resisted the temptation Jeroboam's offer created. Because God had clearly told this young man what He expected him to do.

*Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." 8 But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. 9 For so **it was commanded me by the word of the Lord**, saying, 'You shall **not eat bread, nor drink water**, nor return by the same way you came.'" 10 So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel. 1 Kings 13:7-10*

It is evident that Jeroboam wanted to give this young prophet a reward for healing his hand, but God didn't want the focus of this event to be lessened by Jeroboam thinking he had somehow done something good in any of this. He wanted this prophet to do the duty he had come to do and leave with no other memories except those God had wanted Jeroboam to reflect upon.

All went well until the old prophet in Samaria entered the scene. Here is another classic example that everyone in the NT needs to be admonished by, learn and take to heart.

The young prophet had been given direct information from "**the word of the Lord.**" The things that occurred when this young man took the word of another over the word of the Lord continues to be important even to this day.

*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even **if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel** to you than what we have preached to you, **let him be accursed**. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, **if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed**. Gal 1:6-9*

*He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And **in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**' 8 For **laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men** — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ... 13 **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition** which you have handed down. And many such things you do." Mark 7:6-10, 13*

This was exactly the choice confronting the young prophet. What happened to him is important to all of us today. First, it is revealed that an old prophet still resided in Bethel. Whether he was a true prophet, a false prophet, or even lying about being a prophet is not revealed.

*Now **an old prophet dwelt in Bethel**, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. 13:14*

The old prophet finds the young prophet, invites him home to eat with him.

*Then he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am." 15 Then he said to him, "**Come home with me and eat bread.**" 13:14-15*

The young prophet again quotes God's word and even states that the authority of this command was "**by the word of the Lord**"

*16 And he said, "**I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. 17 For I have been told by the word of the Lord, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'**" 13:16-17*

The young man has a clear command given to him by the word of the Lord. He knew that what he had been given in this command was divine inspiration and God's word, directly from His mouth.

The prophet seeks to enhance the temptation with a lie. His will of having the young man return home with him was greater than any care or concern for the life and soul of this young man. So even though he knew it was a lie, he used it to entice this man away from the command and draw him away to the will of this old prophet. This lie (like the one given to Eve) was far more powerful than any other enticement would have been.

*He said to him, "I too am a prophet as you are, and **an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord**, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (He was lying to him.) 19 So **he went back with him**, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. 13:18-19*

What happened next was a powerful warning, both to the lying prophet and to the young prophet. Why God chose to use the mouth of this wicked deceiver is perhaps the most difficult event in the entire account. The lying prophet is not punished, but the young prophet is given death for rebelling against the word of the Lord.

*Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that **the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back**; 21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the Lord: '**Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you**, 22 but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Lord said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," **your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.**"' 13:20-22*

The problem created by the old prophet was not really the issue. God did not take that into account in any way. The real problem was the young man had disobeyed. The real problem was that the young man did not keep the command the Lord your God had commanded! Nothing anyone else could say removed the duty this man had to keep what God had specifically commanded him.

God clearly dealt with the sins of this older prophet, but the true focus of the event is on the young prophet. This story would travel, and it too became a part of the powerful event that God had given to Jeroboam and Israel. The nature of his death confirmed more fully than the other signs that what he had said was true.

*When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And **his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse.** 25 And there, **men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.** 13:24-25*

The old prophet shows no remorse for his part in the fate of the young man.

*Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, "It is **the man of***



**God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord. Therefore the Lord has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke to him." 13:26-27**

Yet he saw clearly that because of all the things that had happened everything the prophet had said was true.

*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." 13:32*

Yet when Jeroboam heard of this event, he too remained stubborn and rebellious.

**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. 13:33-34**

## **Jeroboam 4**

God had done all He could to help Jeroboam. He had made precious and exceeding great promises to him(1 Kings 11:37-39). He had sent the young prophet to warn him, giving him many signs. The death of that prophet had been enough for the wicked older false prophet to know his words would truly come to pass, but none of this changed the mind of the headstrong Jeroboam. He continues to do it.

*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 return from his evil way, but again he made priests of the high places from among all the people; any who would, he ordained, to be priests of the high places. 34 And this event became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to blot it out and destroy it from off the face of the earth. 1Kings 13:33-34*

This illustrates again, one of the amazing truth seen over and over again in the history of God's people. It started with Cain and has continued unbroken by all who follow his path. Instead of using God's worship as the means to actually worship and please God, they use it for their own ends.

- 1 For some, as Cain did, it appears to be the pride of life, leading them to create something even better than what God asked for.

*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. Jude 9*

*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. Heb 11:4*

*For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. 1 John 3:11-12*

- 2 For others, it becomes a means fulfilling their own desires using those who think they are serving God for their own means.

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 2 Peter 2:1-3*

- 3 There are also those who seek to worship God, but want a less stringent service than the one God has actually asked for.

*For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap*

to themselves teachers after their own lusts; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. 2Tim 4:3-4

#### 4 Others want a more stringent service than God has asked for(Pharisees

*He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." Mk 7:6-8*

God has done all he can through grace and mercy. The only thing left is vengeance and wrath. Jeroboam has done a terrible thing to destroy God's desire to save man. No one before Jeroboam had done the evil and the wickedness that Jeroboam had done.

*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 — 1Kings 14:9-10*

### **Final Prophecy against Jeroboam(1Kings 14)**

God's providence begins to work. He has looked into the future and seen the misery and destruction that will result because of Jeroboam's actions. In all Jeroboam's house, there was only one who was righteous and God determined to use him in two ways. The first way was to reveal to Jeroboam the terrible disaster that is about to come on his entire house.

The second way was to remove his one good son so he did not have to see or experience the terrible things that would come on his father and family.

*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. 1 Kings 14:12-13*

This is something God does during times of great wrath. He will remove those who are righteous before the terrible calamities come upon the wicked. God spoke of this in the times of Isaiah and also to King Josiah, and even to wicked Ahab.

*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. 2 He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness. Isa 57:1-2*

*because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the Lord. 20 Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.'"" So they brought back word to the king. 2 Kings 22:19-20*

*And he answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord: 21 'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22 I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.' ... 25 But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26 And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. 27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. 28 And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 "See how Ahab has*

*humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house." 1 Kings 21:20-22 25-29*

With the term “*at that time*” it is clear that not long after Jeroboam made his final decision to remain in sin and refused to repent, his son became ill. Instead of all his priests and teachers, he sends for a true prophet. There are a few possibilities about why he wanted her to disguise herself. First, he did not want his own people to know he sought true information not from his own prophets and priests, but among a true prophet. Second, he thought he could deceive Ahijah. Neither of these really seems to answer the question.

*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. 1Kings 14:1-2*

Her disguise is wasted on Ahijah, because even though he is blind, God has already revealed the entire plan to him.

*And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. 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." 1 Kings 14:4-5*

Hence just as she is entering the door, only her footsteps being heard, Ahijah revealed that he already knew who she was. If there was any ability to still create faith, this event could have done so. For now only does the prophet know who she was, but also the reason she had come and the terrible answer he had been commanded by God to give her happened as soon as she arrived home.

*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. 1 Kings 14:6-7*

*Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 1Kings 14:12*

But Ahijah also sent her back with the terrible vengeance God intended to take on Jeroboam and his offspring because of the evil they had done. First God reminds Jeroboam of the promises He had made to him and how Jeroboam had responded to them.

*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 — 1 Kings 14:7-10*

Then God described the terrible vengeance that would soon begin.

*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!" 1Kings 14:10-12*

## **The Sins of Jeroboam**

The phrase used above is found twenty-five times in the books of the Kings. It refers to the things listed above. The nation of Israel(the ten tribes) and all the kings the followed never recovered themselves from the sins of Jeroboam. The full damage done by the sins of Jeroboam are listed when God gave up Israel(the 10 tribes to Assyria): After God revealed the terrible things that would

happen to Jeroboam and his house, He also foretold the end of the ten tribes he had taken from David's house and given to Jeroboam. They too would be punished severely for going along with Jeroboam.

*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." 1Kings 14:15-16*

When the day finally came to fulfill these events, God again explained that it was all due to Jeroboam and Israel's refusal to repent of the sin he had created for them and they had embraced.

*And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight. 21 For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them commit a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23 until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day. 2 Kings 17:20-23*

## **The End of Jeroboam's House**

For all the fears, cares and concerns that he had proclaimed had motivated him to do these terrible things, he only reigned 22 years and then left the earth forever.

*Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20 The period that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then **Nadab his son reigned in his place.** 1 Kings 14:19-20*

Only two years after his death, all that Ahijah had revealed came to pass and Jeroboam's posterity was removed forever from the earth.

*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.** 1Kings 15:25-26*

*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. 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. 1Kings 15:27-30*

*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.** 1Kings 14:10-13*

# The Divided Kingdom

## **The Kings of Israel(10 Tribes)**

All Evil – Walking in the ways of Jeroboam

1. Jeroboam Made golden calves; etc
2. Nadab Assassinated by Baasha
3. Baasha Destroyed house of Jeroboam
4. Elah Assassinated by Zimri
5. Zimri Destroyed the house of Baasha
6. Omri Made Samaria capital
7. Ahab Married Jezebel

**Elijah begins work.**

8. Ahaziah
9. Jehoram Slain by Jehu  
**Elisha begins work**
10. Jehu Killed the house of Ahab

11. Jehoahaz

12. Jehoash
13. Jeroboam **Amos & Hosea begin work**
14. Zechariah
15. Shallum
16. Menahem
17. Pekahiah
18. Pekah

19. Hoshea

**Israel taken into Assyrian Captivity-722 BC**

## **The Kings of Judah**

6 good kings

13 evil kings.

1. Rehoboam(evil) Split the Kingdom
2. Abijam(evil)
3. Asa(good)

4. Jehoshaphat(good)

5. Jehoram(one of the worst)
6. Ahaziah(evil)  
Queen Athaliah

7. Joash(good)(evil)

8. Amaziah(good)(evil)
9. Uzziah(good) **Isaiah begins**

10. Jotham(good) **Micah begins**
11. Ahaz(one of the worst)
12. Hezekiah(one of the best)

13. Manasseh(the worst)
14. Amon(evil)
15. Josiah(the best) **Jeremiah begins**

16. Jehoahaz(evil)
17. Jehoiakim(evil) **Daniel begins**  
**Nebuchadnezzar takes some captive.**

18. Jehoiachin(evil) **Ezekiel begins**
19. Zedekiah(evil)

**Destruction of Jerusalem - 70 year  
Babylonian captivity.**

# Rehoboam

Rehoboam's reign was marred by the departure of ten tribes. Although this was God's will, it greatly weakened his power. But he had no one to blame but himself. He began his reign with great pride and folly. The elders of Israel gave him good and wise counsel concerning Israel's request that their taxes be lightened. But he rejected their advice and listened instead to the young man whom he had grown up with and completely rejected the request Israel had made.

*8 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. ... 5 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. 1Kings 12:8, 15*

His rough answer led to the fulfillment of God's words to Jeroboam and the ten tribes reject him as king. At this time, Rehoboam would have compounded his error and brought disaster on Judah, but this time God intervened.

*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, ... 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. 1Kings 12:21-22, 24*

As soon as he began his reign, the worship and service, along with the moral and spiritual ordinances of the Law were rejected.

*And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. **Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. 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. **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.** 1Kings 14:21-23*

The Holy Spirit summed up the entire time Israel entered the promised land until that moment and proclaimed: *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.*** Rehoboam clearly had no respect for God or for the Law of Moses.

In describing why their wickedness was so great, He listed several details:

*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. 1 Kings 14:23-24*

## The Abominations of the Nations

The Hebrew term "abomination" is used nearly 140 times in the OT. It's scope and meaning are very important as we see the phrase "abominations of the nations" used to describe Israel's practices when they went into full apostasy. Because of the number of times this term is used and especially in the context of the practices of Israel, it is important that when we see the word, we understand all the wicked practices that it defines.

The definition of the words are long and technical, but just note the highlighted or italicized portions to gain a good understanding of the Hebrew word as it was used in the Old Testament.

*tā•ab...* abhor (Piel), be abominable (Niphal), do abominably (Hiphil). ... **Attested twenty-two times in the OT**, ... Its basic meanings in the Piel are "**abhor, loathe**" in a physical sense (Job 9:31; Job 19:19; Job 30:10; Ps 107:18) and "**detest, exclude**" for ritual or ethical reasons (Deut 7:26; Deut

23:8 ). **Often the two meanings coalesce** (Amos 5:10; Mic 3:9); ... **the subject may be either God** (Ps 106:40) **or man** (Isa 49:7). In the Hiphil, the verb means "**commit abominable detestable deeds**" (1 Kings 21:26; Ps 14:1; Ps 53:2 ; Ezek 16:52), while in the Niphal it means "**be loathsome, detestable**" (1 Chron 21:6; Job 15:16; Isa 14:19). (TWOT # OT 8581)

*tō'ēbâ* **Abominable (custom, thing), abomination. ... The frequency of this word attests to its importance ; it occurs 117 times in all. ...** The nuances of *tō'ēbâ* are numerous indeed ... As with the verb(*tā'ab*), so also with the noun **the abomination may be of a physical, ritual or ethical nature and may be abhorred by God or man. *Sharing a meal with a Hebrew* was ritually offensive to an Egyptian (Gen 43:32), as was offering certain kinds of sacrifices (Ex 8:22 ). *Homosexuality and other perversions* are repugnant to God and fall under his judgment (Lev 18:22-30; Lev 20:13). *Idolatry*(Deut 7:25), *human sacrifice* (Deut 12:31), *eating ritually unclean animals* (Deut 14:3-8), *sacrificing defective animals* (Deut 17:1), *engaging in occult activities* (Deut 18:9-14), *conducting one's business dishonestly* (Deut 25:13-16), *practicing ritual prostitution* (1 Kings 14:23 ff), and *similar acts of disobedience* (for seven more abominations, see the list in Prov 6:16-19) were sure to bring God's wrath on those who perpetrated them. **Twelve times the book of Proverbs uses the phrase, "is an abomination to the Lord."** ... At the other end of the spectrum, even prayer is an abomination offered by one who refuses to obey God's Word (Prov 28:9). (TWOT #OT 8441)**

*tō'ēbâ* defines something or someone as ... being "**dangerous," "sinister," and "repulsive"** to another individual. ... When used with reference to God, this nuance of the word describes **people, things, acts, relationships, and characteristics that are "detestable" to Him because they are contrary to His nature.** (Vine's OT:8441)

*tā'ab*, "**to abhor, treat as abhorrent, cause to be an abomination, act abominably.**" (Vine's OT:8581)

The noun is used 22 times and translated with *abhor, loathe in a physical sense or detest, exclude* for ritual or ethical reasons. The verb is used 117 times and is nearly always translated "*abomination.*" But it's basic meaning is something *repulsive, repugnant, detestable, leading one to loathe or hate it.* It appears to have that visceral reaction we feel toward something *disgusting, nauseating, and odious.*

One of the passages that helps see the fulness of this abomination is in Deuteronomy. It is the attitude God sought to create in all Israel when they saw an idol. First, don't covet or desire anything on the idol(gold, silver etc.) as if it were a pleasant thing. Second, remember it is an abomination(disgusting, repulsive, loathsome) to God. Since it is an abomination to God it should also be an abomination to His people. Something that is disgusting and nauseating and creates the same attitude one might feel if they saw something physically disgusting or nauseating. Then God adds two synonyms to the two words above that have already been used.

*You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an **abomination(tō'ēbâ)** to the Lord your God. 26 Nor shall you bring an **abomination(tō'ēbâ)** into your house, lest you be **doomed to destruction(charam)\*** like it. You shall **utterly detest it(tā'ab)** and **utterly abhor it\*** for it is an **accursed thing(charam)\*** Deut 7:25-26*

The first synonym is "*charam*" which is used many times in the OT to describe things that have been cursed and must be utterly and completely destroyed.

\* *charam* — 1) to ban, to devote, to destroy utterly, to completely destroy, to dedicate for destruction, to exterminate (BDB # 2764) (Remember Achan at Jericho when he took something devoted to destruction *charam* and was himself devoted to destruction *charam* by stoning )

The second synonym describes something that is filthy, detestable and abominable.

\* *shaqats* — (Piel) to detest, to make abominable, to count filthy, to make detestable...(BDB OT:8262)

Hence this word group describes those things that are disgusting, nauseating because they are corruptions of what is good and wholesome into something vile and unhealthy. When we see and smell food that has gone bad. When we see something that has died and is going through corruption. When we witness things like this, we don't have to think about how we feel. It is a visceral part of us. We don't like to see, smell or touch such things. We want them out of our presence. This is how God feels about things that he calls abominations. They are perversions of things he created wholesome and good to things that are disgusting and nauseating to him.

## Abominations in the Proverbs:

*These six things the Lord hates, Yes, **seven are an abomination to Him**: 17 A **proud look**, A **lying tongue**, Hands that **shed innocent blood**, 18 A heart that **devises wicked plans**, Feet that are **swift in running to evil**, 19 A **false witness who speaks lies**, And one who sows discord **among brethren**. Pr. 6:16-19*

*A **false balance** is an **abomination** to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight. Pr. 11:1*

***Lying lips** are an **abomination** to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight. Pr. 12:22*

*The **sacrifice of the wicked** is an **abomination** to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. Pr. 15:8*

*The **thoughts of the wicked** are an **abomination** to the Lord, But the words of the pure are pleasant. Pr. 15:26*

*Everyone **proud in heart** is an **abomination** to the Lord; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished. Pr. 16:5*

***He who justifies the wicked**, and he who **condemns the just**, Both of them alike are an **abomination** to the Lord. Pr. 17:15*

***Diverse weights and diverse measures**, They are both alike, an **abomination** to the Lord. Pr. 20:10*

*One who **turns away his ear from hearing the law**, Even **his prayer** is an **abomination**. Pr. 28:9*

*An **unjust man** is an **abomination** to the righteous, And **he who is upright** in the way is an **abomination to the wicked**. Pr. 29:27*

## Abominations practiced in Egypt and in the nations of Canaan:

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. 3 **According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do**; and **according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do**; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4 You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. Lev. 18:1-5*

*'Do not **defile yourselves** with any of these things; **for by all these the nations are defiled**, which I am casting out before you. 25 **For the land is defiled**; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and **the land vomits out its inhabitants**. 26 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and **shall not commit any of these abominations**, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 **(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled)**, 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. 29 **For whoever commits any of these abominations**, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Lev 18:24-29*

As we carefully read these passages, we learn that the things they had witnessed being done in Egypt had defiled Egypt bringing both the Ten Plagues and the drowning of all the men in the Red Sea. While the things they would witness in Canaan had defiled their land bringing their annihilation at the hands of Israel.

***"Do not think in your heart**, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying, '**Because of my righteousness** the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'; but **it is because of the***



**wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out from before you. 5 It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you, Deut 9:4-5**

The land was vomiting out it's inhabitants because of the nauseating and disgusting abominations that were being done. The land had done all the abominations listed below. Israel was warned that if they practiced these abominations the land would also vomit them out.

## **Specific Abominations Listed:**

### **Incest Lev 18:6-18**

'None of you shall approach anyone who is **near of kin to him**, to uncover his nakedness:

The nakedness of your **father** or the nakedness of your **mother**

The nakedness of your **father's wife** you shall not uncover;

The nakedness of your **sister**, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother,

The nakedness of your **son's daughter** or your **daughter's daughter**,

The nakedness of your **father's wife's daughter**,

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your **father's sister**;

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your **mother's sister**,

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your **father's brother**.

You shall not approach his wife; she is your **aunt**.

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your **daughter-in-law**

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your **brother's wife**;

You shall not uncover the nakedness of a **woman and her daughter**,

Nor take a **woman as a rival to her sister**, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

### **Other abominable practices Lev. 18:19-23**

not approach a woman to **uncover her nakedness** as long as she is in her **customary impurity**.

not lie carnally with your **neighbor's wife**, to defile yourself with her.

shall not let any of your **descendants pass through the fire to Molech**,

shall not **lie with a male as with a woman**. It is an abomination.

Nor shall you **mate with any animal**, to defile yourself with it.

Nor shall any **woman stand before an animal to mate with it**. It is perversion.

**By all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. *all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled* – Lev. 18:24; 27**

*'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. 23 And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for **they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them.** Lev 20:22-24*

## **The Abominations of Those Nations –**

**'When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. Deut 18:9**

make **son or daughter pass through the fire**

one who **practices witchcraft**,

a **soothsayer**

one who **interprets omens**

a **sorcerer**, one who **conjures spells**  
or a **medium**  
a **spiritist**  
one who **calls up the dead**

"A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God. Deut 22:5

*For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. 13 You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. 14 For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you. Deut 18:9-14*

*"When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, 30 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that **you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'** 31 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; **for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods;** for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Deut 12:29-31*

***you shall utterly destroy them:** the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, 18 **lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods,** and you sin against the Lord your God. Deut 20:17-18*

## **The Real Essence of Idolatry**

Idolatry is a religion devised by man to serve a god they have imagined with service they create. When men create idolatry, they often devise the things they enjoy, or imagine will be pleasing to their god. Hence these people in Canaan created gods that they would serve with incest, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, and bestiality. They created gods that they could sacrifice the unwanted fruit of sexual immorality of any kind or just rid themselves of a child they did not want. They created gods who would tell them the future, call up the dead, etc.

When Israel went to serve these gods, it was because they wanted to be involved in these practices. No one leaves God to go serve an idol. They leave God because God's laws are confining them and keeping them from doing what they want to do.

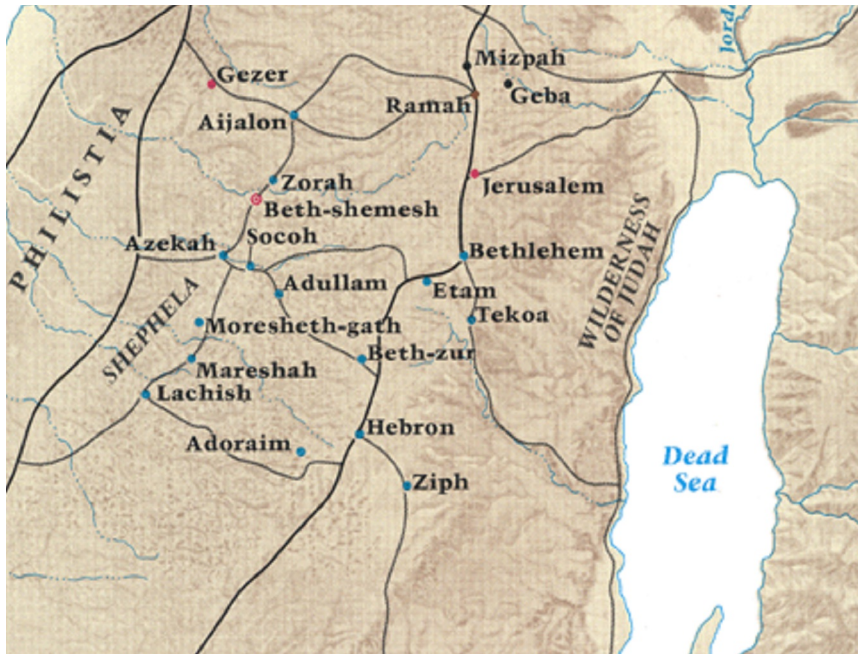
God here proclaimed that under Rehoboam, the nation of Israel went further into all these abominations than any generation before them. Yet it will continue to worsen with successive Kings until God chose to destroy them.

***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. ... 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.** .... 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), 2Kings 21:1-3*

*"Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. 7 In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. 8 You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. 9 In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed; in you are those who eat on the mountains; **in your midst they commit lewdness. 10 In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are set apart during their impurity. 11 One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; and another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. 12 In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me,"** says the Lord God. Ezek 22:6-12*

## Rehoboam - 2 They Humbled Themselves; Therefore I will not Destroy Them

After the departure of the ten tribes (Israel), Rehoboam began to strengthen and fortify cities in Judah. From this time until the end of the OT Scriptures the term **Judah** referred to the tribes of both **Judah and Benjamin**, along with all the others who defected from Israel and came to Judah.



So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6 And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. 11 And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 Also in every city he put shields and spears, and made them very strong, **having Judah and Benjamin on his side.** 2Chr. 11:5-12

Rehoboam took 18 wives and 60 concubines, they gave him 28 sons and 60 daughters. The three wives that are mentioned are granddaughters of David, Jesse, and Absalom, the last being the most favored of all. These wives many wives and had many sons, who also helped strengthen his kingdom.

*Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife **Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David**, and of **Abihail the daughter of Elishah the son of Jesse**. 19 And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. 20 After her he took **Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom**; and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21 Now **Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters**. 22 And **Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maachah as chief, to be leader among his brothers; for he intended to make him king**. 23 He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and he gave them provisions in abundance. **He also sought many wives for them.** 2Chr. 11:18-23*

## Rehoboam and Judah Remained Faithful to God for Three Years

Not only did Benjamin remain with Judah, but many of the Levites who had been living and serving Israel in the Northern region of the ten tribes also left.

*And **from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him**. 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**. 2Chr 11:13-14*

God also wanted us to know that not everyone in the ten tribes followed Jeroboam in his idolatry and sin. Those who “*set their heart to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers.*” With these godly men added to those in Judah, it strengthened his kingdom, but at the end of three years Judah forsook God.

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. 17 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.** 2Chr. 11:16-17

## Israel's Apostasy Led God to Raise an Adversary

After two years in apostasy, God acts by sending the king of Egypt against them. No details are given of a battle, only that all the fortified cities were taken and they were camped outside Jerusalem. Whether these cities were taken without a fight after seeing the superior forces or if there were battles and loss of life is not revealed. We know Rehoboam had a 180,000 men, but the *"twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt — the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians"* were a far superior force so they may have surrendered without a fight.

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 with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt — the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. 4 And **he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.** 2Chr. 12:1-4

## God sent a Prophet and the People were Humbled(Repented)

The prophet Shemaiah was first mentioned when as Rehoboam prepared to fight against the ten tribes to bring them back, he revealed that God had brought this to pass and they needed to stop. Now, he is sent to proclaim God's judgement against them. From the account it appears that the army was camped outside Jerusalem when the prophet arrived. They had two choices, to listen to the prophet believing that this was all from the Lord as a result of their wickedness and repent, or reject his words and seek a way out on their own. This is one of the few times in the history of Judah when they listened to the prophet.

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."* 2Chr. 12:5-6

From this verse it appears that as the outlying fortifications were taken, after hearing of the threat Shishak posed, the leaders had the opportunity to gather to Jerusalem (*the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak*). When God revealed to them that they had forsaken Him and this was His response, the leaders along with the king *humbled* themselves.

The term "*humbled*" is a very important one to understand as it ties in with one of the three greatest threats to man's salvation. The "*pride of life*" has brought multitudes into a bad relationship with the Lord. It was this "*pride of life*" along with arrogance and a "*thinking more highly than they ought to think*," that had led them to the king of Egypt sitting outside the walls threatening to destroy them. It was only because they "*humbled* themselves that they averted a greater punishment.

"*humbled*" is used 36 times in the OT and 28 of those times in Judges through Chronicles. It has two main branches. 18 times it is used of military subjection and 18 times of spiritual submission.

**kana'** This verb **occurs thirty-six times**, It denotes **bringing a proud and recalcitrant people or spirit into subjection**. ... No thoroughgoing distinction is possible between **kana'** and the two other words **'ânā** and **šāpēl** which are most commonly translated "*be humble*." However, **slight distinctions may be drawn**: **'ânā** seems to stress the aspects of **forcible humiliation** (including rape), whereas **šāpēl** contrasts **height and lowness**. **kana'** compares **dominion and subjection** (Ps 106:42). "*Their enemies also oppressed them, And they were brought into subjection under their hand.*" **Eighteen** of the occurrences **refer to military subjection**, most of these being nations which had oppressed Israel or at least threatened to do so. Of the **eighteen references to a spiritual**

**submission, fifteen relate the actions of a king in submitting himself and his nation to God** (1 Kings 21:29; etc.). The emphasis is upon a **proud and independent spirit abasing itself**. Two key references are Lev 26:41 and 2 Chron 7:14 which indicate that so long as a person, or nation, is arrogant and self-sufficient, God can do nothing for them. (TWOT OT:3665)

As we carefully sift through this definition and its importance to our relationship to God and to the final outcome for our eternal souls, it all begins in Leviticus. In this passage, God warned Israel of the most certain judgment and punishment that must follow. If they “*despised His statutes*” or “*abhor his judgments*” and “*break his covenant*,” certain punishment would follow, including “*defeated by your enemies*.” These punishments will continue to increase in severity as long as they remain proud and rebellious.”

*15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, ... 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. 18 And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. Lev. 26:15, 17-20*

The only way to stop these judgments and return to God’s favor, they must “*confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers*,” along with “*their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me*.” Only when their “*uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt*,” will God remember His covenant.

*But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, 41 and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt — 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land. Lev. 26:40-42*

It all begins when their “*uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt*.” the term “*humbled*” is the word above. It is always the necessary first step in all repentance. It is the anguish of the publican in Luke 18 and the godly sorrow of the Corinthians in 2Cor 7.

Uses of these terms in Kings & Chronicles, gives the depth of the importance of humbling ourselves.

*And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 “See how **Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days.** In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.” 2 Kings 21:28-29*

*3 in the eighteenth year of King **Josiah** ....”Concerning the words which you have heard — 19 **because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord** when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the Lord. 2 Kings 22:3, 18-20*

*if **My people who are called by My name will humble themselves**, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chron 7:14*

*(**Rehoboam**) 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.... 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. 2 Chron. 12:6-7; 12, And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel. 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. 2 Chron. 30:1-2; 10-12**

In those days **Hezekiah** was sick and near death, and he prayed to the Lord; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for **his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. 2 Chron 32:24-26**

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. 2 Chron. 33:10-13**

18 Now the rest of the acts of **Manasseh**, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. 19 Also his prayer and how God received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images, **before he was humbled**, indeed they are written among the sayings of Hozai. 2 Chron. 33:18-20

(**Josiah**) 27 because **your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God** when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the Lord. 28 "Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." So they brought back word to the king. 2 Chron. 34:26-28

**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. 2 Chron. 36:11-14

## **May Distinguish My Service from the Service of the Kingdoms**

After God saw their humility and repentance, He fulfilled His word just as He had promised. But He wanted them to learn a lesson (*you reap what you sow*). Although He would not punish them as severely as He had intended, He would not bring them back to the prosperity and peace they had possessed before they sinned.

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.**" 2Chr. 12:7-8

Although God did not allow Shishak to destroy Jerusalem or harm its people. Shishak did take the treasures of God's house and the king's house. Also Shishak, *king of Egypt*, took away *everything!*" Although this may mean nothing more than the temple and king it also may include all

the people who had become wealthy under Solomon's reign. It doesn't appear he took the gold in the temple itself, especially the articles in the most holy place as worship was not impacted.

*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. 2Chr. 12:9*

*It happened in **the fifth year of King Rehoboam** that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 26 And he **took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything.** He also took away **all the gold shields which Solomon had made** 1Kings 14:25-26*

Again it is mentioned that it was Rehoboam's humbling of himself that changed the outcome.

*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. 2Chr. 12:12*

God equated Rehoboam's humbling of himself as the manner in which he strengthened himself for the remainder of his reign. He reigned 17 total years. The first 3 were in an apostasy that lasted about 2 years. Then the last 12 years of his reign were spent faithfully serving the Lord.

*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. 2Chr 12:13*

## **Rehoboam did not Prepare his Heart to Seek the Lord.**

This was Rehoboam's real problem. No one had taught him, or he had refused to do it. He did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.

*And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord. 2Chr 12:14*

Hence one of God's expectations is that His people prepare their heart. This was something David understood and had told Solomon to do.

*"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD." 1 Chr 22:19*

*"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. 1Chr. 28:9*

Isaiah had warned Israel to do the same thing while there was still time.

*Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Isa 55:6-7*

Rehoboam's grandson learned this lesson.

*And they entered into the covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and soul; 13 and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. 2 Chr 15:12-13*

Not only were there problems with Shishak, but Jeroboam also sought war. After Rehoboam's death, his son Abijah reigned in his place.

*Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. 31 So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then Abijah his son reigned in his place. 1 Kings 14:29-31*

# King Ahab

## Introduction:

Although there is no indication that God raised up the house of Baasha to destroy Jeroboam and it appears He simply allowed the wickedness of the nation to continue to grow until this man created his own conspiracy, a later prophet will explain that God was actually involved.

*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.** 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, 1 Kings 15:27-29*

After Baasha began to reign, he showed no interest in serving the Lord, but instead followed all the sins of Jeroboam. We will see this in every king that followed. Regardless of the prophet who warned them or the terrible manner in which they were exterminated, not one of them ever returned to the Lord or showed any interest in following the Law.

*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. 1 Kings 15:33-34*

## Jehu the Prophet

God sent another prophet with another warning. Jehu the son of Hanani is another prophet we know nothing about. But he gives Baasha the same message Ahijah had given to Jeroboam.

*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." 1 Kings 16:1-4*

Like Jeroboam(22 years), Baasha reigned for many years(24 years). After his death the similarities as Jeroboam's son Nadab reigned two years and Baasha's son Elah also reigned two years.

*Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and **reigned two years** in Tirzah. 9 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. 10 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.** 1 Kings 16:8-10*

This one does not appear to be of the Lord since after killing all of Baasha's house he only reigned for seven days and then was executed.

*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, ... 15 **Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days.** And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. ... 16 "**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.** 1 Kings 16:15-16*

## Omri becomes King

The rise of Omni to power again appears to be in the providence of God since there is no indication of God's direct involvement. He simply became more powerful than his rival and became the king.

*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.** 1 Kings 16:21-23

Nothing of note is mentioned about king Omri with the exception of his purchase of a hill from Shemer which later became the city of Samaria. Another important detail is the fact that the downward progression of the kings also began. Omri did worse than all who were before him.

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. 1 Kings 16:24-26

## **Omri's son Ahab becomes King**

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.** 1 Kings 16:29-31

The downward progression of the kings of Israel continued under the reign of Ahab. He too did worse than all who were before him. The strongest evil brought up against him was his marriage to Jezebel and the idolatry she brought with her.

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.** 1 Kings 16:31-34

## **The Sidonians**

Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Sidonians. Sidon was the firstborn son of Noah's grandson Canaan and thus among the cursed that were to be destroyed by Israel when they entered the land of Canaan.

9:25 Then he (Noah) said: **"Cursed be Canaan;** A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." ... 10:15 **Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn,** and Heth; 16 the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; 17 the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; 18 the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. 19 And **the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon** as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; **then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim,** as far as Lasha. Gen 9:25, 10:15-19

Just before Joshua died, God revealed the land that was yet to be conquered and listed among them not only the five lords of the Philistines, but also the Sidonians.

Now **Joshua was old, advanced in years.** And the Lord said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and **there remains very much land yet to be possessed.** ... 2 all the **territory of the Philistines** and all that of the Geshurites, 3 from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); **the five lords of the Philistines** ... 6 and **all the Sidonians** — them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; Josh 13:1-3, 6

In Joshua's final speech, he warned Israel that if they did not drive these nations out they would become snares and traps, scourges on their sides, and thorns in their eyes.

Or else, **if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations** — these that remain among you — and **make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you,** 13 know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But **they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land** which the Lord your God has given you. Josh 23:12-13

God later condemned Asher because they did not drive out the inhabitants of Sidon as He had commanded. Later God revealed that the Sidonians were part of the nations God left to test Israel

**Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. Judg 1:31-32**

Now **these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them**, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, **five lords of the Philistines**, all **the Canaanites**, the **Sidonians**, and the **Hivites** who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And **they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord**, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. Judg 3:1-4

Even king Solomon brought doom to himself when he married women from among the Sidonians.

But **King Solomon loved many foreign women**, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, **Sidonians**, and Hittites — 2 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. 1Kings 11:1-2

Ahab also ignored all these warnings and perhaps did not even know about them. But the terrible consequences God had warned against came to pass all the same and brought Israel that much closer to the doom God had decreed through Joshua's last words:

**But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.** Josh 23:12-13

## **God Raised up Elijah**

Soon after this marriage, Elijah appears with no introduction. The lives of Ahab, Jezebel and Elijah become interwoven throughout the remainder of First Kings.

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." 1 Kings 17:1

As this drought continued for over 3 years (Jas 1:17), Jezebel began to massacre God's prophets. Whether this was tied to the drought or something she was doing that led to the drought is not revealed.

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? 1K. 18:4, 13

While killing God's prophets she was also gathering prophets of Baal and Asherah. At the end of the drought, the great contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal occurred which resulted in the death of 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Asherah, it is expressly stated that these 850 prophets were eating at Jezebel's table.

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.** 1K. 18:19

After God acted for Elijah, he killed all these prophets and raised the ire and hatred of Jezebel.

And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and **Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.** 1 Kings 18:40

And Ahab told Jezebel **all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.** 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not **make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.**" 1K. 19:1-2

This led Elijah to flee and explaining to God why he ran away.

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; **because the children of Israel**

**have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword.**  
*I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." 1 Kings 19:14f*

God then revealed to Elijah that even after all the years of apostasy and the ravages of Ahab and Jezebel He still had 7,000 faithful servants in Israel.

*Yet **I have reserved seven thousand in Israel**, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." 1 Kings 19:18*

We will look at the end of the life of Ahab when we study the lives of Elijah and Elisha. But consider this summary of his life.

*But **there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness** in the sight of the Lord, **because Jezebel his wife stirred him up.** 26 And **he behaved very abominably in following idols**, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. 1 Kings 21:25-26*

# Elijah

## Introduction

Like most of the non-literary prophets, the call and early life of the Elijah are not revealed. Unlike Isaiah, Jeremiah or even Elisha, when and how Elijah became a prophet are a mystery. Even at his introduction with the drought in Israel, there is no clear indication whether Elijah is already prophet. Even James only calls Elijah “a man with a like nature like ours.” Perhaps the answer to this issue is that through this fervent prayer, God called Elijah and not only gave him an affirmative answer, but called him to become a prophet through whom God would work.

*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit. Jas 5:17-18*

Here is what we know:

*And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." 2 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 4 And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 1 Kings 17:1-4*

It seems fairly clear, since “the word of the Lord came to him” right after he made this proclamation, it is probably, possible and even likely that it had also come to him before. There is no agreement among the encyclopedias or commentaries as to where Elijah was born or came from. Even *Tishbe* is not easily located and Gilead covers a large territory including East Manasseh and Gad.

## The Drought of Three and a Half Years

His name in Hebrew is *ēlîyâ* or *‘ēlîyāhu*: “my God is Jehovah” or “Yah is God” “God Jehovah is He.” He simply appears at this moment to warn Ahab of the coming drought. This was a threat God had given to Israel before they ever entered the promised land.

*Now it shall come to pass, **if you diligently obey** the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, ... 12 the Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to **give the rain to your land in its season**, and to bless all the work of your hand. .... 15 "But it shall come to pass, **if you do not obey** the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today .... 23 And **your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.** 24 The Lord will **change the rain of your land to powder and dust;** from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. Deut 28:1, 12, 15, 23-24*

After delivering the message, Elijah was told to leave and hide. God evidently knew that Jezebel would quickly kill him if he remained. He is told to hide by a brook that flows into the Jordan. He also promised Elijah that by His command the ravens would bring him food. Each morning and each evening the ravens would bring food to him. We have no time frame, but the drought eventually caused the brooks and rivers to dry up.

*So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. 7 And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 1Kings 17:5-7*

## The Widow of Zarephath

The “word of the Lord again comes to Elijah instructing him to go to Zarephath which is about 10 miles below Sidon on the Coast. God has somehow commanded this widow to provide for him.

*Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 1Kings 17:8-9*

When Elijah arrives he finds the widow living under dire circumstances likely facing most of the people during this drought. Her food has nearly been depleted as she only has a handful of flour

and a little oil left. So when Elijah asked for something to eat, she explained her circumstances.

*So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 So she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die." 1 Kings 17:10-12*

Jesus spoke of this event during His Ministry. He adds that there were many widows in Israel, but God sent Elijah to this widow. Hence the widow was commanded to feed Elijah and Elijah was sent to the widow to provide for her.

*Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. Luke 4:24-27*

While there, God continued to provide for them by replenishing the flour bin and oil jar for as long as Elijah stayed with her.

*For thus says the Lord God of Israel: "The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth." 15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah. 1 Kings 17:14-16*

## **The First Resurrection**

As life proceeded, we do not know what Elijah did during that three year period. It must have been a lonely and frustrating experience to be alone all that time at the brook and to be staying with a widow. During that three and a half year period, Elijah simply waited. During this waiting period, the son of the widow became ill and died of his illness. Like so many, the widow takes this personally as though God is trying to tell her something.

*Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. 18 So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" 1 Kings 17:17-18*

Elijah proves the error of this statement by bringing the son back to life. This is the first example of such a miracle in the Bible. While Moses was allowed to be a part of the ten plagues and the bringing of water to Israel, he didn't perform any miracles like this. Again, we don't know if this was done at the command of the Lord or if Elijah took it on himself to plead with the Lord, but it appears from the account that he was pleading with God through prayer.

*And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord and said, "O Lord my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" 21 And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, "O Lord my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." 22 Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. 1 Kings 17:19-22*

Although one would have thought that the food continuing through the drought would have been enough, the result of the miracle was to increase the faith of the widow.

*And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!" 24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is the truth." 1 Kings 17:23-24*

## **The Drought comes to an End**

After the "three years and six months" revealed in James, God appeared again to Elijah commanding him to return to Israel.

*And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." 1Kings 18:1*

Since Elijah had revealed that this rain would only come at the his word, God was working through Elijah to show that the drought came from him and influence as many as possible.

The long famine had taken its toll on the ten tribes of Israel. Nothing is said about Judah, but they were in the midst of the forty-one year of Asa and his son Jehoshaphat started his reign in the fourth year of Ahab's and reigned 25 years. They had 66 years of being reigned over by two good kings, so there was no reason for the drought to affect them.

*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. 1Kings 22:41-43*

Things had become so dire that Ahab and Obadiah split up the land to search for some spring of source that would have kept the pasture green. Elijah chose to appear before one of the few righteous men in Israel.

*Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. 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.) 5 And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." 6 So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. 7 Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?" 8 And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'" 1Kings 18:3-8*

Instead of being filled with joy, Obadiah is filled with dread. Ahab has sought and searched everywhere for Elijah, and his ability to disappear appears to have become legendary. Obadiah pleads with Elijah not to disappear as he had done before.

*So he said, "**How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me?**" 10 As the Lord your God lives, **there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you;** and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. 11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah is here!"' 12 And it shall come to pass, **as soon as I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you to a place I do not know;** so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. 1Kings 18:9-12*

Elijah promised Obadiah that he will remain and meet with Ahab.

*Then Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." 16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 1Kings 18:15-16*

## **Ahab and Elijah Meet Again**

At their first meeting Elijah had one sentence for Ahab and then he left.

*And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "**As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.**" 1Kings 17:1*

Any hope that this had touched Ahab's heart is removed with his first words to Elijah. Which is essentially, this is all your fault. You are the one who has brought all this trouble on Israel. He had still not made the application that this was not from Elijah but from God.

This lie is first removed with Elijah's answer that it was Ahab and not himself who had brought all this trouble on Israel. It will be further removed with the request that first all Israel be gathered(invited) to witness the event God had planned. Then all the prophets of Baal and Asherah needed to be gathered together to participate in the event God wanted to occur.

*17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"*

*18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals. 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." 1 Kings 18:17-19*

Some see this event as the contest between Elijah and the 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah. Others see this as a contest between God and Baal and his wife Asherah. Both are true but the applications Elijah makes are between God and Baal.

## **The Contest on Mt Carmel**

After everything is prepared exactly as Elijah specified, **all** the children of Israel and **all** the prophets have gathered on Mt Carmel. Elijah addresses them but they do not answer at the first. He strikes at the very heart of the problem. They were not fully committed to either God. They were limping between two sides. One side wanting to please Ahab and Jezebel, and enjoy the illicit fruits of idolatry. The other side a consciousness of the one true God and knowing in their hearts what they should be doing.

*So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 1Kings 18:20-21*

Then Elijah proposes the test or contest. He is one prophet of the Lord and the prophet of Baal has 450(although gathered there, the 400 prophets of Asherah are not mentioned). Two bulls will be brought and used for sacrifice. They get the first choice of the bull, then both will kill the bull and set the meat on wood to be accepted. The God who answered by fire would then be the true God. This time all the people respond.

*Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. 24 Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." 1 Kings 18:20-24*

Things proceed exactly as Elijah had proclaimed and the prophets of Baal are allowed to go first. From morning until noon they call on the name of Baal and nothing happens.

*So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made. 1 Kings 18:26*

Elijah then begins to mock and jeer at these prophets, trying to make the most out of their failure for the people to see. Maybe he was too busy, or meditating and unable to hear. Perhaps he is on a journey or asleep. Each of these is a mockery of their inability to get a response.

He rouses the prophets to greater efforts, cutting themselves until their own blood is gushing out of the wounds, but still nothing happened.

*And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29 And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. 1Kings 18:27-29*

After about three more hours, as the time of the evening sacrifice neared, Elijah took over. First, he got the attention of all the people by calling them over to witness what he was about to do. The altar that had been to God, but had been broken down was repaired and twelve stones were taken to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. After the altar was built Elijah took the time to dig a trench all the way around the altar. In the background the prophets of Baal are probably still trying, but all eyes are on Elijah.

*Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he*

repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name." 32 Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 1 Kings 18:30-32

Elijah then placed the wood on the altar, placed the pieces of the bull on the altar and then drenched the altar with water so no trickery could be later put forth as the reason this happened.

*And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." 34 Then he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time; and he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. 1 Kings 18:33-35*

At the moment of the evening sacrifice all is prepared and Elijah makes a simple prayer request of God.

*And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." 1 Kings 18:36-37*

God answered in an act of great power and majesty. The wet wood, bull, and stones were all engulfed in fire. At this moment of triumph, Elijah uses it as the opportunity to execute all the prophets of Baal.

*Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" 40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. 1 Kings 18:38-40*

## **The Drought Ends**

Elijah then tells Ahab to rejoice because it would soon be raining and the drought ended. This too is directly tied to this contest. With all the prophets of Baal executed, there was no one to take credit for Baal.

*Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." 42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, 43 and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." 1 Kings 18:41-43*

Elijah knows God's will is for the rain to come. He also knows that it will be through his word that the rain will begin. He prays for rain, then has his servant go check to see if anything has happened. This occurs seven times (the number of completeness), then a small cloud is seen over the sea. This is enough for Elijah to know he has attained his purpose.

*So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again." 44 Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.'" 1 Kings 18:43-44*

Like Samson, the power of God worked on Elijah so he could run more quickly than Ahab's horses.

*Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. 1 Kings 18:45-46*

## **Jezebel's Threat**

God doesn't give us much information, but Elijah had to feel some righteous indignation and a hope that maybe he had done something to change things. After the miraculous encounter, with all Israel as witness and the execution of the worst of the evil influence in Israel, perhaps Israel would return.



But whatever hopes he had were shattered when he heard the threat from the evil Jezebel that Elijah knew from her past in which she had killed all the prophets of God she could get her hands on that, that she meant and would do all within her power to accomplish this.

*And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 1 Kings 19:1-2*

Her words contain a form of an oath to her gods. If I can't kill you like you killed them then let my gods do even more to me. As soon as Elijah heard these words he fled. Some have maligned Elijah for fleeing, but that was exactly what God had told him to do the first time.

*Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 3 "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 1 Kings 17:2-4*

*And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. 1 Kings 19:3*

As Gabriel spoke to Zacharias about the son Elizabeth would soon bear, he spoke of "the spirit and power of Elijah" which makes it impossible for us to see him as a coward or one who doesn't have enough faith to stand.

*But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and **your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son**, and you shall call his name John. ... 17 **He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah**, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "**I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.** Lk 1:13; 17-19*

What really happened is brought out in the following narrative. Elijah went from the thrill and excitement of victory to the realization it was an empty victory. He had accomplished nothing. He was fleeing out of discouragement and disillusionment. Nothing could be done and there was no point in doing it anymore. He drops off his servant in Beersheba and continues his travels into the wilderness.

That night, Elijah prays that he might die. Again, this can be interpreted in different ways that describe his character. It gets clearer as he repeats himself that it is simply resignation of the facts.

*But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "**It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!**" 1 Kings 19:4*

*10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." 1 Kings 19:10, 14*

## **Elijah Goes to Mt Horeb**

Elijah is discouraged. He thought he was going to be instrumental in changing Israel, but has come to see that it will never happen. His initial words do not fully convey his mind like the second. The angel brings him food because God had determined to allow Elijah to come to Mt Horeb, which was the place he first spoke to Moses out of the bush and later gave the law to Israel.

*Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." 8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as **Horeb, the mountain of God.** 1 Kings 19:5-8*

*Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and **came to Horeb, the mountain of God.** 2 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. 12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt,*

***you shall serve God on this mountain."*** Ex 3:1-2 Ex 3:12

Since in his own mind, there is nothing left to do, he has come to Mtg Horeb. Was it because this is where Moses also spoke to the Lord? Was he told to go there, or did he choose it on his own. These are important questions to answer if we are to know all that is happening here, but they can't be answered so we must walk carefully.

At Mt Horeb Elijah found a cave and spent the night there. At some point, without warning, the word of the Lord came to him. It is important to note that not once is Elijah rebuked or chastened. Once again, he is only asked why he has come. As noted above, his reasons have deepened as the trip proceeded.

*And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." 1Kings 19:9-10*

## **Elijah Spoke to God**

The Word of the Lord then told Elijah to go out of the cave and stand out on the mountain before the Lord. The similarities between this event and that of Moses are important.

*And **behold, the Lord passed by**, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. 13 So it was, when Elijah heard it, that **he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave**. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 1 Kings 19:11-13*

***So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."*** Ex 33:22-23

*Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 **And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed**, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Ex 34:5-7*

There are several similarities. They are on the same mountain. In both cases the Lord passed by. In both cases, God spoke. There are also some differences. For Elijah, there were four events to introduce the Lord Himself to Elijah.

1. A great and strong wind that broke rocks.
2. An Earthquake
3. A Fire
4. A still small voice.

The Lord's presence was not in the first three, but in the fourth. Something must have been different because Elijah responded differently. The first three were also present before God gave the ten commandments.

*Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were **thunderings and lightnings**, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was **completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire**. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and **the whole mountain quaked greatly**. Ex 19:16-19*

*For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that **burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest**, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. Heb 12:18-20*

The still small voice said something, but what it was is not revealed, but it warned Elijah that something was different. By covering his face, he manifested his respect and fear of the Lord. He knew something very special had just happened.

## **God gave Elijah a new Task**

He answered the question exactly the same way he did to the “*Word of the Lord.*” But this time, God gave him new instructions.

*So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."*

*Then the Lord said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, **anoint Hazael as king over Syria.** 16 Also you shall **anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel.** And **Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.** 17 It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 1Kings 19:13-17*

Elijah is to return back to complete his work. It appears these words were designed to comfort Elijah. While Elijah did anoint Elisha, and both Jehu and Hazael took great vengeance for God over Israel, Elijah only lived to see the first. Elisha did the other two.

1. Anoint Hazael as king of Syria (2Kings 8:13).
2. Anoint Jehu to destroy Ahab(2Kings 9:1-10)
3. Anoint Elisha to replace him.

Again, it appears these words are given to comfort Elijah, all three of those who were soon to come to power would complete the mission of Elijah. Then God revealed an important fact that Elijah was unaware of and had completely skewed his thinking. He was not alone. There were many others.

*Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." 1 Kings 19:18*

No matter how scattered they were, He who numbers the very hairs of our head knows who they are and were they are.

*Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2Tim 2:19*

## **Elijah Calls Elisha**

Much is left out of this account. How did Elisha know that it was Elijah who placed his mantle(cloak of sheepskin or goatskin?) on him? When he asked to kiss his father and mother was it a rebuke? Did he go back and say goodbye? Why did he slaughter two of the 24 oxen who were plowing and give it to the people?

*So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" 21 So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant. 1 Kings 19:19-21*

The mantle of Elijah is a word used in several different ways. It is first used of Esau who was like a “*hairy garment.*” Then of the Babylonian garment that tempted Achan. Then several times of Elijah who “*wrapped his face in a mantle*” on Mt Horeb. Then took it to strike the waters and they were divided. Later after Elijah went to heaven in a whirlwind, Elisha found his mantle and also used it to divide the waters. It appears to be something of coarse hair, maybe the leather hide of an animal that was not shaved to remove the hair.

*"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. Zech 13:4*

*Then he said to them, "What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?" 8 So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." 2 Kings 1:7-8*

## Elijah's Final Works

After Elijah called Elisha, his main work was done. Although the historical narrative continues, Elijah is only mentioned three more times. Elijah:

- 1 Rebuked Ahab for events leading to the death of Naboth for his vineyard(1Kings 21:17-29).
- 2 Condemned Ahab's son Ahaziah, for sending to Baal-Zebub the God of Ekron, instead of inquiring of the God of Israel(2Kings 1:3-17),
- 3 Was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot (2Kings 2).

Of the three things God had told Elijah he would do after Mt Horeb, the only one he did himself was to anoint Elisha. Then through Elisha, Hazael was told he would be king of Syria(2Kings 8:13), then, through the words of Elisha, one of the sons of the prophets was sent to anoint Jehu as King(2Kings 9:1-10).

## Ahab's Final Years

The end of Ahab's life is briefly recorded after Elisha became a prophet. First, there is a war with Syria that began when Ben-Hadad arrived in Samaria with thirty two kings and multitudes of soldiers. His first request was for all the silver and gold that Ahab possessed along with Ahab's most beautiful wives and children. Ahab quickly agreed to this request, but Ben-Hadad wanted more. He wanted his servants to pass through Samaria and take everything that was considered valuable, not only from Ahab, but from everyone else.

*Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; 6 but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, that whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put it in their hands and take it.'" 1Kings 20:5-6*

Ahab and the elders decide to stand up against the king

*And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent." 9 Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.'" 1Kings 20:8-9*

At that moment, God intervened and promised a victory to them. This was an act of grace designed to bring the people back to him. Yet God used neither Elijah or Elisha, but an unknown prophet.

*Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the Lord.'" 1 Kings 20:13*

After a great victory, Ben-Hadad was counseled that the God of Israel was a God of the hills and not of the plain. If he returned and fought in the plain, he would be victorious. Because of this foolish blasphemy, God again promised Ahab a victory.

*Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they." 1 Kings 20:23*

*Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the Lord: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord. 1Kings 20:28*

After the battle, Ahab foolishly made a covenant with the man God had delivered into his hand for destruction. God sent a prophet to condemn Ahab for this decision. Ahab was very unhappy.

*Then he said to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.'" 43 So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria. 20:42-43*

## **Naboth's Vineyard**

Another clear insight into the character of both Ahab and Jezebel is revealed in this account. It begins with Ahab's request to purchase a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth. Since it was close to his own home Ahab proposed a swap, but Naboth held fast to his right to keep the vineyard given by lot to his fathers at the time of Joshua. Naboth might have saved his life if he had done what Moses had provided for in the Law, but perhaps Naboth had no confidence that once out of his possession, the Law of Moses would have been honored.

*'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. 24 And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land. ... 28 But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession. Lev 25:23- 24 28*

After Naboth's refusal, Ahab becomes sullen, angry and refuses to eat or even talk.

*So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. 1 Kings 21:4-5*

Jezebel promised to get the vineyard for Ahab, then devised a wicked and devious plan to murder Naboth and take his vineyard. Using Ahab's seal, she demanded the city set up false witnesses, accuse and convict Naboth of blasphemy and then take him out and stone him. They followed the letter and after Naboth was dead, Jezebel told Ahab he could have the vineyard, because of that death. Ahab doesn't ask how he died(probably because he knew from past experience).

In their last meeting together, God had sent Elijah to condemn Ahab.

*Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who lives in Samaria. There he is, in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. 19 You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "Have you murdered and also taken possession?"' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours."'" 1Kings 21:17-19*

Once again, Ahab blames all his problems on Elijah, calling him an enemy. But Elijah sets the record straight by telling him why God was going to do to his house what he had done to Jeroboam.

*And he answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord: 21 'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22 I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.' 23 And concerning Jezebel the Lord also spoke, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' 24 The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field." 1Kings 21:20-24*

## **Though Wicked God was Moved by Ahab's Repentance**

We read many times of God's mercy and compassion. How forgiving He is whenever He sees remorse, repentance, and humility. Few cases are more stark than the wickedness of Ahab and God's desire to show mercy to him because of his act of humility.

*But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26 And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. 27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning. 28 And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house." 1Kings 21:25-29*

## **Ahab's Death**

Three years after this event, Ahab requests Jehoshaphat's help in restoring the city of Ramoth

Gilead from Syria. Although Jehoshaphat agreed to go, he placed a condition regarding asking for God's guidance. Although Ahab produces 400 "prophets" who proclaim victory, Jehoshaphat wants a true prophet of the Lord, Ahab is aware of one, but again assumes he is hated by him because of the rebukes due to his evil.

*Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the Lord today." 6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?" So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king." 7 And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of Him?" 8 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!" 1Kings 22:5-8*

Micaiah is called for and warned to give a good report of the coming battle. Micaiah is more concerned about God's truth and says so. He faces a false prophet with an elaborate scheme to convince Ahab and Jehoshaphat. His first prophesy must have been spoken in derision since Ahab asked for the truth. Micaiah's true prophecy is Ahab's death.

*Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?" And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king!" 16 So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" 17 Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'" 1 Kings 22:15-17*

Ahab is very displeased and manifested no faith at all. Instead he chose to put Micaiah into prison and to remain there until his return. He left with Micaiah's final words.

*So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; 27 and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace.'" 28 But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!" 1 Kings 22:26-28*

Ahab seeks to thwart this prophesy by disguising himself, but God still found a means to bring about His prophesy.

*34 Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." ... 37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. 38 Then someone washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken. 1Kings 22:34, 37-38*

After his death, his son Ahaziah reigned, but died two years later.

*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. 1 Kings 22:51-52*

*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 Kings 3:1*

## **Ahaziah meets Elijah**

In a blatant act of idolatry, Ahaziah sends servants to Ekron for the help of the God Baal-Zebub (the lord of a fly). Elijah intercepts the message and sends the servants back with a strong rebuke.

*But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4 Now therefore, thus says the Lord: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" So Elijah departed. 2Kings 1:3-4*

Ahaziah seeks to capture Elijah, sending out captains of 50 men to take him. Twice the Lord put those sent out to death. The third man pleads with Elijah to spare his life and the Angel of the Lord bids Elijah to go with him.

*Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came*

*and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight." 15 And the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." 2 Kings 1:13-15*

Elijah returned with this captain and told Ahaziah he would not leave his bed alive.

The last event in Elijah's life is so closely tied to the beginning of Elisha's work that we will cover them together.

# Elisha

Our introduction to Elisha manifested God's foreknowledge of Elisha's heart. Clearly he was one of the seven thousand that had not bowed their knee to Baal, and while at Mt Horeb(Sinai), God told Elijah to anoint Elisha as his replacement.

*And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 1 Kings 19:15-18*

As soon as Elijah returned to Israel, This is the first thing he did when he returned to Israel.

*So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" 21 So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant. 1 Kings 19:19-21*

Elisha accepts the call, but takes the time to cut his ties. First he kisses his mother and father and tells them goodbye. Then he takes the yoke of oxen he had been plowing with and after slaughtering them, took the wood from the yoke and boiled the flesh in that fire. In that way, he showed to all that he was leaving with no intention of returning. After that, he followed Elijah and became his servant. An interesting idiom that captured this service is "washed the hands of"

*So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah." 2 Kings 3:11*

All that Elisha did for Elijah are passed over completely. His name is not even mentioned until the day that Elijah was to be taken up to heaven. The only event that gives us some idea of the emotional relationship between these two men is seen when he tore his clothes. The final day they are together is ambiguous. Elisha will not leave Elijah, but whether it was this due to his closeness to him or his desire to ask for the double portion is impossible to determine.

As the final day begins, it is evident that Elisha has some reason to suspect that Elijah is leaving, but we are not told what it was. He refuses to leave him to travel alone.

*And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel. 2 Kings 2:1-2*

Elisha is not the only one who knows of Elijah's departure, so there were either words from Elijah or some other revelation.

*Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" 2 Kings 2:3*

First at Gilgal(2:1) then Bethel(2:1), then Jericho(2:4), then on to the Jordan(2:6) Elijah asked Elisha to stay behind and he refused. At each location the "sons of the prophets" knew Elijah would be leaving that day.

*Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho. 5 Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!" 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. 8 Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them*





crossed over on dry ground. 2 Kings 2:4-8

After they crossed the Jordan, the time of the departure had come and Elijah asked Elisha if he had any last request from him. Elisha for something that Elijah called “a hard thing.”

*And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?" Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." 10 So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." 2Kings 2:9-11*

Elisha wants a “double portion” of “your spirit.” None of the translations use a capital on the

word “spirit” which means no one wants to commit themselves to whether this was the Holy Spirit he was asked for or simply the same spirit (attitude and disposition) that Elijah had displayed. This is clearly the meaning of the words of Gabriel to Zacharias about his son.

*He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Lk. 1:17*

Hence Elisha is most likely asking to be placed into the same role and work that Elijah had except he wanted it doubled. After all the discouragement and difficulties Elijah had suffered, he knew that this young prophet was asking for a hard thing indeed. Yet this is not a request that Elijah can answer. Whether this answer came from inspiration, or only from Elijah’s own mind, the condition set forth will be immediately known by how Elijah is taken from the earth. If God allows Elisha the opportunity to actually see Elijah taken up into heaven then he most certainly will receive that double portion. But if God withholds that sight, then it will not happen.

## **Elijah taken to Heaven**

They continued talking as they walked, until suddenly a chariot of fire appeared.

*Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. 2Kings 2:12*

There are too few details to get a clear picture. There is a chariot that appears to be of fire, with horses that also have the appearance of fire. They separate Elijah from Elisha and Elijah was taken up into heaven. Whether he died and his body was buried somewhere, or whether like Enoch, he was translated and did not see death is not revealed. There is so much we would like to know about this event, but for God’s own reasons this is all we have received.

*"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut 29:29*

Elisha tearing his clothes is the only indication we have of his emotional state. Clothes were only torn during moments of great distress and sorrow.

## **Elisha’s Double Portion**

The conditions set by Elijah had been met. Elisha had seen him taken away and in addition, Elijah’s mantle had also been left behind. It is evident that Elisha had no doubt when he struck the water.

*He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the*

*water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over. 2 Kings 2:12-14*

Yet his expression: “*where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?*” is puzzling. Under the circumstances, it does not appear to be doubt. But a simple question. Although Elijah has said that this would be the case, maybe Elisha was still leaving it up to God to make the final decision and reveal Himself. If that is the case, “*where is the LORD(YHWH) the God(ELOHIYM) of Elijah*” is a simple prayer of hope and desire, which God immediately answered by opening the Jordan as he had for Elijah.

Since the Jordan was divided exactly the same way as it had for Elijah, those who witnessed this act realized that he had been given the same power.

*Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. 16 Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." 2Kings 2:15-16*

Elisha tells them not to go and look but they continued asking in such a way that left Elisha feeling ashamed. He knew God had taken care of this matter just as He had for Moses it.

*Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, ... 5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. Deut 34:1; 5-7*

While no one had sent to check on Moses, because they continued to plead, Elisha allowed them to go on this fruitless endeavor. But he rebuked them for it after they returned. For although they had said “*the spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha,*” they still didn’t believe.

*And he said, "You shall not send anyone." 17 But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send them!" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. 18 And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?" 2 Kings 2:16-18*

## **Elisha began his Ministry in Jericho**

The words of the prophets in Jericho, may have been a simple statement or a hopeful request.

*Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren." 2 Kings 2:19*

Perhaps this problem with the water was a part of the curse God had placed on Jericho. Joshua had sternly warned that the man who sought to rebuild Jericho would lose his firstborn and youngest sons. During the reign of Ahab this curse had been fulfilled, but the city had been rebuilt.

*Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "**Cursed be the man before the Lord who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.**" Josh 6:26*

*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. 1 Kings 16:33-34*

Since Ahab “*reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years*” (1Kings 16:29), and his son died after two years(1Kings 22:51), the city had only recently been rebuilt(probably less than 30 years).

Through inspiration, God revealed to Elisha that He would heal the waters, and gave the method by which it would be done.

*And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. 21 Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the Lord: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" 22 So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke. 2Kings 2:20-22*

## **The Youths in Bethel**

As Elijah began his work, he returned to Bethel, which was the seat of the religious error set up by Jeroboam at Bethel and Dan. There is so much we don't know about these 42 youths.

*Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!" 24 So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the Lord. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. 2 Kings 2:23-24*

Did they know this was Elisha the prophet of God? Was their mocking because he was a prophet, or just a sign of their unruly character? When Elisha pronounced this curse, did he know that God would respond with those two bears? The term "mauled" is translated *tore up* in the NAS. It is a strong term used for "ripping open the women with child," and "breaking open the fountain of the deep" during the flood. It is very possible these youths were killed. But regardless of the outcome, it was of God and not from Elisha who only cursed them in the name of the LORD and left the nature of the curse to Him.

## **Elisha Works with the Kings of Israel and Judah**

Although just mentioned here, Elijah was still alive until the death of his older brother so it is in the midst of this twelve year reign that these events occurred.

Like all the previous kings, Jehoram also held fast to the sins of Jeroboam refusing to return to the worship of the LORD that was written in the Law of Moses. Although he did reform Israel in its worship of Baal, God had Elisha treat him with disrespect for his wickedness.

*Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." ... 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. 2 Kings 3:13-15*

## **Punishing Moab**

A brief history of Moab reminds us that they were the offspring of Lot, and God had initially forbidden Israel from taking any of their land. But they hired Balaam to curse them and using Balaam's advice tempted Israel into idolatry. Thus began a long and contentious relationship, which still continued.

Their subjugation to Israel had been done through David and Solomon and it appears had continued until the death of Ahab when they broke away (2Kings 1:1). Jehoram decided to retake Moab, but enlisted the help both of Judah and Edom.

The mission seemed ill fated as they were seven days journey toward Moab and had found no water. Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of the LORD, and he was informed the Elisha was among them. Elisha prophecies that God will first give them the water they seek and then give Moab in battle and they were to severely punish as a judgment of the LORD.

*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." 2 Kings 3:17-19*

First, at Elisha's word they filled the valley with ditches and God then filled those ditches with water. When the sun's early light reflected on this water, the Moabites mistook it for the blood of the soldiers, they rushed into the camp to take the spoil and were routed by the soldiers of the three kings. After destroying the army they did the Lord's bidding regarding his national judgment against Moab.

## **Elisha Saves a Prophet's Widow and the Son of the Shunammite**

After an unfortunate death of a devout son of the prophets, the widow came to plead for help from

Elisha. Her two sons were to be sold to pay the debt (so much for compassion in that age). Elijah finds out she has some oil in the house and bids her collect as many empty vessels as she can find and God creates enough oil to pay for her debts.

The story of the Shunammite woman is a fascinating story that stands alone in the Old Testament. It begins with the kindness of this woman toward Elisha.

Shunem was located just below the Sea of Galilee not far from what would later become Nazareth. There was a wealthy woman who recognized Elisha as a "holy man of God." She wanted to do an act of kindness for him and persuaded her husband to build him a small room. Elisha is deeply touched by this kindness, recognizing it for an act of faith and submission to God (another from among the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal). He calls her and asks if there is anything she would like him to do for her. Her answer revealed her generosity and humility. She had not done this for gain, but was comfortable among her people.

*13 And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'" She answered, "I dwell among my own people."*

This intrigued Elisha even more and when he found out she had no son, he called her into his presence to make a promise from the Lord.

*14 So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old." 15 So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16 Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!" 17 But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her. 2 Kings 4:13-17*

One can only imagine the great joy, pride and contentment that must have filled the heart of this woman who had given up on ever having a son. But as the child grew, a severe problem arose that led to the death of this son. The woman is deeply grieved and goes to Elisha to express her grief.

*And he said to his father, "My head, my head!" So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out. 22 Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back." ... 24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." 25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel.*

Did she know about the widow in Zarephath and Elijah's raising her son from the dead? Was she hoping for the same miracle? We don't have that information, but from all these events it is definitely possible. Elisha immediately determines to help.

*Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me, and has not told me." 28 So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" 29 Then he said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child." 2 Kings 4:20-29*

He arrives and like Elijah's prayers for rain, is not dissuaded that it took a long time.

*When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the Lord. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 2 Kings 4:32-36*

This miracle must have done a great deal to validate the prophets closeness to God in the eyes of the people.

## **The Pot of Stew**

Another famine is gripping the land of Israel. As an act of hospitality, Elisha asked his servant Gahazi to put on a pot of stew. The prophets wanting to be helpful, went to the field to gather herbs. One of the evidently inexperienced ones gathered some gourds(melons/cucumbers).

*So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were. 40 Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it. 41 So he said, "Then bring some flour." And he put it into the pot, and said, "Serve it to the people, that they may eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot. 2 Kings 4:39-41*

After the meal is fully prepared, the flavor immediately warns those who were about to eat that there is “*death in the pot.*” Elisha puts their faith to the test by “healing the pot.” All witnessed him placing flour into the pot with the poison. At his assurance they were willing to eat. This manifested the respect and trust these prophets now had in Elisha.

## **The Feeding of 100**

The final miracle in the fourth chapter centers on something very similar to the oil with which it began. These loaves were not like ours, but the small ones that fit in the hand like those Jesus used. Each loaf would barely feed one man. But with God’s blessing, Elisha performs a miracle that allows 100 men to eat all they wanted and still have some left over.

Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give it to the people, that they may eat."

*But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the Lord: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" 44 So he set it before them; and they ate and had so me left over, according to the word of the Lord. 2Kings 4:42-44*

This passage brings something very important to light. It is plainly stated that this miracle and the words of Elisha were all “*according to the word of the Lord.*” God was always behind these things. No prophet could make such decisions on his own. Peter made it clear that all the prophecies made by a prophet(all teachings and events to validate those teachings) were even initiated by the prophet.

*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:20-21*

## **Elisha and Naaman**

### **Jesus Speaks of Naaman**

Jesus’ words to the Jews in Nazareth hold a very important key to the events we will be studying this evening. After performing many miracles in Capernaum, He returned to Nazareth where He found a heightened expectation. They seemed to feel that if He would do such things in Capernaum, He would also do some in his hometown of Nazareth. Yet Jesus had no intention of doing any miracles there. His reason: “*no prophet is accepted in his own country.*”

*16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ... 23 He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. ...*

The real problem at Nazareth was revealed in the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark. He “*did not*” and “*could not*” do many mighty works “*because of their unbelief.*” He was not performing miracles solely for the benefit of those who were sick. It was done to increase and strengthen belief.

If there was no belief to work with then he “*did not and could not*” do any mighty works there.

*But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 58 **Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.** Mt. 13:57-58*

*But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." 5 **Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He marveled because of their unbelief.** Mk. 6:4-6*

Jesus then made a very important application. Elijah and Elisha had been confronted with the same problem. Although there were many widows in Israel during the days of Elijah, God only sent him to one widow and she was not in Israel. The implication is that just as there was no one in Nazareth, there was also no one in Israel to whom such a miracle would accomplish its purpose as a sign. So “*to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon.*” NOTE: Elijah was sent to help that widow in Zarephath. The Lord knows those who are His and this knew this women would be greatly benefitted by the sign. So also for Elisha. There were many lepers in Israel during the days of Elisha. “*Yet none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.*”

*But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." Lk. 4:16; 23-28*

A careful reading of Jesus words again makes it clear that there was an important reason why Naaman was healed while all others in Israel were passed over. Since God was directing these miracles just as Jesus was directing them in his own day, they are given where they will do the most good. The purpose of miracles has always been for a sign.

The very first time they were used was during the times of Moses after he had asked God what to do if they didn't believe:

*Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" Ex 4:1*

God's answer consisted of three things. The staff turning into a serpent and his hand becoming leprous, and water turning into blood. Moses was to use these as a sign if they didn't believe.

*"Then it will be, **if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.** 9 And it shall be, **if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.**" Ex 4:6-9*

## Introduction to Naaman

*Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper. 2 Kings 5:1*

Although there are two possible meanings, the context of the chapter seems to lead to the second. The first, God wanted Syria to win over Israel as punishment for their sins and Naaman just happened to be the commander. The second, God used these events to make Naaman “*a great and honorable man in they eyes of his master,*” by allowing him to decisively win these battles in a way that brought honor and glory to him as a “*mighty man of valor.*” This is exactly what God did for Joseph.

*The **Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man;** and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And **his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand.** 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. 5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. 6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the*

bread which he ate. Gen 39:2-6

## **The Providence of God and Naaman's Faith**

Because of all that Naaman had become and the possibilities of his potential, God allowed a young girl to be brought back from Israel and become a servant in Naaman's house.

*And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. 3 Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." 2 Kings 5:2-3*

As she witnessed the greatness of Naaman and the terrible blight of his leprosy, she made an important observation to his wife. It is fascinating that she would have made this application. Perhaps she had witnessed or at the very least heard rumors of all the things Elijah had done. Why she went so far as to assure his wife that he would definitely be healed is a mystery. Elijah had never healed anyone of leprosy, and there is no record of him healing someone among the Gentiles. But since this was all part of God's plan, things proceeded as He wanted them.

Naaman has enough faith that he doesn't scoff or mock at such an incredible and unlikely possibility. He brings it up to the king of Syria, who also seems to have enough confidence not to mock or scorn such an idea and is even willing to write the letter.

Naaman is so convinced of the possibility he brings "ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing," which is a tremendous sum of money. He also brings a letter from the king, hoping to enlist the help of the King of Israel in Naaman's being healed of his leprosy.

*Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. 6 Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.*

The only one in this narrative without faith is the king of Israel. When he reads the letter, he doesn't even think of Elisha or sending the matter to him. He tore his clothes as a sign of deep distress and grief, thinking that the real reason for this visit is an opportunity to start another war.

*And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me." 2 Kings 5:5-7*

Once again we see the working of God either through providence or direct revelation, for Elisha hears the exact nature of the visit, the letter and the torn clothes.

*So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." 2 Kings 5:8*

God has already revealed to Elisha that He wanted Naaman to be healed of his leprosy. The event itself would have been reported everywhere. The general of the Syrian army came to the king with a letter requesting he be healed of his leprosy. God had raised up this man to be famous where ever the reputation of his valor and might had gone. Now, his leprosy would be healed and his fame would go far and wide.

Although the king clearly didn't know, Naaman would know "that there is a prophet in Israel." Naaman soon finds himself at the door of Elisha's dwelling. What follows is perplexing but after some careful consideration is clear.

Elisha is not to be a part of this healing. He doesn't come to the door or meet Naaman. He refused to take any credit or recompense for it after it is over, and Gehazi is severely punished for later taking something from him. Naaman is to learn only that the true God is the God of Israel.

*Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean." 2Kings 5:9-10*

It is interesting that after all the points where his faith might falter, it came as he stood before the door of the prophet's home. It is difficult to see if it was his pride or faith that faltered.

*But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy." 12 Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. 2 Kings 5:11-13*

His "fury" and "rage" come to the very forefront and blind his mind. His own ideas of how this event should have transpired are verbalized. "He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy." From these words it appears to be his pride, but could also have been his faith. It was a wasted journey. To dip in the Jordan river was a waste of time. He had better rivers to have washed in while in Damascus.

## **Naaman's Servants Change his Mind**

Here is a classic example of God choosing foolish things to test and assess.

*21 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. ... 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 1Cor. 1:27-29*

Naaman came within "the eye of a needle" from losing the wonderful blessing God had in store for him. Just like multitudes today, trust in God comes first and then the benefits and blessings. Without that trust there can and will be no blessings.

The servants reason from the greater to the lessor. He would have done something exceedingly difficult if the prophet had come and told him to do that. Why turn away in wrath when something so easy could be done?

*And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" 14 So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. 2 Kings 5:13-14*

It is difficult to read these words without feeling powerful emotions toward God. His power, grace, mercy and love are all on display. But He wants faith first and submission first, before He will bestow it. Naaman travels to the Jordan river. Since we don't know where Elisha is staying it is impossible to determine how long this journey would take. One has to wonder about the play of emotions in Naaman's heart. Doubt and fear one moment, hope and anticipation on the other. Will this work! Can the prophet be trusted! He doesn't know but must hope.

## **Naaman is Cleansed**

He began the process of dipping. Elisha had told him to "wash-bathe, wash off, wash away." He interpreted this as a need to "dip."

The verb conveys the immersion of one item into another: *bread in vinegar* (Ruth 2:14), *feet in water* (Josh 3:15), *a coat in blood* (Gen 37:31). *bapto* is the common LXX rendering of this root. ..." (TDWNT OT 2881)

He immersed himself seven times. Was there skepticism, hope, excitement, anticipation, doubt. One time - nothing, again - nothing. A third and fourth time with no tangible results. The fifth and sixth showed no improvement. Nothing happened. There is only one more chance for this to work. He must have felt the strongest emotions as the seventh time he plunged himself under the water of the Jordan River. When he came up out of that water after the seventh time, "his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." The joy, relief, amazement, excitement, adoration and praise are passed over until he arrives at the home of Elisha.



*And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant." 16 But he said, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And he urged him to take it, but he refused. 2 Kings 5:15-16*

He now professes the true faith that was inside his heart: "now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel." In his joy and gratitude, he reaches out to the servant offering him the gift. It seems inconceivable that he would not want to give Elisha everything he had brought with him. "So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing." Elisha turned down great wealth because it was not in God's plan for him to receive it. Even though Naaman urged him to take it, he still refused. Later he told Gehazi why:

*Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? 2 Kings 5:26*

God had important plans and goals in this event and it did not include the prophet's reward. This was an important opportunity for Naaman to give all the glory and gratitude toward God which is exactly what initially occurred.

Naaman determines to take some of the earth of Israel back to Syria. Although many have conjectured why, no real answer is given. Some think it had to do with the instructions regarding how Israel was to make an altar, others that the land of Israel was where God dwelt with his people and he wanted some of that "land" where he lived. Whatever the case, he affirms that he will never sacrifice to any other God but the LORD.

*So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord. 2 Kings 5:17*

The next clause has some very perplexing questions. Although he will worship the LORD, he will not stand up against the idolatry of his king. He knows enough about the attitudes of the King of Syria to offer this plea/excuse.

*18 Yet in this thing may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon — when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord please pardon your servant in this thing." 19 Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance. 2 Kings 5:17-19*

Does Elisha's reply "go in peace" denote approval? From the words of Jesus' later it would appear that such could not be the case. Any form of idolatry was reprehensible to God. But at this state in Naaman's development, Elisha is either told not to intervene, or the matter is simply passed over in silence.

## **Gehazi's Greed**

It is evident from the subsequent punishment he received that Gehazi had been overcome with the lust of covetousness and greed. The manner in which Elisha had rejected this offer should have alerted him that there were good reasons for not taking anything. At the very least he should have trusted Elisha enough to ask him why before acting. But instead of asking Elisha his reasons for giving up such a wonderful opportunity, he took matters into his own hands.

*But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him." 21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "Is all well?" 2 Kings 5:20-21*

It seems from his thoughts that he believed Elisha had made a mistake which he would rectify. That talent of silver and change of clothes had captured his imagination much as the Babylonian garment, silver, and wedge of gold and had Achan (Josh 7:20-21).

That he began his conversation with Naaman with lies that drug Elisha into his plan proved his guilt. First, Elisha did not send him. Second while two men many have arrived from the mountains of Ephraim, it had nothing to do with the request Gehazi now made. That money and clothing was not destined for Elisha or the two men from Ephraim.

*And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.'" 2 Kings 5:22*

Naaman's gratitude is still strong and he is very happy not only to give him what was requested, but to double the amount of silver and then have his servants carry them back with Gehazi.

*So Naaman said, "Please, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. 24 When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. 5:23-24*

He places the "reward" that he had done nothing to earn in his own house. He had no intention of telling Elisha at that point. As soon as he came into his presence, Elisha began to question Gehazi. How his heart must have dropped with the first question: "Where did you go, Gehazi?" He should have and probably did know that lying was futile. He wasn't lying unto a man but unto God. But backed into a corner with no way out, there were only two choices to admit his guilt and plead for mercy or lie and try to cover it up. He chose the latter and wrong choice.

*Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere." 5:25*

Here is an interesting insight into the workings of inspiration. Elisha's heart went with him and he witnessed exactly what occurred as Naaman saw him and came back to meet him. This dealt with the first lie he had spoken to Elisha. Then Elisha condemned the act itself. The work of Elisha was to rebuke Israel with the "double portion of Elijah." This all consuming task left time or effort for nothing else. It was not the time "to receive money clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants." There was a reason why Elisha had refused the reward. The healing of Naaman was an act God had initiated for His own glory and His own purposes. It was not proper or seemly for Gehazi to seek for a reward when it was neither the time or the place for such things.

*Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? 27 Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow. 5:25-27*

The punishment severe, but clearly fit the crime. The wondrous power that God had revealed in taking the leprosy from Naaman Gehazi had sought profit. Therefore the power that removed it from Naaman would place it on Gehazi. The punishment was swift as it came immediately.

A similar warning was sent by Jehovah God himself to Baruch the servant of Jeremiah:

*The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the instruction of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: 3 'You said, "Woe is me now! For the Lord has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." 4 "Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land. 5 And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh," says the Lord. "But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go."'" Jer 45:1-5*

## **The Work of Elisha**

After a quick story of a prophet who lost an axe head in the Jordan and Elisha was allowed to use God's power to restore it, Elisha becomes involved in the wars between Israel and Syria. Remember these wars were the result of Israel's unfaithfulness as a means of seeking repentance and rejection of idols. But in mercy, God allowed Elisha to alleviate some of Israel's suffering. Like Elijah with prophets of Baal, God seek to show the difference between His prophet and the false prophets of Baal.

In this case, the king of Syria was sending raiding parties into Israel seeking to destroy small groups. Each time this occurred, Elisha sent word to the king of Israel and every time the king

checked, his information was exactly correct and tragedy was averted.

*Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp will be in such and such a place." 9 And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." 10 Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. 2 Kings 6:8-10*

The king of Syria assumes it is a traitor in their midst, but someone revealed that it was Elisha the prophet. Where Naaman is at this point is not revealed. But the king is angry and wants to capture Elisha.

*Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" 12 And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." 13 So he said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him." 2 Kings 6:11-13*

He dispatches a great army to capture Elisha and because God is seeking glory among the nations and in Israel, He does an amazing thing through the agency of Elisha. First, the king surrounds the village and Elisha's servant becomes aware of the danger.

*Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 15 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"*

Elisha then reveals that the servant has nothing to fear because there are more people ready to fight for them than there are Syrians. He prays for God to open his eyes so he can see what Elisha already sees.

*So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 2 Kings 6:14-24*

Is this a vision similar to that which we read about in Revelation, Daniel and Ezekiel, or is this a true picture of what was around them? It is difficult to answer this question. Elijah was taken to heaven in a fiery chariot and that was not a vision, but a true reality. Later Gabriel will speak to Daniel about these matters.

*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. Dan 10:20-21*

These are most likely the 12 legions(6,000) of angels Jesus spoke of to His apostles.

*But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" Mt. 26:52-54*

After he shows these things to his servant, he prays again that God would strike the Syrians with blindness. He then tells them that the real man they seek(the king of Israel) was not in this city, but that he would take them to this man.

*So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. 19 Now Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, nor is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria. 6:18-19*

After leading them into the city of Samaria, Elisha again prayed that God would open their eyes. So they could see where they had been led.

*20 So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men,*

*that they may see." And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria!*

The powerful nature of this event was seen both by the King of Israel and the people of the city of Samaria, along with those who had been led there who went back and reported it to the King of Syria. Israel's king is impressed enough to ask the prophet what he should do and then fulfill that command. Syria's king is impressed enough to stop sending bands of raiders into Israel.

*Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?" 22 But he answered, "You shall not kill them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." 23 Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.*

## **Elisha - 4**

### **Samaria is Under Siege**

This event does not stop the king of Syria from his desire to destroy Israel. Nor does it cause Israel to repent and turn from evil. God allows the king of Syria bring his entire army against Samaria and allows Samaria to become desperate because of lack of food.

*And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. 25 And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five shekels of silver. 2 Kings 6:24-25*

One event tips the scales and leads the king to act. In a situation similar to the one Solomon proposed, a woman confesses to the king that they have eaten one baby and now the other will not give up her baby.

*Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" 27 And he said, "If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" 28 Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29 So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son." 6:26-29*

This leads the king to tear his clothes revealing he is wearing sackcloth to seek favor from God. But his response to this event shows the shallow nature of his faith as he blames the whole thing on Elisha and wants to put him to death.

*Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body. 31 Then he said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!" 2 Kings 6:30-31*

Elisha is also in the city of Samaria sitting with the elders and already knows the king's intent before the messenger arrives.

*But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And the king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" 33 And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; 6:32-33*

God then revealed to Elisha that the siege would end within a day and that at that time food would again become inexpensive. The messenger expresses doubt and Elisha proclaims his doom: You will see it, but will not eat of it.

*Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'" 2 So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your*

eyes, but you shall not eat of it." 2 Kings 7:1-2

That night, God sent a delusion to the army of Syria and thinking they were about to be attacked, had fled from their camp, leaving everything behind.

*For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses — the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" 7 Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact — their tents, their horses, and their donkeys — and they fled for their lives. 2 Kings 7:6-7*

The very next morning, four lepers decided that they would surrender to Syria to either be killed or allowed to live. They arrive, but no one is there.

*3 Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? 4 If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." 5 And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. 2 Kings 7:3-5*

At first they decide to gather personal profit, then think better of it and bring the new to the city of Samaria.

*And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it. 9 Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." 2 Kings 7:8-9*

The king believes this is some type of trap and doesn't want to leave the city so a delegation of a few men are sent and find it exactly as the lepers had said.

*So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.'" 2 Kings 7:12*

*13 And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, I say, they may become like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see." 14 Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." 15 And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. 7:13-15*

When the city hears this new everyone rushes out to gather some of the spoils and in the process the man who had doubted the day before was trampled and Elisha's words were fulfilled.

*Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord. 17 Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. 18 So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." 19 Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?" And he had said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." 20 And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died. 2 Kings 7:13-20*

## **The Shunammite Woman**

The relationship between the Shunammite woman and Elisha again appears in the Scripture. The account takes us back seven years to the moment just before the famine that just ended occurred.

Elisha had warned her then that this famine would last for seven years and that she should leave Israel until it ended. After it ended, she decided to return and petition the king for her land to be returned.

*Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the Lord has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years." It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. 2 Kings 8:1-3*

After the famine ended there are some events in the Scriptures placed there to reveal to us how God can act in ways beyond man's ability to comprehend. We call this God's providence because He is intervening in the world of men, but not in a direct or supernatural way. There is nothing in this event out of the ordinary except for the timing. In this case, a conversation between Gehazi and the king of Israel happens to discuss Elisha's miracles. At the very moment he was speaking of the Shunamite woman, she appeared seeking help from the king, who was so moved he gave her even more than she asked.

*Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done." 5 Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." 6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now." 2 Kings 8:3-6*

This is very similar to what happened to Mordecai the same day that Haman was coming to seek his life, forcing him to honor Mordecai instead of destroying him (Est. 5-6).

*When a man's ways please Jehovah, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Pr. 16:7*

## **Elisha Fulfills Elijah's First Task**

When Elijah stood before the Lord at Mt Horeb asking for his task to end, God gave him three duties.

*anoint Hazael as king over Syria. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 1K. 19:15-16*

Elijah's actual role in these three things was to do the last one and appoint Elisha as his successor. Elisha then fulfilled the other two. In this account, Elisha went to Syria and revealed to Hazael that he was to succeed the king.

It all began with Elisha traveling to Damascus and the king sending a large gift, asking if he would recover from his illness. There is no word on whether Elisha took the gift or rejected it.

*Then Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." 8 And the king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'" 9 So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'" 2K. 8:7-9*

The conversation between Hazael and Elisha is important because it fulfills the task God had given Elijah. He revealed to Hazael that he would become king over Syria and that he would conquer Israel and be victorious in his battles, which is exactly what God had told Elijah to do.

*Then he set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept. 12 And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?" He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child." 13 So Hazael said, "But what is your servant — a dog, that he should do this gross thing?" And Elisha answered, "The Lord has shown me that you will become king over Syria." 2 K. 8:11-13*

Yet there is a single verse in this account that has created no end of speculation.

*And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the Lord has shown me that he will really die." 8:10*

Before we begin to seek to unravel this complicated passage, let's set the parameters. First, God cannot lie.

*that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, Heb. 6:18*

*in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began Titus 1:2*

Second, God is not tempted with evil and will never tempt others.

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. Jas. 1:13-14*

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1Cor. 10:13*

Third, lying is always a sin.

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev 21:8*

*Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. Rev 22:15*

Any attempt to interpret or harmonize this passage must take these foundation truths into consideration. If our interpretation violates these principles, then it is an error and false teaching.

So as we examine the verse, what does it actually say? There are two parts to the passage. First, God clearly told Elisha that he would recover. "Go, say to him, You shall certainly recover." So the answer to the query from the king is clear. You will not die from this illness. The illness itself would not have taken the life of the king.

It is the second portion of the verse that is difficult. "And Elisha said to him, However the Lord has shown me that he will really die." Only Elisha and Hazael knew the true meaning of these words. There are two possibilities. The first is that Hazael is to go back and lie to the king telling him he would recover when he was really going to die. But we know this is impossible. So what is the other possibility.

Remember, Elisha had not come to Syria to advise the king, but to anoint (appoint) Hazael. Hazael was to learn that he would become the next king at this interview between himself and Elisha. That information, joined with the wicked and selfish heart of Hazael, led to the second part of this passage. Hence while the illness would not take the life of the king, and he would surely recover from the illness, God had shown Elisha that the king was going to die. The inference is not that Hazael should tell him a lie. The inference is that Hazael is going to kill him. The rest of the account revealed that is exactly what happened. It was not the illness, but murder that killed the king.

*Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me you would surely recover." 15 But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped it in water, and spread it over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place. 2 Kings 8:14-15*

## **Elisha Fulfills Elijah's First Second Task**

The second task God had given Elijah was to anoint Jehu king over Israel. Yet this time, not only is Elijah not directly involved, but neither is Elisha. Elisha gives very specific instructions. He tells him exactly where Jehu will be and what he will be doing. He is to give this message only to Jehu so he must ask him to go into an inner room. This time the anointing was to be literal. He was to pour oil on his head and then give God's message to him that he has now been anointed as king over Israel. Finally, after these words he is to flee and spend no more time with him.

*And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2 Now when you arrive at that place, look*

*there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among his associates, and take him to an inner room. 3 Then take the flask of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the Lord: "I have anointed you king over Israel."' Then open the door and flee, and do not delay." 2 Kings 9:1-3*

The only thing the young man adds are the words Elisha spoke to Ahab after the death of Naboth when Ahab sought his vineyard and Jezebel had him murdered.

*Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. 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.'**" And he opened the door and fled. 2 Kings 9:6-10*

## **Death of Elisha**

Evidently the final revelation made to Elisha was that his own sickness would lead to his death. When the king of Israel arrived, he quoted the very words that Elisha had at the death of Elijah.

*And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. 2 Kings 2:12*

*Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" 2 Kings 13:14*

Instead of this being a time when the king of Israel laments with Elisha, Elisha takes control and again works as a prophet. Using a parable of a bow and an arrow. First he has Joash shoot an arrow and the king



# Asa & Jehoshaphat

## Introduction:

After the death of Jeroboam's house, Israel had 6 kings in the same period of time that Judah had two. All of Israel's kings were wicked and God had no reason to help them when difficulties arose. As a matter of fact, due to their wickedness, many died after being visited by a prophet and told of their imminent death due to their wickedness.

Israel	Judah
3. Baasha Killed Jeroboam's house(24 year)	3. Asa(good)(41 years)
4. Elah Assassinated by Zimri(2 years) (End of house or Baasha)	
5. Zimri Killed house of Baasha(7 days)	
6. Omri Made Samaria capital(6 years)	
7. Ahab Married Jezebel(22 years)	
<b>Elijah begins work.</b>	4. Jehoshaphat(good)(25 years)
8. Ahaziah (2 years)	
<b>Elisha begins work</b>	
9. Jehoram (12 years) Slain by Jehu (End of Ahab's House)	
10. Jehu Killed house of Ahab & Jehoram	5. Jehoram(one of the worst)(8)

The lives of Asa and Jehoshaphat contain some very important events that place them squarely into Paul's words to the Romans

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Rom. 15:4-5*

Although these men are not listed among those in Hebrews 11, they are still very helpful as part of the great cloud of witnesses.

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb. 12:1*

## Asa

While Kings only gives us a summary of his life, Chronicles expands and gives important details. Yet the account in Kings gives some important facts that are helpful to understand his life and fidelity to the Lord.

*And he **banished the perverted persons** from the land, and **removed all the idols** that his fathers had made. 13 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. 14 But the high places were not removed. **Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the Lord all his days.** 1 Kings 15:12-14*

As soon as he began his reign, he immediately sought to bring Israel back into conformity to the quality and type of life revealed in the law. Recognizing that "evil companionship corrupts" He removed all the "perverted persons" from the land. This generally had reference to the ritual harlots and homosexual prostitutes who honored the idols who authorized them.

*There shall be no ritual harlot of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel. Deut 23:17-18*

Any Israelite who frequented the places of perverted persons would also be perverted by their contact not only with fornication, but also idolatry. He also removed all the idols and even his own grandmother because of her obscene (literally something horrible that causes one to shudder) image.

### The High Places

The one thing he did not do (perhaps because he could not) was remove all the high places. These were places other than Jerusalem where Israel would gather to worship God. It was not idolatry, but still a departure from the Law and almost always a single step into idolatry. Moses had strictly enjoined upon them that after the place where God would choose was selected, never again would Israel temple offer sacrifice anywhere else.

*You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3 And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. 4 You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things. 5 "But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. Deut 12:2-6*

Very few kings were successful in removing them, and even after they did, the people still refused to come to Jerusalem.

*41 **Jehoshaphat** the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. ... **Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.** 1 Kings 22:41-43*

*In the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, **Amaziah** the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. ... **However high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.***

*In the seventh year of Jehu, **Jehoash** became king, 3 **But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.** 2 Kings 12:1-3*

*In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, **Azariah** the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. 2 ... 4 **except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.** 2 Kings 15:1-5*

*In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, **Jotham** the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. ... 35 **However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.** He built the Upper Gate of the house of the Lord. 2 Kings 15:32-35*

*Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that **Hezekiah** the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 4 **He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image** and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. 2 Kings 18:1-5*

***Josiah** was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ... **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. ... 9 **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.** 2 Kings 22:1; 23:5-9***

### Asa's heart was Loyal

Yet though they were not completely removed, he did all he could to remove them.

***Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God, 3 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. 4 He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. 5 He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. 2 Chron 14:2-6***

This appears to be a contradiction, but it is not. The passage in Kings speaks of the results of all his efforts, while here in Chronicles it speaks of the efforts he put forth to remove them. He did all he could to eradicate them, but the stubbornness of the people of Judah would not bend even under these efforts.

### **God helped him fight against the Ethiopians.**

Because of his “loyal heart” God could do for him what he refused to do in Israel. After Asa’s “fervent and righteous prayer,” God moved against this army and the prayer “availed much.”

*Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. 10 So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 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!"** 12 So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 2 Chron 14:9-12*

### **God Sent a Prophet**

This prophesy of Azariah contains some very important words that should be followed today just as they were then.

*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!"** 2 Chron 15:1-7*

This prophet reminded them that God can only be with men when they are with him. If God is sought, He will be found, but if God is forsaken He will forsake us. This sums up the blessings and curses in Deuteronomy. He then sums up the history since the time of Solomon. The nation had been a long time without God, teaching priests and the Law. They had gone back in their hearts to the times of the judges when everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Also like the Judges, Israel went through the same cycle. They were unfaithful, then trouble came. They sought Him and He helped them. Yet in all that time there was no peace, only turmoil and trouble. So God sums up His efforts during these times as he used the nations to destroy and break down.

After the great victory and after this inspired sermon, Asa took heart and became ever more zealous, fulfilling even more fully the words spoken above.

*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. 2 Chron 15:8-9*

It was now the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Asa, and at that time a great revival and awakening occurred. The impact of these events were felt not only among the people of Judah, but also many came out of Israel, heeded his words and were moved to make a covenant.

*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. 2Chron 15:9-14*

## The Erosion faith created by Prosperity and Peace.

Although these great things were all done in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, by the 36<sup>th</sup> year, most of it had been forgotten and new problems arose.

First, the next time a battle loomed, instead of relying on God as they had promised to do only 21 years earlier, they choose to ignore God and seek an alliance with Syria.

*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, 2 Chron 16:1-2*

Second, God sent a seer(prophet) to preach nearly the same sermon Asa had heard 21 years earlier.

*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** 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." 2 Chron 16:7-8*

He first rebuked them for their sin and revealed the consequences in the escape of the king of Syria which would not have occurred if they had relied on the Lord. He then reminded them of the earlier victory gained when they had relied totally on the Lord, and then reminded them that God is always looking throughout all the earth for those who rely on and trust only in Him. To those who are loyal, He will be strong and helpful.

His concluding words of rebuke were especially strong. He tells him his actions were foolish and revealed the consequence would be that God would remove peace from the land and replace it with war.

## Asa's Heart was Loyal to the Lord all his days. 1 Kings 15:14

The Scripture can't be broken. Asa was loyal all his days, yet Asa, did not initially choose repentance at this time, but further rebellion. This is a classic example of Peter's words that the Lord is longsuffering not wishing that any should perish.

*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.** 2 Chron 16:9-10*

His actions came from anger and rage(*the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God*), he remained in that anger and was still weakened in his faith three years later, when he chose physicians over the Lord.

*And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians. 2Chr. 16:12*

He died two years later. But we must untangle this seeming contradiction. We only have two choices. Either the inspired book of Kings got this wrong, or in spite of all these things, somehow his heart was still loyal. Hence the book of Kings says he was loyal all the days of his life, the book of Chronicles gives us a short period of time in which in anger and rage, he put God's prophet in prison and failed to seek God for his disease.

The only answer is subsequent repentance and an inner attitude that was still present even under the influence of sin. We can sin, then repent and confess without the loss of our loyalty. So did David with Bathsheba, and Samson. Although it is not chronicled, the only solution to the dilemma of his loyalty to God under such circumstances is that he did not lose his faith and trust in God even though he fell into grievous sin. So Saul of Tarsus lived in all good conscience and was loyal to his God through ignorance and strong emotions. This is a tough Scripture and we must move carefully.

# Jehu

## Introduction / Review

For the third time in the history of the ten tribes, God passed harsh judgment on a king and all his posterity. It began with Jeroboam because he chose human wisdom over trusting in the LORD with all his heart.

### Jeroboam

*Go, tell Jeroboam, ... **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!**"*** 1 Kings 14:7-12

Jeroboam had introduced the worst kind of substitution. When they went to idols, they knew they were not following God. But when the worship of the Lord was perverted, even though they were in sin, it did not feel like they were. We see this today in the denominations. They all worship God and follow Jesus. The variants that characterize each one still leave them in sin and condemnation, but it is much more difficult to see and to prove.

### Baasha

Later God gave this same punishment to Baasha because he continued Jeroboam's legacy.

*Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying: 2 "**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.**" 1 Kings 16:1-4*

### Omri, the Father of Ahab

The third and final dynasty where God gave this same punishment was Ahab. He not only walked in the sins of Jeroboam, but also added to it. Yet it did not begin with Ahab. His father Omri who took the throne before him, "**did worse**" than all the kings before him.

*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.** 1 Kings 16:25-26*

After his death, his son Ahab is introduced to us. The degeneration which began with sins of Jeroboam continued under Ahab as he too "**did evil more than all who were before him**" to provoke God than all(**NOTE: not just kings, but ALL**).

*So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then **Ahab his son reigned in his place.** 29 **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.** 1Kings 16:28-30*

### Ahab

Yet it did not stop there! Ahab went far beyond the others.

*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.** 1Kings 16:31-34

## **Jezebel**

The reason for Ahab's progression is placed at the feet of His decision to marry Jezebel.

*But there was **NO ONE LIKE AHAB WHO SOLD HIMSELF TO DO WICKEDNESS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, BECAUSE JEZEBEL HIS WIFE STIRRED HIM UP.** 26 And **HE BEHAVED VERY ABOMINABLY IN FOLLOWING IDOLS**, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. 1Kings 21:25-26*

Yet it was not until after the death of Naboth at the hand of Jezebel and the tacit silence of Ahab who knew there was no godly way to get the vineyard after Naboth's refusal. It was then that the words Elijah had been longing to say since Horeb were spoken.

***I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah,*** because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.' 23 And concerning Jezebel the Lord also spoke, saying, ***'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.'*** 24 ***The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field.***" 1 Kings 21:22-24

## **Ahaziah & Jehoram(Joram), Sons of Ahab**

Yet Elijah died long before Jehu was called to fulfill this. After Ahab's death, his son Ahaziah reigned for two years, then another of Ahab's sons, Jehoram also reigned, and Elijah was taken to heaven during the reign of Jehoram.

***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. 1 Kings 22:51

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.*** 2K. 3:1-2

## **Jehu**

The reign of Jehu was revealed to Elijah many years earlier(1K. 19:15-17). During this time of extreme wickedness in both Israel and Judah, God proclaimed through Elisha that the time had come and the prophesy was to be fulfilled.

*And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2 Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among his associates, and take him to an inner room. 3 Then take the flask of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the Lord: "I have anointed you king over Israel."' Then open the door and flee, and do not delay."* 2 Kings 9:1-3

After the prophet had anointed Jehu, he revealed exactly what God wanted him to do. All Ahab's posterity was to die.

***And he said, "For you, Commander." 6 Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. 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." And he opened the door and fled. 2 Kings 9:5-10*

As soon as the prophet leaves and the friends see Jehu with the oil of the anointing still upon him, the immediately recognize something important has happened.

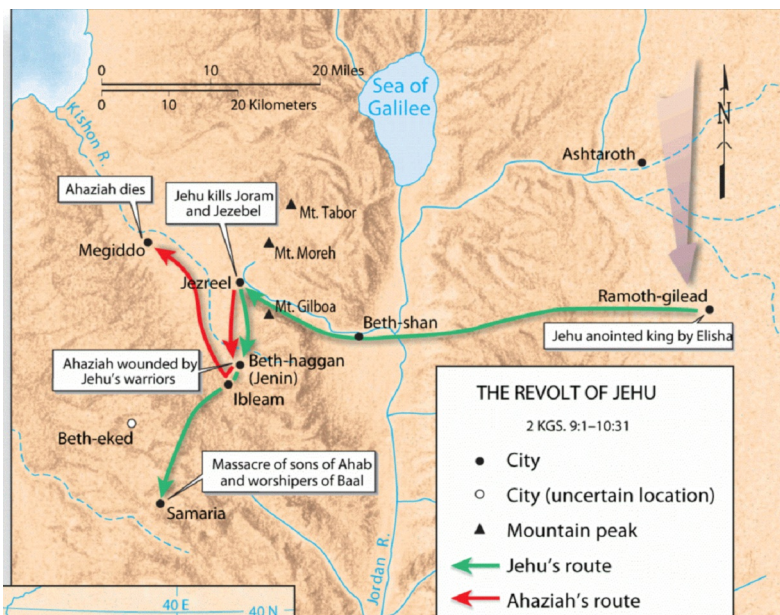
*Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and one said to him, "Is all well? Why did this madman come to you?" And he said to them, "You know the man and his babble." 12 And they said, "A lie! Tell us now." So he said, "Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, **'Thus says the Lord: "I have anointed you king over Israel."**'" 13 Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, **"Jehu is king!"** 2 Kings 9:11-13*

## **Jehu is King**

Armed with the knowledge of God's will, Jehu quickly made his plans. While Jehoram(now Joram) was recovering in Jezreel from would suffered in battle, Jehu came to the city to begin to fulfill what God had told him to do. They move quickly and force all who are in the city and knew of the prophesy to remain and not tell it prematurely. For that reason, Jehoram was completely unaware of what was coming.

***So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram.*** (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. 15 But **King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds** which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, **let no one leave or escape from the city to go and tell it in Jezreel.**" 2 Kings 9:14-15

Jehu then began the journey to Jezreel. As he neared the city, Joram recognized him and sent out several messengers to question him, but Jehu did not let them return. Finally Joram gets into a Chariot with his brother-in-law Ahaziah who is the king in Judah.



*So the watchman reported, saying, "He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!" 21 Then Joram said, "Make ready." And his chariot was made ready. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. 2 Kings 9:20-22*

The providence of God is clearly seen in the fact that they meet on the very property of Naboth, whose death had brought about the very events that were now transpiring.

*And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 1 Kings 21:1*

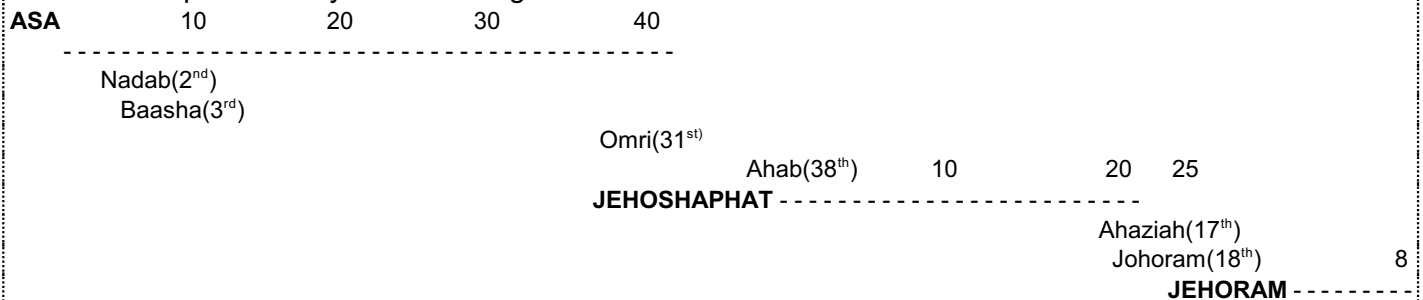
*Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25 Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick him up, and throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were 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." 2 Kings 9:24-26*

## Jezebel's & Ahab's Influence in Judah

Before we can move to the next event that occurred in the historical account of Jehu, there are some things we need to understand. We have to go back to the an earlier time. From the chart on the next page we learn that Jehoshaphat began his reign in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Ahab's reign and continued to reign into reign of Jehoram(Ahab's second son). Jehoshaphat made some terrible decisions during this time.

Asa(good king) reigned 41 years, beginning his reign while Jeroboam was still king in Israel. 1K 15:9  
 Jeroboam's son Nadab began his reign in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Asa 1K 15:25  
 Baasha began to reign in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Asa 1K 15:28  
 Omri began to reign in the 31<sup>st</sup> year of Asa 1K16:23  
 Ahab began to reign in the 38<sup>th</sup> year of Asa 1K 16:29  
 Jehoshaphat began to reign in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Ahab. 1K 22:41  
 He was 35 when he began to reign and reigned 25 years. 1K 22:42  
 Ahaziah(Ahab's son) began to reign in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoshaphat's reign. 1K 22:51  
 In Jehoram's(Ahab's 2nd son) 5<sup>th</sup> year, Jehoram(Jehoshaphat's son) began at age 32 for 8 years 2K 8:16-17

Each dash represents a year of the reign.



Ahaziah(1)\*

\*(Jehoram and Ahaziah died at the same time at the hand of Jehu.)

## Evil Companionship Corrupts Good Morals

The far reaching influence of wicked Jezebel was felt even in Judah. Though Jehoshaphat was a good king, he foolishly worked in fellowship with the kings of Israel.

***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. 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.** 1 Kings 22:41-44*

It is inconceivable that a good king like Jehoshaphat could have a peaceful relationship with Ahab and all the wickedness he was doing. That peace later led to a fellowship with Israel in which they not only began to work together, but Jehoshaphat actually allied himself with the king of Israel through marriage.

*Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and **BY MARRIAGE HE ALLIED HIMSELF WITH AHAB.** 2 After some years he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth Gilead. 3 So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?" And he answered him, "**I AM AS YOU ARE, AND MY PEOPLE AS YOUR PEOPLE; WE WILL BE WITH YOU IN THE WAR.**" 2Chr. 18:1-3*

He had learned nothing from Solomon! This alliance was fraught with terrible peril. Jehoshaphat



had no know something of Jezebel's persecution of the prophets and her great wickedness. Yet he still chose to allow his son to marry into this family, which was a direct violation of some very important principles.

*Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." 1 Cor 15:33-34*

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God ~~with idols?~~ For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor 6:14-18*

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Gal 6:7*

The consequences of this alliance were far worse than anything Jehoshaphat could have imagined. If he had known, he never would have done such a foolish and despicable thing. We are first introduced to this son after he began to reign. He did not follow in his father's steps regarding faithful service to the Lord, but instead, married to a daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, she swayed him to walk in all the ways of the kings of Israel.

**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. 2K. 8:16-18**

Yet far worse than this was the manner in which this king, influenced by Jezebel's daughter began his reign. As soon as he became strengthened as king he killed all his brothers. Leaving Jehoshaphat with no heirs except himself. Obviously if Jehoshaphat had know such a terrible consequence would follow would never have made such a tragic mistake. BUT HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!

*And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then **Jehoram his son reigned in his place.** 2 He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3 Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but **he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.** 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.** 2 Chron 21:1-4*

The life he lived over the next 8 years was so evil and wicked, that Elisha was called upon to take a hand and wrote him a letter.

**5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem...** 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 your people with a serious affliction — 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. ... 20 He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.** 2Chr. 21:5, 12-15, 20

All of this can be laid at the feet of Jehoshaphat for making a treaty with Ahab and taking his daughter to be his wife. Yet even this was not the worst consequence of Jehoshaphat's foolish decision.

## **Athaliah**

This daughter's name was Athaliah, who was also the mother of the next king in Judah as well as

the granddaughter of Omri. Yet not only was this king the son of a daughter of Ahab, but was also son-in-law to the house of Ahab. Hence he had a mother and a wife who were of Ahab's and Jezebel's lineage.

***In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. 26 Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. 27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab, for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab. 2Kings 8:25-27***

As soon as Jehu had killed both Ahab's son Joram and Joram's & Athaliah's son Ahaziah, she moved to do a terrible deed. She killed all the offspring of David who could have taken the throne. Only one son was left of the seed of Ahaziah and David.

***When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away ... 3 So he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land. 2 Kings 11:1-3***

## **Jehu Finishes His Commission from the Prophet**

Because of the alliance between Israel and Judah, Jehu broadly interprets his commission, killing the son-in-law of Jehoram.

***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. 29 In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah. 2 Kings 9:27-29***

*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.*

Then Jehu enters the palace portion of Jezreel and Jezebel does her best to use her femininity to deter Jehu, but it fails to move Jehu.

***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?" 2 Kings 9:30-31***

She is then cast from the window, and all of God's words against her are then fulfilled.

***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; 37 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."'" 2 Kings 9:32-37***

After this event, Jehu finishes the commission as he had interpreted it. First, he writes a letter to the city of Samaria where Ahab's 70 sons were living offering them an opportunity to defend Ahab's sons.

***Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote and sent letters to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to those who reared Ahab's sons, saying: 2 Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons are with you, and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons, 3 choose the best qualified of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. 4 But they were exceedingly afraid, 2 Kings 10:1-4***

Due to their fear, they do not wish to stand with Ahab's sons, so Jehu sends a second letter.

*"Then he **wrote a second letter** to them, saying: **If you are for me and will obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow.** 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. 2 Kings 10:5-7*

Jehu now reveals his knowledge of Elijah's prophesy and reveals that they had taken part in fulfilling it.

*So it was, in the morning, that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, "You are righteous. Indeed I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these? 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.**" 2K 10:9-11*

Jehu then continues his work in Jezreel to fulfill the prophecy of Elijah by seeking and destroying all who remained to Ahab, along with his advisers, friends and priests.

*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.** 2 Kings 10:9-11*

The final judgment against the house of Ahab almost appears as a coincidence, as the children of Ahab and Jezebel's daughter Athaliah had come to see to Ahaziah.

*And he arose and departed and went to Samaria. On the way, 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. 2K. 10:12-14*

Yet it was not a coincidence, but the fulfillment of the letter Elijah had written.

## Elijah's Letter

Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram had begun his reign with great bloodshed and treachery against his father and brothers. He then brought to Judah the wickedness that was in Israel because of the daughter of Ahab who was his wife. Due to this wickedness of Jehoram in killing all his brothers, Elijah had sent him a letter with a prophesy that God would punish all his offspring because of his deeds.

*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, ... behold, the Lord will strike your people with a serious affliction — your children, your wives, and all your possessions; 2Chr. 21:14-15*

Jehu was the instrument through which this terrible prophesy was fulfilled.

*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. 8 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.** 9 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." 2Chr. 22:7-9*

*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. 2 Kings 10:17*

This completed Jehu's part in the bloody end to the house of Ahab. Ahab's His own daughter Athaliah finished it.

*When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. 2 Kings 11:1-2*

## Jehu's Reign

Although he reigned over Israel for 28 years, God only revealed one event about his reign. The

zealous manner in which he carried out the commands to destroy the house of Ahab revealed something about his character, but it is hard to deduce exactly what it revealed. If he had gone on to completely reform Israel, we would conclude that he was the most devout king that Israel ever received. But since he did not, it is very difficult to assess his exact motives.

Perhaps like so many, all that God asked him to do that he enjoyed and he agreed with he was willing to do with great zeal and determination, and when it came time to do those things that God demanded, but he had no interest in doing, they parted ways.

His first act as king was the attempt to completely destroy the worship of Baal in Israel. Once again we have the facts revealed to us without an inspired explanation or commentary. This is exactly what happened, but how God felt about it is not revealed. He began with lies and deceit.

*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.** 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.** 2 Kings 10:18-20*

After completely filling the temple, he makes a proclamation to be certain no one who truly sought Jehovah was present. He had already stationed 80 armed soldiers and warned them that if anyone escaped they would forfeit their own lives.

*"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.**" 2 Kings 10:23-24*

He then carried out his plan by executing everyone who was in that temple of Baal, tearing down the temple and making it a refuse dump. It is clearly revealed that this destroyed Baal from Israel.

*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.** 2 Kings 10:25-28*

Yet from that moment on Jehu made no attempt at all to serve God or remove the apostasy that Jeroboam had introduced. God promised Jehu his family would reign to the fourth generation.

*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. 2 Kings 10:29-31*

Yet the entire 28 year reign of Jehu is summed up these verses. There is nothing more to say. He was used to destroy the house of Ahab and the worship of Baal and did God's will, but that was the end of his service to God as he then walked in his own path choosing to continue to serve God through Jeroboam's calves.

## The Four Generations of Jehu and His Sons

God had promised Jehu, “*your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.*” These “sons” followed in their father’s footsteps, and little is written of their reigns except for their continued battle losses to the Syrians. These events fulfill the final words of God to Elijah after he fled from Jezebel’s wrath. Although Hazael was mentioned first, his work lasted the longest as it continued through his sons.

*Then the Lord said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 17 It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 1 Kings 19:15-18*

### Jehu(28 years)

It began in the reign of Jehu. God continued to use Hazael to complete the cutting off of Israel. In Jehu’s reign the entire eastern side of the Jordan by Hazael.

*In those days the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel 33 from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead — Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh — from Aroer, which is by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan. 2 Kings 10:32-33*

### Jehoahaz(17 years)

After the death of Jehu, his son Jehoahaz began to reign, God’s longsuffering was now coming to an end, and as His anger began to burn and the enemies God raised up against Israel began a different work. Always before, through the judges and kings, conquerors were used to bring repentance to Israel. God had only wanted them to return to Him. But now things have changed. Now it is not just repentance but the beginning of judgment. Israel is being removed from it’s land and the prophesies of Moses are being fulfilled.

*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. 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. 2 Kings 13:1-4*

### Repentance Still has Power

Yet even during these days when God saw repentance, He relented for a short time and allowed that repentance to shine brightly for us to see today. Regardless of how wicked the person and no matter how strongly God had determined to destroy, repentance always met with favor and grace.

*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. 2Kings 13:4-5,*

Yet before this repentance and promised deliverance, terrible destruction had been poured out on Israel.

*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. 2Kings 13:7*

### Jehoash/Joash(16 years)

We are not told why this king began his reign as Jehoash and ended it as Joash, but both names mean exactly the same thing:

*Yehow'ash — Jehoash = "given by the Lord" (BDB OT:3060), and Yow'ash or Yo'ash — Joash = "given by the Lord" (BDB - 3101)*

His sixteen year reign proceeded along the same lines as his father and grandfather. He did evil,

but God's grace and mercy are once again given. This time it was the death of Elisha that led God to show His power to bless instead of to curse them. When Joash went to show his respect to Elisha at his death, God allowed Elisha to give Joash a promise of victory.

*Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" 2 Kings 13:14*

After using a bow and arrow to promise deliverance from Syria, Elisha asked Joash to strike the ground with the arrows to symbolize his victory. When he only half-heartedly struck the ground three times, Elisha became angry and told him he should have been more forceful and zealous and struck many times. His half-hearted attitude led Elisha to warn him he would not completely destroy Syria, but only gain the three victories he had sought for by striking only three times.

*And he said, "**The arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.**" 18 Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. 19 And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "**You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times.**" 2Kings 13:17-19*

The Holy Spirit added one more reason why God did not completely destroy them at this time. It was His covenant and oath to bless the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

*And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23 But the Lord was gracious to them, **had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,** and **would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.** 2K. 13:22-23*

## Jeroboam 2(41 years)

This Jeroboam is the third generation after the death of Jehu. He too continue to walk in the sins of his namesake. His 41 year reign brought prosperity and peace to Israel. This time it is in fulfillment of a prophesy made by the prophet Jonah. Three more reasons were given for this grace.

- (1) *"the Lord saw that **the affliction of Israel was very bitter**;*
- (2) *there was **no helper for Israel.***
- (3) ***the Lord did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven.***

*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 Hopher. 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. 2 Kings 14:25-27*

As we analyze these four reasons, few answers are recorded for us. We know nothing of the prophesy of Jonah, nor if this prophesy was given before or after the events recorded in his book. It may have been after and thus Jonah was also a sign to Israel, but there is no real way to know. God's mercy has often been kindled during Israel's anguish and bitterness, but with their destruction now decades away, and the prophet's Amos and Hosea already working, we can't pinpoint why this was happening. In the last two perhaps there is a hint. Although there was no helper in Israel, God had nowhere ever stated He would completely blot them out of existence. There may be an implication that someone had made such a comment or assumption and God was showing it to be false.

Yet though his reign is prospering, dark clouds are now forming. God sent both Amos and Hosea during the Jeroboam's reign.

*The words of **Amos**, who was among the sheepleaders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and **in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel,** two years before the earthquake. Amos 1:1*

*The word of the Lord that came to **Hosea** the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and **in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.** Hos 1:1*

This is all God revealed about Jeroboam's reign.

## Zechariah(6 months)

The final son in Jehu's dynasty only reigned six months and evidently had no children since there is no one contesting the reign. There is also nothing said about all Jehu's posterity being killed. It only states that he was killed in front of the people and then began to reign. The Scripture makes it very clear that this completely fulfilled God's promise to Jehu.

*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. ... 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. 2 Kings 15:8-10,12***

Shallum only reigned one month before he was killed by Menahem who then reigned ten years. We don't know if Hosea and Amos were still preaching after the death of Jeroboam, but with only three kings and thirty-one years left to its existence, Israel has run out of time, grace, mercy and longsuffering and judgment is at hand.

# Jonah

## Introduction

We are first introduced to Jonah as a contemporary of king Jeroboam. He was used by God to inform the king of the successes he would have in battle.

*23 Jeroboam reigned 41 years ... 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 Hopher. ... 28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam ... 29 So Jeroboam rested with his fathers, 2Kings 14:23-29*

Though the account is vague, we know that sometime during the reign of Jeroboam, Jonah was already a prophet. He came to Jeroboam and give him that welcome prophesy that he would restore the territory of Israel. After that prophecy, the next words record his death. So it could have been at the beginning, middle or end.

Why is this important? Two important questions can now be raised. First, did the events recorded in the book that bears his name occur before or after these prophecies? Second, at what point in his reign did these events occur? The importance relates to why Jonah rebelled against God's command to preach to Nineveh.

Here are the facts: After the death of Jeroboam, in the space of 12 years five kings reigned.

*his son Zechariah reigned for **6 months**. 2Kings 15:8-9  
Shallum Jabesh killed him and reigned in his place for **1 month**. 15:10, 13-14  
Menahem and struck Shallum and he reigned in his place for **10 years** 15:13-14, 17-19  
Menahem rested with his fathers. Pekahiah his son reigned in his place for **2 years** 15:22-24  
Then Pekah, an officer of his, killed him and reigned in his place for **20 years**. 15:25-27*

Sometime during those 12 years Assyria came and was only stopped due to a bribe:

***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 So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land. 2Kings 15:19-20***

Then in the midst of the 20 year reign of Pekah, Assyria came again and began the conquest that would soon remove Israel from its' land.

*27 Pekah became king over Israel and reigned twenty years. ... 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. 2 Kings 15:27-30***

It was also during that 20 year reign that Ahaz began to reign and during the reign of Ahaz Isaiah foretold the complete destruction of Israel to Assyria.

***In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 Kings 16:1-2***

*Now it came to pass **in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham**, ... 3 **Then the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, ... 8 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. ... 17 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."** ... 20 **In the same day the Lord will shave with a hired razor, With those from beyond the River, with the king of Assyria, ... 8:7** 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. Isa 7:1, 3, 8, 17, 20; 8:7*

So within 40 years of the death of Jeroboam, the truth that Assyria would destroy Israel had been clearly proclaimed and known.

What does this have to do with Jonah? Look now at what we learn from Jonah. First, when God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria Jonah refused and fled.



*Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord Jonah 1:1-3*

After God brought him back and he succeeded in getting Nineveh to repent, Jonah revealed why he had fled.

*But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2 So he prayed to the Lord, and said, “Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Jonah 4:1-3*

Jonah fled and refused to go to Nineveh because he knew God was gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness and One who relents from doing harm. He did not want God to relent and be gracious and merciful to Nineveh. He wanted Nineveh to be destroyed.

Why would Jonah have such strong and hateful feelings? Why did he want God to destroy an entire nation? If we place his preaching at this time in history then it is clear that he did not want to preach to them because he knew God was going to use them to destroy Israel and he wanted to see them destroyed. Of all the answers this one seems to be the most plausible and likely.

Jonah is a complicated man. He has some very conflicted feelings about Nineveh. To give him the benefit of the doubt is easy if we can accept the above.

### **Jonah Commanded to go to Nineveh**

*Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” Jonah 1:1-2*

The phrase “word of the Lord” was first used when God revealed things to Abraham in a vision. It was later clarified in the times of Samuel.

*After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, ... 4 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” Gen. 15:1, 4*

*Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation. 1 Sam 3:1-2*

Hence Jonah was given a direct revelation from God and he knew it. It is clear from Jonah’s words in chapter four that there was some type of discussion between God and Jonah about this command before Jonah fled. “So he prayed to the Lord, and said, “Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country?”

### **Fleeing the Presence of the Lord**

*3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. Jonah 1:3*

While Adam and Eve sought to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, and Cain sought to go out from the presence of the Lord, it can’t be done.

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from **the presence of the Lord** God among the trees of the garden. Gen 3:8*

*Then Cain **went out from the presence of the Lord** and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. Gen 4:16-17*

*O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. ... 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or **where can I flee from Your presence?** 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. Ps 139:1-3,4-7*

God knows everything about us whether we seek to be in his presence or out of it. We can be like

an ostrich and think no one can see us if our head is in the sand of our own wisdom and folly, but God can still see everything. Yet Jonah had not yet learned this lesson which the book clearly and forcefully teaches.

## **God's Sending and Preparing**

Not only was it impossible for Jonah to flee the presence of Jehovah, but God was always one step ahead of Jonah, sending and preparing both for judgment, salvation, and for the teaching of His wayward and foolish prophet that He loved.

*But **the Lord sent out a great wind** on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. Jonah 1:4*

*Now **the Lord had prepared a great fish** to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:17*

*And **the Lord God prepared a plant** and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. 7 But as morning dawned the next day **God prepared a worm**, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that **God prepared a vehement east wind**; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." Jonah 4:6-8*

Thus commands, providence and longsuffering met Jonah every step of his journey. It began when God first told Jonah to go to Nineveh and continued as his rebellion manifested itself the moment Jonah set foot on that ship going to Tarshish which is somewhere in what is today called Spain.

That wind was not sent out as punishment or destruction for rebelling at His word. This might have been our first thought and perhaps what many of us would have believed God would have done in dealing with such rebellion. But instead of wrath, this wind was sent out in mercy to bring Jonah to repentance.

But that repentance was slow in coming and this book is itself a very comprehensive example of Peter's wonderful revelation about God's character of longsuffering.

*But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2Pet. 3:8-9*

It is amazing that Jonah was not brought to repentance as soon as the storm began. This was not a common storm, but a great wind and mighty tempest. Yet while all the others in the boat were doing all they could to save themselves, first by lightening the ship and then by crying out to their gods seeking mercy and deliverance, Jonah was sleeping.

*Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. 1:5*

How could Jonah sleep? Jonah was a prophet and had a clear understanding that he was in rebellion against God. Did his conscience not trouble him? There are several Scriptures that deal with this situation. It could have been a hard heart, a heart so angry and filled with lusts that it can not think clearly, it can be stubborn, or it can be convinced that there is no hope for atonement and therefore no reason to care any longer. Whatever his reason, he was doing what the others were not, showing no concern for the fate of the ship and the lives of all who were on it.

When the shipmaster learned that Jonah was sleeping, he became angry that Jonah was not doing his part to save the ship. It is a sad situation when the ungodly have a better concept of duty than a servant of God.

They then seek to cast lots to try and find out who was responsible for this storm. This is a very terrible and evil practice. Who knows how many innocent people have been killed because the lot fell to them and the sailors used it to remove them? It is a clear case of tempting the Lord. It is always a 50-50 chance that the lot will come out one way or the other, so if God does not intervene

and we cast a lot(or flip a coin), and then say whatever the outcome it is from God, it is an evil and presumptuous practice. Yet in this case, the lot fell as God's providence desired and things moved not due to the sailors, but God.

*So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish." 7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 1:6-7*

When the lot fell to Jonah, they sought for an explanation. There were some things they already knew that would have created these circumstances. Jonah had already told them he was fleeing from his God. But they didn't know the things they now ask.

*8 Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" 1:8*

They first offer him the opportunity to clear himself or confess. They also want to know his occupation, where he came from, his country and his people. They are seeking for any extenuating circumstances that could explain the terrible storm that was even then raging among them. He doesn't answer the first two questions, but very honest in the rest his answer.

*So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 1:9-10*

It is interesting when they find out who Jonah serves their fear grew even greater. Even then there was a great consciousness of Jehovah in the hearts of these idolaters. Their problem became even greater as they made the application of what he had said earlier. Evidently it had not troubled them that he was fleeing from the presence of his "god" until they found out it was the God of heaven. Jonah had already revealed the nature of the conflict he had created by fleeing from the presence and it all was clear that Jonah truly was the problem.

It appears that Jonah had a clear understanding of what had happened, and that God was bringing his sin into the light. Since he knew he was responsible, and that the lot had fallen to him, he was convinced that God had done it.

They then ask Jonah to help them with the decision. It is clear from these events, that these were good and honest men. They sought to find out the whole truth and even allow the "guilty man" the opportunity to redeem himself and even to set his own punishment or method to resolve the problem.

*Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?" — for the sea was growing more tempestuous. 12 And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me." 1:11-12*

Jonah's answer gives us some insight into his character. Whether by inspiration, or by his own reasoning, he is convinced that he is the cause of the problem. He knows that he has rebelled against God and that those who had done what he did have always been punished. So his inference is that God is sending this storm to destroy him.

The mariners are not happy with this solution. They do not want to take a passenger and throw him into the sea thus committing murder. They therefore seek with all their strength to bring him back to land. But they fail, and they know that they will all die anyway, so they offer a prayer to God seeking forgiveness.

*Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they cried out to the Lord and said, "We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You." 1:13-14*

Jonah is listening to all this, yet there is no revelation of his repentance or prayers at this moment. If he said any it is not recorded. After the men prayed, they took Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea immediately and in a very obvious manner stopped and calmed. These seasoned sailors were amazed and knew that they had seen something that was not normal. It was such an

awe inspiring sight, that the men felt great awe, dread and reverence toward the LORD(Jehovah).

*15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.*

Even to the degree that they made vows to God. Some of these vows must have had to do with giving God great glory as news of this event preceded Jonah to Nineveh.

## **The Sign of Jonah**

Here are the facts as revealed later by Jesus. First, Jonah was a sign to Nineveh just as Jesus was a sign to His own generation. Jonah himself became a sign. Just as Jonah was a sign to Nineveh, in exactly the same way Jesus was to be a sign to his own generation.

*And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. 30 For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. Lk. 11:29-31*

What was this sign? Matthew recorded a different event where Jesus was more clear. This time He is responding to the request by the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus would give them ironclad proof that He was the Son of God. They wanted some amazing act of power of a magnitude that they could not help but accept it. Jesus' anger came because he had already been giving them such signs.

*Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. Mt. 12:38-39*

Hence first Jesus condemned them as an evil and adulterous generation. He then revealed that there would in fact be a sign. It would be the sign of the prophet Jonah. This is the sign He spoke of as recorded in Luke above. Jonah himself was a "sign" to Nineveh just as Jesus would be a "sign" to them. What was this sign? "Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish." A sign is something others hear or see and then use that as proof that what they are being told is true. The sign of Jonah was the knowledge that he had been three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. This is then compared to the sign Jesus would give that generation. He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth then return just as Jonah had.

His return(resurrection), would be the sign that they sought. Once they heard the resurrection of Jesus they would have the sign they sought.

*For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 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. Mt. 12:40-41*

Since they were both signs, they had to be known. It is not a sign unless others see it or are aware of it. So Nineveh had to know Jonah had been three days and three nights in the fish, or it would not have been a sign leading them to repent.

Also, Nineveh could only rise up and condemn those in Jesus' day if they had been offered a similar proof. Nineveh had repented when they saw the sign of Jonah. Many in Israel would not repent when they saw the sign of Jesus.

How did Nineveh know? Either the sailors must have brought the knowledge that Jonah had been told to go to Nineveh and had been cast into the sea, or Jonah was commanded to preach it to them. Either one is possible and it is even possible that both were in play. They had heard of the man who had been thrown into the sea then he showed up to preach repentance to them.

## **Jonah was Unprepared, but God was Prepared.**

God had already prepared for this moment. Jonah was fleeing and had no way to repent and return. God had already devised the means that would give Jonah the time he needed to repent

and at the same allow him to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

As the waters closed over Jonah and the waves tossed him, Jonah had no hope. He was lost and doomed. When the fish swallowed him, it would not have appeared as deliverance. To be under the sea and then swallowed by a fish would be the final blow. As he remained in that fish, at first it was to wait to die. Yet he did not die. He continued to live. Hour after hour, and how long each hour must have felt. Slowly the doom must have lifted and wonder and anxiety must have grown. From the despair of no hope, to the anxiety of what is to happen as hours turned to days.

*Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. 1:17*

Although many have sought for an answer, we do not know what type of fish this was. It is the general word for fish used throughout the OT Scriptures:

*dagah* A feminine noun meaning fish. This word is identical in meaning to *dag*(1709), which can be found in the book of Jonah, where the fish was called a *dag*(Jon. 1:17; 2:10) but was called a *dagah* in Jonah 2:1. In all other instances, this word was used in the collective sense to refer to the fish at creation (Gen. 1:26,28); the fish who died in the plague (Ex 7:18,21; Ps 105:29); the fish eaten in Egypt (Num 11:5); and the fish in the waters (Deut 4:18; Ezek 29:4,5; 47:9,10). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT: 1710)

There is no way to take this generic term for all fish and deduce what type of fish the Lord selected. We are not informed at what point Jonah knew he was to be spared. Whether it was by direct revelation or a gradual sense that it was to happen is not revealed. But though it was implied that it took the full three days and nights before Jonah prayed, it is possible that it was at some point during that time.

*Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said: "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. 2:1-2*

Jonah is very up front and honest. He only cried out to God because of this affliction. It was the affliction of being in that fish that led to his prayer. As the affliction continued hour after hour, at some point, like the prodigal son, it appeared to him that his best hope was to return and plead for mercy.

*"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."' Luke 15:17-19*

## **The Nature of the Affliction**

Jonah gave a detailed explanation of the nature of the afflictions he had passed through that led to his repentance. It began as he hit the water in the heart of the sea. Then the waves tossed him and covered him. The terrible nature of this turmoil entered even into his soul. Then he sank, weeds wrapped about him and he felt he had gone to the very bottom of the sea. This was either what happened just before the fish swallowed him or what this fish did after he entered it. He may have gone down through the force of the waves, or the fish may have swallowed him and took him to the bottom of the ocean. Either way, Jonah concluded that the bars had closed behind him and he would never see the light again.

### Jonah's Response

*Then Jonah prayed from the fishes belly  
I Cried ... Because of my affliction  
and He answered me  
out of the belly of Sheol I Cried  
And You heard my voice.*

*Then I said I have been cast out of your sight  
Yet I will again look to your temple*

*Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God.*

*"When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord;*

*And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple.*

*"Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.*

*But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving;*

*I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."*

### The affliction that created the response

*For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas  
And the floods surrounded me;  
All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.*

*The waters surrounded me, even to my soul;*

*The deep closed around me;*

*Weeds were wrapped around my head.*

*I went down to the moorings of the mountains;*

*The earth with its bars closed behind me forever;*

### The Fruit of Jonah's Repentance

As we look at the afflictions and the changes in Jonah's heart it becomes clear that they are so mixed together that it is impossible to follow its course. Some commentators have concluded that these words were not spoken in the fishes belly, but outside of it in the form of a song. The only obvious thing is that Jonah entered the fish unrepentant and prepared to die and left the fish having repented and made vows to the Lord of what he would do when he again was free to chart his own course.

One thing is clear, as soon as Jonah was back on shore, the command he had refused to fulfill the first time was given to him a second time.

*Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." 3:1-2*

This time, there is no murmuring and no rebellion. He has learned his lesson and will not rebel against God's command again. The message is one of doom.

*So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. 4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" 3:3-4*

So the general command "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me," and "preach to it the message that I tell you," has now become very specific.

The city is so large it takes three days to walk. But is it circumference or walking from one end to the other. Historians tell us that Nineveh was about 60 miles in circumference so the three day extent is its circumference. As Jonah begins his journey he preaches the message God had decreed for him to preach.

### Jonah's Message Leads to Nineveh's Repentance

Of all the prophets that God has sent to preach, there are very few times the people actually responded with repentance. Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Micah were sent to Israel and Judah and failed to get repentance. Their mission was a failure. Jonah was successful to the fullest extent.

*So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 6 Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. 8 But let man and beast*

*be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?*

It is difficult to imagine what would have led an entire city to repent only at the preaching of Jonah. It appears to be the sign of Jonah that Jesus spoke of that truly brought about this repentance. It is interesting that the very act of rebellion that Jonah had done to keep this from happening became the reason why it was so effective.

### **God Relented**

Just as God had relented at Jonah's repentance, so now he relented of the evil he had proclaimed against Nineveh.

*Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.*

This is exactly what God later revealed to Jeremiah.

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Jer 18:1-10*

Everything was as it should be. Jonah has done exactly what God had commanded him to do and Nineveh had responded positively to the message and after repentance, God has relented of the punishment he had determined to bring upon Nineveh.

### **Jonah was Displeased**

Jonah's response to this great success is astounding. Not only is he greatly displeased but he is also angry with God. The paradox here is that what God had offered Jonah in the fish is now the reason for his anger.

*But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.*

The rest of this chapter is a snapshot of the vastness of God's mercy and patience. God's responses to his weakness help us better understand how *"the LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness."* Jonah gives color and texture to how God *"has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities."* Finally, it is the perfect story to show us how *"as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him."* Ps. 103:8-13

Like Cain before him, Jonah is throwing a tantrum. He is overcome with the emotions of anger and bitterness and is no longer thinking clearly. In both cases God seeks to reason with them just as we would our own children. Instead of responding to the anger and wrath, God responds with love, compassion and patience.

### **Jonah's Prayer**

Jonah's second prayer is far different than this one. After the fear and dread of death in the belly of the fish, his humble and penitent prayer was answered and revealed God's mercy and grace for which Jonah praised and thanked God. But this prayer is a form of murmuring. Jonah is very angry about what God has done and he now bitterly complains to God about it.

In this prayer we learn a lot about Jonah's character and we also have a commentary on the events of the first chapter.

*So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" 4:1-3*

Jonah has already spoken of this before. This prayer has gone up to God while he was still in Israel. This prayer was the reason why Jonah had fled to Tarshish. Although Jonah had repented of fleeing to Tarshish and the rebellion against God's command, his repentance could not reach deep enough to overcome his real problem.

Jonah has no compassion for his enemies. Knowing God's mercy and compassion, he believed his mission might be successful and he did not want Nineveh to be forgiven.

What Jonah "knew" about God's character is nearly exactly what God had revealed about Himself to Moses as quoted in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

*And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Ex 34:6-7*

*He **made known His ways to Moses**, His acts to the children of Israel. 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. Ps 103:7-9*

It is sad to see Jonah so twisted in his thinking. He is so angry that he now seeks for what he had so feared in the belly of the fish. He quotes Moses and Elijah in their discouragement.

*Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. 11 So Moses said to the Lord, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? ... 15 If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now — if I have found favor in Your sight — and do not let me see my wretchedness!" Num. 11:10-11, 15*

*But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" 1 Kings 19:4*

But while Moses and Elijah are in anguish because they cannot help the people and gain repentance, Jonah is in anger because God has been merciful. Sadly, like unmerciful servant (Mt. 18:15-35), he could not see his own hypocrisy. He did not want to be the instrument that brought salvation to Nineveh. Yet God continued to patiently teach him. We see in God the patient and loving father of the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:20-32).

Though Jonah's prayer is unworthy of an answer, God's mercy continues as He seeks to reason with his immature prophet.

*Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"*

Isn't this far enough? Hasn't Jonah now exhausted the mercy and pity of God? Isn't it time for God to give up and leave him to his fate or even strike him dead for his terrible attitude? But instead of responding in anger, God's love and mercy shine through again in the question: "Are you right to be angry?" This is the same compassion Jesus gave to Peter even before his denial. God wanted to help Jonah, but Jonah doesn't respond.

### **Jonah still "hopes for the worst"**

Although he knows God has relented, Jonah still hopes that God will destroy the city. While he waits for the outcome,

*So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city.*

Whatever this shelter consisted of, it was not enough to shade him from the heat of the sun. God decided to give him Jonah a powerful lesson.



As Jonah waited to see if the city would be destroyed with emotions of bitterness anger and vengeance in his heart, God prepared a plant, a worm and a vehement east wind to lead His prophet to repentance and spiritual growth.

*And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. 7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 4:6-8*

God knew the heart of his prophet and sought to place Jonah into His own position so Jonah can see why God has done what he did. First, he prepares a gourd to grow up over the shelter Jonah had made to give him welcome shade. In the short time Jonah had it, he grew to love and appreciate that plant. Then in the morning, God brought a worm to destroy the plant, so Jonah could appreciate the emotions that are felt when something precious and important has been harmed and destroyed.

The east wind was prepared to show Jonah just how important that plant had been to him and how terrible it was to have lost it. In this God revealed how he had felt. He had created the heavens and the earth and placed Adam and Eve on it to love and cherish. Like the worm, the serpent in the garden had brought God's plans to an end. Through the centuries, God had sought to rebuild what had been lost and had known the joy of rebuilding and the bitterness of its loss. This had happened over and over again with Israel. It was now happening to Nineveh. Jonah's loss of the plant and discomfort at its loss was a minor thing in comparison to what God was dealing with.

### **God teaches Jonah a Lesson**

Although these events created a new ugly outburst of anger and a terrible wish for death from His prophet, God still doesn't grant Jonah the wish he would regret for all eternity. Instead God used these events as an opportunity to teach Jonah (and us) something very important. Jonah was angry because: "*You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow*" (4:10). Jonah's interest in the vine had nothing to do with the labor and effort he had put into it, but only in the pleasure it had given him for one night.

*Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!" 10 But the Lord said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 4:9-10*

In contrast, the pity God felt toward Nineveh was much deeper. God had raised up Nineveh in hopes of producing a great harvest of souls. The sins of Nineveh had threatened her existence in the same way that the worm had to Jonah's plant.

*And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left — and much livestock?" 3:11*

While Jonah only had a plant, God had 120,000 innocent children and all the animals. Because of Jonah's efforts all these had been spared. God had pitied them and as well as the livestock who were also innocent but who would suffer greatly in Nineveh's judgment. This is God's attitude toward children who die as a result of his judgment upon the wicked. They form a portion of that ten righteous Abraham pleaded for in Sodom (Gen 18:32). They are the undeserving victims of the wickedness of their parents.

How Jonah responded to all this is something we will not know until the day of Judgement for the book closes without recording the outcome.

# The Prophets

## **Review/Overview**

Prophecy is a gift given by God to those men and women God chose to speak for Him. As he told Moses, "I will be with your mouth" (Ex. 4:11) so all prophecy comes into being.

*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 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 1:20-21*

When **Jesus called Abel a prophet**, he revealed that God speaking through men (prophecy) was already being done through Abel even while Adam and Eve were still alive. Abel's words to Cain were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

*Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Lk 11:49-51*

## **Jude called Enoch a prophet.**

*Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 14-15*

## **God called Abraham and Moses a prophet.**

*Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." Gen 20:7*

*Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6 Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?" Num 12:6-8*

## **Peter called Balaam a prophet.**

*They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. 2 Peter 2:15-16*

There have been many prophets recorded in Scripture. Nathan, David, Abijah, Elijah, Elisha, etc. were all called prophets and were sent by God with words in their mouths to bring to those God sent them to speak to.

Most prophets recorded in the Scriptures did not write down their words. They are called nonliterary prophets because of this. Others like David, had a small portion of their writings recorded in the Scriptures. David and Solomon are both kings of Israel, and David is called a prophet, but Solomon wrote many portions of Scripture in Proverbs, Psalms and Ecclesiastes. Other prophets wrote, but their names were not always recorded.

Only sixteen men have books written with their names attached to them. They have been classed into to categories. They are called major and minor prophets. This designation was not made by God. It originated sometime in the past to categorize the longer and shorter books. The major prophets were selected based on the longer length of their books.

These were arbitrary choices seeking a way to help break the Old Testament down into five categories. Since there are five books of Law, twelve books of history, and five books of poetry, it made sense to make five books of Major prophets and 12 books of minor prophets. The problem arises when we realize there are only four major prophets because the Jeremiah's lamentations

is far too short to remain in the category, so there are really four major prophets and one of them wrote two books. The other arbitrary decision was to place Daniel into the major prophets. It is easy to see that His book is only six pages longer than Hosea. But if we take into account the desire to make it easy to remember then we have an understanding of why it was done. It is much easier to remember the 5, 12, 5, 5, 12 than it would be to remember 5, 12, 5, 3, 1, 13.

## Major Prophets(5)

	Chap.	Page	3. Lamentations	5	6
1. Isaiah	66	61	4. Ezekiel	48	45
2. Jeremiah	52	57	5. Daniel	12	15

## Minor Prophets (12)

1. Hosea	12	9	5. Jonah	4	2	9. Zephaniah	3	3
2. Joel	3	3.5	6. Micah	7	5	10. Haggai	2	1.5
3. Amos	9	6.5	7. Nahum	3	2	11. Zechariah	14	8
4. Obadiah	1	1	8. Habakkuk	3	2.75	12. Malachi	4	3

## Purpose under the New Covenant

After the Law was nailed to the cross, much of what they had to say became “*obsolete and growing old*” only rudiments now that we are under Christ.

*In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:13*

*Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. .... 11 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. Gal 4:3-5, 9-10*

They are now writings left for other reasons than those that God originally sent them to do.

### (1) Written for our learning.

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Rom 15:4-5*

### (2) Written for our Admonition

*Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 1Cor 10:1-12*

### (3) Make us wise to Salvation/Help Complete us

*and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim. 3:15-17*

### (4) Do Well to Take Heed.

*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; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:19-21*

Whenever we read these writings, we must keep in the back of our minds that these parameters

must be met or these prophets can harm us just as much as help us.

My own method while reading the prophets of the Old Testament (every book) is based on these four passages. We can learn from their positive and negative examples, but we must always use the New Testament for all doctrine and practice. Paul made it too clear what happens if we fail here.

*And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.  
4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. Gal 5:3-5*

There is another passage though regarding the purpose and value of the Old Testament that has become more and more important to me through the years. It is spoken by Peter

## **(6) Ministering Unto Us**

*Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.  
12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12*

This is a second way to see the value of the prophets. They were men sent by God to reveal the secret things of God's eternal purpose.

*God, spoke to the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners Heb. 1:1*

Some (Malachi, Joel) have only a few of these prophecies and others (Elijah, Elisha) speak nothing of them. Others (David in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah) wrote many Messianic prophecies. Though the things foretold of the Messiah and His kingdom are only a tiny portion of their work they are vitally important to us today.

The prophecies that opened the veil of God's eternal purpose were not primarily written for them. Though these "*prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you,*" "*it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things.*" Though these prophecies "*testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them*" they were given to them to "*minister*" to us"

For this reason they are more closely linked to the New Testament than the Old Covenant.

## **They Were Revealing portions of God's Eternal Purpose**

God's eternal purpose was fully developed and completed before the foundation of the world (Rom. 16:25-26; 2Tim. 1:8-10; Titus 1:1-2; Eph. 1:3-5; 3:10-11). Since God knew the end from the beginning and knew everything that would be in the gospel, He used the prophets in the Old Testament to give certain glimpses into the nature and work of the New Covenant.

*Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been **kept in silence through times eternal, 26 but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets**, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith: Rom 16:25-26*

God gave them these glimpses to allow Paul to say that everything he preached was "*saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come*" (Acts 26:22). God revealed enough to give the shadow and outline of all Paul preached and wrote. These prophets, selected by God, laid the foundation to give those preaching the gospel what they needed to validate their preaching. God revealed enough of his eternal purpose that the apostles only needed to complete the details. Thus the revelation of God's eternal purpose was seamless.

These prophecies gave the scriptural proof needed to convince Israel and save souls. They also revealed enough information for the apostles to make pithy doctrinal points using the prophecies to give the extra information to make it clear. Even today we use these prophecies to gain a clearer perspective and clarify things in the NT.

**Isaiah 53** is still read today as one of the most comprehensive summations of the life and death of the Messiah.

**Jeremiah 23:1-6** and **Ezekiel 34** offer additional insight about elders working as shepherds.

Jesus ascension and reign are seen more clearly after reading **Psalms 2** and **Daniel 9:7-14**.

Finally, prophecy is often the foundation for important NT revelation. For example the Hebrew writer used **the order of Melchizedek** to help us better see our Messiah as a priest reigning on his throne (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5-7).

We are greatly indebted to these prophets. They give us admonition (1 Cor 10), make us wise unto salvation, and help us be complete unto every good work (2 Tim 3:15-18).

## **How God used the Prophets to Minister to Us in Acts**

After Jesus resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and “opened their minds” by using the prophets who were ministering unto them in their writings.

*Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:25-27*

*Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:44-48*

## **Choosing a twelfth apostle**

Whether Peter was still or already inspired at this point, or whether these were words Jesus had already expounded to them is not revealed, but Peter said, "*Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.*" Peter then quoted the words and used them to direct their conduct in choosing another to replace Judas.

*"For it is written in the Book of Psalms: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office.' 21 "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." Acts 1:20-22*

**Peter's first sermon**, he stated that the tongues of fire and the speaking in the languages in which they were born "*is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel,*" and the death of Jesus was "*by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.*" He then used David's "*thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption*" to prove the resurrection and "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.*" to prove Jesus' ascension and absolute rule as both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:14-36).

**In Peter's second sermon**, he revealed the events of Jesus death as "*things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets,*" and the remaining time until the second coming are "*the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old.*" He quoted Moses and revealed it was Jesus who was "*A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you.*" All who refuse obedience would be "*utterly destroyed from the people.*" Finally, "*all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days*" (Acts 3:12-26).

**After Peter and John were arrested and threatened**, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David (Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing. *“The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass.”* (Acts 4:23-31).

**Phillip joined the Eunuch** using the words of Isaiah 53 and *“beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus.”* (Acts 8:35).

**Peter preached to Cornelius** saying *“to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins”* (10:43).

**In Paul’s first recorded sermon** he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and *“of this man’s seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”* All who lived in Jerusalem *“because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.”* His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, *“when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb.”* Through the gospel the apostles *“bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers,”* for *“in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption.”* Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, *“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets.”* (Acts 13:23-41)

**When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles**, James said the prophets had already revealed God’s will. *“Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written...”* It was the prophets who were used by *“the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old”* (Acts 15:14-18).

**In his defence before Turtullus and Agrippa** Paul summed up his service to God with *“so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets”* (Acts 24:14), and *“I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come,”* (Acts 26:22).

**In his discussion with the Jews in Rome**, he was *“testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening.”*

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, *“And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Pet. 1:19-21).

*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom. 11:33-36*

# Amos — The Last Days of Israel(10 Tribes)

## Review:

After Jehu executed God's wrath on Ahab and Jezebel, God promised Jehu his sons would reign in Israel until the fourth generation.

*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." 2Kings 10:30-31*

Jehu reigned 28 years, but he rejected God and continued to worship in the manner of Jeroboam. None of his sons changed this course. His son Jehoahaz reigned 17 years, and after his death, his son Jehoash/Joash reigned for 16 years, they too did evil in God's sight. When Jeroboam II came upon the throne, he too rejected God to follow his namesake Jeroboam I for his entire 41 year reign. His son Zechariah only reigned for 6 months and the time of Jehu was complete.

*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. 2 Kings 15:12*

This was a combined reign of 101 years. But conditions in Israel had continued to deteriorate, and God's patience was coming to an end. During the reign of Jeroboam God sent two prophets into Israel to proclaim their doom and offer them one final opportunity to repent.

But the end was near. With the death of Jeroboam, the stability of Israel's leadership began to crumble and in a little over forty years, they would be taken into Assyria. Here are the kings and their length of their reign after the death of Jeroboam.

<b><u>Zechariah the son of Jeroboam</u></b> reigned <b><u>six months.</u></b> <u>2 Kings 15:8</u>	<u>6month</u>
<b><u>Shallum the son of Jabesh</u></b> reigned <b><u>a full month in</u></b> Samaria. <u>2 Kings 15:13</u>	<u>1month</u>
<b><u>Menahem the son of Gadi</u></b> reigned <b><u>ten years</u></b> <u>2 Kings 15:17</u>	<u>10</u>
<b><u>Pekah the son of Remaliah</u></b> reigned <b><u>twenty years.</u></b> <u>2 Kings 15:27</u>	<u>20</u>
<b><u>Pekahiah the son of Menahem</u></b> reigned <b><u>two years.</u></b> <u>2 Kings 15:23</u>	<u>2</u>
<b><u>Hoshea the son of Elah</u></b> reigned <b><u>nine years.</u></b> <u>2 Kings 17:1-2</u>	<u>9</u>
<b><u>Ninth year of Hoshea,</u></b> the king of Assyria carried Israel away to Assyria, <u>2 Kings 17:5</u>	<u>4 years</u>

While the five kings in the dynasty of Jehu lasted over a hundred years, in quick succession the final five kings only reigned 41 and then Israel was no more.

## God Sent the Prophets

God had been sending prophets to His people since the day they came out of Egypt. In several places in the prophets He revealed that though He had done all that He could to warn them of their danger, they never listened.

*Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. Jer. 7:25-27*

*When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. 2 The more (the prophets) called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Hos 11:1-2*

*Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. 11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazirites. Is it not even thus, O you children of Israel? say the Lord. 12 But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not. Amos 2:10-12*

## A New Method: Literary Prophets

At this point in the history of Israel, God moved to a new method of using the prophets. Not only did they preach and teach them, but they also wrote books that would then become a permanent

record of their efforts. These could be read long after they were gone in hopes that others seeing how things came out exactly as they had prophesied would be influenced to repent.

*And the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; 23 until Jehovah removed Israel out of his sight, as he spake by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. 2Kings 17:22-23*

With the exception of a few, most of the prophets gave a record of who they preached for and the kings who reigned while they did their work. This is how we date them, and how we can compare the events recorded in the Kings and Chronicles with the events recorded in their books.

The Genealogy of Jesus, given in Matthew, gives us the list of kings that will help us as we go through the literary prophets to place the time of their work.

*David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. 7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. 8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. 9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. 11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. Mt 1:6-11*

## **Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah**

When we compare this genealogy with the opening words of Amos Hosea, Isaiah and Micah we see exactly where they fit. By looking at the kings they worked under we can see the chronology in which they worked.

*The words of **Amos**, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of **Uzziah** king of Judah, and in the days of **Jeroboam the son of Joash**, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. Amos 1:1*

*The word of the Lord that came to **Hosea** the son of Beer, in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, and in the days of **Jeroboam the son of Joash**, king of Israel. Hos 1:1*

*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. Isa 1:1*

*The word of the Lord that came to **Micah** of Moresheth in the days of **Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning **Samaria and Jerusalem**. Mic 1:1*

When we look at the lives of these kings in 2Kings and 2 Chronicles, we learn the length of their reign and their relationship with God. Remember that the prophets who prophesied under the reign of a good king would be well received, but persecuted during the reign of an evil king.

Uzziah(Amaziah)	(reigned 52 years; did what was right)	Amos	Hosea	Isaiah
Jotham	(reigned 16 years; did what was right)	Hosea	Isaiah	Micah
Ahaz	(reigned 16 years; did what was evil).	Hosea	Isaiah	Micah
Hezekiah	(reigned 29 years; did what was right)	Hosea	Isaiah	Micah

Amos made it clear that his book focused on what “*he saw **concerning Israel**.*” Hosea on the other hand only says “*the word of the Lord came,*” but he mentions Israel many times so his primary work appears to be with the ten tribes. Micah says “*he saw **concerning Samaria and Jerusalem**.*” While Isaiah “*he saw **concerning Judah and Jerusalem**.*”

Since they worked while Jeroboam and Uzziah were reigning and it was in the “**twenty-seventh** year of Jeroboam, that Azariah(Uzziah) became king(2Kings 15:1-2), we know that Amos and Hosea both began their work in the final years of Jeroboam. It was therefore about 50 years before the end that God sent them to offer one last chance.

## **Amos**

God had Amos begin his book with words of judgement and condemnation for all the nations that Israel had dealings. He begins with those nations that Israel would feel some relief that they were to be punished, then he moved to Judah and finally to Israel.

The expression for three, yea for four expresses that their iniquity was now complete and God was



just to punish them for such sins. This is what God told both Abraham and Israel.

*But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Gen. 15:16*

*5 Not for your righteousness, or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that he may establish the word which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. Duet. 9:3-6*

*27 (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); 28 that the land vomit not you out also, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. Lev. 18:2*

Amos begins with the fearful roar of God. Later in the book he repeats this fearful warning.

*And he said: "The Lord roars from Zion, And utters His voice from Jerusalem; The pastures of the shepherds mourn, And the top of Carmel withers." Amos 1:2*

*Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? 4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing? ... 8 A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy? Amos 3:3-4, 8*

### **Thus says the Lord**

For three transgressions of <b>Damascus</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:3</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Gaza</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:6</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Tyre</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:9</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Edom</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:11</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Ammon</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>1:13</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Moab</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>2:1</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Judah</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>2:3</u>
For three transgressions of <b>Israel</b> ,	and for four, I will not turn away its punishment <u>2:6</u>

Each of these nations will be punished by Assyria.

Damascus: threshed Gilead with implements of iron.

Gaza: took captive the whole captivity

Tyre: delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,

Edom pursued his brother with the sword, cast off all pity; anger tore perpetually, kept his wrath forever.

Ammon: ripped open the women with child in Gilead, That they might enlarge their territory.

Moab: burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.

Judah: have despised the law of the Lord, And have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, Lies which their fathers followed.

Israel: (1) sell the righteous for silver (2) the poor for a pair of sandals (3) pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor (4) pervert the way of the humble (5) man and his father go in to the same girl (6) defile My holy name (7) lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge (8) drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god

God then reminds Israel (and all in Judah who later read this book) about their history. He had destroyed the Amorite when they took the land of Canaan after He had brought them out of Egypt. He had led them in the wilderness for forty years.

*"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them, Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was as strong as the oaks; Yet I destroyed his fruit above And his roots beneath. 10 Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt, And led you forty years through the wilderness, To possess the land of the Amorite. Amos 2:9-10*

### **God Sent Nazirites and Prophets**

He also reminded them of His efforts to avoid this fate. He had sent both Nazirite and Prophet.

*I raised up some of your sons as prophets, And some of your young men as Nazirites. Is it not so, O you children of Israel?" Says the Lord. Amos 2:11*

Although we have met many prophets, beginning with Moses and continuing through the times of Israel and Judah, this is the second time in the Scriptures that God has mentioned the Nazirite. Samson is specifically mentioned as a Nazirite, and he was very much aware of the importance of keeping that vow.

*For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Judg 13:5*

*that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man." Judg 16:17*

A Nazirite was an individual who took a vow of separation. We generally link it to the prohibitions of cutting hair, drinking or eating anything from the vine, and no contact with a dead body. Yet God here gives them a much higher position. The true meaning of the Nazirite was a separation to Jehovah(LORD).

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman **consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord,** 4 **All the days of his separation** he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. 5 '**All the days of the vow of his separation** no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which **he separated himself to the Lord,** he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6 **All the days that he separates himself to the Lord** he shall not go near a dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because **his separation to God is on his head.** 8 **All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the Lord.** Num 6:1-7*

Clearly the vow of the Nazirite was a complete separation and consecration to the Lord. While those days are in effect, he is "holy to the LORD." It is clear from this passage that while these people were separated to the LORD, God was using them to bring His people to repentance.

Two of the most noteworthy men who were separated and consecrated to God were Samuel and John the Baptist. Yet a careful reading doesn't make this conclusive.

*And she vowed a vow, and said, O Jehovah of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will **give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life,** and there shall **no razor come upon his head.** 1 Sam 1:11*

*For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and **shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.** He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. Lk. 1:15-16*

While God had called His people through Nazirites and prophets. The response of Israel was despicable. They tempted or forced the Nazirites to break their vow and commanded the prophets not to prophesy and reveal God's will to them.

*'But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, And commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!' Amos 2:12*

## **Warning Proverbs From the Prophets**

God gave Israel some proverbs to consider in hopes it will strike fear in their hearts. He begins with a basic statement of fact that God and Israel could not walk together because Israel will not agree with God about the direction they should go. Then God speaks of a roaring lion, a bird trapped in a snare, and the trumpet blown in the city.

*Can **two walk together,** unless they are agreed? 4 **Will a lion roar in the forest,** when he has no prey? **Will a young lion cry** out of his den, if he has caught nothing? 5 **Will a bird fall into a snare** on the earth, where there is no trap for it? **Will a snare spring up** from the earth, if it has **caught nothing** at all? 6 **If a trumpet is blown in a city,** will not the people be afraid? If there is **calamity in a city,** will not the Lord have done it? Amos 3:3-6*

All of this God has done through his prophets. Yet Israel has not feared nor changed directions. The Lion is now roaring just as God revealed it to the prophets, but they are commanding them not to prophecy.

*Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. 8 **A lion has roared!** Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy? Amos 3:7-8*

God then described the punishment they would receive after the lion has roared. First, there will be very little left of them after the lion has finished. just two legs or even just a piece of an ear.

*Thus says the Lord: "As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion Two legs **{(OR)}** a piece of an ear, So shall the children of Israel be taken out Who dwell in Samaria — Amos 3:12*

## **Strong Words**

I often wonder how the prophets eyes must have widened with some dismay as such words come from their mouths. We learned from Jonah that sometimes even with inspiration, the prophet doesn't want to proclaim the inspired message the Holy Spirit gave them. What must Amos have felt as he prepared to deliver these words? After describing the prosperity of those in Israel. He begins with sarcasm and quickly moves into some of the strongest and plainest words in the prophets.

*I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house; The houses of ivory shall perish, And the great houses shall have an end," Says the Lord. Amos 3:15*

*Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, "Bring, let us drink!" 2 The Lord God has sworn by His holiness: "Behold, the days shall come upon you When He will take you away with fishhooks, And your posterity with fishhooks. Amos 4:1-2*

With this idiom, the Holy Spirit through Amos rebuked the selfish women whose demands kept their husbands involved in wickedness and covetousness. The "winter" and "summer houses," the "houses of ivory" and "great houses" were not enough. Day by day they heard the demands of their wives for more.

A cow of Bashan is a "well fed, fat cow."

The cows of Bashan are well-fed, fat cows, ... as Bashan had fat pastures, and for that reason the tribes that were richest in flocks and herds had asked for it as their inheritance (Num 32). (Keil and Delitzsch OT Commentary)

Amos concluded with the powerful condemnation and punishment, which the Lord has sworn by His holiness to accomplish. Both the women and their children will have fishhooks embedded into their bodies and they will be drug away into Assyrian captivity.

## **Sarcasm**

Amos is then given words of sarcasm from God. An exhortation to continue in the sins they had practiced since the says of Jeroboam.

*"Come to Bethel and transgress, At Gilgal multiply transgression; Bring your sacrifices every morning, Your tithes every three days. 5 Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, Proclaim and announce the freewill offerings; For this you love, You children of Israel!" Says the Lord God. Amos 4:4-5*

Bethel is the very city where Jeroboam set up one of his calves. Gilgal is not mentioned in the kings, but Hosea also mentioned it.

*"Though you, Israel, play the harlot, Let not Judah offend. Do not come up to Gilgal, Nor go up to Beth Aven, Nor swear an oath, saying, 'As the Lord lives' — Hos 4:15*

*"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. All their princes are rebellious. Hos 9:12*

God details how meticulous they were in their idolatrous sacrifices. Sacrificing every morning and tithing every three days. Yet mingling their sacrifice with leaven which was unlawful. But these were the things that pleased them.

## Prepare to Meet Your God

God now outlines how He had responded to their “*adulterous idolatry*.” He explains in detail some of the things He did to bring about their repentance. The list seems to increase in intensity until it ends with their final destruction.

### Famine and Drought — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

A lack of food (cleanness of teeth) had been sent from God. He had taken away their blessings and they felt their want, but did not repent and return. He sent drought at the worst times to certain cities, and gave rain to others, but they did not repent and return.

*6 "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. 7 "I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered. 8 So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. Amos 4:6-8*

### Pests — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

The crops escaped drought had been blasted with small (bacteria) and large (locusts) pests. They thought they would get a harvest, but in the end there was nothing.

*9 "I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord.*

### Plague and War — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

God “sent,” for this was not by chance. The thing God had promised would not happen if they feared Him had happened. There were terrible plagues and war that cost them their sons.

*"I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, Along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. Amos 4:9-10*

*If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, **I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians.** For I am the Lord who heals you. Ex 15:26*

*If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59 then **the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues** — great and prolonged plagues — **and serious and prolonged sicknesses.** 60 Moreover **He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt,** of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61 Also **every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you** until you are destroyed. Deut 28:58-61*

God has the power and will to do things like this to bring about the repentance of His people. These are small problems if they lead to repentance compared to complete destruction that will come without it.

### Complete but limited Destruction — Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord

Some cities either by earthquake or some other “natural” disaster were completely destroyed with no one left alive.

*"I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me, "Says the Lord. Amos 4:11*

### Prepare to Meet your God O Israel!

There was nothing left for God to do. He had done everything He could to avert this end. He had sent prophets and Nazirites whom they had ignored and sought to ruin. He had sent every type of “natural” disaster, but they too had failed. So, since they had rejected every appeal to repent and return to God, the greatest of all catastrophes would occur. A foreign army would overrun the land and kill, rape, pillage and destroy at will.

*12 "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God,*

O Israel!" 13 For behold, He who forms mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth — The Lord God of hosts is His name. Amos 4:12-13

## **More Proverbs of the Coming judgment**

Some were seeking the day of the Lord to come. Perhaps in sarcasm they sought to see it come since Amos and Hosea were both speaking of it. But God warns them, when it comes it will be darkness. He used three cascading proverbs to describe it. A man escapes a lion and meets a bear. Or he flees the lion and escapes into the house only to be met by a serpent who bites him.

*Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light. 19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him! 20 Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it? Amos 5:18-20*

## **God expressed His true Feelings toward their False Worship**

God expresses not just distaste but actual hatred for their false worship. They were offering feast days and sacred assemblies, but only those in accord with Jeroboam's sin. What God really wanted was justice and righteousness toward Him and toward one another. Such justice would force them to worship and honor Him according to the Law.

*"I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. 22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. 23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. 24 But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream.*

## **Their False Worship had Plagued them since Sinai**

God takes them all the way back to their wandering in the wilderness to charge them with this unfaithfulness. We can pinpoint it even to the time Moses was on the Mount getting the Law and they were building the golden calf. Even before they even entered the promised land, they had been worshipping idols.

*"Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? 26 You also carried Sikkuth your king And Chiun, your idols, The star of your gods, Which you made for yourselves. 27 Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus, " Says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts. Amos 5:25-27*

Some of this started with Rachael who stole her father Laban's gods and then continued while they sojourned in Egypt. God reveals some terrible things about this early time in the history of Israel.

*Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers. 5 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, 'I am the Lord your God.' 6 On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands. 7 Then I said to them, 'Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.' 8 But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' 9 But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they were, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. 10 "Therefore I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11 And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them.' 12 Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. 13 Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them'; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. 14 But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 15 So I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had*

given them, 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands, 16 because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. 17 Nevertheless My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness. 18 "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19 I am the Lord your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20 hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.' 21 "Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them'; but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness. 22 Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 23 Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, 24 because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols. 25 "Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live; 26 and I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire, that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the Lord." Ezek 20:4-26

This is what Joshua had charged them with.

*"Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* Josh 24:14-15

They had been in contact with this idolatry all the way back to their fathers beyond the river (Laban, etc.). They had also been infected with the gods of Canaan and Egypt. How far back Joshua noticed these things is unknown, but it was obvious to him after some time in the promised land.

Stephen quoted this passage when he was preaching to the Jews just prior to his death. He begins with Moses and then stated clearly that these wouldn't obey Moses, because they had already turned their hearts back to Egypt. The Holy Spirit specifically used the calf as the proof that they had already deserted God and gone back to Egypt. When God witnessed this, He gave them up. This didn't happen then because of the Moses intercession and Joshua's leadership. But as Joshua's generation passed from the earth, God began the process of giving them up, which culminated here at the time of the preaching of Amos and Hosea.

*"This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, 39 whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 41 And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 43 You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'" Acts 7:38-43*

## **Three Visions**

From the context of the passage, this sermon was preached to the people and after hearing it the priest in Bethel responds.

### **I The Vision of Locusts**

*Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings. 2 And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: "O Lord God, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!" 3 So the Lord relented concerning this. "It shall not be," said the Lord. Amos 7:1-3*

As we read these words, we can only get a glimpse of what Amos actually saw. If what we read here doesn't sound bad enough for him to respond like this, we only have to remember that terrible

things can be revealed in visions. Yet this must be different from what God revealed earlier in the book (Amos 4:9). This was so terrifying that Amos pleaded with God for he could see that if this were to happen Jacob would not longer stand. At his pleading, God relented.

## **II The Vision of Fire**

*Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold, the Lord God called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. 5 Then I said: "O Lord God, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!" 6 So the Lord relented concerning this. "This also shall not be," said the Lord God. Amos 7:4-5*

This vision comes with a much clearer terror. This time there is a fire which has already devoured the ocean and the land where Jacob lived, so Amos again pleads with God to relent of this terrible judgment as well.

## **III The Vision of the Plumb Line**

*Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. 9 The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam." Amos 7:7-9*

Although this vision is much tamer and Amos doesn't plead with God, the results will be the same. God is standing on a wall that was made by a plumb line and is thus a perfect wall. There is no way to identify this wall as God gives no clue. Later when speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the remainder of Judah, God again used this term, but again without any way to identify it.

*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." 2 Kings 21:13-15*

Although we may not be able to identify the wall or the plumb line, whatever it was God intended to do with them, once it had been accomplished, "I will not pass by them anymore." The reason God will have no reason to pass again is that "high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste." When this vision has been accomplished Israel will be no more. Since Amos trusts God and God hasn't told him, Amos holds his peace.

The final point of the vision is what leads to the next section. "I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam" is also the completion of the words God had given to Jehu when he said that his children would reign on the throne to the fourth generation was then completed. Six months after the death of Jeroboam, the sword did remove the house of Jeroboam through Jehu.

## **Amos is Rebuked**

Amaziah, the priest of Bethel has no tie to Aaron as he is part of those whom Jeroboam had chosen from all the people who wanted to be priests. Amaziah generalizes false charges against Amos. There is no conspiracy, Amos is only preaching the truth, but this is how truth is twisted to create persecution.

*Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos has said: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive From their own land.'" 12 Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy. 13 But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence." Amos 7:10-13*

Amos response is all we know about him. He was a common man breeding sheep and caring for sycamore fruit. This tree is not grown in America. It is a large tree that produces small clusters of fruit that taste like figs. The wood was used for utensils and also for the mummy coffins used in

Egypt. The tree remains green all year long and often has fruit throughout the year. The book began with "The words of Amos, who was among the sheepleaders of Tekoa." (Amos 1:1). Tekoa was located about six miles south of Bethlehem and about 12 miles south of Jerusalem.

Amos was not seeking this office. God had assessed his heart and knew he was prepared and spiritual minded enough to do it. God himself responds to Amaziah. Because he has not listened and taken warning, telling the people to repent, the terrible consequences that will come when Assyria arrives will hit hard on the family of Amaziah.

*Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepleader And a tender of sycamore fruit. 15 Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel. ' 16 Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord: You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, And do not spout against the house of Isaac. ' 17 "Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; Your land shall be divided by survey line; You shall die in a defiled land; And Israel shall surely be led away captive From his own land. '" Amos 7:14-17*

## **The Coming Famine**

Another terrible consequence of this judgment will be the loss of contact with God and His word. When they are taken into another land, God warns that there will not be the opportunities to hear His word spoken. They had rejected it when it was readily available and when they were ready to hear it, there would be a famine. now

*"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. 12 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*

## **A Messianic Prophecy**

He begins with the promise that David's tabernacle will be rebuilt. James quotes this verse nearly verbatim in Acts 15 to prove the Gentiles were to be allowed into the kingdom. This tabernacle is not his palace or God's dwelling place, but his own house. Though God had promised a son to sit on his throne forever, at the time of Jesus that prophecy seemed hopelessly unfulfilled. But Amos is clear, yes it will have fallen down and need repairs, but God' had promised it will happen.

*"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name, " Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:11-12*



# Hosea

## Introduction

The book of Hosea presents some difficult challenges that must be dealt with prior to looking at the contents of the book. The difficulty lies in God's request to Hosea regarding the wife that he is to marry. Some have gone so far as to make that part of the book a parable, but that would take away its most powerful aspect. The passage in question:

*When the Lord began to speak by Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the Lord." 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. Hos 1:2-3*

Since the passage is clearly literal, there is no need to follow that path. So why would God ask Hosea to marry such a woman? Perhaps a more important question is how would Hosea find such a woman? The reality of the conditions in which Hosea lived is that he would have no problem with this since they were all daughters of whoredom.

*'Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart. 12 My people ask counsel from their wooden idols, And their staff informs them. For **the spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, And they have played the harlot against their God.** 13 They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops, And burn incense on the hills, Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, Because their shade is good. **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.** Therefore people who do not understand will be trampled. Hos 4:11-14*

The consequences of their idolatrous practices had led the daughters to become harlots at their idolatrous festivals. Therefore after they married they continued the practices. God said he would not punish them any differently than the men since they too were looking for such women. This is the age of Hosea. Instead of looking hard for such a woman, it would be hard not to find one. Perhaps the woman he had already chosen but had held back was now what God has asked him to do. There is just too much we don't know. But there is no evidence at all to charge God foolishly.

## Purpose

Although this is a terrible ordeal for anyone to endure, there was an important reason. God sought for a man who would understand His own pain in enduring the idolatry of His people. We see idolatry as a sin and a wicked practice, while God saw it as adultery. We need to blend both of these to truly understand God's feelings.

*"Son of man, there were **two women**, The **daughters of one mother.** 3 They **committed harlotry in Egypt**, They **committed harlotry in their youth**; Their breasts were there embraced, Their virgin bosom was there pressed. 4 Their names: Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister; They were Mine, And they bore sons and daughters. As for their names, **Samaria is Oholah**, and **Jerusalem is Oholibah.** 5 "Oholah played the harlot even though she was Mine; And she lusted for her lovers, the neighboring Assyrians, Ezek. 23:2-5*

***She has never given up her harlotry brought from Egypt**, For in her youth they had lain with her, Pressed her virgin bosom, And poured out their immorality upon her. Ezek. 23:8*

*'Thus **I will make you cease your lewdness and your harlotry Brought from the land of Egypt**, So that you will not lift your eyes to them, Nor remember Egypt anymore.' Ezek. 23:27*

This is but one of many graphic and disgusting passages (Ezek. 16:1-39) outlining the terrible way that God saw what they were doing. He pictures the marriage as occurring at Mt Sinai, and long before that marriage Israel had been committing harlotry with idols. He uses Hosea and later Jeremiah and Ezekiel to make this clear. Jeremiah used the adultery of Israel to condemn Judah:

*"Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her*

a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the Lord.... 20 Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the Lord. Jer. 3:6-10, 20

## **Hosea's Children & God's Children**

After the marriage the rest of the first chapter records the birth of three children. Each name was chosen by God and the reason for that name was listed.

### **Jezreel**

The firstborn was a son and God instructed Hosea to name him Jezreel. This is the name of the city where Ahab had his palace and also the place of Naboth's vineyard. This was also the place where Jezebel did her terrible deeds. But it was not these reasons why God chose that name. He chose it in memory of some of the acts of Jehu which had been wrong. This has perplexed many. God had told Jehu to do what he did and later commended him for doing it. It was not a general commendation: "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."

*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."*

Since God was so pleased with what Jehu had done, why does God ask Hosea to name his son Jezreel?

*"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. 5 It shall come to pass in that day That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel." Hos. 1:4-5*

Several answers have been suggested, but none of them are completely satisfying.

(1) Jehu did exactly what God wanted done, but his heart was not right while he did it. He had an additional motive for doing God's will. This is obvious when we read the final words about Jehu.

*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. 2 Kings 10:29-31*

God did exactly the same thing with Assyria:

*"Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation. 6 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. 7 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." ... 12 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." Isa 10:5-7, 12*

(2) If Jehu did not kill all these people out of a love for the Lord, then there were other motives. Jehu did what he wanted to do, not what God wanted of him. Why would he do this? Several motives have been suggested. One suggests: "gain the kingdom, increase his power, and satiate his tyranny and lust; Lust for power, (Gill). Another "when he is not simply carrying out the Lord's will as the servant of God, but suffers himself to be actuated by evil and selfish motives, that is to say, when he abuses the divine command, and makes it the mere cloak for the lusts of his own evil heart. ... "as Calvin has very correctly affirmed, was a crime so far as Jehu was concerned, but with God it was righteous vengeance." Even if Jehu did not make use of the divine command as a mere pretext for carrying out the plans of his own ambitious heart." (Keil and Delitzsch)

(3) Although Jehu did exactly what God asked him to do with Ahab, he went far beyond it when he killed those from the house of David who had come to visit. He killed Joram (2Kings 9:24),

Ahaziah, king of Judah(2 Kings 9:27-28), and Ahaziah's relatives(2Kings 10:12-14). He also massacred all those who worshiped Baal without a trial or an opportunity to repent. (2Kings 10:18-28). Yet most of these things did not occur at Jezreel, so it doesn't fit perfectly.

The second reason he was to be named Jezreel pertained not to the past, but to the future. At Jezreel Israel would lose a great battle.

### **Lo-Ruhamah,**

The second child born by Gomer was a girl, and God again instructed Hosea to give a name. The name is a prophecy of the future. Through this name, God was revealing to Israel the condition they would soon bring upon themselves. If they did not repent and turn from their present path of sin, God would be taking away His mercy.

*And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away. 7 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." Hos. 1:6-7*

It is not unusual for God to have his prophets name their children. God told Abraham to name his son Isaac(laugh).

*Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. Gen 17:19-20*

The names of most of God's people are based on circumstances of their birth. As Rachel was dying, she named her son "Ben(son) Oni(of sorrow)" but Jacob renamed him "Ben(son) jamin(of right hand)"

*Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." 18 And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin. Gen 35:17-19*

The idea behind Lo-Ruhamah is a terrible judgement on the ten tribes. especially when God promised to continue to give it to Judah.

### **Lo-Ammi**

The final child is a son, and God once again commands Hosea to name the son as the continuation of the prophesy. Not only will the ten tribes of Israel no longer receive any mercy from God but they will no longer even be considered His people.

*Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God. Hos. 1:8-9*

One of Lot's children on the other hand was named just the opposite. "Ben(son of) -Ammi(my people)."

*And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day. Gen 19:38*

As these children grew up and people asked for the reason for the name, Hosea would be prepared with this powerful answers. Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ammi were all names of judgment on the wicked nation of Israel.

### **Prophecy**

Although doom and judgment were only decades away, God knew their restoration would not occur for about 750 years(captivity in 722 then recalled after 33AD). Although these words are placed here in the book written years later, it is doubtful they were preached in the same sermon as judgment and condemnation. These words are for later. After they are in captivity and they are in need of hope and comfort. God is so merciful that compassionate that He wants them to have this comfort at that time.

*'Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.' 11 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, For great will be the day of Jezreel! 2:1 Say to your brethren, 'My people,' And to your sisters, 'Mercy is shown.' Hos 1:10-11*

So this was not a complete judgment. It is similar to the words Isaiah was saying to Judah at about the same time.

*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. Isa 1:9; See also Rom. 9:22-33*

God would leave a remnant, both in Israel and in Judah. The punishment would be severe, but it would not be a full end. The children of Abraham would still have the opportunity to receive the blessings promised to him because of his faithfulness.

*Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. Rom 11:28-32*

God promised that the judgment upon these fathers would not remove the promise given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The children of Israel would again become like the sands of the sea!

*blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Gen. 22:17-18*

Then, those who had been called “not my people” will return and be restored. Both Paul and Peter quote this passage and thought.

*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; 10 **who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.** 1Pet. 2:9-10*

*What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, **not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ' You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."** Rom. 9:22-26*

Yet God was not content to only call back the wicked of Israel and Judah whom He had scattered, he would also recall the Gentiles. Since the time of Abraham, Israel had been God’s chosen people, but after they were cast off and became like the Gentiles, God could call everyone back on equal footing.

## **Jezreel**

God used a play on words. While Jezreel can mean “God scatters” it also means “God sows” and thus God gathers. Hence the scattering will be overturned and a great sowing and gathering will occur. Both the scattering and the gathering had been prophesied even in the times of Moses.

*And **the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you.** Deut 4:27-28*

*But **from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.** 30 When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice 31 (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers*

which He swore to them. Deut 4:29-31

"Then **the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods,** Deut 28:64

Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that **the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.** 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Deut 30:1-4

## **A Second Gathering**

Yet far more to the point of Hosea's words are similar words again spoken about the same time by Isaiah. The first gathering would bring the captives of Judah back. But there will be a second gathering in which any who were left of Judah and all who had been a part of Israel would be gathered.

"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.**" 11 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.** 12 **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.** Isa. 11:10-12

## **Charges Against Israel(your Mother)**

This future, God planned for His people, will be great, but it is so far in the future that it could bring little comfort to those living in that day. Hosea now returns to adulterous Israel and continued to reveal why God was just to punish and nearly destroy her. The first half of the second chapter brings all the charges against Israel.

"Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, And her adulteries from between her breasts; Hos 2:2

Just as the previous chapter, God again offered hope to the future generations after these people had been punished.

Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, "You are My people!" And they shall say, "You are my God!" Hos 2:23

## **Charges Against Gomer**

As in the first chapter so here, Hosea's own circumstances so closely mirror what God sees in Israel, that the two blend together. With the term "just like" God makes it clear that there is a direct parallel between what Hosea must do and what God is doing.

Then the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans." Hos 4:1

Hosea's wife is now in some dire circumstance where she needs to be bought. Somehow her adulterous ways have brought her into some form of slavery or imprisonment. She had left Hosea for adulterous activities and was now paying the price for her sin. While many would simply say "you are reaping what you sowed" and leave them in their misery, neither God nor his prophet have such an attitude.

So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. 3 And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man — so, too, will I be toward you." Hos 4:2

Yet the marriage is not fully restored. Hosea has bought her out of all her misery and placed her in a place of safety. But she is to remain chaste. She is to have no man. They will stay together, but it will not be in a husband and wife relationship yet. They are together and he is caring for her, but she will not have a man (even Hosea), and he will be the same to her (he will not have a woman). So the relationship is partially restored, but not fully.

The reason is then given. The same thing will occur with God and Israel. He will care for them, but they will not be restored for many days. They will have no king and no sacrifice for God. They will also have no idols. It will not be until God again decides to give them a new opportunity to become His again in the latter days that the relationship will be fully restored.

*For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or Teraphim. 5 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. Hos 4:1-3*

## **Conclusion**

This concludes the personal life of Hosea. We learn nothing more of him or what happened to his relationship with his wife. Did they reconcile and become happy, or did Gomer continue her treacherous ways? The rest of his book contains only God's message to Israel.

Several of these passages give us insight into God's true character, revealing not only God's anger and wrath, but also His sorrow and frustration.

## **Israel's Wordly Sorrow**

First God expressed His feelings toward their "worldly sorrow." After a time of prosperity, some form of disaster occurred which leads them to evaluate the reason. Because God had always been so merciful and compassionate, they presume that if they showed token repentance, they would soon return to their former prosperity. Their service to God was not based on love and devotion but on greed and selfishness. Their words sounded so sincere as we read them even today.

*Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. 3 Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth. Hos 6:1-3*

Yet God shattered this illusion. Both Ephraim (10 tribes) and Judah had the same problem. Their faithfulness to Him was like the early cloud that burns away without rain, or the early dew that looks like it has watered the ground, but disappears as soon as the sun warms the earth. Their words of repentance lose all meaning as soon as prosperity and success warm their hearts. This left God with only one alternative. To rebuke them with the prophets and to slay them with both His words and the judgments that would bring desolation.

*"O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away. 5 Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And your judgments are like light that goes forth. Hos 6:1-5*

## **How Will I Give you Up?**

In one of the clearest passages, God expressed the hopes He held for Israel when he was still a child in Egypt. But those hopes were dashed by their stubborn rebellion. The more God sent judges and prophets to call them the further away they went. Although it was God who always saved them and removed the yoke from their neck, they refused to know or see it.

*"When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. 2 As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images. 3 "I taught Ephraim to walk, Taking them by their arms; But they did not know that I healed them. 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. Hos 11:1-4*

They left God no choice but to send him back into captivity and slavery. But they would not go back

to Egypt but into Assyria. Yet before that captivity, there would be terrible consequences. God would allow Assyria to be their king, but this was a king with no mercy. They would be slashed, devoured and consumed.

*5 "He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, Because they refused to repent. 6 And the sword shall slash in his cities, Devour his districts, And consume them, Because of their own counsels.*

God then returned to their shallow repentance. They were bent on backsliding, and even when they did call on Him it was not to exalt or honor Him. So through their own decisions, God was now preparing this terrible punishment.

*7 My people are bent on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him.*

Yet the emotions churning in God's heart are not at all what we might have expected. Instead of a satisfied wrath and a sense of righteous fulfillment that made all equal again, God felt the same way any of us would if it were one of our own children who had brought such terrible consequences down upon themselves.

Although there is nothing left to do, like all other parents, we look for one more thing. We just can't let go. They deserved everything they were going to receive, but God has no satisfaction or happiness. His heart churns, His sympathy stirs, His mercy intervenes.

*8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I set you like Zeboiim? My heart churns within Me; My sympathy is stirred.*

They should be made like Admah and Zeboiim. These were two cities closely joined with Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed along with them. The wickedness of Israel was similar to theirs.

*'The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' Deut 29:23*

Yet as Isaiah had noted, God had left them a remnant. So the circumstances were not the same.

*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. Isa 1:9; See also Rom. 9:22-33*

Since the circumstances were different because of the promises to the fathers, God would not do to Israel as He did to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim. He would not pour out the anger as it deserved, but would hold it back. This did not mean they would not be destroyed as Sodom and the rest. But that there would not be a full end. There would be that piece of an ear, or two legs.

There would be a second chance for Israel. He would call for them again and they will return.

*9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror. 10 "They shall walk after the Lord. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, Then His sons shall come trembling from the west; 11 They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, Like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses," Says the Lord. Hos 11:1-11*

## **A King: Given in Anger and Removed in Wrath**

God reminded them of exactly where the problem that led to this began. Though Israel is now destroyed, God had always been their help. God had always been their king and there was no other who could help and save them as He could. God then quotes their own words to Samuel.

*Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now **make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**" 1Sam. 8:4-5*

*And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, **but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.**" 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, 1Sam. 8:7-8*

*Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but **we will have***

***a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." 1Sam. 8:19-20***

This event now led them to this. The kings failed God miserably. First Saul, then Solomon, and then Jeroboam. Now God will destroy the ten tribes and their king He had given them in His anger and would now take away in His wrath.

*"O Israel, you are destroyed, But your help is from Me. 10 I will be your King; Where is any other, That he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? 11 I gave you a king in My anger, And took him away in My wrath. Hos 13:9-11*



## Joash / Jehoash

**Review:** We studied Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram and his grandson Ahaziah while we were studying the life of Jehu and his destruction of Ahab's house. These two kings were closely aligned with both Ahab and Jezebel. Jehoram married one of Jezebel's daughters Athaliah. The first thing Jehoram did when he became king was kill all his brothers. He continued in this wickedness and was so wicked, God struck him with an incurable disease of his intestines from which he died (when the intestines came out) after only eight years as king. His son Ahaziah only reigned 1 year, before he killed by Jehu while on the way to visit Ahab. After Ahaziah's death Jezebel's daughter Athaliah killed all her grandchildren and began to reign as queen.

### Joash hidden from the Slaughter

But one of her grandchildren was hidden from her. In the confusion as the children were being killed, Athaliah's daughter secretly hid Joash and brought him into the house of God (temple).

**Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah. 11 But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. 12 And he was hidden with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land. 2Chr. 22:10-12; 2 Kings 11:1-3**

In the passage we get the main characters in the life of the next king.

1. **Athaliah** the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, the wife of Jehoram, the mother of Ahaziah and Jehoshabeath and grandmother of Joash.
2. **Jehoshabeath/Jehosheba** - The daughter of Jehoram and Athaliah, sister of Ahaziah and wife of Jehoiada the priest.
3. **Joash/Jehoash** the son of Jehoram and last of the seed of David in that line.
4. **Jehoiada** the priest.

The life of Joash begins with him hidden in the house of God (temple) for seven years with Jehoiada and his wife Jehosheba. Since he was only seven years old when he began his reign, he must have been a new born baby at the time he was hidden. It is very similar to the early life of Samuel.

*Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. 2Chr. 24:1*

### Joash anointed King

The events that brought Joash out of the temple as king are given in great detail in both Kings (11:4-21) and Chronicles (23:1-21). The highlights of this revolt against Athaliah's conspiracy are found here. First, they went out into Judah and gathered Levites and chief fathers in Israel. He put them under oath then the Levites and priests came into the temple and to protect Joash. Jehoiada then brought out Joash and they anointed and proclaimed him king.

**4 In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds — of the bodyguards and the escorts — and brought them into the house of the LORD to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son. ... 8 you shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in." 11 Then the escorts stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, by the altar and the house. 12 And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the Testimony; they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, "Long live the king!" 2Kings 11:4; 8-12**

**2 And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. ... 5 All the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6 But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they are holy; but all the people shall keep**

*the watch of the LORD . 7 And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. 2 Chron 23:1-11*

## **True Worship to God Restored**

After Jehoiada made several covenants, the people went to the temple of Baal, tore it down and killed the priest.

***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. 18 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. 2Kings 11:17-18***

Jehoiada also restored the work in the temple.

*Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD , to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD , as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was established by David. 19 And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD , so that no one who was in any way unclean should enter. 2Chr. 23:16-19*

## **The Reign of Joash**

At the age of seven and in the seventh year of the reign of Jehu, Joash began his 40 year reign over Judah. He was a good king who did what was right for as long as Jehoiada the priest and his mentor/father instructed and guided him. It is evident that once that guidance was removed, Joash became a different king altogether.

***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. 2Chr 24:1-2***

## **Joash Reigns in Israel**

The only event recorded about his reign under Jehoiada centered on restoring the temple. It had been defiled during the time of Athaliah.

*For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord to the Baals. 2Chr 24:7*

It appears he was sincere and not simply doing the will of Jehoiada. We don't know how long into the reign this occurred.

*Now it happened after this that Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the Lord . 5 Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly." However the Levites did not do it quickly. 2Chr. 24:4-5*

*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, 5 let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found." 2 Kings 12:4-5*

Although the command is simple enough, it has some difficulty. It appears that the king is asking, at least in part for the priests to use the money that would have gone to them and use it for the temple. All the dedicated things would normally belong to the priests(see Num. 18). Whether that was part of the reason for the problem, or it was a flaw in the priests an levites is not revealed. They just didn't do it.

After 23 years, Joash called them in and rebuked them for not doing what he had asked. It was agreed that they would not repay what had been already given, but that they would no longer take money from the people.

*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. 2 Kings 12:6-8*

A new way was devised.

*Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the Lord. 9 And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the Lord the collection that Moses the servant of God had imposed on Israel in the wilderness. 10 Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put them into the chest until all had given.*

From the way the people responded it appears the message had not really been proclaimed. Either that or the priests had not been honest and the people had become discouraged up until they saw a legitimate way. Things moved quickly after this.

*11 So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. 2Chr. 24:11*

*The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the Lord ; and they hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the Lord , and also those who worked in iron and bronze to restore the house of the Lord . 13 So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it. 14 When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; they made from it articles for the house of the Lord , articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the Lord continually all the days of Jehoiada. 2Chr. 24:12-14*

## **Jehoiada's Death and Joash's apostasy**

The last words above are a hint of what was to come: *"they offered burnt offerings in the house of the Lord continually all the days of Jehoiada."* Although Jehoiada lived a long life of 130 years and he was given great honor at his death, it changed everything.

*But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died. 16 And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house. 2Chr. 24:15*

After his death, the leaders of Judah, who had been compelled to worship God evidently against their will all these days now came to Joash and asked him to change the way they worshiped God. The king it appears did not take much convincing and he too willingly left God to worship idols.

*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. 2Chr. 24:17-19*

Their quickness and the completeness of this apostasy revealed the impurity of their devotion up to this time. Joash lost his love and zeal for God, and God's wrath came upon them. Once again prophets were sent to bring them back, but they wouldn't listen.

The Holy Spirit then came upon one of Jehoiada's sons. The son of the very man who had done so much for Joash is now standing before him, and at the commandment of the king he is stoned to death.

*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!"*

## **God's Vengeance**

At some point after this event, God sent the Syrian army against the people and all the leaders were killed and all their money sent to Damascus.

*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.*

*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. 2Chr. 24:23-25*

*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. 1Kings 12:20-21*

*Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. 2Chron 25:4*

## Uzziah, Jotham & Ahaz

These three kings of Judah had a great impact on the preaching of the prophets sent at that time. We have seen in our own culture how leaders can affect the culture and how the people can influence those leaders. The sexual revolution led to legalized abortion, forever changing the nature of the political parties here. Later, this same sexual revolution legalized homosexuality and further changing the political parties and which has now led to homosexual marriage. Few alive before 1970 could have envisioned the impact that the culture had on the selection of leaders, how the leaders have pushed the culture, and how both of these have changed the landscape of the hearts who are now hearing the gospel.

There is nothing new under the sun, and this has happened as a cycle since the beginning.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ... so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ... 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Rom. 1:18-23*

All the prophets with the exception of Micah began their work in the days of Uzziah and continued through the reign of Hezekiah. It will be clear from the accounts of their lives the difficulties they worked against.

<i>Amos... in the days of <b>Uzziah</b> of Judah,</i>	<i><b>Jeroboam</b> of Israel, <u>Amos 1:1</u></i>
<i>Hosea ... in the days of <b>Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah</b>, of Judah, <b>Jeroboam</b> of Israel <u>Hos 1:1</u></i>	
<i>Isaiah ... in the days of <b>Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah</b>, kings of Judah. <u>Isa 1:1</u></i>	
<i>Micah ... in the days of <b>Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah</b>, kings of Judah, <u>Mic 1:1</u></i>	

### **Uzziah/Amaziah**

Azaryah'. helped by Jehovah  
Uzz'iyah, strength of Jehovah but in the prolonged form *Uzziya'hu*,(from McClintock & Strong).

**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. 2 Chron 26:3-5

*In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, **Azariah** the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. 2 He was **sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem.** 2Kings 15:1-2*

Since he is called Uzziah in the prophets, we will stay with that name, and since this name is used in Chronicles, which is a much more specific account of his life, we will work out Chronicles.

He begins his reign at 16, and although we are not given any further information, while he was under the guidance of a prophet named Zechariah, he sought God and God made him prosper. Whether this lasted most of his life or only a short time is not recorded.

### **God made him to Prosper**

While under the guidance of Zechariah, still seeking God, he went to war against the Philistines and won a great battle and God greatly blessed him.

*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.** 2 Chron 26:6-8*

*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.** 2 Chron 26:15*

## **Uzziah's Pride**

Clearly after the death of Zechariah, Uzziah's false estimate of his own power and ability led him to go against God's law. He wanted to do the work of the priest and thus entered into the temple with a censer.

*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. 2 Chr. 26:16-19*

Because of this pride, he sinned and entered the temple. When the priest went in to warn him about his sin, instead of being contrite and repentant he became angry. God did nothing when he entered the temple, but when he was still stubborn in his rebellion after being rebuked, God intervened with punishment.

*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. 2Chr. 26:19-20*

The punishment was swift and final. He was definitely humbled at this moment, but there was no longer any room for repentance and he remained a leper for the rest of his life.

*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. 2Chr. 26:21*

Other than this one event, nothing else is written, so we have to fall back on the summary of his life in Kings, that he did what was right.

*And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, 4 except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 2 Kings 15:3-5*

## **Isaiah's Call**

It was in the year that Uzziah died that Isaiah received his call. From the events in this call, we get a good assessment of the conditions in Judah as Uzziah's 52 year reign came to a close.

*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. 2 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. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 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." 6 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. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." 8 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." 9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' 10 "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." 11 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, 12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.*

## Jotham

Since Jotham had been helping his father from the time of he was struck with leprosy, and he was 25 when he began to reign at the death of his father, it appears it was late in Uzziah's reign that this occurred. Jotham was a good king, but did not stop the corruption of the people.

*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.** 2Chr. 27:1-2*

## Prepared his ways before the LORD

His reign was prosperous and busy and God blessed him in his work because he prepared his ways before the Lord.

*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. 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.** 2 Chron 27:3-6*

Yet in spite of his reign and God's blessings, the people still had the terrible heart He had revealed to Isaiah. At this time, God began to punish Israel.

*Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 37 **In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah.** 38 So Jotham rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place. 2Kings 15:36-38*

## Ahaz

Ahaz was twenty when he began his reign and he was more interested in the lifestyle of those he lived among than what God had revealed in His law.

*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. 2 Chron 28:1-4*

## God sent adversaries

God was attempting to do for Judah what he had done throughout the time of the judges. He sent adversaries who would bring Judah to their senses. It failed with Ahaz because he allied himself with the king of Assyria.

*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 Syria captured Elath for Syria, and drove the men of Judah from Elath. Then the Edomites\* went to Elath, and dwell there to this day. 2 Kings 16:5-6*

*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. 2 Kings 16:7-9*

## Ahaz builds a new altar

After meeting with the king of Assyria and seeing the altar they used to worship their idols, he gives

a command to get the plans, remove the altar God had revealed to Israel and replace it with his heathen altar.

*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. 2 Kings 16:10-12*

*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." 2 Kings 16:14-16*

### **Great evil in Judah.**

*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. 2 Chron 28:22-24*



## Hezekiah

As one looks at the list of Kings that ruled over Judah, some were called good/right and others were evil. Yet the majority of the good kings were half-hearted in their service to God. The two kings that stood above all the others were Hezekiah and Josiah. Both were very zealous in their reforms to undo the evil their fathers had done. Both began their reign after serious damage to God's temple and worship.

They are both powerful illustrations of how God's word can overcome the worst of evil influences, even within the family itself. These two kings perfectly illustrate Ezekiel's examples of wicked fathers bearing good sons (Ezek. 18).

Hezekiah's upbringing must have been very difficult. His father Ahaz was twenty when he began to reign and only reigned sixteen years. Since Hezekiah was twenty-five, when he began his reign, he was about 9 years old when his father took the throne. More than that since his father was twenty when he began to reign, he was only eleven when Hezekiah was born and only thirty-six when he died.

*In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 **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 his God, as his father David had done.** 2Kng. 16:1-2*

*Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that **Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem.** 2Kng. 18:1-2*

### From 9 years old until his 25<sup>th</sup> year, he watched his father, Ahaz reign

Perhaps his grandfather Jotham had taken an interest in him and for, as a good king *he "became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God. (2Chr. 27:6).* But this is only speculation.

What we do know that from the age of nine, he witnessed the type of man and king his father became.

*3 **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,****  
4 **he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.**  
22 **Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD .**  
24 **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.** 2Chr 28*

He also witnessed the great upheaval his father's wicked ways brought upon Judah.

*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.*

*he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, **who defeated him with a great slaughter.**  
... 6 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.***

*8 **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.*

***a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded;** and he went out before the army ... 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."***

**18 the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, 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 . Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him. Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. 2Chr. 28**

Out of these circumstances came one of the greatest kings of Judah!

## **Hezekiah Began His Reign**

Judah was very low when he took the throne and Israel was only six years from complete removal from their land. Assyria was a constant threat, and all the nations around Judah were emboldened to take whatever cities they wanted.

*In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 2Kng. 17:6*

Hezekiah must have been a true breath of fresh air to the oppressed righteous in Judah. In the first month of his reign, he restored the temple and began true worship to the LORD.

*In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. 4 Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, 5 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. 2Chr. 29:3-6*

As noted above, Hezekiah had witnessed all the terrible things done by his father and the righteous retribution God had poured out on Judah.

*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. ... 8 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. 9 For indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity. 2Chr. 29:6, 8-9*

The first thing he wanted to do was make a covenant with God and restore Judah to Him. The first thing he does is gather the Levites with instructions to cleanse the temple

*"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. 11 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." 2Chr. 29:10-11*

*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. 2Chr. 29:15-16*

The priests were also involved, entering into the temple and cleaning out all the debris.

*Then the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and brought out all the debris that they found in the temple of the LORD to the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it out and carried it to the Brook Kidron. 2Chr. 29:16*

It took eight days to completely remove all the trash and then another eight days to completely sanctify and prepare the temple for service to the LORD.

*Now they began to sanctify on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule 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. 18 Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles. 19 Moreover all the articles which King Ahaz in his reign had cast aside in his transgression we have prepared and sanctified; and there they are, before the altar of the LORD." 2Chr. 29:17-20*

There are two possibilities of the meaning of "first day of the first month." The most obvious would be the "first day of the first month" of his reign over Judah. If that be the case, then it would have

been in the beginning of the next year that the events describing the Passover occurred.

Yet it is also possible that his reign started with the new year of the Jewish calendar. If that be its meaning, then it was three days after the Passover should have been observed when Hezekiah gathered Judah together.

## **Hezekiah Restored God's Temple, Israel, and Worship to the LORD**

Immediately after the temple was cleansed and prepared, Hezekiah called Judah's leaders to the temple and step by step followed God's words. He first had the altar cleansed and prepared for use.

*Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. 21 And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a **sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah**. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. 22 So they **killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar**. Likewise **they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar**. They also **killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar**. 2Chr. 29:20-22*

After the altar, an offering male goats were made for the leaders(including the king) who laid their hands on the goat as the Law of Moses required. Yet Hezekiah went much further than just Judah, He wanted to atonement made for all Israel and not just Judah alone.

*Then they brought out the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. 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**. 2Chr. 29:23-24*

After all was atoned and made holy, Hezekiah began to restore the actual worship to God.

*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. ... 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. 2Chron. 29:26, 27-30*

At the end of these events, Hezekiah pronounced them consecrated and gave them the opportunity to show their devotion to God.

*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. ... 35 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. 2Chr. 29:31, 35-36*

The only flaw in the entire plan came from the priests, who had not properly prepared themselves.

*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. 2Chr. 29:34-35*

## **Hezekiah Prepares to Restore the Passover**

Although the prescribed day for the Passover had passed, Hezekiah relied on a passage that gave them a second opportunity.

*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. Lev. 23:5-6*

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you*

or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD'S Passover. 11 On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ...13 But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin. Num 9:9-11, 13

So Hezekiah used this opportunity to gather the entire nation of Judah along with all in Israel who would also like to participate.

**And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. 2 For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. 3 For they could not keep it at the regular time, because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. 4 And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly. 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. 2Chr. 30:1-5**

Hezekiah sent "runners" who like heralds or preachers went from city to city to proclaim the opportunity for them to return to Jerusalem, the temple and the Worship of Jehovah.

**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. 2Chr. 30:6-8**

**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." 2Chr. 30:9**

**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. 2Chr. 30:10-12**

Not everyone who arrived at Jerusalem had properly prepared themselves. They were unprepared, but wanted to participate. Hezekiah interceded for them, and God heard that prayer.

**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 19 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." 20 And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people. 2Chr. 30:18-20**

As the account ends, a summary of the events and the good it accomplished

**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. 22 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. 2Chr. 30:21-22**

**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. 26 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. 27 Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven. 2Chr. 30:25-27**

## **The Ideals of Reform Captured the Hearts of the People**

With the feast of unleavened bread, the Passover and the continuation of the festivities for another full week, the people of Israel were deeply moved and took it upon themselves to continue what Hezekiah had started

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. 2Chr. 31:1

## **Hezekiah also Continued the Restoration**

Hezekiah also continued his efforts to bring Judah back into complete submission to God and to the Law of Moses. He first restored all the work of the Priests and Levites to the level it ought to be and then commanded those in Jerusalem to restore the tithe and other offerings so the priests could do this work and so God would be glorified by their obedience.

Not only did Hezekiah put his efforts into making the people submissive, but also used his own resources to reinstate all that he could to what God wanted it to be.

*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.** 2Chr. 31:2-3*

After showing his own example, he commanded all those in Jerusalem to join with him in serving God with all their heart. Clearly the people were still deeply moved by all they had seen and immediately followed his example and command. What is equally exciting is that though the command was given to those who dwell in Jerusalem, even those from Israel and Judah who had come to the Passover were also submissive to the command.

*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.** 5 **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.** 6 **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.** 2Chr. 31:4-6*

The response was overwhelming and not only did everyone get what they needed, but the rest of it was heaped up causing Hezekiah to come and question them about it. Their answer must have been very deeply satisfying to him.

*Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10 **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.”** 2Chr. 31:9-10*

As God sums up his service to Him, it is with the highest of honor and praise.

***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.** 2Chr. 31:20-21*

All of this is condensed into a short paragraph of the first fourteen years of his reign.

***He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.** 5 **He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so***

*that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. 7 The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went. 2K. 18:4-6*

## **The World of Hezekiah's Day**

While Chronicles goes into the great details of the restoration, the account of his life in the book of Second Kings takes a more historical perspective. Weaving into His life the great events that were occurring that would clearly have a great impact upon him.

## **Israel(10 Tribes) Removed**

There is nothing more motivating to a servant of God than to see the terrible consequences of those who are not doing what God has commanded. While we read about them in the Scriptures and are told to take them to heart(1Cor. 10; 2Pet. 2; Heb. 3-4), Hezekiah lived to see it.

*Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. 10 And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 12 because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant and all that Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them. 2Kng. 18:9-12*

In his fourth year, Assyria besieged Samaria and in the sixth year, Israel fell and was removed. Judah now stands alone.

## **Eight Years Later in the Fourteenth year of His Reign Assyria Comes for Judah**

Early in his reign(in the fourth year), Hezekiah had rebelled against Assyria.

*The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city. 9 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah 2K. 18:7-9*

But in the fourteenth year, when Assyria came, Hezekiah humbled himself before them and sought for peace. There is no indication of a lack of faith here. It seems he was a humble man who sought for peace. The king assessed a penalty to Hezekiah and he paid it.

*And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 14 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachis h, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 2Kng. 18:13-15*

## **Assyria Seeks to Destroy Jerusalem.**

In the midst of Hezekiah's faithful service, in the fourteenth year of his reign, at the age of 39(1Kgs. 18:13), Assyria's king surrounded Jerusalem with over 185,000 men. Having already conquered the ten tribes of Israel, he believed it would be a simple matter to take Judah.

These events are recorded in Isaiah 36-39, 1Kings 18:17-20:21 and 2Chronicles 32. Isaiah has the most detailed account, with Kings and Chronicles giving fewer details. Yet each offers some detail that the other passes over.

Chronicles sums up the events leading into the conflict. It is evident that they had a lot of time to prepare since they were able to stop up the springs, build up the wall, and make weapons and shields. These preparations, and Hezekiah's words of encouragement did much strengthen and encourage them.

*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, 3*

**he consulted with his leaders and commanders to stop the water from the springs which were outside the city; and they helped him.**

**5 And he strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised it up to the towers, and built another wall outside; also he repaired the Millo in the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. 6 Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement,**

**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. 2Chr. 32:1-8**

## Hezekiah - 2

### Review:

Hezekiah had spent his entire reign restoring God's Law and service in Judah. He was a good and faithful king. In the fifteenth year of his reign, Assyria sent a large army to take Jerusalem.

### Assyria arrives at Jerusalem

When the army arrived at Jerusalem, there were more than 185,000 men. These men struck great fear and dread into the hearts of those in Jerusalem.

*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. Isa 36:2-3*

*And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and **killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand**; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses — all dead. 2Kng. 19:35-36*

But more than their presence were the words spoken to all the people in the Hebrew language, that put into plain view the great disadvantages of Jerusalem.

*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? 5 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? 6 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. 7 "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'?"**" Isa 36:4-8*

He also scoffed at their pitiful preparations and blasphemed God.

*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! 9 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? 10 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.'**" Isa 36:8-10*

The ambassadors pleaded with him to speak in the language of the Assyrians, but he scoffed. Then makes a direct appeal to the people, hurling insults and again speaking words of blasphemy.

*Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "**Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall.**" 12 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?" 13 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! 14 Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; 15 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."**" Isa 36:11-12*

***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? 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"**" Isa 36:18-20*

### Hezekiah's Response

Assyria has given Hezekiah three choices. He can find enough men to do battle against Assyria, he can surrender the city, or he can prepare for a siege. Assyria had written a letter and he spreads that letter before the LORD in the temple. Hezekiah first tore his clothes in his anguish, then covered himself in sackcloth.



*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. Isa. 37:1*

These were two methods were often used in Israel. We first read of tearing clothes when Judah did not find Joseph in the pit and of sackcloth when Jacob thought Joseph was dead.

*Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and **he tore his clothes**. 30 And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?” Gen. 37:29-30*

*And he recognized it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” 34 Then **Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist**, and mourned for his son many days. Gen 37:33-35*

Among its final uses is the High Priest at Jesus trial and Paul and Barnabas when they heard those in Iconium were about to offer sacrifice to them.

*But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, **they tore their clothes** and ran in among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? Acts 14:14-15*

*Then the high priest **tore his clothes**, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! Mt. 26:65-66*

Assyria had written a letter and he spread that letter before the LORD in the temple.

***He also wrote letters to revile the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him**, saying, “As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand.” 18 Then they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city. 19 And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth — the work of men’s hands. 2Chr. 32:17-19*

*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**. 2Kng. 19:14*

Hezekiah then sent a message to Isaiah, even these messengers were clothed in sackcloth.

*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. Isa. 37:2*

This coarse material was often used as a sign of mourning and grief.

*sak*, from its net-like or sieve-like structure; a word which has descended pure in the Greek *sakkos* and modern languages) is the name of a coarse material, apparently made of goat’s or camel’s hair (Rev 6:12) (from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia)

The message Hezekiah sent contained a mixture of sorrow and hope. He knew there was nothing within Jerusalem that could help them, but God could help him, so he requests that Isaiah will also pray as he is.

*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. 4 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.**” Isa 37:3-7*

They are both praying, and Hezekiah’s prayer is recorded:

*Now because of this **King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven**. 2Chr 32:20*

***Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD**, and said: “O LORD 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. 16 Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 18 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 destroyed them. 19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone.” 2Kng. 19:15-19*

As they are praying the answer comes from God.

*And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall 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. 7 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."'" Isa 37:6-7*

God Hezekiah a wonderful answer. A portion of that answer is given below. For the entire reading read 2Kng. 19:20-34:

*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, I have heard.' 21 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! 22 '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. 2Kng. 19:20-22*

*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. 33 By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD . 34 'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'" 2K. 19:32-34*

## **God Saved Judah**

Soon after this prayer was answered, God sent the angel of the LORD and 185,000 men died in a single night.

*And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel\* of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses — all dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. 37 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple 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. 2K. 19:35-37*

## **The Glory from the Victory**

This was an amazing act of power. What no other nation had done, Judah, through the help of the LORD had done. It is difficult to put together the exact order of what occurred right after this event.

*Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and guided them\* on every side. 23 And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter. 2Chr. 32:22-23*

From the account we have just read, it is clear that the LORD saved Hezekiah from the hand of "Sennacherib the king of Assyria." What is new is that it is also revealed that God also saved him "from the hand of all others." In addition, it is also stated that God "guided them on every side." The other accounts simply reveal his sickness without giving any time frame. Here these words are placed after the victory and before he became sick.

Did these things happen before the events surrounding Assyria? Did other things happen after this victory that led to these words? We simply don't have enough information to draw any conclusions. One thing is clear, God had done much to enhance Judah and Hezekiah because of his faithfulness. This is a clear example of something God had said in the Psalms.

*I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. 11 "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. 12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels. 13 "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! 14 I would soon subdue their enemies, And turn My hand against their adversaries. Ps 81:10-14*

Because of Hezekiah's faithfulness, God was able to do exactly as He said. He did subdue their enemies, and turned His hand against their adversaries. Because of all this, two wonderful things occurred. First, God's name was glorified and many gifts were brought to the LORD at Jerusalem.

We will never know how much good was done and how many turned to Him at that time.

The second thing that occurred was to Hezekiah. He became famous, and not only famous, but exalted. The nations ascribed to him some of the glory that had been given to the LORD. Some of this would be good and wholesome. Hezekiah had been righteous and humble and his faithful service to God had brought this about. But there was also the danger that too much credit was given to him.

### Isaiah Prophecies Hezekiah's death.

At the very pinnacle of his reign, when all had come to fruition, and he was ready to enjoy the fruits of his labor, God sent word by Isaiah:

*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.'" 2K. 20:1*

How these words must have cut him to the heart. His faithful service had brought him to the position where he could enjoy the fruits of his labor, and now it was all to be cut off. Those living under the old covenant were accustomed to their faithful service to God bringing long life and prosperity. So God had promised Solomon.

*And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. 14 So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." 1 Kings 3:13-14*

Hezekiah wept bitterly because all his hopes and dreams for the future were cut off.

*Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, 3 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. Isa 38:2-3*

Yet while he wept he also prayed. It was a simply prayer but contained great power. It relied upon the one thing that God promised would always avail much and have great power.

*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Jas. 5:16-18*

The prayer was so powerful that Isaiah had not even left the city when God revealed to him that he should turn back and again speak with Hezekiah. God then revealed to Hezekiah that he had heard his prayer and seen his tears. God made several promises. First, I will heal you and you will be able to enter the house of the LORD on the third day. Second, I will add fifteen years to your life. Third I will deliver you and the city from Assyria and defend it from all others.

*And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.'" 2Kng. 20:4-6*

After Isaiah revealed all this, Hezekiah asks for a sign. Obviously he has been deeply shaken by the severity of the disease. He seeks immediate assurance that he will not die. He is given two choices regarding the movement of the sundial. Should the shadow move forward or backward. He chooses the latter as it is much more difficult to accomplish. Much has been written about this sundial and after all has been assessed we still can't be certain. The term sundial is only used twice in the Scriptures and both are about this account, so we have no means of comparison. Some put forth it is a set of stairs that the sun moved up and down upon. Others that it was a sundial Ahaz had found in Assyria. But these are only speculations.

*Then Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. 8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What is the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?" 9 Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?" 10 And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees." 11 So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and*

*He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.*  
2Kng. 20:7-11

Isaiah prays to God and God did move the shadow backward. Here again there is a lot of speculation. Many who write in this proclaim God did not move the sun backwards, but only refracted the light to make it appear that it had gone backward. Yet comparing it to Joshua's request, we have the same problem.

*Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: "Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." 13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. 14 Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.* Josh. 10:12-13

If God could make the sun stand still for an entire day, he can also move the sun backwards. We don't know how God did it, but no matter what He did, it was a miracle of great proportions.

## **Hezekiah's Writing**

Hezekiah's writing appears to be broken down into three distinct parts. Although he writes this after the ordeal, he speaks first of how he felt immediately after Isaiah gave him the news. It is a long writing so we will only quote the main points for our study here.

*This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, **when he had been sick and had sickness:** 10 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."** 11 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.\* 12 **My life span is gone,** Taken from me like a shepherd's tent; I have cut off my life like a weaver. ... 13 **I have considered until morning** —" Isa 38:9-13*

Although this is written when he "recovered from his sickness," he speaks of his feelings while in the midst of it. When Isaiah left and all he had was a direct revelation of his death from God, he thought these things. He would die in the prime of life. In his fourteenth year of a reign that started when he was 29, he was only 43. It appears that the night after Isaiah had left, he continued to meditate on his situation. At that time the relief of being alive was crushed under the great emotional trauma he had endured. So he carefully considered as the writer of Ecclesiastes had revealed. His day of adversity had come and he would gain as much as possible from it.

*Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked? 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.* Eccl. 7:13-15

The second part of the writing speaks of what he learned from the experience after he had fully recovered. He begins with the awesome fact that God had spoken to him through Isaiah the prophet. First that he would die and second that he would recover. He then described he resolutions made after it was all over. First, "I shall walk carefully all my years In the bitterness of my soul." Although we could take this to the point of murmuring, that is obviously not the intent. I suspect it is an affirmation of what he intended to do. To try and keep that feeling that brought such humility into his heart for the rest of his life. He says as much later in the writing, when he states that it was for his peace that all this occurred. .

*"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. 16 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. 17 **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.*** Isa. 38:15-17

The third part is praise, adoration, and thanksgiving to God for His salvation and forgiveness.

***The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day;** The father shall make known Your truth to the children. 20 "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."* Isa 38:19-20

Before leaving this amazing event, we need to consider carefully: Why did God do this? Why send Isaiah to him in this manner. There are three possible answers. The first is an offer to allow him to leave this life at the pinnacle of his faithfulness to God and enter into his rest. The second, a clear sign to Hezekiah that will insulate him from pride. He was going to die and from that day until the end of his life, he would remember that God had spared him and these precious days were a gift from God. Third, knowing the number of his days(fifteen years), would help him fulfill God's desire for each of us that will give us wisdom.

*So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom. Ps 90:12*

## **Hezekiah's Final Days**

After this event, Hezekiah did nothing that was worthy of being recorded. Only a single event is listed and then a summary of the rest of his life. It appears from something said in Chronicles that this event did not go as well as it should have because God saw in Hezekiah's heart that he wanted to test.

*However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart. 2Chr. 32:31*

This is a fascinating concept. So often we pray for wisdom and providence and God gives it to us, but if we have something in our heart God seeks to test, He may leave us to make our own decisions to see what we are truly made of. It seems God did the same thing to Balaam. First he sought to protect him from a useless and dangerous mission. But when Balaam still sought to go, God allowed him to do so and in that event Balaam destroyed himself.

Of all the envoys that came to Hezekiah to bring him presents and accord him honor, only Babylon is chosen. Probably because of the future dealings that Judah was to have with Babylon. This account is the same in Isaiah and Kings. We will look at the account in Isaiah. It begins with the letter from the king and the reception of the envoys that brought it. Hezekiah was so impressed with them that he wanted to show them just how great Judah was and how much God had blessed them.

*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. 2 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. Isa 39:8*

After they left. Isaiah was sent by God to help Hezekiah with a bigger picture. First, Isaiah gives Hezekiah a chance to express himself on what he has done.

*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." 4 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."Isa 39:2-4*

Then he tells Hezekiah what will come in the future. Whether He tells him this because he will be partly to blame, or simply to reveal that all the pride he felt in showing it to these people should not be crushed by knowing that everything he had showed them would someday be taken by them. In addition, some of his sons would become eunuchs.

*Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: 6 '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. 7 '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.'" Isa 39:5-7*

His answer doesn't seem to be appropriate. Most of us would show some concern for our offspring, but it appears there is no godly sorrow for what he has done. He is only glad that it won't happen in his days.

*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.” Isa 39:8*

This is confirmed with the final words in Chronicles.

*But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, (gave no return for the benefit he received NASB) for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 2Chr 32:25*

In Hezekiah’s final years he was not able to keep his commitment: *“I shall walk carefully all my years In the bitterness of my soul.”* Nor did he fulfill his promise: *“we will sing my songs with stringed instruments All the days of our life, in the house of the Lord.”* Instead he *“gave no return for the benefit,”* and did not *“repay for the favor”* God showed him. After God spared his life, his heart was lifted up with pride. What he did with Babylon was among the first of the many things that took him further and further from his God and the faithfulness he had shown in his youth. It went so far that *“wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem.”* We are not told what they did. But it led to nearly having that wrath poured out upon them. But instead:

we will sing my songs with stringed instruments All the days of our life, in the house of the Lord

*Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. 2Chron 32:25*

But it was too late to restore the damage that was done. His son and heir, Manasseh, was only 12 when he began to reign so he never saw the Hezekiah that was so devout and godly. Instead he saw the Hezekiah that was so lifted with pride and a nation who followed him that God’s wrath was upon them. Yet those final days of repentance must have captured his attention for unlike all other kings of Israel, though wicked in the extreme, he repented in the end and was brought back to Jerusalem from Babylon(2Chr 33:11-13).

# Isaiah

**Introduction:** Although Isaiah is one of the five books of the major prophets, and one of the longest books in the Bible (5<sup>th</sup> longest), very little is known about him or his personal life. A look at the encyclopedias and dictionaries all come to the same basic conclusions. The only personal references:

His father's name was Amoz, but there is no indication of the tribe or location of his home.

*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. Isa. 1:1*

He was married to "the prophetess," but we have no information to conclude whether she was given this name because she was married to Isaiah or because she was a prophetess like Miriam or Deborah.

*Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Isa. 8:3*

He had at least two sons, which it appears God had named for him.

*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, Isa. 7:3-4*

*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; 4 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."** Isa. 8:3-4*

Their names are translated: Shear-Jashub, "A Remnant Shall Return" and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, "Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty" or "swift is booty; speedy is prey"

Isaiah made a statement in the same chapter where he named his son that some have used to confirm that God had named his children. Yet, there is some doubt about this interpretation because it was later used to describe Jesus, though it could refer first to Isaiah and then to Jesus.

*11 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: 12 "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.... 17 And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him. 18 **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. Isa. 8:11-12; 17-18*

*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, 12 saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." 13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "**Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.**" 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, Heb. 2:11-15*

## The Call of Isaiah

The most important passage that gives us an insight into his character is the record of how he was called to become a prophet. While Moses had to be commanded, and Jeremiah was made one from his youth, Isaiah is one of the few volunteers who chose to become a prophet of God. The account also reveals his tender conscience and devotion to God.

The scene opens with a vision. There are very few similarities between this vision and that of Ezekiel. First, Isaiah sees God's throne and his "train" filled the temple. The term train is used of the hem of the high priests outer robe.

*You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. 33 And **upon its hem** you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, **all around its hem**, and bells of gold between them all around: 34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon **the hem of the robe** all around. 35 And it shall be upon Aaron*

when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord and when he comes out, that he may not die. Ex. 28:31-34

So it was the fringe at the end of the robe God wore that filled the temple.

## Seraphim

The seraphim are not mentioned anywhere else in the Scriptures. Ezekiel's living creatures had four faces and four wings, while these Seraphim have six wings and we aren't given any details of their faces, except that it is in the singular. The living creatures in Revelation also had six wings, but they each had a different face. We must keep in mind that these are visions with a purpose for revealing things in this manner. How closely they resemble actual creatures in heaven is impossible for us to know.

*Also from within it came **the likeness of four living creatures**. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6 **Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings**. 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. 8 The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. Ezek. 1:5-9*

*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. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. Isa. 6:2-4*

*Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were **four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back**. 7 The first living creature was **like a lion**, the second living creature **like a calf**, the third living creature had a face **like a man**, and the fourth living creature was **like a flying eagle**. 8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" Rev. 4:6-8*

Some have concluded that because Isaiah could see into the temple, he may have been of the priestly tribe, but there is no strong evidence to take this conclusion so far. This is a vision.

When Isaiah sees all this, he is overcome with dread, and cries out in fear. Why he mentions unclean lips is unusual as it is the only place in the Scriptures that use this term. The term "unclean" is used many times of ceremonial defilement. It is what the Leper was to cry out when people approach. But here it is used of the lips or mode of expressing one's thoughts and intents.

*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. Isa. 6:5*

He feels it is a terrible thing to see the LORD of hosts with his unclean lips. This issue of conscience is quickly dealt with by God by sending a Seraphim with a coal in his hands to touch the lips of Isaiah.

The vision continues with one of the seraphim a set of tongs with a live coal from the altar. Since these coals are the very ones that enter both the Holy place with the incense and the most holy place once a year, Isaiah is reassured both by the words of the Seraphim and what he knows of the altar. His iniquities are then taken away and his sins are purged.

*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. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." Isa. 6:6-7*

## Isaiah's Commission

God then cries out in Isaiah's hearing "Who will I send and who will go for us." The us could be the Seraphim, or it could be the same us and we found in the first chapters of Genesis. Isaiah doesn't question or hesitate. He is ready to take up this duty.

*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." Isa. 6:8*

God's response to Isaiah is one of the saddest commands in the Scriptures. While the apostles



know they would be persecuted and rejected, they also knew they would convert some and their mission would have some success. Isaiah is given a limited commission compared to the apostles and one with little hope.

*And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' 10 "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. Isa. 6:9-10*

### Isaiah's Message:

Just keep doing what you have always done. Keep hearing the words of God and refuse to understand them. Continue to see what God has said, but refuse to truly understand and perceive.

### Isaiah's Mission

The result of Isaiah's preaching on such an audience as those he is to preach to will only accomplish one thing. The more truth Isaiah preaches, the more obtuse the heart will become, the less the ears will want to hear and the more the eyes will look the other way and refuse to see.

The sarcasm of the final words is designed to get attention. Keep doing what you have always done so you will not be able to see, hear and understand. For in that way you will never return and be healed.

### Quoted by Jesus and Paul

These same words were quoted by Jesus when he began preaching in parables and Paul after he had preached the gospel to the Jews who were in Rome.

***And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' 16 But **blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;** 17 for assuredly, I say to you that **many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Mt. 13:14-17*****

*So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "**The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 saying, 'Go to this people and say: 'Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'"** 28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" Acts 28:25-29*

Isaiah then sought to know the limits of this commission. How long is he to preach this message to the people. Perhaps he hoped that eventually, the message would be heard and he would be able to preach something better. Perhaps he hoped to hear some words of encouragement about the success of his work. But it was not to be. Instead of encouragement, God have an even stronger warning of how little this would accomplish.

***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,** 12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. 13 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** Isa. 6:11-13***

Isaiah would have to learn as so many of God's saints, that obedience to His words is all the results that anyone can expect and it should be enough. When we do God's will and there are not results, the results are in doing God's will. Anything more would be compromise and sin.

This call occurred in the year that Uzziah died. This helps us see how he fit in with his contemporaries. Since Uzziah reigned 52 years, and Jeroboam died in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year, it was at least fourteen years after Amos and Hosea were doing their work that Isaiah began.

**Amos...** in the days of **Uzziah** of Judah,

**Jeroboam** of Israel,  
Amos 1:1

**Hosea ...** in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, of Judah, **Jeroboam** of Israel Hos 1:1

**Isaiah ...** in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, king of Judah, Isa. 1:1

**Micah ...** in the days of **Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, Mic 1:1

Uzziah(Amaziah)	(reigned 52 years; did what was right)	Amos	Hosea	Isaiah	
Jotham	(reigned 16 years; did what was right)		Hosea	Isaiah	Micah
Ahaz	(reigned 16 years; did what was evil).		Hosea	Isaiah	Micah
Hezekiah	(reigned 29 years; did what was right)		Hosea	Isaiah	Micah

When we look at the lives of these kings in 2Kings and 2 Chronicles, we learn the length of their reign and their relationship with God. Remember that the prophets who prophesied under the reign of a good king would be well received, but persecuted during the reign of an evil king.

# Isaiah - 2

## Chronology/Outline

It is impossible to find any chronology in the book. It flows from event to event, sometimes speaking of the past, then moving to their consequences in the present. Other times he is in the near future and then extends into a future far away. Often even in the same chapter, it moves:

From one nation to another nation.

From judgment to forgiveness.

From the present rejection to future acceptance.

From condemnation to mercy.

From wrath to compassion.

From curses to blessings.

There is no real consensus even for an outline. There are often so many different topics in the same chapter that it defies any consistent summary. Hence when one consults different authors, one finds large differences in the way it is outlined.

### **1 Isaiah Reproves, Rebukes and Exhorts 1-12**

### **2 Burdens, Oracles, Taunts, Woes, Signs to the Surrounding Nations 13-26**

4853. מַשָּׂא' maśśā': A masculine noun meaning a burden or load; by extension, a burden in the form of a prophetic utterance or oracle. It is derived from the verb nāśā' (5375) meaning to lift, to bear, to carry. When used to express a burden or load, it is commonly used to describe that which is placed on the backs of pack animals, like donkeys (Ex 23:5); mules (2 Kings 5:17); or camels (2 Kings 8:9). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT)

- |   |          |  |          |
|---|----------|--|----------|
| 1. <b>Burden</b> against Babylon              | 13       | 7. <b>Burden</b> —Wilderness of Sea Babylon          | 21:1-10  |
| <b>proverb/parable/taunt</b> – Babylon's King | 14       | 8. <b>Burden</b> against Dumah(Edom)                 | 21:11-12 |
| 2. <b>Burden</b> against Philistia            | 14:28–32 | 9. <b>Burden</b> against Arabia                      | 21:13–17 |
| 3. <b>Burden</b> of Moab                      | 15–16    | 10. <b>Burden</b> against Valley of Vision Jerusalem | 22       |
| 4. <b>Burden</b> of Damascus and Israel       | 17       | 11. <b>Burden</b> against Tyre                       | 23       |
| 5. <b>Woe</b> to the land of Ethiopia         | 18       |  |          |
| 6. <b>Burden</b> against Egypt                | 19       |  |          |
| <b>Sign and wonder</b> —Egypt and Ethiopia    | 20       |  |          |

### **3 Judgment, Redemption, Praise and Songs, 24–27**

### **4 Woes 28-33**

1945. הוֹי hōy: An interjection meaning ho! woe! alas! It is used in lamenting a person's death (1 Kings 13:30). It is used in prophetic announcements of judgment or threats (Isa 1:4,24; Jer 48:1; Ezek 13:18; Amos 5:18). It is used to draw attention to an unexpected but momentous occasion (Isa 18:1) or to a hope-filled and joyous expectation (Zech 2:6[:10]). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT)

Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, scornful who rule in Judah 28

Woe to Ariel David's City —Jerusalem 29

That Jerusalem is ... this name is very certain: but the reason and meaning as applied to Jerusalem, is very obscure and doubtful. Some, with the Chaldee, suppose it to be taken from the hearth of the great altar of burnt-offerings, which Ezekiel plainly calls by the same name; and that Jerusalem is here considered as the seat of the fire of God, 'uwr 'Eel which should issue from thence to consume his enemies: compare Isa 31:9. Some, according to the common derivation of the word, 'ariy 'Eel, the lion of God, or the strong lion, suppose it to signify the strength of the place, by which it was enabled to resist and overcome all its enemies. (Clarke's Commentary)

Woe to the rebellious children(Judah) 30

Woe to Those Who Rely on Egypt 31–32

Woe to you who plunder(Assyria) 33

### **5 The indignation of the LORD against all nations 34**

### **6 Prophecy of future glory for those in Zion 35**

## **7 History: Hezekiah's victory over Assyria, sickness and recovery 36-39**

## **8 The LORD and Idols**

Comfort yes comfort my people 40  
I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He 41  
Behold My Servant whom I uphold 42  
Fear Not: I have redeemed you and I am with you 43  
I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. 44  
The Power and Might of the LORD 45  
To whom will you liken Me... They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; 46  
Babylon's Fall 47  
For My name's sake I will defer My anger, for My praise I will restrain it from you, 48

## **9 The Servant's Ministry and Israel's Restoration (chs. 49–57)**

The Call and Mission of the Servant 49  
Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience 50  
Comfort - A glorious future 52  
The Suffering Servant 52:13 - 53  
The Blessings of forgiveness. ch. 54  
God Calls — Those who seek will find 55  
Blessing for the obedient; Condemnation for the Wicked 56 - 57

## **10 Condemnation, Judgment, Deliverance 58–66**

Condemnation of their style of fasting 58  
Your iniquities have separated you 59  
Arise, shine; For your light has come! 60  
the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor 61  
For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth 62  
Condemnation then loving kindness 63  
Prayer of repentance and deliverance. 64  
condemnation for the guilty and mercy for the contrite 65-66

## **Opening Words of the Isaiah**

The first chapter would be the perfect opening comments from Isaiah, but there is no way to prove this was his first sermon. It may have been many sermons, preached in different times and places, or a single sermon preached in many places. Yet it is the opening message of the book.

1. A parable of a father and the owner of an ox. 1:2-3
2. Charges the sinful nation. 1:4
3. The futility of preaching to these people. 1:5-6
4. The current conditions of Judah are like Sodom and Gormorrah. 1:7-9
5. Condemnation of the rulers. 1:10-11
6. the vanity of their worship. 1:12-15
7. A call to repentance 1:16-17
8. The promise of forgiveness. 1:18-20
9. The disgusting history of Jerusalem. 1:21-23
10. God's coming judgment 1:24-26
11. The promise of redemption and judgment. 1:27-31

## **The Nature of Prophecy.**

Prophecy is the general term for the words of anyone who has been chosen to speak for God. Before they can speak for God they must have the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *"for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2Pet. 1:19-21)*. Hence prophecy is also Scripture because *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."* (2Tim. 3:16). The first prophet was Abel(Lk. 11:50-51) and the second Abraham(Gen. 20:7),

but the first prophet to write any of the books of the Bible was Moses(Deut. 18:15-18).

Since all the writings of the Bible are Scripture all the writings of the Bible are also prophesy. We must recondition our minds away from thinking that the term prophesy refers to predictions of the future. Although some of the prophesy in the Scriptures refer to the future, the vast majority as nothing to do with the future. All that Moses wrote was prophesy, yet only a few verses deal with events in the future. Many prophets said nothing about the future, but were only spokesmen selected by God for specific purposes. Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah were all prophets, but said nothing about the future.

The vast majority of all prophesy recorded in the major and minor prophets were directed towards those living at that time.

# Manasseh

## Introduction

Manasseh is among the most intriguing characters in the Old Testament. First, because he is among the worst of all the kings of Judah. His wickedness exceeded that of the nations whom God had cast out. God severely punished both Judah and Manasseh when he allowed Assyria to capture him and taken him to Babylon. While there, he felt great remorse. What probably started as worldly sorrow, finally led to godly sorrow and true repentance. Then, in an amazing act of grace, mercy and forgiveness, God allows him to go back to Jerusalem and continue to reign as king. The power and providence that brought that about are an amazing testimony of what God will do for His people.

## Birth and Early Reign

Since Hezekiah was “*twenty-five years old*,” when he began to reign and “*reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem*” (2Chr. 29:1), he was 54 when he died. Since Manasseh was 12 when he began to reign, Hezekiah was 42 when this child was born. Why he was the successor is not revealed. Perhaps he was Hezekiah’s first son, or perhaps his brothers were no longer living, or unworthy.

Manasseh was born three years into the fifteen years God had added to his Hezekiah’s life after his prayer. (2Kings 20:6), and grew up in the period of his life when, Hezekiah did not “*repay according to the benefit shown him.*”

*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. 6 I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.’” Isa. 38:5-7*

*But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. 2Chr. 32:25-26*

Thus the formative years of Manasseh were lived while his father and Judah were in apostasy. If he ever saw the faithful and loyal Hezekiah we read about, it was only for a short period of time and only after he had sullied his life and reputation. He did see him humble himself, but it left no lasting impression on him in his early life. It may have led him to his own repentance and restoration later in life.

## The Wickedness of Manasseh

After the death of Hezekiah, Manasseh quickly undid everything his father had done and brought Judah even lower than the condition his wicked grandfather, Ahaz, had left it. All Hezekiah’s reforms and preparations to the temple were swept away and soon just a distant memory.

*Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But 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 broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; 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 shall My name be forever.”** 5 And he **built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.** 6 Also he **caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.** 2Chr. 33:1-7*

*So Manasseh **seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem** to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. 2Chr. 33:9*

*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. 2Kngs*

Even though Manasseh had never seen his father in the times of his greatest faithfulness, he had to have known of the work he had done to remove evil from Judah. It would have been impossible for him to have missed the repentance of Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah (*Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*). This was not a sin of ignorance, but of arrogance and rebellion. It is hard to find any extenuating circumstances. This was an ungodly man who chose to turn away from God.

When we add to this the "*inhabitants of Jerusalem*," of whom many would have still been alive, it is difficult to imagine how this could have been done so easily. The only answer is that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were not convicted enough to stand up against him. They simply sat by while he made the significant changes. These things could not be ignored or worked around. He defiled the temple and caused true worship to cease there. No devout servant of the LORD would be able to keep the law after he did these things. None of the feast days, no sacrifices could be brought, etc.

rebuilt the high places which his father had broken down.  
raised up altars for the Baals.  
made wooden images.  
worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.  
built altars in the house of the LORD.  
built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.  
caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom.  
practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery.  
consulted mediums and spiritists.  
did much evil in the sight of the LORD.

### The Valley of the Son of Hinnom

Of all the things in this list, the one God held the greatest condemnation and contempt for were the events in the valley of the son of Hinnom. This was a valley on the outskirts of Jerusalem and was part of the border between Judah and Benjamin.

*1 So this was **the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah** according to their families: ... 8 And **the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite city (which is Jerusalem)**. The border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of Rephaim northward. Josh. 15:1, 8*

*11 Now **the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin** ... 16 Then **the border came down** to the end of the mountain that lies **before the Valley of the Son of Hinnom**, Josh. 18:11, 16*

Jeremiah began preaching about 15 years after the death of Manasseh. He had a lot to say about this valley and God's anger. The reference is to the terrible things done in this valley during the days of Ahaz and Manasseh. God also called it Tophet, although no one really knows why. The meaning of the name is nowhere revealed or discussed.

What is made clear is that the things done in that valley were the cause for the name. The purpose for the place is more important than the name. It was where Israel took their children to burn in the fire. Although God had never asked for or even imagined asking for such a thing, the wicked imaginations of the hearts of these people had devised it.

*For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight," says the LORD. "They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it. 31 And **they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.** 32 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when it will **no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter**; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. Jer. 7:30-33*

Later, Jeremiah was sent out to this valley, which was near one of Jerusalem's gates. While in or near this valley, God told him to make a proclamation to the kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

A catastrophe of such great magnitude is coming. The “tingling of the ears” is an idiom to Judah as “chills down one back is to us. It describes an event so horrible it creates a visceral response. When the time finally comes and the facts of what truly happened are made known, people will be amazed, awed and terrified. This event is joined to the place where Jeremiah is standing.

Because they have made the valley of the Son of Hinnom “*an alien place,*” where they “*burned incense in it to other god’s,*” and “*filled this place with the blood of the innocents.*” Thus God associated the valley of the Son of Hinnom with idolatry and human sacrifice. They used “*the high places of Baal,*” to burn their sons with fire. For this reason, God will cause the name of this place to change in the mouths of the people. From the day their ears tingle, they will call it the “*valley of slaughter.*”

**2 And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. 4 "Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents 5 (they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), 6 therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. Jer. 19:2-7**

God also called it the place where they offered their children to Molech. Their may have been two altars, one for Baal and one for Molech, or it may have been different in different periods of history.

*But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 35 And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.' Jer. 32:34-35*

We will return to this valley in the days of Josiah and see how these prophecies began their fulfillment.

When we add this to all the other sins of Manasseh, it became the tipping point leading God to His final decision that Jerusalem would be destroyed and Judah taken into captivity.

## **God’s Warning Turns to Final Judgment**

God had been very clear about the conditional nature of His Promises. He had strongly warned them of the consequences of the conduct they were now engaged in, but they did not pay any attention to the words He had already written in His law.

*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. 2Kings 21:8-9*

The idolatry of Egypt and Canaan centered not just on false worship, but also vile sexual practices. These practices are listed in Leviticus 18 and 20. They include all forms of fornication including incest, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality.

*3 According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. ... 26 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. Lev. 18:26-29*

***And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they***



**commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. Lev. 20:23-24**

Manasseh was seducing them back into such things to such a degree that they were doing more than these nations when Israel destroyed them.

God made His feelings known to these people, but they wouldn't listen.

*And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 2Chr. 33:10-11*

Finally, God made the ultimate decision. This was not to be a minor skirmish as they had been in the past. It was not to be a battle where many died and much was lost. This was the judgment God had threatened back in the times of Moses.

*You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. 63 And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. 64 "Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known — wood and stone. 65 And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Deut. 28:62-65*

His words through the prophets express that these things will soon come to pass. He uses terms that leave no doubt of His intentions.

*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.'" 2Kings 21:10-15*

God speaks of the "tingling of the ears." Like our "chills up the back," God proclaims a terrible judgment is coming, and when people hear about it, they will feel this sense of dread and anguish.

### **The Measuring Line of Samaria**

God had shown Amos several examples of the terrible judgment he would send on Israel. First, it would be locusts, but after Amos appeal God relented.

*Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the laking's mowings. 2 And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said: "O LORD God, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, For he is small!" 3 So the LORD relented concerning this. "It shall not be," said the LORD. Amos 7:1-3*

Later God showed him a fire that destroyed the sea and the land and again Amos interceded and God relented. Finally God showed him the plumb line that God would use to measure each of His people. After he sets this line, He will not need to pass by again. Everything will be desolate because God will rise with the sword.

*Thus He showed me: Behold, the LORD stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the LORD said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. 9 The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam." Amos 7:7-9*

These words were directed at the destruction of the ten tribes and now that same destruction awaits Judah because of Manasseh.

### **The Plummet of the House of Ahab**

The plummet was also a measuring instrument similar.

mišqōlet ... A feminine noun referring to a plumb line, a leveling instrument. It indicates a tool able to determine if something is level, horizontal. Righteousness was God's "level" to evaluate His people (Isa 28:17); the skewed plumb line of the house of Ahab was placed over a wicked Jerusalem to judge her (2 Kings 21:13). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:4949)

As God had placed the level on Ahab's line and cut it off, so also had God determined to do to Jerusalem and Judah.

*'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22 I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and made Israel sin.'* 23 And concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, *'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.'* 24 *The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field.'* 1Kings 21:21-24

## **Forsake the Remnant — Victims of Plunder to all their Enemies**

Leaving the figures of measuring and plummet, God now proclaims their doom. He will forsake the remnant of His people and leave them as victims of plunder.

*"Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, 48 therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. 68 "And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you."* Deut. 28:47-48; 68

This is a clear indication that the sands of time have now been released and the days of Jerusalem are now numbered. Due to Manasseh's wickedness and Judah's compliance with it, God had finally decided that the time had come. Even the good reign of Josiah could not move God from this decision.

*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. 26 **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.** 27 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.'" 2Kings 23:25-27*

When Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem Manasseh is again revealed to be the cause.

*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 **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.** 2Kings 24:1-4*

The wrath of God over the sins of Manasseh was not to be quenched until Jerusalem was destroyed and Judah was in captivity. All because of Manasseh.

## **God had Already Promised it Was Temporary**

Yet God had already revealed to His people who were still listening and those who would seek him after this punishment that this was only temporary. In a Messianic prophecy, God promised that this did not reflect His true feelings, but was something that had to be done once, just as the flood had to be done once. Later, God's true feelings of mercy love and compassion would return.

*1 "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. ... 6 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. 7 "For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you. 8 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. 9 "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. 10 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. Isa. 54:6-10*

A portion of this passage is quoted by Paul to describe how all who are baptized into Christ are part of these people.

*but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband." 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Gal. 4:26-31*

## **The Rest of the Acts of Manasseh**

This is how the account of His life in Kings ends.

***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. 2Kings 21:17-18*

Yet the rest of those acts are an amazing example of God's judgment, compassion, and providence and power. Something Hezekiah had referred to when sending out to the apostates in Israel.

***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."** 2Chr. 30:9*

## **Taken Captive**

After the warnings God gave through the prophets, He gave a much more powerful warning to Manasseh. The Assyrians who had been severely damaged in the days of His father Hezekiah, had regained strength and once again returned. God then used them to capture Manasseh and took him with hooks and bound him with fetters. Whether this is literal or just a figure of speech has been debated. There is no reason not to take it literally. Either way, Manasseh has been taken captive and carried away to Babylon which is around 900 miles away. This was a long journey of several months duration.

*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. 2Chr. 33:10-11*

## **Repentance and Confession**

Whatever his initial feelings of disbelief, anger, pride or bitterness, they gradually gave way. He was in affliction and that affliction turned his heart to humility and he began to implore and plead with God. There are some very important terms emphasized in this passage that describe the process of godly sorrow in his heart. First, there was **affliction**. It is sad that this is required, but for many this is the only way. It takes great affliction and bitterness to lead some to repent. The affliction led to him **implored**, **humbling**, **praying**, **entreaty** and **supplication**. After all this, God received and heard his supplication.

*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. 2Chr.*

### **Forgiveness and Restoration**

God not only heard, but He acted. He first brought him back to Jerusalem, and then allowed him to return to being king over Judah. It is difficult to fully understand the last statement. There had to be some faith for God to answer his prayer. Perhaps it simply means that he now acknowledged the LORD as God and served him properly with reverence respect and awe the rest of his life.

### **Fruits of Repentance**

After his return, he cleansed the temple as his father Hezekiah had done. Removing all traces of idolatry and repairing what had been damaged. He then restored the worship and sacrifices. He also commanded the people to again worship the LORD.

*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 God of Israel. 17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God.*

Although this was an amazing repentance and restoration, it did not affect his son Josiah, nor did it change God's mind regarding His decision. Hence, repentance can lead to forgiveness of the sins committed and yet still not remove their consequences.

# Josiah

## Introduction

Josiah is introduced to us as having been made king of Judah by the people. His wicked father Amon had begun his reign at 22 and only reigned 2 years dying at the age of 24. He died as a result of a conspiracy among his servants. Nothing is said as to what he had done to create a circumstance where his own servants plotted to kill him.

**Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. 23 And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more. 24 Then his servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house. 2Chr. 33:21-25**

The one point that seems to indicate the sequence of events is “*he did not humble himself before the Lord, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself.*” There is a necessary inference that something happened to humble him and he refused to be humbled. Manasseh had refused to be humbled until he was taken into captivity. God did something to allow his son Amon to also humble himself, but he refused to do so. Whether his servants conspired against him because he did something to them because of his lack of humility, or God simply allowed this terrible event to occur because he did not humble himself is something we cannot determine.

What they did was reprehensible enough that the people in the land put them to death. This leads us to conclude that though the servants thought he was worthy of death, the people of Judah did not agree with their decision or the way they carried it out.

**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. 2Chr. 33:25**

After they executed these wicked murderers, they made his son Josiah, king at the age of 8. Since Amon was 22 when he began his reign and 24 when he died, his son Josiah was born when Amon was 16. The fact that he had an 8 year old son when he was only 24 is probably a testament to his ungodly life.

## Josiah Begins His Reign

It is evident from some of the things stated in the account of his life that he did not start making the decisions of a king at 8 years of age. He had not even reached an age of accountability. The summary of his life sums up his reign from the age of 8 until his death 31 years later at 49.

**Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 2Chr. 34:1-2**

But the real details are given in the explanation of how it all began. Since he began his reign at 8 and in his 8<sup>th</sup> year as king he began to seek the God of his father David, he was 16. It is interesting that while Ammon was fathering a child at 16, his son was intensely interested in seeking God. Also important is the statement that it was “*the God of his father David.*” Perhaps this meant that David had become his role model. Yet even at 16, he was not yet ready to begin. The purging started in his 12<sup>th</sup> year when he was 20.

**For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images 2Chr. 34:3**

## Purging Judah and Jerusalem

So the fulness of the power of his reign did not begin until he was twenty years of age. He did not begin with the temple as Hezekiah had done. His first mission was to rid Judah and Jerusalem of all idolatry. He did this with great zeal and was very methodical. He went out and personally

oversaw it all as well as actively participating in it. Anything and everything that had anything to do with idols, he removed. We get some insight into their idols at that time. They were wooden images, carved images and molded images.

*They **broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which were above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.** 2Chr 34:4-5*

Not only did he remove them, but he took the additional step of breaking them all into dust and then carrying that dust to the graves of those who had sacrificed to them, making them unclean.

At the same time, he was taking the bones of idolatrous priests burning their bones on these altars. The interesting question about these bones is whether they were already in the graves, in some type shrine, or still alive and just executed when he burned them. In doing all this he made everything unclean for idolatry to be practiced there, but at the same time he cleansed everything in Judah and Jerusalem.

*He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:5*

## **Purging All the Land of Israel**

Unlike other kings since the divided kingdom, he did not stop with Judah and Jerusalem, but determined to cleanse other portions of the land of Israel. Going out into the cities and breaking down the altars in “*Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali.*”

*And so he did in **the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali** and all around, with axes. 7 When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:6-7*

There is so little information given here. He may have only wanted the entire land cleansed and so he went out and destroyed all the idols in the land of Israel that were being used by the heathen. Yet it is also possible there are still Israelites living in these places and he wanted them to be cleansed as well. This fits well with something Hezekiah(great grand father) had said.

*1 And **Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. ... 5 So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, ... 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 .... 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.”** 2 Chr. 30:1-9*

After sending out runners with a proclamation to all Israel inviting them to the Passover, He urged them to “*return to the LORD.*” He promised two things: First, their brethren in captivity would be treated with compassion and second, that they might “*come back to this land.*”

After fulfilling all these things, Josiah returned to Jerusalem.

## **Finding the Book of the Law**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, when he was 26, he had completed the cleansing of the land and the temple and was now prepared to renovate the temple. As Hezekiah before him, he found it in severe disrepair. When we add the 29 years of Hezekiah’s reign(2Kings 18:18), the 55 years of Manasseh(2Kings 20:21) it had been more than eighty years since the temple had been fully renovated.

*In the eighteenth year of his, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, **to repair***

**the house of the LORD his God. 2Chr. 34:8-9**

While they are gathering up the money and beginning the work of restoring the temple, they found the Book of the Law. That it had been lost and forgotten is a terrible witness to the unfaithfulness of Judah. It is interesting that even after they find it, it does not appear to have made a very strong impression on them until they read it. It almost seems like an afterthought. Instead of beginning with the important fact that they had found the law, they begin speaking of how the work is going.

*Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, **Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.** 15 Then Hilkiah answered and 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. 16 So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, **“All that was committed to your servants they are doing. 17 And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen.”** 2Chr. 34:14-17*

Even though Shaphan had already reads portions of the book, it had not made a great enough impression to make it the first and most important report to the king.

*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.** 2 Kings 22:8-9*

Only after giving this report is the fact that they found the book revealed.

*Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, **“Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.”** And **Shaphan read it before the king.** 2 Chron 34:18*

## **The King Hears the Words of the Law**

The kings response to the book is much more powerful than that of his servant Shaphan. As he hears the words, the emotions finally reach the point where he tears his clothes.

*Thus it happened, **when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes.** 2Chr. 34:19*

Tearing clothes has a long history among God's people. Job appears to be the first, but it continued through the history of Israel. It was done as a sign of anguish and sorrow.

*Then **Job** arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: **“Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.”** Job 1:20-21*

*Then **Jacob** tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. Gen 37:34-35*

*But **Joshua** the son of Nun and **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; Num 14:6-7*

*Then **Joshua** tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. Josh 7:6-7*

*Therefore **David** took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and **so did all the men who were with him.** 12 And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, 2 Sam 1:11-12*

*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. 2 Kings 19:1-2*

*When **Mordecai** learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. Est 4:1-2*

*So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Ezra 9:3-4*

*12 And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. .... 14 But when the apostles **Barnabas and Paul** heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the*

*multitude, Acts 14:12, 14*

As the anguish grew within his heart, he felt a compelling need to inquire from God. The passages of the blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 27-29 would bring great fear to him.

*Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 21 “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.” 2Chr. 34:20-21*

Evidently, they already knew about the means to consult God about this matter. We don't know what criteria God had for choosing prophets. Nor do we know why occasionally it was a woman instead of a man. Since this is the eighteenth year of his reign, Jeremiah is already working.

*The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, 2 to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. Jer 1:1-2*

Zephaniah was also working at this time, though he may not have been alive this late into Josiah's reign.

*The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. Zeph 1:1*

Yet for reasons known only to God, the prophetess Huldah was chosen. Nothing more known about her.

*So Hilkiah and those the king had appointed went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath 2Chr. 34:22*

## **God Revealed His Purpose**

Her words offer no hope for the people. The decree had already been determined and because of the evil hearts of those Josiah is ruling over, Josiah's own repentance doesn't have the power change anything.

*Then she answered them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Tell the man who sent you to Me, 24 “Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring CALAMITY on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, 25 because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.’” 2Chr. 34:23-25*

But as Ezekiel pointed out not too many years later, Josiah did deliver his own soul.

*The word of the Lord came again to me, saying: 13 “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God. Ezek 14:12-14*

Josiah has risen to the level of these three men. For God has offered deliverance to him.

*But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Concerning the words which you have heard — 27 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the LORD. 28 “Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants.”” So they brought back word to the king. 2Chr. 34:22-28*

Yet it might not have been the deliverance most of us would have look for. For he died in battle against Pharaoh.



*In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. 2 Kings 23:29-30*

Yet though he perished, God still fulfilled His words. As Isaiah had revealed not too many years earlier.

*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. 2 He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness. Isa 57:1-2*

## **Josiah Makes a Covenant**

Josiah then called all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem and all the people great and small to the house of the LORD. Then he began to read the words that had so touched his heart to all of them.

*Then the king sent and **gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.** 30 **The king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem** — the priests and the Levites, and **all the people, great and small.** 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. 2 Chr. 34:29-31*

After all the words were read, Josiah made a covenant to follow the LORD and keep His commandments. The words about the commitment of the rest of those there is summed up with the phrase: “*he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand.*” If subsequent history had borne out the sincerity of their commitment, we could say that both free will and his command were involved. But since they all fell away as soon as he died, and Jeremiah later could find no one who was truly sincere, it is impossible to know if it was weakness, hypocrisy that led to later apostasy.

*Then **the king stood in his place 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 the covenant that were written in this book.** 32 **And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand.** So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 2Chr. 34:31-32*

***"Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places If you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her. .... 3 O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return. 4 Therefore I said, "Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God. 5 I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God." But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds. Jer 5:3-5***

Although we don't know exactly when the words of Jeremiah occurred, it could not have been during the reign of Josiah because he would have been that one man and besides that, it clearly states that the remained faithful to the Lord as long as he was king. After the death of Josiah there were only four more kings and only 23 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Jehoahaz reigned for 3 months, then Jehoiakim who reigned 11 years(during his reign Nebuchadnezzar takes the first captives. After Jehoiakim, came Jehoiachin who reigned 3 and finally, Zedekiah the last king reigned 11 years.

*Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and **made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the Lord their God. All his days they did not depart from following the Lord God of their fathers.** 2Chr. 34:32-33*

## **Josiah removed All the abominations from All the country**(more detailed account)

There is a divergence here in the writings of the Kings and Chronicles. While Chronicles has already described all the cleansing that Josiah has done, Kings now places these events between the covenant they made and the keeping of the Passover.

There are two possibilities. Either Kings is simply summing up all that Josiah had already done and the “thus” above is the end, or another purging began. After finding the book of the Law, it may be that a more meticulous cleansing could have begun with far greater precision. Yet some of the wording also seems to indicate that things that had already been done were being described again. The deciding factor is the chronology, there just wasn’t any time for the events in Kings to occur after.

*For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. 2 Chron 34:3-4*

*In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 2 Chron 34:8*

*In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept. 2Chron 35:19*

## **Cleansed the Temple and carried the ashes to Bethel**

**A true restoration movement.** Josiah was so zealous for God, that he stripped the entire land of Israel, including the ten tribes of all idolatry. He removed everything that had anything to do with idolatry. He even removed the things that had been done by Ahaz, Manasseh, Solomon and Jeroboam. When he finished the land of Israel had been returned to it’s original condition before all these idols had been built. His example in restoring things back into the same condition they had been when the Law had originally been written is a great example of everyone who would follow.

*Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 2Chr. 34:1-2*

*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. 2Kings 23:25*

If there is any example that revealed how important our own attitude is today regarding the desire to bring the church into the exact condition it was at the time of Christ and His apostles it is this verse. He was considered the greatest king before or after. He was commended because he turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses. That is exactly what we are doing if we do the same with the Law of Christ. Seeking to make God’s eternal purpose as pristine as possible so even the angels can see His manifold wisdom and not ours.

*to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph 3:10-12*

Josiah commanded the high priest and the priests under him along with the Levites(doorkeepers) to remove anything in the temple that had any connection with idolatry. They took them outside of the city and burned them. It specifically states that he carried the ashes of all forms of idols found in the temple to Bethel, which will become very important as this account proceeds.

*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. 2Kings 23:5*

## **Removed the Idolatrous priests and everything connected with them**

After cleansing the temple itself, he moved to the city of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. He removed the priests, the places(temples, groves, etc.) and their contents. The ritual booths would be the houses of prostitution created to worship the idols. Josiah also did all he could to defile

them to the point where no one could come back to them later.

*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**. 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. 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. 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** 2Kings 23:*

Once again, "Topheth, in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom" is mentioned as it was in the days of Manasseh his grandfather. Josiah did all he could to defile this place, Jeremiah was sent there later to prophesy against it. The timing is about right since Jeremiah began his work in Josiah's thirteenth year, but there is nothing to tie it directly.

*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. 2Kings 23:10*

*The words of Jeremiah ... to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. Jer 1:1-2*

***And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. 4 "Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents** Jer. 19:2-4*

By the time of Jesus, this valley had become the very thing God had proclaimed. Then it was called *gehenna*, which is the Greek rendering of this valley. It is the name we use translate "hell."

He removed even the vestiges that Hezekiah and Manasseh had not fully removed, going back even to the days of Solomon.

*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**. 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. 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. 2Kings 23:*

He then went to Bethel, which was the seat of the false religion set up by Jeroboam and destroyed it. It was mentioned above that Josiah had burned all the idolatrous artifacts he had found in the temple at Jerusalem and brought the ashes to Bethel. Perhaps all this happened at the same time, or he returned later to do all this.

To the last detail(including his name), he fulfilled everything that priest had prophesied so many years ago.

*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**. 2 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.**'" 1Kings 13:1-2*

Whether Josiah was following this or doing it on his own is not stated. But it would be difficult to

read your own name in the prophesy and not seek to do everything God had said about him.

**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. 2Kings 23:15-18**

**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. 20 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.**

This concludes the specifics of Josiah restoration of the worship of the LORD and the complete removal of all the taints and errors of all previous kings.

## **Josiah's Passover**

While Kings merely sums up this Passover event, Chronicles gives the details. Yet some very critical things are stated in this summary. Again emphasizing the importance of a full restoration to the original words to be followed.

It is made very clear that Josiah's command was clear: "**Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.**" They did not rely on tradition or human wisdom. Josiah was very specific! It must be kept "**as it is written in this book of the Covenant.**" So the followed precisely what the book had decreed.

We do exactly the same thing with the Lord's supper. We have stripped away all the traditions from the Catholics and everything that was added during the middle ages and do it exactly as it is revealed in the New Testament. We follow frequency, day, elements and purpose.

Because Josiah did this, God is very clear: "**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.** What an amazing commentary! Just to do things exactly as they were originally recorded made this passover different than anything that had been observed since the days of the judges.

*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. 2Kng. 23:22*

## **Details in Chronicles**

These details now become more powerful since they explain why the above statements were made, making it clear that he followed the Law of Moses to the letter.

First he chose the right day, and he "**set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD.**"

*Now Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 And he and set the priests in their duties encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD. 2Chr. 35:1-2*

Second, he commanded them to do everything as it had been commanded "**following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son.**" Because the temple had been built, and the ark was no longer being moved from place to place the Levites had fulfilled their initial role and had been instructed in how to serve in the temple. They must prepare

themselves exactly as commanded, not just by Moses, but also by David and Solomon who were also inspired.

This is very similar to those today those who claim the words of Jesus have more power than the words of His apostles.

*Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel. 4 **Prepare yourselves according to your fathers' houses, according to your divisions, following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son.** 2Chr. 35:3-4*

Third, they were to slaughter the Passover, consecrate themselves, prepare them for the brethren, **that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.**" Once again, Josiah is deeply concerned about following the Law.

*And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the lay people, and according to the division of the father's house of the Levites. 6 So **slaughter the Passover offerings, consecrate yourselves, and prepare them for your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.**" 2Chr. 35:5-6*

Fourth, Josiah was generous in making certain that everyone had what was necessary to keep the Passover. Josiah gave 33,000; his leaders gave 2,500; and the leaders of the Levites gave 5,500.

*Then Josiah gave the lay people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover offerings for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these were from the king's possessions. 8 And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiyah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings **two thousand six hundred from the flock, and three hundred cattle.** 9 Also Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover offerings **five thousand from the flock and five hundred cattle.** 2Chr. 35:7-9*

Fifth, everything was prepared. Josiah made certain that everything necessary from the Law was done, then it was fulfilled exactly as the Law demanded.

*So **the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their places, and the Levites in their divisions, ACCORDING TO THE KING'S COMMAND.** 11 And they slaughtered the Passover offerings; and the **priests sprinkled the blood with their hands, while the Levites skinned the animals.** 12 Then **they removed the burnt offerings** that they might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the lay people, **to offer to the LORD, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF MOSES.** And so they did with the cattle. 13 Also **they roasted the Passover offerings with fire ACCORDING TO THE ORDINANCE;** but the other holy offerings they boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them quickly among all the lay people. 14 Then **afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busy in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.** 15 And **the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their places, ACCORDING TO THE COMMAND OF DAVID, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer. Also the gatekeepers were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position, because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them.** 2Chr. 35:1-15*

Finally, joined with the Passover was the feast of unleavened bread which was also observed exactly as the Law had prescribed. Again, as Kings has summarized, this was a remarkable Passover and nothing like it had been done since the time of Samuel. None of the kings of Israel had been as meticulous as King Josiah, and God took notice and commended it!

*So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. 17 And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18 There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19 **In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was***

## The Close of Josiah's Life

After this description of the Passover in his 18<sup>th</sup> year, the final 13 years are left in silence. Evidently, he continued to be faithful until his death as the summary of his life indicates. First, there was no king like him either before him or after him. Second, he turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses. There is no indication that he did not remain like this until the end of his life.

*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. 2K. 23:25*

After Josiah completed all these good things, he died in battle. The events surrounding the battle are vague. In Kings, only the detail that he died are given. For reasons nowhere given, Josiah decided to oppose this Pharaoh.

*Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 29 In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And Pharaoh Necho killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. 30 Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. 2Kng. 23:28-30*

A few more details of this event are given in Chronicles, but still not enough to fully comprehend what occurred. The Pharaoh sent a message to him that Judah was not the object of this war. With this message, one would have thought that Josiah would have returned home.

Yet added to this was a claim of God's involvement. This was either a lie or the truth, and Josiah was either going against God or did not believe him. Perhaps by using God's name, Josiah had doubt of the true intent of Pharaoh. There just isn't any way to know what was in his heart that led to these final events. The fact that he disguised himself so he could fight against him is another fact that adds to the perplexity of what motivated him. Pharaoh had warned him that God might destroy him. That he was such a godly and righteous man and did not heed this words is so out of his character that we have no basis upon which to even speculate.

*But he 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. 2Chr. 35:21-22*

Sadly, even though he was disguised, the terrible warning Pharaoh had given came to pass. Josiah was hit with an arrow and though he lived long enough to return to Jerusalem, he could not be healed.

*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. 2Chr. 35:23-24*

This does not end the story of this Pharaoh that does cast some doubt on his credibility. Only a few months after Josiah's death, Pharaoh does attack Judah. Whether this was as revenge for Josiah's intervention or an indication of his deceit to Josiah is impossible to guess.

*Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. 2 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 Now **the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.** 4 Then **the king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt.** 2Chr 36:1-4*

Not only did the people mourn for Josiah, but Jeremiah also mourned for him. One can only

imagine the depth of Jeremiah's grief. Josiah was an ally and a help to Jeremiah in his work. With the death of Josiah, Jeremiah is immediately attacked and those attacks continued for the rest of his life.

*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.*

## Josiah's Sons: Jehoahaz(Shallum) & Jehoiakim

### Introduction:

With the death of Josiah, only four kings remained before the seventy year captivity began.

**Jehoahaz** son of Josiah was **23 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **3 months** in Jerusalem.  
**Jehoiakim** was **25 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **eleven years** in Jerusalem  
**Jehoiachin** was **8 years old** when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem **3 months and 10 days**.  
**Zedekiah** was **21 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **11 years** in Jerusalem. 2Chr. 36:1-3; 5; 9-10; 11-13; 36:1-3

If we add the **3 months of Jehoahaz**, the **11 years of Jehoiakim**, the **3 months and 10 days of Jehoiachin**, and the **11 years of Zedekiah**, we get **22 years, six months and ten days**.

In those 22 years, all the wickedness recorded in Jeremiah and Ezekiel must be placed. Jeremiah began his work in Josiah's reign, but all his prophecies to the evil kings of Judah were done in those days.

*The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah ... to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. Jer 1:1-3*

Ezekiel began sometime after the first captivity which occurred at the end of Jehoiakim's reign. So most of the words of Ezekiel about the leaders in Judah would have to fit into the eleven years of Zedekiah's reign.

### Jehoahaz

We have an unusual dilemma in the choice of Josiah's son by the people.

*Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. 2Chr. 36:1-2*

The problem was that Josiah did not have a son named Jehoahaz.

*The sons of Josiah were Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum. 1Chr. 3:15-16*

So, of these four, which one was renamed Jehoahaz and placed on the throne before Jehoiakim who later reigned in his place? The best answer seems to be the one offered in the Hebrew Lexicon by Driver-Briggs

šallûm; šallum: A proper noun designating Shallum: (Complete Word Study Dictionary: OT:7967)

šallûm; šallum: 2. son of Josiah, and king of Judah Jer. 22:11; 1 Chr. 3:15 (Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, OT:7967)

### Jeremiah speaks of Shallum and Jehoiakim

The passage cited in Jeremiah make it clear that it was Shallum who had been taken away before Jehoiakim had begun to reign and was then still reigning. We see this when we look at the passage in context. Jeremiah has been sent to the king of Judah later identified as Jehoiakim.

*Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word, 2 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! 3 Thus says the LORD: "Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you indeed do this thing, then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David. 5 But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself," says the LORD, "that this house shall become a desolation." Jer. 22:1-5*



*Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him; **Weep bitterly for him who goes away, For he shall return no more, Nor see his native country.** 11 For thus says the LORD **concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, who went from this place: "He shall not return here anymore, 12 but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.** Jer. 22:10-12*

*Therefore **thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:** "They shall **not lament for him,** Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my sister!' **They shall not lament for him,** Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!' 19 **He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey,** Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem. Jer. 22:18-19*

Jehoiakim was indeed dragged from the gates of Jerusalem in bronze fetters by Nebuchadnezzar himself and taken to Babylon where he died, never to return to Jerusalem.

*Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord his God. 6 **Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon.** 2Chron. 36:5-7*

So both the logical and Scriptural conclusion is that it was Shallum who was placed on the throne by the people and renamed Jehoahaz and was deposed three months later by Pharaoh Necho. This same Pharaoh Necho also appointed Jehoiakim to replace him.

*Then **the king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim.** And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt. 2Chr. 36:4*

### **A Parable in Ezekiel**

God commanded Ezekiel to take up a lamentation against these two brothers who had been carried into captivity. The first, Shallum/Jehoahaz into Egypt and the second Jehoiakim into Babylon.

*"Moreover **take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,** 2 and say: 'What is your mother? A lioness: She lay down among the lions; Among the young lions she nourished her cubs. 3 **She brought up one of her cubs, And he became a young lion; He learned to catch prey, And he devoured men.** 4 The nations also heard of him; **He was trapped in their pit, And they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt.** 5 'When she saw that she waited, that her hope was lost, **She took another of her cubs and made him a young lion.** 6 He roved among the lions, And became a young lion; He learned to catch prey; He devoured men. 7 He knew their desolate places, And laid waste their cities; The land with its fullness was desolated By the noise of his roaring. 8 **Then the nations set against him from the provinces on every side, And spread their net over him; He was trapped in their pit.** 9 **They put him in a cage with chains, And brought him to the king of Babylon;** They brought him in nets, That his voice should no longer be heard on the mountains of Israel. Ezek 19:1-9*

### **Jehoiakim**

We don't learn much about the 11 year reign of Jehoiakim in Kings or Chronicles. But Jeremiah has a lot to say that helps us understand what happened after Josiah died, just how wicked the people were even before Jehoiakim began to reign and how Jehoiakim began his reign. These events occurred right at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign.

Jeremiah is commanded to go into the temple and preach to the people entering it. God demanded he not diminish a single word. He tells them that if they won't repent, God will make the temple in Jerusalem just like the tabernacle in Shiloh had at some point after the death of Samuel's sons.

**In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah,** king of Judah, this word came from the Lord, saying, 2 "**Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah,** which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. **Do not diminish a word.** 3 Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.' 4 And you shall say to them, '**Thus says the Lord: "If you will not listen to Me,** to walk in My law which I have set before you, 5 to heed the words of My servants the prophets whom I sent

to you, both rising up early and sending them (but you have not heeded), 6 then **I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.**""

When the people heard these words, they knew exactly what Jeremiah was saying. Even after the 39 years of Josiah's reign, there is no hesitation. They call for the death of Jeremiah.

**So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord.** 8 Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, that **the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die!** 9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant'?" And **all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.** Jer 26:7-9

Some of the princes of Judah wanted to save Jeremiah from the priests and prophets. But Jehoiakim was not among them. As a matter of fact, he had already killed a prophet of the LORD for saying similar words.

**When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house.** 11 And the **priests and the prophets spoke to the princes** and all the people, saying, **"This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."** 12 Then **Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard.** 13 Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. 14 As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you. 15 But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing." 16 So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, **"This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."** Jer 26:10-16

### The Argument put forth to Save Jeremiah

**Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: 18 "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest."' 19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and seek the Lord's favor? And the Lord relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves."** Jer 26:17-19

### The Argument put forth to Kill Jeremiah

**Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.** 21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. 22 Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and other men who went with him to Egypt. 23 And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people. 24 Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death. Jer 26:20-24

### Some Important Necessary Inferences

Josiah was the greatest king Judah ever had, but even in the midst of his reign God's made it clear His wrath had not been eased.

**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.** 26 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. 27 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.'" 2 Kings 23:25-27

Yet God sent Jeremiah to the Potter sometime near these events. He showed him how a potter can work with clay and explained that He can do the same. If a nation would repent, he would relent. The logical conclusion is that though Josiah had brought Judah near to Him, the people either did not repent, or never brought forth the fruits worthy of repentance.

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." .... 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. **"Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. 11 "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, "Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.""** 12 And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart." Jer 18:1-2, 5-12*

# Jehoiakim

Review:

*Jehoiakim was **25 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **eleven years** in Jerusalem ... And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 2Kings 23:36-37*

Jehoiakim began his reign only a few months after the death of his father Josiah. It appears that very soon after his reign began, he revealed his contempt for God and His prophets by killing one of them. This information is not found in Kings or Chronicles but in Jeremiah. It began at the beginning of his reign and is related in connection to God's instructions to Jeremiah.

**In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah**, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD, saying, 2 **"Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah**, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. **Do not diminish a word.** 3 Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.'

After he finished these words, the priests and prophets wanted to put Jeremiah to death. A debate ensued in which the leaders who wanted to save Jeremiah recounted how a prophet in the days of Hezekiah had said exactly the same thing as Jeremiah did here. The enemies of Jeremiah then recount that though this was at the beginning of his reign, he had already killed a prophet.

*Now there was **also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.** 21 **And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt.** 22 **Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and other men who went with him to Egypt.** 23 **And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.***

## The Third/Fourth Year of Jehoiakim

With such a terrible beginning to his reign, it should be no surprise that the book of Daniel began with the events that occurred in Jehoiakim's third/fourth year. It was then that Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem, besieged it for the first time. God gave the city into his hands and at that time he carried away Daniel and his three friends.

### Daniel Taken Captive

*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.** Dan. 1:1-6*

### Jeremiah Proclaimed the Seventy Year Captivity

It is in the fourth year of Jehoiakim that God pronounced the 70 years of captivity in Babylon. The prophecy is to all the people of Judah and it is made in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. We are not told as at other times where Jeremiah was proclaiming this. Perhaps as at other times, he is at the temple speaking these words to all who enter. Or perhaps, he is proclaiming this to all where ever he is.

The chronology here and in Daniel appear to be contrary each other. If Nebuchadnezzar's first year coincides with Jehoiakim's fourth year how can Daniel be taken captive in his third year? The difference in how Jews and Chaldeans count time seems to be the most plausible explanation. That's why we will simply look at it as Jehoiakim's third/fourth year.

Jeremiah has now been a prophet for 23 years and the people have not listened to him in all that time. God now sends the message that 70 years of captivity have been decreed against Judah. Along with captivity will also come utter destruction. The entire land will be desolate for that seventy year period.

***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. ... 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.** Jer 25:1-11***

Yet with this decree is also given the prophesy that Babylon would fall at the end of these 70 years. Although none of those alive then would see it, the fourth generation would like to see it.

***12 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13 So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. 14 (For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)'" Jer 25:12-14***

## **Jeremiah Began Writing his Book.**

***Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day. 3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." Jer 36:1-3***

## **Baruch Read the Book in the Temple**

Jeremiah dictated his book to his scribe Baruch. Baruch went to the temple and read it in the hearing of the people. Although he again proclaims the anger of the LORD, nothing evil is done to Baruch at this time.

***Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the LORD which He had spoken to him. 5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, "I am confined, I cannot go into the house of the LORD. 6 You go, therefore, and read from the scroll which you have written at my instruction, the words of the LORD, in the hearing of the people in the LORD's house on the day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come from their cities. 7 It may be that they will present their supplication before the LORD, and everyone will turn from his evil way. For **great is the anger and the fury that the LORD has pronounced against this people.**" 8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house. Jer 36:4-8***

## **Baruch's Rebuke/Exhortation**

At this time, after Baruch had written the words of the book in Jehoiakim's fourth year, God warned Baruch of the thoughts in his heart. He first describes those thoughts "woe is me." He then revealed His plans to Baruch. "what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land." God then warns Baruch against his own thoughts. "do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them." Finally, God offers a blessing of comfort. "I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go."

*The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the instruction of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: 3 'You said, "Woe is me now! For the Lord has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." 4 "Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land. 5 And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh," says the Lord. "But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go." Jer 45:1-5*

## **The Fifth Year of Jehoiakim**

Baruch again reads the words from Jeremiah's book to the people.

*Now it came to pass in the **fifth year of Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10 Then **Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD**, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house, in the hearing of all the people. Jer. 36:9*

When some from the palace heard Baruch, they took his words back to the palace. When the princes heard what he was preaching they went to Baruch and brought him to the palace.

*13 **Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the hearing of the people.** 14 Therefore **all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cush, to Baruch, saying, "Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read in the hearing of the people, and come."** So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. 15 And they said to him, "Sit down now, and read it in our hearing." So **Baruch read it in their hearing.** 16 Now it happened, when they had **heard all the words, that they looked in fear from one to another, and said to Baruch, "We will surely tell the king of all these words."** Jer. 36:13-16*

We learn how Jeremiah wrote his book. We also learn that the princes had little hope Jehoiakim would heed the words. Instead they had every reason to believe Jeremiah and Baruch were in danger.

*And they asked Baruch, saying, "Tell us now, **how did you write all these words** — at his instruction?" 18 So Baruch answered them, "**He proclaimed with his mouth all these words to me, and I wrote them with ink in the book.**" 19 Then the princes said to Baruch, "**Go and hide, you and Jeremiah; and let no one know where you are.**" Jer. 36:13-16*

After they had read three or four columns, the king cut it with a knife and threw it into the fire. It is good to see that these rulers pleaded with the king. It is terrible that the king was unmoved.

*And **they went to the king, into the court; but they stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king.** 21 So **the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he took it from Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king and in the hearing of all the princes who stood beside the king.** 22 Now the king was sitting in the winter house in the ninth month, with a fire burning on the hearth before him. 23 And it happened, **when Jehudi had read three or four columns, that the king cut it with the scribe's knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.** 24 Yet **they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words.** 25 Nevertheless Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah **implored the king not to burn the scroll; but he would not listen to them.** 26 And the*

**king commanded Jerahmeel the king's son, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them. Jer. 36:20-26**

### **Jeremiah Rewrites the Scroll, adding even more words.**

**the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: 28 "Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. 29 And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have burned this scroll, saying, 'Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to cease from here?'" 30 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. 31 I will punish him, his family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed."'" 32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the instruction of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words. Jer. 36:27-32**

### **Jehoiakim's Seventh/Eighth Year**

Since Jehoiakim only reigned eleven years, this would be his seventh or eighth year. Jerusalem was taken and Nebuchadnezzar took control. At that time, 3,023 Jews were taken to Babylon.

*In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. 2Kings 24:1-2*

*These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; Jer 52:28-29*

### **Jehoiakim's Eleventh Year**

Jehoiakim's final year was filled with disaster. After he rebelled against the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and took him away.

*Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, 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. 2Chr. 36:6-8*

## **Jehoiachin's 3 Month Reign**

After Nebuchadnezzar bound Jehoiakim in bronze fetters to carry him to Babylon and he rested with his fathers, his son Jehoiachin began to reign. Although his reign was only of three months duration, his evil was so great that God chose to remove him.

***So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. ... 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. 2 Kings 24:6; 8-9***

***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. 2 Kings 24:10-12***

This is the first major captivity described in Kings. The captivity of Daniel was simply ignored. Nebuchadnezzar looted the treasures of both the king and the temple. He also broke in pieces many of the gold things Solomon had made and placed in the temple. He also took captive the best of those who were in Jerusalem.

***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. 2 Kings 24:10-16***

At some point in this three month reign, God gave Jehoiachin the name, "Coniah/Jeconiah"

***"As I live," says the Lord, "though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25 and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear — the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. Jer 22:24-27***

With the use of this name, we can pinpoint Jeremiah's parable of the figs:

### **The Baskets of Figs**

At some time during the three month reign of Jehoiachin(now called Jeconiah), God revealed two baskets of figs set before the temple.

***The Lord showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. 2 One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad. 3 Then the Lord said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad." Jer. 24:1-3***

After revealing this vision to Jeremiah, God later revealed the meaning. The good figs are those who have been carried away to Babylon. God has screened out the people and has allowed those to be "sent out of this place for their own good." These people will be brought back from Babylon.

***Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. 7 Then I will give them a heart to know***



Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart. Jer. 24:4-7

The bad figs are all who remain in Jerusalem. These will be delivered up to a terrible curse.

**'And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad' — surely thus says the Lord — 'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. 9 I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.'** Jer. 24:8-10

The question of whether Jeconiah was one of the ones taken for good is answered later by Jeremiah.

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.** 2Kings 25:27-30 Jer. 52:31-34

It was after he came to Babylon (and probably after he was released from prison) that he bore a son. We see this in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, which is generally believed to be Joseph's genealogy (Luke's genealogy was that of Mary).

Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Mt. 1:11-12

# Jeremiah

## Length of the book and Duration of Prophecy.

Second only to Isaiah, Jeremiah is one of the longest books in the major prophets. If we add his Lamentations, Jeremiah has more material than even Isaiah.

	Chapters	Pages
1. Isaiah	66	61
2. Jeremiah	52	57
3. Lamentations	5	6
4. Ezekiel	48	45
5. Daniel	12	15

His book is a compilation of historical events, prophecies to Judah and the nations, and his own life's story. While most of the prophets personal life is left in obscurity, Jeremiah's long journey is captured in great detail. His work spanned 5 kings and covered over 40 years.

**Josiah** was **eight years old** when he became king, and he reigned **thirty-one years** in Jerusalem.

**Jehoahaz** son of Josiah was **23 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **3 months** in Jerusalem.

**Jehoiakim** was **25 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **eleven years** in Jerusalem

**Jehoiachin** was **8 years old** when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem **3 months and 10 days**.

**Zedekiah** was **21 years old** when he became king, and he reigned **11 years** in Jerusalem. 2Chr. 34:1; 36:1-3; 5; 9-10; 11-13; 36:1-3

If we add the 31 years of Josiah, the 3 months of Jehoahaz, the 11 years of Jehoiakim, the 3 months and 10 days of Jehoiachin, and the 11 years of Zedekiah, we get 53 years, six months and ten days. If we subtract the first 12 years of Josiah's reign (Jeremiah started his 13<sup>th</sup> year), then Jeremiah prophesied for about 41 years.

Since he spoke of being but youth, he is possibly around 20. He would have been in his 60's when Jerusalem was captured and destroyed. Many of the worst things that happened to Jeremiah occurred during the reign of Zedekiah when he was in his 50's.

Jeremiah was called to preach harsh sermons of rebuke to hardened and wicked men who did not want to hear the message God commanded him to preach. He was persecuted, not only with scorn and threats of death, but also with the physical torment of being arrested, imprisoned, and left to suffer in the mud.

## Jeremiah's Call

*Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Jer 1:4-5*

We know from Isaac and Jacob, that God selects people before they are born to fulfill certain tasks for Him. Others appear to be chosen based on their ability to fulfill a specific task (Noah, Moses, and Job). Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul seem to fall in between. They were given very important tasks that required freewill, faith, and fidelity to God and His word. With so many failures and unfaithfulness on the part of God's people, one wonders how God knew before birth that they would in fact remain faithful.

Yet, it seems this is not such an unusual occurrence. God knows "all our ways" and the days fashioned for us are already known before we are born.

*1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And*

*in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were Ps 139:1-3; 15-16*

This does not interfere with our freewill and choice. God doesn't force anyone to serve or remain faithful. Since God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, there is no partiality with God, and He is not a respecter of persons, there is no favoritism being shown. Everyone gets the same opportunity and will receive the same reward.

What God said to Jeremiah, infers preparation and possibly ability. God may have given to Jeremiah those qualities necessary or chose him because He knew he would have them. God may have allowed those thing necessary for Jeremiah to be intelligent and patient, through the combination of genes or he may have chosen him because he already had these things. God may have allowed Jeremiah to be raised with the important opportunities for spiritual education, or He may have chosen him because he knew he would have them by time and chance. Clearly God chose him because He knew he was going to be the perfect fit for what God needed to be done. It is just perplexing to see it was all done before conception.

Paul's similar statements create the same questions.

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, Gal 1:15-16*

The ordaining and separating occurred long before they were prepared to do the work. These are mysteries beyond our ability to understand. Many who don't understand it place God into the position of forcing them to do His will. Yet the Scriptures never teach this. It is much more profound that God can do this without hindering man's will and choice.

## **Jeremiah's Response**

Jeremiah's response is not an unusual one. Most people when considering a great task God wants done feel their unworthiness.

*Then said I: "Ah, LORD God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." Jer 1:6*

This is humility and respect and fear of falling short, not doubt or lack of faith. Moses started with similar misgivings of being unable to communicate well enough to be God's spokesman. Jeremiah was afraid he was unprepared, and was expressing this fear to God. Even today we struggle with such concerns. Mordecai's comment to Esther helps us answer our own concerns.

*And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Est 4:13-14*

When an opportunity to perform some service to God arises, we look to God's providence and expectations and not to our own weaknesses. God needed someone to deliver Israel from the king's edict and Mordecai knew it. He also saw that Esther was in the perfect position to bring that deliverance. Her lack of faith or fear of speaking would only lead to her own fall. Yet this was her moment of destiny. She had in fact come into the kingdom for such a time as this.

## **God's Answer(1): Comfort**

God's answer to Jeremiah comes in many different parts. The first is a verbal assurance, the second is an act on God's part that gave Jeremiah inspiration, the third was authority, then came visions. The assurance is to give comfort.

*But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the LORD. Jer 1:7-8*

There is no rebuke here. God simply explained to Jeremiah why he should feel no fear about his youth and inexperience. Read in context it is actually elaborating on what God wanted him to do and comforting Jeremiah that He will be with him and deliver him. Just as Moses believed he could not speak well, and Jeremiah felt his was too young. God had answered Moses:

*So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? 12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." Ex 4:11-12*

Subsequent events proved both Moses and Jeremiah were not only the best, but the only ones who were prepared to do what God asked. God answered Jeremiah in a similar way. You don't have to come up with any words, all you have to do is give them my commands and I will deliver you from whatever problems this creates.

### **God's Answer(2): Competence:**

The second part of God's answer to Jeremiah's concern of inexperience was to remove it.

*Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth." Jer. 1:9*

This is one of the clearest descriptions of inspiration. We don't know exactly how God touched his mouth. Perhaps it was a vision like that of Isaiah.

*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. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." Isa 6:6-7*

Perhaps there was some tangible sign as there was with the apostles.

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:2-4*

However it was done, God first gave him inspiration so that His words were directly from God.

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son Heb. 1:1-2*

*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:20-21*

From that moment, Jeremiah was no longer the one speaking. He spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained exactly how this is done.

*But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Matt 10:19-20*

*Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. Lk. 21:14-15*

Jeremiah no longer need worry about what he was to say. God would give him exactly what he needed to say and give him a wisdom far beyond the wisest sinner in the midst of Judah.

### **God's Answer(3): Authority**

The third part of God's answer was to give him authority. Not only would God give him the words he would speak, but then God would use His own power to bring about those words. Imagine how Jeremiah must have felt. Here is a young man who is very aware of his youth and inexperience. God appears to him and tells him I have given you inspiration, I will deliver you from all adversaries, and I will use my own authority and power to bring about everything you say, not only to Judah, but to all nations on earth.

*See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant." Jer 1:10*

## God's Answer(4): Visions

God then gave Jeremiah two visions. **The first is an almond branch(staff)**. Since only the term "almond" is supplied what manifestation of the tree is based on the translators. The ASV and NASB have "a rod of an almond-tree." and the KJV and ESV have "a branch of an almond tree.

*Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." 12 Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."*

The definition of "almond" is very helpful to understanding this passage.

šāqad (... watch, wake; (šāqēd) almond tree, almonds. ... šāqad has cognates in both Phoenician and Syriac. ... occasionally overlaps, and is used with, šāmar, "guard, " "watch over." In the latter the emphasis is on careful attention and preserving, while in , alertness is basic. Used in Qal and Pual, the latter in participial form only. The idea of watchfulness which is basic to the root affords the key to the explanation of the Hebrew name for the almond tree. This tree, which in Israel blooms as early as January and February and is affectionately looked upon as the harbinger of spring, is appropriately enough called šāqēd " "the waker." ... This name for the almond forms the basis for God's vivid object lesson on the occasion of Jeremiah's call (Jer 1: 11-12). The almond rod, shaqed, is a reminder to Jeremiah that God will be watchful and punctual, shoqed, in carrying out what he has promised. (TDWOT OT: 8<sup>247</sup>)

noun [masculine] almond (-tree) (Late Hebrew id.; so called from its early waking out of winter's sleep, (BDB OT: 8<sup>247</sup>)

Thus God gave this first vision to show that his being chosen is like the first blossoms of an almond tree.

The second vision is of a rapidly boiling pot. This time God Himself explains the reason for this vision. The time for judgment has come and the pot is already boiling with it. We later learn that Babylon is now being called and will soon be on the scene.

*And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north." 14 Then the Lord said to me: "Out of the north calamity shall break forth On all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the Lord; Jer. 1:11-15*

Jeremiah's call is 12 years into Josiah's 31 year reign and Nebuchadnezzar arrived to take Daniel and his friends in the third year of Jehoiakim. Hence in 19 years(remainder of Josiah) and 3 years of Jehoikims reign is **22 years**.

*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. Dan 1:1-2*

As God had told Habbakuk,

*"Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. Hab. 1:5-6*

Truly the pot is now boiling

## Jeremiah - 2

### Review

His work spanned 5 kings and covered over 40 years.

<b>Josiah</b>	<b><u>31 years</u></b>	<i>Jeremiah Began in 13<sup>th</sup> Year</i>	19 Years
<b>Jehoahaz</b>	<b><u>0.25 year</u></b>		19.25
<b>Jehoiakim</b>	<b><u>11 years</u></b>		30.25
<b>Jehoiachin</b>	<b><u>0.25 years</u></b>		30.5
<b>Zedekiah</b>	<b><u>11 years</u></b>		41.5

### Jeremiah's Call & Humble Response

*Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Jer 1:4-5*

*Then said I: "Ah, LORD God! **Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.**" Jer 1:6*

### God's Answer(1): Comfort - (I will compensate for your youth)

*But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For **you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak.** 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For **I am with you to deliver you,**" says the LORD. Jer 1:7-8*

### God's Answer(2): Competence - (I have put My words in your mouth - Inspiration)

*Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: "**Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.**" Jer. 1:9*

### God's Answer(3): Authority - (I have set you over the nations)

*See, I have this day **set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.**" Jer 1:10*

### God's Answer(4): Visions

**(Almond** - "early waking" "*the waker*" - Jeremiah's call is the awakening of God's Wrath – ready to be poured out on the nation).

*Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree." 12 Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."*

### (A Boiling Pot - "All preparations are now set – fire set; water gathered & now boiling)

*And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "**I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north.**" 14 Then the Lord said to me: "**Out of the north calamity shall break forth On all the inhabitants of the land.** 15 For behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the Lord; Jer. 1:11-15*

### God's Answer(5): A Warning and a Choice

The commands have been given and the assurances and abilities are set in place. The authority to do the work and the very nature of the work has been outlined. Now, it is up to the free-will choices of Jeremiah. God offers two paths for him. If he allows the nature of the work to trouble him and he is too dismayed to do the work, then God will do the very thing to him.

*"Therefore **prepare yourself and arise,** And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, Lest I dismay you before them. Jer 1:17*

The translation "prepare yourself" is unfortunate. The literal translation is found in the ASV.

## Gird up Thy Loins

*Thou therefore **gird up thy loins**, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. Jer. 1:17*

This is both an actual event and also became an idiom. It's first use occurred as God warned Israel to eat their first Passover with their loins girded, prepared to leave.

*And thus shall ye eat it: **with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand**; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's Passover. Ex. 12:11*

Throughout the Old Testament it was used of preparation to run, go quickly, and have the mind ready to work.

*and the hand of Jehovah was on Elijah; and **he girded up his loins, and ran** before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. 1Kings 18:46*

*Then he said to Gehazi, **Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go thy way**: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. 2 Kings 4:29*

*And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said unto him, **Gird up thy loins, and take this vial of oil in thy hand**, and go to Ramoth-gilead. 2Kings 9:1*

***Gird up now thy loins like a man**; For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Job 38:3*

***Gird up thy loins now like a man**: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. 8 Wilt thou even annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified? Job 40:7-8*

*She **girdeth her loins with strength**, And maketh strong her arms. Pr. 31:17*

*1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. ... 5 And **righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins**. Isa. 11:1, 5*

Jesus used it as a warning to his disciples of how they are to be working for Him, and how they view the time from their conversion to His return.

*Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; 36 and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Lk. 12:35-36*

Finally Paul and Peter use it to describe the efforts Christians must put forth in preparation to work to gain truth and to prepare to understand important doctrines.

*Stand therefore, **having girded your loins with truth**, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, Eph. 6:14*

*Wherefore **girding up the loins of your mind**, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 1Pet. 1:13*

There is an interesting paradox in the final portion of this verse.

*Thou therefore **gird up thy loins**, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. Jer. 1:17*

Jeremiah is to be prepared mentally and spiritually along with the desire to act physically when the need arose. But there will be a cost. If he is to stand with God, it will lead to a conflict that may lead him to feel "dismayed."

ḥāṭaṭ: A verb meaning to be shattered, to be dismayed, to dismay, to shatter, to scare. The base meaning is probably breaking or shattering like a bow or of the drought-cracked ground ...OT:2865 ... Figuratively, it refers to **nations shattered by God** (Isa 7:8). It is also used with a intensive and causative meaning **to scare, to terrify, or to dismay** (Isa 30:31). Job said that **God terrified him with dreams** (Job 7:14)" (Complete Word Study Dictionary OT; 2865)

Shattering, fear, and dismay have come to Judah. As the one who brings these tidings, Jeremiah will seek to create these emotions to bring repentance. Yet often instead of repentance, it creates the desire to shatter the one who brings the message. God is warning Jeremiah that he must focus on his relationship with God, and not the people of Judah. If he allows their emotional responses to shatter him, then he will become just like them as disobedient to God. God will then be forced to shatter Jeremiah in their presence since he too had become rebellious. If he wants to come out victorious, he must continue to stand with God, regardless of the response of the sinners.

## **God's Answer(5): Assurance & Guaranteed Victory**

The final portion of God's answer to Jeremiah's concerns over his youth assure him of victory.

*For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls against the whole land — Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you." Jer. 1:17-19*

First, God revealed that Jeremiah was even then a fortified city with iron pillars and bronze walls. No one would be able to prevail against him. A very similar promise was made to Joshua and later to us.

*No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Josh. 1:5*

*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" Heb. 13:5-6*

As long as Jeremiah remains faithful to God's Word, he will be protected. No one, not kings, princes, priests of any of thye people of Israel can prevail against God, or those God sends.

Yet, Jeremiah is again warned. They will fight against you. Although ultimate victory is assured, the fighting will be fierce and have withered many a servant of God's hope. Only ultimate victory is assured, not life.

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:35-39*

## **Chronology**

Although chronology is very important to the accuracy of our historical documents, God does not always concern Himself with it. Jeremiah is a book that sometimes goes in line with historical times, but at other times, God will skip to bring up the points that He wants His people to see even though it doesn't follow chronologically. Thus one chapter will see us in Josiah's reign and another in Zedekiah's, and the next chapter might be Jehoichin.

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, Jer. 21:1*

*Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: Jer. 22:18*

We must be cautious when reading and seek to get the proper chronology as much as we can.

## **Jeremiah Begins His Work**

The heart of the message Jeremiah was to take to Jerusalem(and all Judah) is recorded in the first few chapters.

*"Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. Jer 2:2*



**"What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters? Jer 2:5**

**I brought you into a bountiful country, To eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land And made My heritage an abomination. 8 The priests did not say, 'Where is the Lord?' And those who handle the law did not know Me; "Therefore I will yet bring charges against you," says the Lord, "And against your children's children I will bring charges. Jer 2:7-8**

**Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit. Jer 2:11**

**'For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jer 2:13**

**'In vain I have chastened your children; They received no correction. Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion. Jer 2:30**

**Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the Lord. Jer 3:20**

**"If you will return, O Israel," says the Lord, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved. Jer 4:1**

**For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth, Lament and wail. For the fierce anger of the Lord Has not turned back from us. 9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord, "That the heart of the king shall perish, And the heart of the princes; The priests shall be astonished, And the prophets shall wonder." Jer 4:8-9**

# Jeremiah - 3

## Introduction/Review

God called Jeremiah as a “youth” and promised to help him become the seasoned prophet who could handle all that God would ask of him. He began with revelation that Jeremiah was to preach to the people. The sermon(s) in the first few chapters are harsh rebukes. Judgment is now upon them and God wanted them to hear it. Yet it was also for Jeremiah. Jeremiah too had to heed the words he was preaching and follow them.

## Jeremiah's Youth and Lack of Experience Caused him to Doubt

After preaching these things, Jeremiah became concerned. What he was preaching was far different from the other prophets in that day. In his youth, Jeremiah had believed what they were saying and therefore brought it to God.

*Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, Saying, 'You shall have peace,' Whereas the sword reaches to the heart." Jer 4:10*

To fully understand Jeremiah's misunderstandings we have to remember that he began preaching in Josiah's 13<sup>th</sup> year. Remember that Josiah was only 8 years old when he began his reign. Although he began to seek God in his 8<sup>th</sup> year, it was not until the 12<sup>th</sup> year that he started purging Judah and Jerusalem.

***Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images** 2Chr. 34:1-3*

While this continued for many years, they did not find the book of the Law until his 18<sup>th</sup> year.

***In the eighteenth year of his, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. ... 14 Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses.** 2Chr. 34:8-9, 14*

Hence was called right in the midst of Josiah's reforms. Evidently, having this good king had given the prophets and people a false sense of security. They believed that because Josiah was doing all the right things, it would move down to the people. So Jeremiah is convinced that this is a time of a spiritual reawakening and the prophets were preaching God's true feelings.

## God showed Jeremiah the full extent of Judah's Wickedness

God then gave Jeremiah a commission. Were these people truly deceived into thinking all would be well with them? Had the prophets really been sent by God to comfort and promise them peace? Jeremiah knew the Law. Blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

*"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 **the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today;** 28 **and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.** Deut. 11:26-29*

If Jeremiah can find people who are serving the Lord, then truly Jeremiah's concerns would have some merit. God does not give a difficult task. He wants Jeremiah to find a single man. Yet there is a deeper purpose. It is for Jeremiah to “see now and know.”

***"Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places if you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her. 2 Though they say, 'As the Lord lives,' Surely they swear falsely."** Jer. 5:1-2*

God wanted someone who executed judgment and sought the truth. People who went to His law

for their decisions. Yet God warned him. Don't just listen to their words and even their oaths for they swear falsely. Evidently Josiah was excluded from this quest.

As Jeremiah began this quest it is difficult to see clearly whether he was optimistic or filled with doubt. His own youthful experience had led him to his words above, but God's answer had revealed the truth to him. Sadly the first part of his quest led to failure. He could find none among the poor who were penitent or would accept God's rebuke.

*O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? **You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return.** 4 Therefore I said, "**Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.**" Jer. 5:3-4*

The great men were in contact with Josiah and were actually responsible for carrying out his reforms. Surely among them he would find someone. Yet he is still unable to grasp the full extent. He still believes among the great and wise he might find one. But even among these men, the outward submission to Josiah had not reached their hearts.

***I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God." But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds.** Jer. 5:5*

This completed Jeremiah's initial training. He had preached the inspired truth of God's anger and wrath that was to be poured out upon them. Although initially Jeremiah did not feel that these words were fair and just since the other prophets were preaching blessings and mercy, he now understood that these people were fully wicked and ripe for God's judgment.

## **God Answers Jeremiah's Concern**

Now that Jeremiah understands the extent of their wickedness God had fully answered his earlier concerns.

*Then I said, "**Ah, Lord God! Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, Saying, 'You shall have peace,' Whereas the sword reaches to the heart.**" Jer. 4:10*

God first described the prophets Jeremiah had in which expressed so much confidence. They were liars when they made such prophesy. They were just wind. God had never spoken to them about any of this.

***They have lied about the Lord, And said, "It is not He. Neither will evil come upon us, Nor shall we see sword or famine. 13 And the prophets become wind, For the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them."** Jer. 5:12-13*

The condemnation did not fall exclusively upon the prophets. The people loved what these prophets were doing and the message they were bringing. It was both astonishing and horrible that this could be, so in that sense, Jeremiah was justified in his concern. Such things ought not to be.

***"An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?" Jer.5:30-31***

## **A Change in Jeremiah**

After his search and God's words in Chapter Five, Jeremiah is a changed man. He now sees the people clearly and his attitude reflects it. First, there is no one to preach to, since no one wants to hear. Their ears are not circumcised and thus can't give heed to God's will. Because of their sins, the Word of the Lord is only a reproach so they cannot delight in it since it only brings condemnation.

***To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it. 11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. "I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days.** Jer. 6:10-11*

While some see only the Lord speaking, it is much more probable that Jeremiah expresses that he is now completely with the Lord on this. He too is filled with fury! He can see how wicked the people are and that there is no remedy so He is now going to preach boldly and clearly.

One of the reasons for this fury both in God and Jeremiah is the covetousness of the people and the prophets who are exploiting it.

*Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely. 14 **They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace. 15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down,"** says the Lord. Jer. 6:13-15*

God also revealed the utter and complete rebellion of His people. It was not ignorance or weakness, but stiff necked pride and stubbornness. God had tried everything and Israel had rebelled against it. He had made a path and showed them that they could return to it, but they refused it. He gave them watchmen (Josiah and other prophets like Habbakuk and Zephaniah, and they blatantly told God they would not listen to them.

*Thus says the Lord: "**Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'** 17 Also, **I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.'**" Jer. 6:16-17*

The hypocrisy of both the prophets and the people is what had led to the paradox and contradiction Jeremiah had seen.

While His people would not hear, He spoke to the earth itself. As Saul before them, they thought that sacrifices could make up for any rebellion.

*So Samuel said: "**Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.**" 1Sam. 15:22-23*

Yet God again made it clear that no amount of sacrifice or worship could make up for rebellion. , but God said

***Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people — The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words Nor My law, but rejected it. 20 For what purpose to Me Comes frankincense from Sheba, And sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me.**" Jer. 6:19-20*

God then told Jeremiah that his role as a prophet would be to test them just as an assayer does silver. His preaching would work like the bellows and fire. Yet it would all be vain. For they are all "stubborn rebels, slanderers, corrupters. No matter how harsh his sermons, the wicked cannot be skimmed off the top and purity remains. After the wicked are drawn off, nothing remains.

***"I have set you as an assayer and a fortress among My people, That you may know and test their way. 28 They are all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers. They are bronze and iron, They are all corrupters; 29 The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire; The smelter refines in vain, For the wicked are not drawn off. 30 People will call them rejected silver, Because the Lord has rejected them."** Jer. 6:27-30*

Now, both God and Jeremiah are in fellowship. Jeremiah feels as God feels toward the people and Jeremiah now understands the people he has been sent to work with. He will preach with zeal and love, but it will make no difference. When he has completed his duty as assayer, there will be nothing less. Yet as God told Ezekiel, there are two purposes for a prophet.

*"As for you, son of man, the children of **your people are talking about you** beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, '**Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.**' 31 So they **come to you** as people do, they **sit before you as My people**, and they **hear your words, but they do not do them;** for*

*with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. 32 **Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.** 33 And when this comes to pass — surely it will come — then **they will know that a prophet has been among them.**" Ezek. 33:30-33*

## **Jeremiah's Sermon in the Temple**

Jeremiah is now prepared both by experience and understanding to begin his work. As noted above, chronology is difficult to determine, but since it is placed here, we will consider it as what God wanted Jeremiah to do now that he understands the people he has been sent to help.

He is sent to the temple and stand at the gate. If this is a normal day, he will be speaking to those in Jerusalem who were among the most spiritually minded. If he is speaking during one of the great feast days, then the audience would be multitudes from all over Judah.

His message (which he now believes with all his heart), is to repent of their deeds and no longer rely on the lying words of the prophet. The temple is only of value if the people are faithful. If not it is only a structure.

***The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!'" 3 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'** Jer. 7:1-4*

The sermon also had exhortations. They still have an opportunity. Even at this late date, God would relent if they showed remorse, repentance and the fruits of repentance.

***"For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, 6 if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, 7 then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. Jer. 7:5-7***

Jeremiah then speaks to them of the fruits of the "lying words" that were being proclaimed by their prophets. How could they believe they could violate 5 of the ten commandments and still be pleasing to God. Yet that would have to be the case if these prophets are right. Do they really believe they could violate all this and then come to stand before God in the temple? Do they really think God would continue to deliver them so they could keep right on sinning?

***"Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10 and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? 11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it," says the Lord. Jer. 7:8-11***

God reminds them of a similar event in their history. From their entrance into the promised land until Samuel's birth, the tabernacle was at Shiloh. Yet due to the wickedness of Eli's sons, the ark was taken from Shiloh to help fight in their fight against the Philistines. It was captured and returned to Israel, but never did it return to Shiloh. He reminds them of these historical facts. God can indeed forsake his people in their hour of need and allow the place where his tabernacle stood to be forsaken. Because of their wickedness, what had happened before was about to happen again.

***"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the Lord, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren — the whole posterity of Ephraim. Jer 7:12-15***

Whether this is part of his proclamation, or only God's instructions to Jeremiah is impossible to

determine. It would certainly have an impact on these people to hear them. Jeremiah is no longer to pray for Israel. God will not hear any prayers offered up for the blessings or needs of these people. The evil of their rebellion is seen in the entire family. The children gather the wood, the fathers light the fire and the women knead the dough for the "queen of heaven." The commentaries and encyclopedias have only guesses and surmises of who this would be. The moon, Venus, a constellation are put forth, coming from Assyria or Persia. What we do see here is a complete devotion to an idol while they turn their back on God, thus provoking him to anger and shaming their own faces.

*"Therefore **do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you.** 17 Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The **children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven;** and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may **provoke Me to anger.** 19 Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the Lord. "Do they not provoke themselves, **to the shame of their own faces?"** Jer 7:16-19*

God returns to the terrible misunderstanding that has plagued so many. What they do in the temple, and what sacrifices they bring to honor God are insignificant in comparison to obedience. They act as though all that was learned at Sinai was to offer burnt offerings and eat the meat. God is clear! In comparison to obedience and submission, God didn't even speak about burnt offerings.

Burnt offerings were offered in nearly every generation, but submission and obedience seldom were seen. Israel had gone backward and not forward. They preferred the counsels and dictates of their own evil hearts. Even the prophets strong denunciations hand not checked them and they were doing even worse than their fathers.

*Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. 22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, '**Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.**' 24 **Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.** 25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers." Jer. 7:21-26*

As God sends him forth with this message, He warns him again. You shall speak all these words in obedience to me, but do not expect anything from the people. They will not obey you.

*"Therefore **you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you.** You shall also **call to them, but they will not answer you.**" Jer. 7:27*

# Jeremiah 4 - Descent into Sorrow

## Review:

**Innocence:** The book of Jeremiah began with his innocence. When God asked him to work as a prophet, Jeremiah's concerns were in his own inability to do the work. After God encouraged and explained how He would help him, all Jeremiah's concerns were removed and he prepared to do the work.

**Doubt and Concern:** It appears in the beginning that Jeremiah thought he would take his place with the other prophets and they would all work together with Josiah to continue reforming the people. He first suspects a problem when his message contradicts that of all the other prophets. He does not rebuke God, but begins to doubt that his message could be the right one as it seems it makes all the prophets into liars.

*Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Surely **You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem**, Saying, 'You shall have peace,' Whereas the sword reaches to the heart." Jer 4:10*

**Zeal and Hope:** God then Gave Jeremiah a commission that he was eager to fulfill.

*"**Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; See now and know; And seek in her open places if you can find a man, If there is anyone who executes judgment, Who seeks the truth, And I will pardon her.** 2 Though they say, 'As the Lord lives,' Surely **they swear falsely.**" Jer. 5:1-2*

He was so convinced that this would not be a difficult task that even when he could find no one among the poor and unlearned, he still expected to find them among the great men that were working with Josiah to purge Judah of idolatry.

*O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? **You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, But they have refused to receive correction.** They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to return. 4 Therefore I said, "**Surely these are poor. They are foolish; For they do not know the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God.**" Jer. 5:3-4*

***I will go to the great men and speak to them, For they have known the way of the Lord, The judgment of their God." But these have altogether broken the yoke And burst the bonds.** Jer. 5:5*

**Dawning of the Truth:** Slowly the true reality of what his work was to be became clear. Far from working with other prophets for the good of the people, Jeremiah would stand against these false prophets with no help whatsoever from the people. God's earlier words must have become much clearer to him at this moment. He would stand with God, but alone against all the people.

*Thou therefore **gird up thy loins**, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at them, lest I dismay thee before them. Jer. 1:17*

*For behold, **I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls** against the whole land — **Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land.** 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you." Jer. 1:17-19*

**Anger and Fury:** His first emotion after the shock was to become angry.

***To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.** 11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. "I will pour it out on the children outside, And on the assembly of young men together; For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, The aged with him who is full of days." Jer. 6:10-11*

## Sorrow and Mourning

After another sermon preached to the people, his sorrow and anguish over the condition of the people begins to come to the forefront. He can now see the end has come. The preparing, sowing, and reaping has already been done and even the harvest is complete. Yet though everything has been done the people are not saved.

***I would comfort myself in sorrow; My heart is faint in me. 19 Listen! The voice, The cry of the daughter of my people From a far country: "Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?" "Why have they provoked Me to anger With their carved images — With foreign idols?" 20 "The harvest is past, The summer is ended, And we are not saved!" 21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; Astonishment has taken hold of me. 22 Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery For the health of the daughter of my people? Jer 8:18-22***

Jeremiah's heart is filled with great sorrow. He is hurt, mourning and astonished. There is nothing to soothe his pain and nothing to cure the people. As he looks out at the deaths of the innocent people (they did not deserve to die for their conduct, only for their rebellion against God). We face similar issues today. As we hear of multitudes who are dying without God because of the wickedness of men. Truly it is judgment, but one we wish would could have helped them avert.

He wants to leave these people and no longer witness their wickedness and evil.

***Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people! 2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness A lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For they are all adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men. Jer 9:1-2***

One of the often quoted passages from Jeremiah are words of wisdom from our Creator about what He wants to see within our hearts.

***Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. Jer 9:23-24***

Another well known passage are words from Jeremiah. After seeing the wickedness of Judah, Jeremiah recognizes that he too has sin in his life. He fully understands that it is not in any man to direct his steps and that only by following God's path can any hope be found. Yet even then, every man needs correction, yet having seen the wrath of God being poured out on his people, Jeremiah pleads for justice and mercy.

***O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. 24 O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing. Jer 10:23-24***

## **God Reveals A Plot**

Jeremiah was doing his work, still hoping for a change in heart when God revealed the men in his own hometown were plotting to take his life. Jeremiah was completely taken off guard as such an idea never occurred to him.

***Now the LORD gave me knowledge of it, and I know it; for You showed me their doings. 19 But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more." Jer 11:18-19***

Jeremiah now understands and begins praying and speaking as God has since the beginning. He seeks God's vengeance upon them. God immediately grants the prayer, promising to punish them for this sin.

***But, O LORD of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause. 21 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, lest you die by our hand' — 22 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine; 23 and there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, even the year of their punishment.'" Jer. 11:20-23***



## Jeremiah becomes Impatient

Although we can't see the full extent of it in the words, God's answer revealed that Jeremiah has passed into an area of danger and temptation. His bitterness and anger have begun to work in his mind. While he begins with his faith in God's righteousness, he then begins to question how God was going about things. While he had been more than patient and wanted God to be also, now he seeks immediate punishment. He sees the terrible circumstances that he is in and the prosperity and ease of those who are persecuting him. He doesn't understand why it should be like this. Jeremiah's thoughts seem to focus on one of their own words against him.

***Righteous are You, O Lord, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously? 2 You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit. You are near in their mouth But far from their mind. 3 But You, O Lord, know me; You have seen me, And You have tested my heart toward You. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, And prepare them for the day of slaughter. 4 How long will the land mourn, And the herbs of every field wither? The beasts and birds are consumed, For the wickedness of those who dwell there, Because they said, "He will not see our final end."*** Jer 12:1-4

God's answer is a warning. Things are going to get much worse than this. If you can't keep up with those who can run races, what are you going to do against horses. Things are still peaceful now and yet the times are coming when a flood will arrive. These are mere words, their treachery is far deeper even than the words. Their hypocrisy is far deeper than Jeremiah knows. Even his own brothers in the house of his own father have dealt treacherously against him.,

***"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the flood plain of the Jordan? 6 For even your brothers, the house of your father, Even they have dealt treacherously with you; Yes, they have called a multitude after you. Do not believe them, Even though they speak smooth words to you."*** Jer 12:5-6

One of Jeremiah's sermons brings out the lament of Judah for her sins and God's answer. They have asked why and God has fully explained it to them. They have been entrenched in sin even in Egypt. They were so accustomed to doing evil that it would take something impossible to change it. They received exactly what they deserved.

***And if you say in your heart, "Why have these things come upon me?" For the greatness of your iniquity Your skirts have been uncovered, Your heels made bare. 23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. 24 "Therefore I will scatter them like stubble That passes away by the wind of the wilderness. 25 This is your lot, The portion of your measures from Me," says the Lord, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood."*** Jer 13:22-25

## Jeremiah Prays for Judah

After a terrible judgment from the Lord in the form of a terrible drought, Jeremiah's compassion was formed. Two possibilities can explain these words after his anger of the previous chapters. Either they are from an earlier date, or perhaps his compassions were kindled as he witnessed the terrible consequences of God's judgment.

***The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts. 2 "Judah mourns, And her gates languish; They mourn for the land, And the cry of Jerusalem has gone up. 3 Their nobles have sent their lads for water; They went to the cisterns and found no water. They returned with their vessels empty; They were ashamed and confounded And covered their heads. 4 Because the ground is parched, For there was no rain in the land, The plowmen were ashamed; They covered their heads. 5 Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field, But left because there was no grass. 6 And the wild donkeys stood in the desolate heights; They sniffed at the wind like jackals; Their eyes failed because there was no grass."*** Jer 14:1-6

These terrible events led Jeremiah to again cry out to God for them.

***O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, Do it for Your name's sake; For our backslidings are many, We have sinned against You. 8 O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time***

of trouble, Why should You be like a stranger in the land, And like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night? 9 Why should You be like a man astonished, Like a mighty one who cannot save? **Yet You, O Lord, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us!** Jer 14:7-9

God again reminded Jeremiah of the wickedness of these people and tells him not to pray for them for He will not hear.

**Thus says the Lord to this people: "Thus they have loved to wander; They have not restrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, And punish their sins." 11 Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."** Jer. 14:10-12

Jeremiah again intercedes, this time laying the guilt on the false prophets. Although God agrees with Jeremiah, He simply tells Jeremiah they too will be punished.

**Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" 14 And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land' — 'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them — them nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters — for I will pour their wickedness on them.'** Jer 14:10-16

Even after this answer, Jeremiah again sought to intervene.

**Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble. 20 We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. 21 Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us. 22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.** Jer 14:19-22

Yet God is unmoved. He revealed to Jeremiah that even if Moses and Samuel were interceding for them, he would not relent.

**Then the Lord said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.'" 3 "And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction," says the Lord: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem." Jer 15:1-4**

# Jeremiah 5 — An Example of Suffering and Patience

## Introduction:

*My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. James 5:10-11*

Though but a youth when called, his faithful spirit and submissive soul were needed by God. The time for all the terrible curses God had warned Israel would occur if they were unfaithful had come. While God took Daniel and Ezekiel to Babylon to continue working with the remnant of “good figs” (Jer. 24:1-8), Jeremiah was left with the “bad figs” doomed to be destroyed. His life would be one of deprivation and sorrow. He would be hated by all men and would gain no tangible results from all his labor except his faithfulness to God. As this truth begins to become obvious to Jeremiah, he is unprepared for it and faltered.

## The Truth of His Role

In the midst of a terrible drought, that led to even animals leaving their young to die and great anguish among the people of Judah, Jeremiah pleaded with God for mercy. His tender heart could not bear to look upon the great suffering of both people and animals.

***O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, Do it for Your name's sake; For our backslidings are many, We have sinned against You. ... Yet You, O Lord, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us! Jer. 14:7-9***

God revealed that this drought was the just consequence of their conduct and could not be changed. God again reminds Jeremiah that praying for these people is futile. He will not regard their fasting and will not accept their sacrifices. Instead He will continue to bring curses upon them.

***Thus says the Lord to this people: "Thus they have loved to wander; They have not restrained their feet. Therefore the Lord does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, And punish their sins." 11 Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence." Jer. 14:10-12***

Yet Jeremiah continued to intercede. He believed that God had the power to do anything and that if he manifested enough godly sorrow and grief on his part he could change God's mind and bring blessings upon his people. He believed that it was the fault of the false prophets and that God's wrath should be directed against them.

***Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" 14 And the Lord said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land' — 'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them — them nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters — for I will pour their wickedness on them.' Jer. 14:10-16***

While God confirmed Jeremiah's charge against the prophets, and revealed that He would destroy them for their evil, the people could not be absolved of their own guilt. They would die of both famine and sword and no one would bury them. God had already told Jeremiah this truth.

*The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end? Jer. 5:31*

Yet Jeremiah again sought to intervene. It appears that Jeremiah simply couldn't accept the truth that nothing could help these people. He offered a public confession in their behalf. His godly sorrow and remorse for the circumstances Judah had brought upon itself are powerfully expressed. He makes some of the same points Moses made after the golden calf.

**Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble. 20 We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. 21 Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us. 22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these. Jer. 14:19-22**

Yet God was unmoved. He revealed to Jeremiah that even if Moses and Samuel were making the same intercessions He would not relent this time. Jeremiah is given only one message to give to the people: cast them out of My sight. If the people should respond where then should we go, God's terrible answer is all Jeremiah is authorized to give. They will go to death, sword, famine, or captivity. God has created four forms of destruction: (1) Sword to slay; (2) dogs to drag; (3) birds of the heaven to devour and destroy; (4) the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.

*Then the Lord said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.'" 3 "And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction," says the Lord: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. Jer. 15:1-4*

## **Jeremiah's World Crashes**

All that God has said about the future leads Jeremiah to sum up his own bleak circumstances. He speaks in a way similar to that of Job regarding his birth. Jeremiah's life is so difficult that it is a woe to him that he was ever born.

**Woe is me, my mother, That you have borne me, A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent for interest, Nor have men lent to me for interest. Every one of them curses me. Jer. 15:10**

His final words about being cursed by all men appear to violate God's warning at the very beginning.

*Therefore prepare yourself and arise, And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be **dismayed** before their faces, Lest I **dismay** you before them. Jer. 1:17*

As the dialogue continues, it becomes evident that Jeremiah is in fact "**dismayed**" before them. He begins by asking God to take vengeance on those who are persecuting him.

## **Jeremiah Prays and Reasons with God:**

1. Take vengeance on them.
2. In your patience do not take me away.
3. For your sake I have suffered rebuke.
4. I ate your words and they became the joy and rejoicing of my heart.
5. I did not sit with the mockers nor rejoice.
6. I sat alone because of your hand and was filled with indignation.

*O Lord, You know; Remember me and visit me, And **take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke. 16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. 17 I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, Nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, For You have filled me with indignation. Jer. 15:15-17***

## **Jeremiah Charges God**

This is Jeremiah's lowest point in the book. At last all hope for the future and all rationalizations

of why these things have not yet occurred have been removed. Jeremiah now sees clearly what it ahead. He has been godly and done God's will. He has prayed for the people and had hoped to make some difference for his people. But everyone hates him and now God has told him that not even Moses or Samuel could make a difference.

Up to this point in his work as a prophet, he has done everything God has asked of him and all it has brought him is perpetual pain and an incurable wound that can't be healed. There is no balm in Gilead even for him. Is this how it is to be? Is God going to become just an unreliable stream. Jeremiah comes for refreshment and wants to see God's merciful character and only sees wrath and curses. Will God be waters that fail?

**18 Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable, Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail? Jer. 15:18**

## **God Demands Repentance**

Although we only see the question, God response gives the motive and attitude behind it. With these words it is obvious to God that Jeremiah has left Him and returned to Judah. They were rebellious and now Jeremiah has rejoined them. God warns him that he now needs to return (repent). If he will repent that God will bring him back into fellowship with Him and they will continue to work together as they had previously.

If Jeremiah will remove the vile from all that was precious in his previous words, then Jeremiah will once again be God's mouth. Jeremiah is again warned that in his position there is only one option for him. His work is to get them to return to him as he is in fellowship with God. What must not happen is that Jeremiah returns to the rebellious people and away from God. God then reaffirmed His promise to make Jeremiah a fortified bronze wall (Jer. 1:18-19).

*Therefore thus says the Lord: "If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, But you must not return to them. 20 And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you," says the Lord. 21 "I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible." Jer. 15:19-21*

We will read of Jeremiah's repentance later in the next chapter. Although his repentance and confession are not recorded in the book, it is obvious from the rest of the book that he did so and their fellowship was restored, since Jeremiah is again God's mouth.

## **The Full Truth Revealed**

Jeremiah has passed through his crisis of discouragement and returned to the Lord. God now believes Jeremiah is ready to bear the entire truth. He must not marry or have children because only gruesome death awaits the entire nation.

*The word of the Lord also came to me, saying, 2 "You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place." 3 For thus says the Lord concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: 4 "They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth." Jer. 16:1-4*

Throughout all this terror and anguish, Jeremiah is to remain unmoved. He is not to mourn, lament or bemoan them. Since God has removed not only His peace, but also His lovingkindness and mercy, as His servant, so must Jeremiah rise above his human weaknesses and remain unmoved

Not only is he to refuse to mourn with them, but he must also not feast, sit or eat and drink with them.

*For thus says the Lord: "Do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan them; for I have taken away My peace from this people," says the Lord, "lovingkindness and mercies. 6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament*

for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. 7 Nor shall men break bread in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother. 8 **Also you shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink.**" Jer. 16:5-8

His message is clear. After he reveals these things to the people, if they question him regarding why God has decided that now is the time to do these things, he is to tell them:

(1) Your fathers have forsaken me and followed other Gods. (2) You have done worse than them: (3) you follow the evil dictates of your own heart. (4) No one listens to me

**"And it shall be, when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the Lord pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?' 11 then you shall say to them, 'Because your fathers have forsaken Me,' says the Lord; 'they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law. 12 And you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me. 13 Therefore I will cast you out of this land into a land that you do not know, neither you nor your fathers; and there you shall serve other gods day and night, where I will not show you favor.'** Jer. 16:10-13

God again revealed the nature of the people Jeremiah is preaching to, why his preaching is ineffective and why God cannot be moved to forgive them. Their sin has been engraved with a pen of iron and even harder, the point of a diamond. It has been engraved in their heart and their altars.

**"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; With the point of a diamond it is engraved On the tablet of their heart, And on the horns of your altars, 2 While their children remember Their altars and their wooden images By the green trees on the high hills."** Jer. 17:1-2

God also reveals the difficulty of anyone knowing such a heart. Even the most godly of men face this difficulty. There is so much lust, pride and temptation in the heart of each person that who can really know what they are truly made of? One moment, faithful service to God the next, giving in to lust and temptation. Who is the real person? Which one more accurately reveals our true character. While everyone believes they are a good person, God has created the means to test the heart

**"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.** Jer. 17:9-10

Throughout the Scriptures we see these tests. God tested Abraham, then tested Israel by the way he revealed the instructions on how they were to gather the manna. He tested the ancient word with the ark Noah built and tests men today with the gospel and the commands such a baptism the way we respond to those tests reveals the true nature of our heart that will be manifested on the judgment day.

Jeremiah's remorse and repentance along with his plea to God that he might be saved. He seeks healing and salvation. He wants his heart to reveal his faithfulness to God. While others are scoffing at his warnings, he is seeking to humbly serve God. He pleads with God not to be a terror to him as He will be to the others in Judah. God is Jeremiah's only hope from the coming doom.

**Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; Save me, and I shall be saved, For You are my praise. 15 Indeed they say to me, "Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now!" 16 As for me, I have not hurried away from being a shepherd who follows You, Nor have I desired the woeful day; You know what came out of my lips; It was right there before You. 17 Do not be a terror to me; You are my hope in the day of doom.** Jer. 17:14-17

## Jeremiah 6

### Review:

While young, Jeremiah was assured by God that he was capable of doing the work of a prophet.

- ▲ As began his work, he had high expectations of results, but his message was so different that Jeremiah asked God why He had deceived the people with the other prophets(Jer. 4).
- ▲ He then learned the truth. In the midst of great reforms by Josiah, all the prophets were liars, and all the people were wicked and evil sinners. Jeremiah could not find one good man in their midst.
- ▲ Jeremiah then moved closer to God's own feelings, filled with fury, he became the assayer: By his preaching he would test their way(Jer. 6).
- ▲ Jeremiah began to mourn over the destruction and loss of his people(Jer. 8).
- ▲ A plot to destroy him was revealed by God but God promises vengeance. (Jer. 11)
- ▲ Jeremiah became discouraged and God encouraged him(Jer. 12).
- ▲ A drought returned compassion to Jeremiah and he pleaded with God. God again told him not to pray for them. He also warned: not even Moses or Samuel could change His mind(Jer. 14-15)
- ▲ Jeremiah cursed his birth because everyone curses him and charged God with being an unreliable stream. God demands repentance and Jeremiah repents(Jer 15)
- ▲ God commanded Jeremiah not to marry or have children. He was not to mourn or lament them(Jer. 16).

After all this, Jeremiah is now a seasoned prophet who no longer charged God but understands the wickedness of the people and the righteousness of God's decisions. He now begins to pleading with God for strength and that God's providence will protect him. Those who persecute him will be ashamed, but Jeremiah wants to live in such a way that he doesn't need to be ashamed. He is now speaking as the oracles of God. He repeats God's warning given at the beginning and again after his unadvised speech about God being a deceitful brook.

***Let them be ashamed who persecute me, But do not let me be put to shame; Let them be dismayed, But do not let me be dismayed. Bring on them the day of doom, And destroy them with double destruction! Jer. 17:18***

### God offered Judah Another Opportunity to Repent and be Saved

Jeremiah is again sent to the gates to preach to the people. This time it is the gates to the city of Jerusalem and not to the temple. God wanted a different audience. Instead of those going to worship He wants those involved in commerce within the city to hear His words about the Sabbath. Specifically He wants the kings to hear these words. God warned them they were acting just as their fathers in refusing to keep it.

*Thus the Lord said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; 20 and **say to them,** 'Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. 21 Thus says the Lord: "**Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day,** nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; 22 nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, **nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.** 23 **But they did not obey nor incline their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction. Jer. 17:19-23***

Jeremiah is to offer them an opportunity to flee and avoid the coming judgment. This sermon would again reveal both to Jeremiah and the people the true nature of their deceitful heart. If they would listen carefully to God's command, God would spare them. Kings and princes will again enter the gates and the city will remain forever. But if they won't heed. Then an unquenchable fire will come and devour.

*"And it shall be, **if you heed Me carefully,**" says the Lord, "**to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever.** 26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the mountains and from the South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of the Lord. 27 "**But if you will not heed Me to hallow the***

**Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." Jer. 17:24-27**

## **The Potter's Wheel**

While most of us have heard this "parable," it is important to see it in its full context. It was given immediately after the offer above, as a tool for Jeremiah to use as he spoke to the people. He was sent to the potters house to watch him work. Jeremiah witnessed the potter having to change his plans for the object he was making because that object was marred and damaged. He simply used the same clay to change it into another vessel over which he had full control.

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. Jer. 18:1-4*

No one even thought about the principles since they are so obvious. The clay had no rights and no say. It was all within the will of the potter. Paul used this same principle to explain how God works with individuals as well as nations.

*But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, Rom. 9:20-24*

After God showed Jeremiah, He gave him the message He was to deliver to the people. God was a potter over Judah, just as this potter was over clay.

*Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! Jer. 18:5-6*

God wanted it understood, that not only Judah, but all the nations under heaven were also under this same control. God's plans are based on two things. His own sovereign will, and the conduct of the nations. He makes plans, but those plans are in flux always based on the attitudes of the people in the nations. If His plan is to destroy and they repent, he will relent. If His plans are to bless, if the nation grows wicked, He will again relent of all the good He planned to do.

*The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Jer. 18:7-10*

After revealing all this, God returns to the same message that had been offered at the gates for the kings in the previous chapter. If you want to save Judah from destruction, you must repent and return to the Lord. If you do not then you will be destroyed.

*"Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." Jer. 18:11*

There response offers an amazing insight into the consequences of sin. It had hardened them to a degree where they rejected God's offer. It is hopeless! Everyone will obey the dictates of his evil heart.

*And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart." Jer. 18:12*



## The People Attack Jeremiah

Since they do not like the message, they attack the messenger. They do not want to hear these things anymore. Their proverb is a good one, but their application is evil folly. They know that as long as Jeremiah is in their midst, he will continue to preach repentance and obedience. So their answer is to discourage him with their response.

*Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." Jer.18:18*

Jeremiah again pleads with God. But instead of mercy and forgiveness, he seek vengeance. It is interesting how people's attitudes can change when it becomes personal. The people were the same people as the ones enduring the drought in chapter 14. There, Jeremiah sought mercy, but now when he sees the depth of their wickedness, he seeks the same end as God.

*Give heed to me, O Lord, And listen to the voice of those who contend with me! 20 **Shall evil be repaid for good? For they have dug a pit for my life. Remember that I stood before You To speak good for them, To turn away Your wrath from them.** 21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, And pour out their blood By the force of the sword; **Let their wives become widows** And bereaved of their children. Let their men be put to death, **Their young men be slain By the sword in battle.** 22 Let a cry be heard from their houses, When You bring a troop suddenly upon them; For they have dug a pit to take me, And hidden snares for my feet. 23 **Yet, Lord, You know all their counsel Which is against me, to slay me. Provide no atonement for their iniquity, Nor blot out their sin from Your sight; But let them be overthrown before You. Deal thus with them In the time of Your anger.** Jer.18:19-23*

God immediately sends Jeremiah out to preach again. He again chooses a potters vessel(probably to remind them of the potter's wheel). This time he is to call the elders of the priests and people, to proclaim doom upon them.

*Thus says the Lord: "Go and get a potter's earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests. 2 And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. Jer.19:1-3*

*"Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury them in Tophet till there is no place to bury. Jer.19:10-12*

Since the people have firmly rejected Jeremiah, and the Word of God he proclaimed, why does God continue to send him out to preach? His care and concern for the people was too great to simply give them one warning. He gives them multiple warnings even at the cost of his prophets life.

## Jeremiah is Beaten and Placed in the Stocks

After Jeremiah finishes prophesying these words, the chief governor in the temple has him beaten. Since he was in the house of the Lord he was a Levite or Priest. Some believe he was just under the High Priest and held authority. By doing this, he was publicly repudiating Jeremiah and his message. He treated him as a criminal because that is how he wanted him portrayed to the people of Judah.

God immediately revealed the terrible consequences to this man because of this deed.

*Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2 Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord. 3 And it happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The Lord has not called your name Pashhur, but*

*Magor-Missabib. 4 For thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see it. I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. 5 Moreover I will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon. 6 And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.'*  
Jer.20:1-6

## **Jeremiah's Bitter Prayer**

After being beaten and placed in the stocks, Jeremiah is again in anguish of heart and soul. It is important to note that although he is bitter, it is not directed against God, but against his own circumstances. God had induced him to become a prophet in the same way he induced us to become Christians. The will of God is an option for everyone, but Jeremiah recognized the importance of submitting to it. But the cost was far higher than he had anticipated or even imagined. What had begun as emotional and social persecution had then escalated into physical violence and being arrested as a criminal.

He described his own attitudes toward these things. He determined to stop preaching, but could not do it. He doesn't say whether the burning in his bones was his own conscience and sense of duty or some miraculous power from God. But he could not stop preaching no matter what the cost.

*O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me. 8 For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, "Violence and plunder! "Because the word of the Lord was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. 9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name."But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not. 10 For I heard many mocking:"Fear on every side!" "Report," they say, "and we will report it! "All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, "Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him." Jer.20:7-10*

Although his circumstances are bleak, he no longer blames God. He is doing God's will and God will bless him. He lays all the fault at the feet of those who are persecuting him and knows that God will deal with it. Yet he is so unhappy he again curses the day of his birth.

*But the Lord is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten. 12 But, O Lord of hosts, You who test the righteous, And see the mind and heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them; For I have pleaded my cause before You. Jer.20:7-12*

*Cursed be the day in which I was born! Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me! 15 Let the man be cursed Who brought news to my father, saying, "A male child has been born to you!" Making him very glad. Jer.20:14-15*

## **Nebuchadnezzar Siege Changes Attitudes**

When imminent danger arises, the true understanding of Jeremiah's role as a prophet comes to the front. Although they mock him and refuse to believe or listen to him, when things become dire, it is to him they send for help. The wording of the chapter makes it difficult to know if the events in the previous chapter are closely tied to this one. But since their attitudes toward Jeremiah are timeless, it makes little difference.

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, saying, 2 "Please inquire of the Lord for us, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon makes war against us. Perhaps the Lord will deal with us according to all His wonderful works, that the king may go away from us." Jer.21:1-2*

The hubris of this delegation is amazing. After all Jeremiah has done and said to them and all the

terrible things they have done to him that they came at all was insulting to God. When we add to that the complete lack of repentance or remorse over their own deeds, God's answer is not surprising in the least.

***Then Jeremiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 4 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who besiege you outside the walls; and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. 5 I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. 6 I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. Jer.21:3-7***

God is not content to only send a message to the King. He also wants Jeremiah to go out and speak to the rest of the people and fully express God's decree that Jerusalem will fall.

***"Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. 9 He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him. 10 For I have set My face against this city for adversity and not for good," says the Lord. "It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire." Jer.21:8-10***

## Jeremiah 7

### **God's Condemnation of the Shepherds(elders) and Prophets**

Long before the elders in the church, God's leaders were viewed as the shepherds of His people. He was very angry with the leaders in the days of Jeremiah because they had not cared at all for His people. He would deal with them for their evil deeds. God also promised to gather His scattered flock from all the nations, and set up caring shepherds for them. He dates this time to when His servant David(Jesus) becomes king.

***"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the Lord. 3 "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord. 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. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: Jer.23:1-6***

After condemning the shepherds, God also excoriated the false prophets who had deceived and led to the destruction of His people. This section begins with Jeremiah's own attitude toward these prophets who so greatly hindered his work. It concludes with what God will do to punish them.

***My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the Lord, And because of His holy words. 10 For the land is full of adulterers; For because of a curse the land mourns. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Their course of life is evil, And their might is not right. 11 "For both prophet and priest are profane; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the Lord. Jer.23:9-11***

God warned the people against the words of those who claim to speak for Him, but instead speak from their own heart. It should be obvious to them when they deny God's own words.

***Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the Lord. 17 They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You shall have peace";' And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'" Jer.23:16-17***

God then reveals the terrible consequences of false teachers. Their insubordination and lack of reverence are seen in the truth that God never sent or spoke to these prophets. But the true problem lay in a different direction. If they had preached the truth some would have listened and they could have turned them from their evil way.

***"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. 22 But if they had stood in My counsel, And had caused My people to hear My words, Then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings. Jer.23:20-22***

The all seeing and every present God now reveals what He has seen. Using their own dreams, these prophets have prophesied lies to His people Israel. In the same way that their fathers had forgotten God for Baal, these were now forgetting God through their dreams. God then gives a stern warning. Tell your dreams and dreams and My word faithfully. God's word is the wheat and their dreams are the chaff. God's word is like fire and like a hammer.

***"Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord, "And not a God afar off? 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the Lord; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord. 25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26 How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, 27 who***

**try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. 28 "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the Lord. 29 "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" Jer.23:23-29**

As God summed up His anger at these men, he accused them of “stealing My words from his neighbor.” They use their own tongues and call it God’s word. They use their false dreams and call it prophesy.

*"Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who steal My words every one from his neighbor. 31 Behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.' 32 Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the Lord, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the Lord. Jer.23:30-32*

## **The Burden of the LORD**

God then condemns their use of the term “oracle” or “burden.”

*massa* "load; burden; tribute; delight." The 43 occurrences of this word are scattered throughout the periods of biblical Hebrew. The word means that which is borne by a man, an donkey, a mule, or a camel: "If thou see the donkey of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him..." Ex 23:5 — the first occurrence. ... *Massa* means "burden" in the sense of something burdensome, a hardship. Moses asked God: "...wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" Num 11:11. (Vine's OT:4853)

In Isaiah, God used this term to describe the prophecies concerning the wicked and their doom in the future. Isaiah spoke of the oracle(burden) of Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Dumah, Arabia, Tyre. It was also how Nahum and Habbakuk began their books. Evidently the false prophets in Jeremiah’s day had taken this term as their own and were using it in way that disgusted God. God then warns them that they must never use this phrase again since it had become so perverted.

***"So when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the oracle of the Lord?' you shall then say to them, 'What oracle?' I will even forsake you," says the Lord. 34 "And as for the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The oracle of the Lord!' I will even punish that man and his house. 35 Thus every one of you shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, 'What has the Lord answered?' and, 'What has the Lord spoken?' 36 And the oracle of the Lord you shall mention no more. For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have perverted the words of the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God. 37 Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the Lord answered you?' and, 'What has the Lord spoken?' 38 But since you say, 'The oracle of the Lord!' therefore thus says the Lord: 'Because you say this word, "The oracle of the Lord!" and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the Lord!'" 39 therefore behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and will cast you out of My presence. 40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten." Jer. 23:33-40***

## **Another Turning Point**

The parable of the two baskets of figs was already covered when we spoke of the captivity of Jehoiakim’s son, Jeconiah. From Jeremiah’s perspective, it is a parable of more difficult times ahead. Those whom Jeremiah had some hope helping were now removed by Nebuchadnezzar by God. Only those in Babylon had any hope for a future. Those now left in the city were doomed.

***Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans. 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. 7 Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart. 8 'And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad' — surely thus says the Lord — 'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue***

*of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. 9 I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers."* Jer. 24:5-10

## **Confronting the Prophets**

Jeremiah continues to point out to the king and the people the error of those who were prophesying to them in the name of God. God makes it clear in verse 15, that though He was not responsible for sending them, if these people listen to them, they will bring the curse God had been threatening to send upon themselves. These lies preached by the false prophets would lead God to drive them out and lead them to perish.

*I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! 13 Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14 Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for they prophesy a lie to you; 15 for I have not sent them," says the Lord, "yet they prophesy a lie in My name, that I may drive you out, and that you may perish, you and the prophets who prophesy to you." Jer. 27:12-18*

## **Jeremiah's Short Letter to the Captives**

Not long after the vision of the good and bad figs, God revealed the words He wants Jeremiah to send to the captives in Babylon. The letter consists of several parts. First, It revealed the length of the captivity He had decreed they would endure. They will remain in Babylon for 70 years. For that reason they are to build homes, marry and have children, and seek the peace of the place of their captivity. They were warned again not to heed the false prophets who were promising a quick return.

*Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive — to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. ... 4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters — that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord. 10 For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. Jer. 29:1-10*

Second, it made wonderful promises of grace, mercy, and forgiveness. God still had wonderful thoughts for the future of His people.

*For 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. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.*

Third, God again answered their concern regarding the prophets who were still prophesying lies to them.

*Because you have said, "The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon" — 16 therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, concerning all the people who dwell in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone out with you into captivity — 17*

thus says the Lord of hosts: **Behold, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like rotten figs that cannot be eaten, they are so bad. 18 And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth — to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, 19 because they have not heeded My words, says the Lord, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; neither would you heed, says the Lord. 20 Therefore hear the word of the Lord, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. Jer. 29:11-20**

### **Gods Command to Jeremiah to write his Book**

After this short letter, God commands Jeremiah to begin writing the entire book we now have in our possession.

***The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. 3 For behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the Lord. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'" Jer. 30:1-3***

# Jeremiah 8 – The Last Days of Jerusalem

## Introduction:

*The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. Jer. 32:1-2*

Since Zedekiah only reigned 11 years, the end was now very near. Jeremiah was again in prison, when this vision came to him. It was a graphic illustration that God would restore Israel to the land they were about to be carried from, but even though Jeremiah had already revealed it, he was still unable to comprehend it. It was less than 10 years ago that Jeremiah sent a letter to Babylon, telling them they would return after 70 years.

*1 Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive ... 3 The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying, For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. Jer. 29:1, 3, 10*

## Jeremiah Commanded to Buy a Field

God reveals to Jeremiah that a near kinsman would soon bring him an offer to redeem a field that should go to him. When the man soon arrived with the offer, Jeremiah knew it was the fulfillment of God's word and that he needed to buy the field (which he otherwise might not have done).

*7 Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it." 8 Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. 9 So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money — seventeen shekels of silver. Jer. 32:6-9*

Jeremiah purchased the field as he had been told and even told Baruch to place the deed in a container that would keep it safe, since after many days it would be possessed again.

*13 "Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, 14 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." 15 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." 32:13-15*

## Jeremiah' Prayer Begins with Praise and Adoration

Jeremiah's prayer revealed his discouragement and doubt. His address to God is one of the most comprehensive hallowing of God's name anywhere in the Scriptures.

*'Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. 18 You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them — the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the Lord of hosts. 19 You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. 20 You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among other men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. Jer. 32:16-21*

## Jeremiah's Perplexity and Doubt

After such an expression of faith and confidence in God's power and love, one would expect great confidence, but instead Jeremiah only reveals their dire circumstances and the incongruity of what God has asked him to do.



**'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see it! 25 And You have said to me, O Lord God, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses"! — yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'** Jer. 32:24-25

God calmly reasons with his prophet helping him grow and comforting him with His power. He is right in his first assessment, but wrong in his application. First, God will destroy Jerusalem.

**26 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 27 "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? 28 Therefore thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it.'** Jer. 32:26-28

## **God Again Promises Forgiveness and Restoration**

Then God would do the impossible! He will gather them from all the countries where he delivered them. They will return to Jerusalem, God will make an eternal covenant with them, and they will buy and sell again.

**37 Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. ... 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 42 "For thus says the Lord: 'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43 And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44 Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal them, and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the Lord."** 32:37-44

## **The Illustration of the Rechabites**

God commands Jeremiah to go to the house of the Rechabites. They were the descendants of Moses father-in-law Hobab.

Now Moses said to **Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law,** Num. 10:29

Now **the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law,** went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which lies in the South near Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people. Judg. 1:16-17

Now **Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses,** Judg. 4:11

These were the **Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.** 1Chr. 2:55

We don't know how long they had kept the commands of their father, but it had been long enough for God to use them as an illustration to Judah. They had done for their father (proving it could be done) what Judah had not done for God. Because of this faithfulness, God promised there would always be one of his descendants serving Him.

**2 "Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink." ... 5 Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine." ... 6 But they said, "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever. ... 8 Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, ... 13 'Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "Will you not receive instruction to obey My words?" says the Lord ... 14 "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me. ... 16 Surely the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father,**

which he commanded them, **but this people has not obeyed Me.**" ... 18 And **Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, 19 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever."'"** Jer 35:2

## Jeremiah Arrested Again

Soon after these events, the siege was lifted and Jeremiah wanted to go look at the property he had purchased. But when the guard sees him trying to leave the city, he accused him of defecting.

*And it happened, when **the army of the Chaldeans left the siege of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, 12 that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. 13 And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there whose name was Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!" 14 Then Jeremiah said, "False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him. Jer. 37:11-14***

This led to Jeremiah being beaten and imprisoned once again. When King Zedekiah had him brought before him, Jeremiah pleaded for his life and Zedekiah had mercy, moving him to a better prison with better food.

*So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. 15 Therefore **the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison. 16 When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, 17 then Zedekiah the king sent and took him out. ... 20 Therefore please hear now, O my lord the king. Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there." 21 Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was gone. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Jer. 37:14-21***

## God Demands Judah Surrender to Nebuchadnezzar

Although there is no time given in this next section, the context makes it clear it is at the same time as the other events. Jeremiah is preaching that if they stay in the city they will die, but if they surrender they shall live. Once again the Jews see it as treason, and being unable to put him to death, they imprison him again.

*"Thus says the Lord: '**He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.**' 3 Thus says the Lord: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.'" 4 Therefore **the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. Jer. 38:1-4***

## Jeremiah is Saved by an Ethiopian Eunuch

This time the imprisonment is far more severe. He is placed in a dungeon that is filled with mire that Jeremiah sinks in so deeply, that it was very difficult to remove him. An Ethiopian eunuch named Ebed-Melech goes to the king in hopes of saving Jeremiah from death. God rewards him with the promise of escape from all future evil.

*6 So **they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire. 7 Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, 8 Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying: 9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For there is no more bread in the city." 10 Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take from here thirty men with you, and lift***

**Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies." 11 So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12 Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes." And Jeremiah did so. 13 So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison. Jer. 38:6-13**

Meanwhile the word of the Lord had come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 16 **"Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be performed in that day before you. 17 But I will deliver you in that day," says the Lord, "and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid. 18 For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me," says the Lord."** Jer. 39:15-18

## **Jeremiah's Final Word to Zedekiah are Unheeded**

After Jeremiah is brought up out of the mire, Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah and he pleads with him to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. If he surrenders, the city will not be destroyed and he will be spared.

**Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the Lord. 17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: "If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18 But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand." 19 And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me." 20 But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver you. Please, obey the voice of the Lord which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live. Jer. 38:14-20**

## **The Fall of Jerusalem**

Everything God had foretold through Jeremiah happened in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. The city was destroyed, the people taken captive, all the nobles were killed along with Zedekiah's sons and Zedekiah had his eyes put out and then was carried to Babylon.

**In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. 3 Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon. 4 So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the plain. 5 But the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him. 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.**

## **Nebuchadnezz Gives Jeremiah his Freedom**

After the destruction of Jerusalem, all that God had promised Jeremiah at the beginning of his work as a prophet had not been brought to pass. Jeremiah had prevailed, but the children of Judah had not. Twice God had promised this to him. The first time when he began his work and the second when he had grown discouraged and God had told him to repent.

*For behold, I have made you this day A fortified city and an iron pillar, And bronze walls*

**against the whole land** — *Against the kings of Judah, Against its princes, Against its priests, And against the people of the land.* 19 **They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you," says the Lord, "to deliver you."** Jer 1:18-19

**If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth.** *Let them return to you, But you must not return to them.* 20 **And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; And they will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you; For I am with you to save you And deliver you," says the Lord.** 21 **"I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible."** Jer 15:19-21

**Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,** 12 **"Take him and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you."** 13 *So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers;* 14 *then they sent someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.* Jer. 39:11-14

# Jeremiah 9

## The Fall of Jerusalem

Everything God had foretold through Jeremiah happened in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. The city was destroyed, the people taken captive, all the nobles were killed along with Zedekiah's sons and Zedekiah had his eyes put out and then was carried to Babylon.

***In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated.*** 3 Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon. 4 So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the plain. 5 But the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. ***And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him.*** 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 8 And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

## Nebuchadnezzar Gave Jeremiah his Freedom

***Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying,*** 12 ***“Take him and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you.”*** 13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers; 14 then they sent someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and ***committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.***  
Jer. 39:11-14

Many different explanations are given for the first part of this passage. It begins “*the word of the LORD*” yet no word follows. Some think part of the prophesy was lost. Others that it is the heading of the final historical section of the book and is not a word for him to preach, but the written word sealed with these words. Yet no other prophet has done this, and to simply conclude that it was lost, seems to be illogical because the first part is saved.

I think the best possible explanation are that the words that came from *Nebuzaradan* were given by Jeremiah, and he is simply quoting them. How else would he know all the things that are listed in this passage? Be that as it may, the main point of this section is to reveal why this had happened to Israel, and to let everyone know that even the Babylonians knew about it.

***The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.*** 2 ***And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: “The Lord your God has pronounced this doom on this place.*** 3 ***Now the Lord has brought it, and has done just as He said. Because you people have sinned against the Lord, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you.”***

## Jeremiah's Choices

Whether this is a part of the “word from the LORD” for it certainly fulfills all God's promises to Jeremiah, or just his own decision is not clear. But Jeremiah is given complete choice of what he wants to do. If this is part of the “word of the LORD,” then God Himself is giving him this choice. If it is just the words of *Nebuzaradan*, then perhaps God made this choice for him, but it is not revealed, and we only know because this was the choice he made. Since God was not finished with Jeremiah and he continued to be His prophet, the best solution is the latter.

***And now look, I free you this day from the chains that were on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land is before you; wherever it seems good***

***and convenient for you to go, go there.” Jer 40:1-4***

After the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah’s book continues for a few more years. Judah is in exile and the rest are killed but there is still a small remnant and the book records their history from the time of the fall of Jerusalem until the they kidnap Jeremiah and take him to Egypt with them.

The first portion of the words has been variously translated because the of latitude of the Hebrew words:

*However, before Jeremiah turned to go, Nebuzaradan added, Go back to Gedaliah NIV*

*If you remain, then return to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, ESV*

*As Jeremiah was still not going back, he said, “Go on back then to Gedaliah NAS*

*Now while he was not yet gone back, Go back then, (said he), to Gedaliah ASV*

*Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, Nebuzaradan said, “Go back to Gedaliah NKJV*

It is clear that something delayed Jeremiah and so *Nebuzaradan* again repeated his choices. This time he adds the name of the governor who would protect him. He also gave him both rations to keep him satisfied and also a gift which is not named.

Jeremiah then made his choice to stay and be with Gedaliah and remained with those who were left in the land.

*Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, Nebuzaradan said, “Go back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go.” So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go. 6 Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land. Jer 40:5-6*

## **The Historical Setting Jeremiah is Now Working Under**

The main characters Jeremiah is now working with are listed along with a history of the events at that time. Gedaliah either by the words of Jeremiah, or just of his own desire with no power to fulfill them, promised they would be safe and prosper if they just submitted to him. At this time all the people who had fled the land began to come back, but nowhere is a number given, and because they all died in Egypt, there is no account at all of them.

*And when all the captains of the armies who were in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, children, and the poorest of the land who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, 8 then they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah — Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath before them and their men, saying, “Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. 10 As for me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken.” 11 Likewise, when all the Jews who were in Moab, among the Ammonites, in Edom, and who were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, 12 then all the Jews returned out of all places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruit in abundance. Jer 40:7-9, 12*

## **Treachery of Ammon Leading to Gedaliah’s Execution**

The historical account of the death of Gedaliah is another sad chapter in the history of Judah. God had left them and it will soon be revealed that their idolatry was so rampant that God could not yet leave his wrath. The king of the Ammon(one of Lot’s children), had commissioned Ismael to kill Gedaliah, which unfortunately for Gedaliah, he refused to believe it.

God had already warned Moab about their own doom if they refused to serve the king of Babylon, yet here they were, seeking to kill the man Nebuchadnezzar had set as leader over Judah.

**In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 “Thus says the Lord to me: ‘Make for yourselves bonds and yokes, and put them on your neck, 3 and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. ... 5 ‘I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. 6 And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7 So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son’s son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. 8 And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,’ says the Lord, ‘with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.” Jer 27:1-3, 5-8**

Either just before or after these things, Ezekiel has also sent word to Ammon about their conduct at the destruction of Jerusalem, and His anger and punishment for them.

*The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them. 3 Say to the Ammonites, ‘Hear the word of the Lord God! Thus says the Lord God: “Because you said, ‘Aha!’ against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity, 4 indeed, therefore, I will deliver you as a possession to the men of the East, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. 5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels and Ammon a resting place for flocks. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.” 6 ‘For thus says the Lord God: “Because you clapped your hands, stamped your feet, and rejoiced in heart with all your disdain for the land of Israel, 7 indeed, therefore, I will stretch out My hand against you, and give you as plunder to the nations; I will cut you off from the peoples, and I will cause you to perish from the countries; I will destroy you, and you shall know that I am the Lord.” Ezek. 25:1-7*

## **The Remnant of the Army seeks to Save Gedaliah**

First Johanan gives a warning, then an offer to deal with the traitor, but Gedaliah is so taken in by this treachery that he refused the command to save himself.

*Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, 14 and said to him, “Do you certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?” But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them. 15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, “Let me go, please, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know it. Why should he murder you, so that all the Jews who are gathered to you would be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?” 16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, “You shall not do this thing, for you speak falsely concerning Ishmael.” Ezek. 25:1-7*

## **Gedaliah is Murdered**

This city was taken in the fourth month which corresponds to our July. Yet the conspiracy was completed in the seventh month which is September/October. Most likely this is the next year although it is certainly possible that it was the same year since the summer fruits would have been harvest in the sixth and seventh months.

**In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated. Jer 39:2**

Now it came to pass **in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and of the officers of the king, came with ten men to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. And there they ate bread together in Mizpah. 2 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him, arose and struck Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also struck down all the Jews**

who were with him, that is, with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.

## **Gedaliah's Short Lived Reign**

First, he continued to murder the Jews.

4 And it happened, on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, when as yet no one knew it, 5 that certain men came from **Shechem**, from **Shiloh**, and from **Samaria**, **eighty men** with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, **having cut themselves**, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord.

Yet these Jews were still worshipping God contrary to the Law of Moses. One also has to wonder how they worshipped in the house of the Lord when it was destroyed, they were in Mizpah and not Jerusalem, there was no altar and perhaps no priests.

*"You are the children of the Lord your God; **you shall not cut yourselves** nor shave the front of your head for the dead. 2 For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. Deut 14:1-2*

Ishmael plays the part of a hypocrite, weeping and promising to bring them to Gedaliah whom he had already killed and to lure them into the city. 70 were killed and 10 sought to ransom their life with their possessions.

6 Now **Ishmael** the son of **Nethaniah** **went out** from Mizpah to meet them, **weeping as he went along**; and it happened as he met them that **he said to them, "Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!"** 7 So it was, **when they came into the midst of the city**, that **Ishmael** the son of **Nethaniah** **killed them and cast them into the midst of a pit**, he and the men who were with him. 8 But **ten men** were found among them who said to **Ishmael**, **"Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the field."** So he desisted and did not kill them among their brethren. 9 Now the pit into which **Ishmael** had cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain, because of **Gedaliah**, was the same one **Asa** the king had made for fear of **Baasha** king of Israel. **Ishmael** the son of **Nethaniah** filled it with the slain. 10 Then **Ishmael** **carried away captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah**, the **king's daughters** and **all the people who remained** in Mizpah, whom **Nebuzaradan** the captain of the guard had committed to **Gedaliah** the son of **Ahikam**. And **Ishmael** the son of **Nethaniah** **carried them away captive and departed to go over to the Ammonites**.

## **Johanan Saves the People, but Ishmael Escapes**

As soon as Johanan hears about the massacre, he fights with Ishmael.

11 But when **Johanan** the son of **Kareah** and **all the captains of the forces that were with him** heard of all the evil that **Ishmael** the son of **Nethaniah** had done, 12 they **took all the men and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah**; and they found him by the great pool that is in Gibeon. 13 So it was, when all the people who were with **Ishmael** saw **Johanan** the son of **Kareah**, and all the captains of the forces who were with him, that they were glad. 14 Then all the people whom **Ishmael** had carried away captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to **Johanan** the son of **Kareah**. 15 But **Ishmael the son of Nethaniah** **escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the Ammonites**.

## **They Seek out Jeremiah's Counsel and Promise to hear God's Word**

We don't know if Jeremiah was among them captives at this time, but he is with them, and although they have already made up their minds to go to Egypt, they come to Jeremiah. Everyone who is left is there. They ask him to pray to God and get His counsel on what they should now do.

Now **all the captains of the forces**, **Johanan** the son of **Kareah**, **Jezeaniah** the son of **Hoshaiah**, and **all the people, from the least to the greatest**, came near 2 and said to **Jeremiah** the prophet, **"Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the Lord your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see), 3 that the Lord your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do."** Jer. 42:1-3



Jeremiah promised to do exactly what they have asked him for and will not leave out one word.

*Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the Lord your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the Lord answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you.” Jer. 42:4*

They then promise to do everything God speaks through Jeremiah, bringing great condemnation upon themselves when they later refuse to do what they had promised. One has to wonder why they made such a promise when they had no intention of keeping it unless it came out in their favor which evidently they were convinced would happen.

*So they said to Jeremiah, “Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. 6 Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.” Jer 42:5-6*

## **Jeremiah’s Brings God’s Answer**

It is evident from the delay that God did not simply come at the call of the people. He waited ten days. Either to give the people time to consider how they will respond when God gives an answer or for another reason unknown to us. God promises that if they will stay in the land He will bless them. He will build and plant them, save them from Babylon, and show them mercy.

*And it happened after ten days that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. 8 Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9 and said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: 10 ‘If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. 11 Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,’ says the Lord, ‘for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. 12 And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and cause you to return to your own land.’ Jer 42:7-12*

God then revealed what will happen to them if they rejected His words and go to Egypt anyway. If they enter Egypt after this strict warning terrible curses will come upon them. Everything that had already happened in Jerusalem would happen again, this time to all who go to Egypt.

*“But if you say, ‘We will not dwell in this land,’ disobeying the voice of the Lord your God, 14 saying, ‘No, but we will go to the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell’ — 15 Then hear now the word of the Lord, O remnant of Judah! Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘If you wholly set your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, 16 then it shall be that the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there you shall die. 17 So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.’ Jer. 42:13-17*

*“For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘As My anger and My fury have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.’ 19 “The Lord has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, ‘Do not go to Egypt!’ Know certainly that I have admonished you this day. 20 For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the Lord your God, saying, ‘Pray for us to the Lord our God, and according to all that the Lord your God says, so declare to us and we will do it.’ 21 And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. 22 Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell.” Jer 42:18-22*

Like all who reject the Lord, they go after the messenger and continue to be convinced in their hearts that though they rejected His words, they will still be blessed. They call God’s messenger a liar, and reject all that he told them. All the people decide to go to Egypt in spite of God’s clear

and terrible warning. Though they had just seen Jeremiah's words come true in Jerusalem, they reject them here.

*Now it happened, when Jeremiah had stopped speaking to all the people all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, all these words, 2 that **Azariah** the son of Hoshaiiah, **Johanan** the son of Kareah, and **all the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, "You speak falsely! The Lord our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.'** 3 **But Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death or carry us away captive to Babylon."** 4 So **Johanan** the son of Kareah, **all the captains of the forces, and all the people would not obey the voice of the Lord, to remain in the land of Judah.** 5 **But Johanan** the son of Kareah and **all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah** who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, **from all nations where they had been driven — 6 men, women, children, the king's daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah** the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and **Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah.** 7 **So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the Lord. And they went as far as Tahpanhes.** Jer 43:1-7*

Although Jeremiah is now in Egypt, it was not by his freewill and God continued to speak through him. He gives a graphic and powerful warning to the people of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar is soon coming to Egypt. Jeremiah is to take stones and hide them at the house of Pharaoh with the threat that in that exact spot Nebuchadnezzar will set his throne and as in Jerusalem deliver them to death or captivity.

*Then **the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,** 9 **"Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the sight of the men of Judah, in the clay in the brick courtyard which is at the entrance to Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes;** 10 **and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden. And he will spread his royal pavilion over them.** 11 **When he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt and deliver to death those appointed for death, and to captivity those appointed for captivity, and to the sword those appointed for the sword."**" Jer 43:8-11*

# Jeremiah 10

## Introduction:

We have now reached the final recorded events of the life of Jeremiah. He has spent his entire life proclaiming God's prophecies. He has written and rewritten much of the book we now possess. The writing began in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Since most of the other books do not contain any reference to their writing, it is interesting to see how it was done in this case.

Most of the writing is described as beginning in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

*36 Now it came to pass in the **fourth year of Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah, king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day. 3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and **Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the Lord which He had spoken to him.** Jer.36:1-3 36:4-6 See also Jer.30:1-3*

*27 Now **after the king had burned the scroll** with the words which Baruch had written at the instruction of Jeremiah, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying: 28 "**Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned.** ... 32 **And besides, there were added to them many similar words.** Jer.36:27-29, 32*

*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) ... 12 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the Lord; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13 So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, **all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.** Jer.25:1, 12-14*

### Josiah reigned **thirty-one years**

The words of Jeremiah ...came in the **thirteenth year of Josiah** 18

Jehoahaz reigned **3 months** in Jerusalem. 3 months

Jehoiakim reigned **eleven years** in Jerusalem 11 (In 4<sup>th</sup> year started writing)

Jehoiachin reigned **3 months and 10 days.** 3 months 10 days

Zedekiah **11 years** in Jerusalem. 11 years (in 4<sup>th</sup> year more writing)

The final 18 years after the writing of the original book are not described, but were put together by him during that time. He did write a book that he sent to Babylon in the fourth year of Zedekiah, but it was thrown into the river:

*The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went with **Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign.** And Seraiah was the quartermaster. 60 So **Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon.** 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, ... 63 **Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates.** Jer.51:59-63*

## The People Have Learned Nothing

In spite of all the preaching of Jeremiah and all the other prophets, Israel has still learned nothing. They have witnessed the fall of Jerusalem and the loss of all that they possess. Yet they have still not given up their idolatry.

*The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying, 2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: '**You have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, 3 because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that***

**they went to burn incense and to serve other gods** whom they did not know, they nor you nor your fathers. 4 **However I have sent to you all My servants the prophets**, rising early and sending them, saying, “Oh, **do not do this abominable thing that I hate!**” 5 **But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods.** 6 **So My fury and My anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem;** and they are wasted and desolate, as it is this day.’ Jer.44:1-6

**“Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, out of Judah, leaving none to remain, 8 in that you provoke Me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to dwell, that you may cut yourselves off and be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? 9 Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not been humbled, to this day, nor have they feared; they have not walked in My law or in My statutes that I set before you and your fathers.’** Jer.44:7-10

**“Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will set My face against you for catastrophe and for cutting off all Judah. 12 And I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to dwell there, and they shall all be consumed and fall in the land of Egypt. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine. They shall die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine; and they shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach! 13 For I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, 14 so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape or survive, lest they return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return and dwell. For none shall return except those who escape.’”** Jer.44:11-14

This is among the most amazing examples in the Scriptures of the hard hearted nature of God’s people. In spite of all they have seen and experienced, they still have no faith in God, nor any fear of the words of Jeremiah. They boldly tell Jeremiah we will not listen to you. They attribute all the disaster that came upon Jerusalem to the fact that they had given up their idols.

They reasons that if they had not given them up, they would still be fine in Jerusalem and they are not going to make the same mistake again.

**Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: 16 “As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you! 17 But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. 18 But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine.”** Jer.44:15-18

It had already been recorded that this was a family affair. Everyone in the family dedicated to the worship of idols, while the worship of the Lord was ignored.

**Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger.** Jer.7:17-20

The women are still actively involved in this sin. They cite their husbands permission as some form of excuse.

**The women also said, “And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands’ permission?”** Jer.44:19

Jeremiah again preaches the truth to the people. This time to explain the folly of their idolatry and

pronounce their doom.

*Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people — the men, the women, and all the people who had given him that answer — saying: 21 “The incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them, and did it not come into His mind? 22 So the Lord could no longer bear it, because of the evil of your doings and because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, an astonishment, a curse, and without an inhabitant, as it is this day. 23 Because you have burned incense and because you have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord or walked in His law, in His statutes or in His testimonies, therefore this calamity has happened to you, as at this day.”* Jer.44:20-23

*Moreover Jeremiah said to all the people and to all the women, “Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt! 25 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: “You and your wives have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled with your hands, saying, “We will surely keep our vows that we have made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her.” You will surely keep your vows and perform your vows!’ 26 Therefore hear the word of the Lord, all Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt: ‘Behold, I have sworn by My great name,’ says the Lord, ‘that My name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, “The Lord God lives.” 27 Behold, I will watch over them for adversity and not for good. And all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them. 28 Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs.’”* Jer.44:24-28

God the provides a sign that He will do all he has said. The man they had put all their trust in when they left Judah and came to Egypt will be given into the hands of his enemies and there will be no one to protect them.

*And this shall be a sign to you,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that My words will surely stand against you for adversity.’ “Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.’”* Jer.44:30

We don’t have any more information about Jeremiah than these words.

## **Did Jeremiah Write Lamentations?**

Although there is no statement in Scripture, the internal evidence is clear that the same man who wrote Jeremiah also wrote Lamentations. Since we know that Jeremiah wrote the book that bears his name, there can be little doubt that the same man wrote both. First, seldom does tears come into the books of the prophets, yet they are evident in both Jeremiah and Lamentations

*Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!* Jer.9:1

*Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water. 19 For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: ‘How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.’”* Jer.9:18-19

*But if you will not hear it, My soul will weep in secret for your pride; My eyes will weep bitterly And run down with tears, Because the Lord’s flock has been taken captive.* Jer.13:17

*“Therefore you shall say this word to them: ‘Let my eyes flow with tears night and day, And let them not cease; For the virgin daughter of my people Has been broken with a mighty stroke, with a very severe blow.’”* Jer.14:17

*She weeps bitterly in the night, **Her tears are on her cheeks**; Among all her lovers She has none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; They have become her enemies Lam.1:2*

***My eyes fail with tears**, My heart is troubled; My bile is poured on the ground Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, Because the children and the infants Faint in the streets of the city. Lam.2:11*

***My eyes overflow with rivers of water** For the destruction of the daughter of my people. 49 **My eyes flow and do not cease, Without interruption**, Lam.3:48-49*

The persecutions and anguish found in Jeremiah is also found in Lamentation

***Woe is me, my mother**, That you have borne me, **A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!** I have neither lent for interest, Nor have men lent to me for interest. **Every one of them curses me.** Jer.15:10*

***Why is my pain perpetual And my wound incurable**, Which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, As waters that fail? Jer.15:18*

*Then they said, "**Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah**; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. **Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.**" Jer. 18:18*

***I am the man who has seen affliction** by the rod of His wrath. 2 He has **led me and made me walk in darkness and not in light.** Lam. 3:14-15*

***I have become the ridicule of all my people — Their taunting song all the day.** 15 He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood. Lam. 3:1-2*

***You have heard their reproach**, O Lord, **All their schemes against me**, 62 The lips of my enemies And their whispering against me all the day. 63 Look at their sitting down and their rising up; **I am their taunting song.** Lam. 3:61-63*