

The Hebrew Monarchy:

Saul to Zedekiah

c. 1053 BC – 586 BC

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(A helpful chart of the Kings and Prophets and the timeline associated with each may be found in Addenda H)

INTRODUCTION

Over the next eight weeks we will study the glorious and tragic history of the Hebrew monarchy, beginning with Saul's coronation (c. 1053 BC) and concluding with fall of Jerusalem and Judah's Babylonian exile (c. 586 BC). When Saul became king, Israel was a loose confederation of tribes. Two generations later, during the reign of Solomon (beginning 971 BC), Israel had achieved international prominence. Four hundred years later, when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the ten northern tribes already had passed into obscurity and for many years Judah had been but a vassal nation to the surrounding empires. God is not asleep. The events that transpired in the Middle-east in these centuries were used of God to bring about the Desire of All Nations¹ and the resulting spiritual kingdom that we call, Church.

In our study we will harmonize the accounts of this era, both biblical and non-biblical. The biblical material will include Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and the prophets. The non-biblical material will include the annals of the nations whose history touched the history of Israel.

For many reasons it is important for us to be familiar with the biblical record. The most important reason is its author. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of these historical biblical documents. Paul wrote to Timothy,

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (II Timothy 3:16)²

The Scripture that Paul exhorted Timothy to be faithful in reading to the Church was the Old Testament – that was the Scripture which they possessed at that time.

Until I come, give attention to the public reading³ of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching (I Timothy 4:13).

Furthermore, concerning the Old Testament record, Paul reminded the Corinthians,

*Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "the people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try Jehovah, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. **Now these things happened to them as an***

¹ Haggai 2:7

² Paul's language is quite informative. Literally, Paul stated, *all writing* (πᾶσα γραφή) *is inspired by God*. This means that the written words in the autograph were/are God's revelation. This is contrary to the statements of some modern scholars who declare that the Word of God is present in Scripture, but that Scripture itself is not the Word of God.

³ The Greek term rendered, *public reading*, is ἀνάγνωσις. Some versions render this word as, *reading*. However, the context, as well as the fact that this is the term that describes reading Scripture to the congregation in the synagogue has caused most more recent translations to render the term, public reading.

example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (I Corinthians 10:6-11)

If there were no other reason than this, familiarity with the Old Testament record is an essential element in our understanding of God and our spiritual growth.

BACKGROUND

Before beginning our study, we must be aware of the background for the events that we encounter in the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy and its subsequent history.

Israel as a theocracy

Several conditions prevailed in Israel, immediately upon their entering the Promised Land. The following is an overview of salient points concerning this period.

- After conquering the Promised Land and before releasing the people to go to their appointed homes, Joshua assembled the people and challenged them to commit fully and exclusively to Jehovah, the True God. The people, with one voice, pledged this exclusive loyalty to Jehovah (Joshua 24:19-27).
- The Israelites remained faithful to Jehovah as long as Joshua lived (Joshua 24:31). After Joshua and those elders who had served with him died, the Israelites began to worship Canaanite Gods, in direct violation of Jehovah's explicit prohibition (Deuteronomy 21:21-22, *et al*). In some cases they did this in conjunction with worship of Jehovah and in some cases they did this instead of worship of Jehovah.
- In response to this apostasy, Jehovah removed His protecting hand from His people, allowing surrounding nations and tribes to plunder them (Judges 2:14-15).
- By God's design, Israel was not a united nation with a strong military leader (like Joshua) overseeing the defense of the country. Jehovah's intent was for the people to be vulnerable, and totally dependent upon Him. Their apostasy was an expression of their failure to do so. They began to rely on the false God's of the Canaanites. As a result, by God's design (Judges 6:14), Israel's farmers were defenseless against the raids of the surrounding tribes who confiscated their crops and dominated them.
- God responded to His people's groans and sorrow (Judges 2:18) by raising up various "judges" from time to time, to war against Israel's enemies, especially the powerful Philistines (Judges 2:16, 18). Some of these judges operated as individuals (example: Othniel, Ehud, and Samson) and others led bands of warriors (example: Gideon), and some led armies (example: Barak and Deborah). The judges were God's agents, not only for defending His apostate people, but also His agents to call the people to repentance (Judges 2:16-20). Some judges fulfilled this dual purpose well and some did not (Samson, for example, did not produce any moral or spiritual revival in Israel).
- The individualism that prevailed in Israel resulted in a non-conformist mentality. Each person was guided by his individual conscience and value system. No earthly government existed to enforce Jehovah's Law; therefore, *each one did that which was right in his own eyes* (Judges 17:6; 21:25). One expression of this individualism was

worshipping Jehovah in places that the Canaanites had used as places of worship. Jehovah had specifically spoken against doing this, even though the worshipper may have been sincere in doing so (Deuteronomy 12:1-14). Offerings to Jehovah were to be made only at the Tabernacle, located at the spot that Jehovah directed.

- Samuel, one of the most unique men of history, was born at the conclusion of this period. In Samuel were combined the two God-governing theocratic functions, priest and judge, but he also had another dimension; he was a seer/prophet (*seer* was the term by which prophets were known at this period in Israel's history)⁴. Samuel fulfilled all of these functions honorably and well. In his valedictory, he challenged anyone to bring accusation of malfeasance against him. No one could cite a single time in which he had not displayed utmost integrity (I Samuel 12:1-5).
- In his old age, Samuel appointed his sons to various judgeships (I Samuel 8:1-2). Unfortunately, Samuel's sons did not have the integrity displayed by their father; they took bribes and perverted justice (I Samuel 8:3).
- The elders of the various tribes formed a delegation and came to Samuel not only to complain about the malfeasance of his sons, but also to express their displeasure with the entire *theocratic* concept. They asked him to appoint someone to be king over Israel, *to judge us like all the nations* (I Samuel 8:5). Samuel brought the request to Jehovah, who instructed him to warn the people what a king would require of them, but at the same time to not reject the people's request. Jehovah told Samuel that the people were not rejecting Samuel, but Jehovah. After Samuel's warning of what life under a king would be like, the people were adamant, *No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.*

⁴ The term, *seer*, is the English rendering of two Hebrew words, *roeh* (רֹאֶה) -from the ordinary Hebrew verb meaning, *to see*) and, *hozeh*, (הֹזֵה) the noun, *seer*, used in conjunction with the verb used of prophetic vision). *Seer* is the term that was used for those who later were known as *prophets* (Hebrew *nabhi* נָבִיא meaning, *speaker*). Although a clear distinction between a seer and a prophet cannot be made (there are times when they are used synonymously), it appears that the term prophet, נָבִיא, began to be used when a regular prophetic order came into existence. After the establishment of the monarchy, the office of prophet became an important element in leading the nation. Samuel began as a *seer* and ended his life as a *prophet*

Excursus: Israel's First King

Saul was the first true King of Israel – one chosen and anointed by God. However, he was not the first one to wear that title. During the time of the judges, various men had ruled over individual tribes, or amalgamations of tribes. None of these formally were kings. The first one to bear the title of, “king,” was Abimelech (Judges 9:6).

After Gideon had defeated the Midianites and brought peace to the land, the men of Israel urged him to become their king. They envisioned a dynasty in which Gideon and his sons after him would be their monarch. Gideon refused to become a king, declaring the *theocratic principle*, “*I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; Jehovah shall rule over you.*” (Judges 8:23)

Gideon had many wives who bore him a total of seventy sons. He also had a concubine who lived in Shechem, a town about 28 miles south of his home in Ophrah. Shechem was the home of remnants of Canaanites who had survived the wars with Joshua. Gideon’s unnamed Shechemite concubine bore him one son, Abimelech. Following Gideon’s death, Abimelech met with his mother’s family in Shechem and said (paraphrased), “The men of Israel offered to make the Gideon family a royal dynasty. Why should you have seventy Israeli men rule over you? Wouldn’t it be better to have one ruler, instead of seventy? I am a son of Gideon – his blood flows through my veins – but also I am your relative, a Shechemite. Make me your ruler.”

Abimelech’s relatives were won over by this speech and as a result of their advocacy Shechem’s elders lined up behind Abimelech. They gave him money from the treasury of their Canaanite god, Baal-berith.⁵ Abimelech used this money hire a group of thugs who accompanied him to Ophrah, where they executed the seventy legitimate sons of Gideon⁶. After the slaughter, the Shechemites made him “king” (Judges 9:4-6). He reigned for about three years (Judges 9:22).

His reign was turbulent. The natural cause of the turbulence can be explained by the fact that Abimelech was not willing to commit himself to Shechem. He wanted to be viewed as the King of Israel, and so he established his capital at Arumah, five or six miles southeast of Shechem. The Canaanites were not willing to accept him as an Israelite king (Judges 9:28) and the conflict between them resulted in Abimelech’s razing Shechem (Judges 9:45). He encountered further conflict when he tried to extend his rule over other remnant Canaanite cities. Abimelech’s reign ended when he was killed during the siege of the tower of Thebez (Judges 9:50-54)

The natural cause is not the real explanation of Abimelech’s problems. Scripture declares,

Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, so that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal (Gideon) might come, and their blood might be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers. (Judges 9:23-24)

Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father in killing his seventy brothers. Also God returned all the wickedness of the men of Shechem on their heads, and the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal came upon them. (Judges 9:56-57)

⁵ Also known as Beth-millo, the remains of the Canaanite temple, described in this episode, were uncovered by archaeologists who excavated Shechem.

⁶ One of the sons, Jotham, hid himself and escaped the slaughter.

Characteristics of Israel's theocratic monarchy

Following the period of Judges and Jehovah's agreeing to Israel's having a king, the nation was ruled by a *theocratic monarchy*. The basic difference between a *theocracy* and a *theocratic monarchy* consists of who bears the title, "king."

- A *theocracy* is a government in which there is no human monarch. The unseen Jehovah is the only king, who reveals his will through various agents who do not have governmental powers.
- A *theocratic monarchy* is a government consisting of a human king who is charged with ruling as God's agent.

A true theocratic monarch will do only that which is Jehovah's will. Thus, a theocratic monarch's primary concern is to know the will of God. The theocratic monarchy of Israel stood in stark contrast to many of the major rulers of ancient times. In some nations, the king took on divine status – this especially was true of Egypt and Rome. In Israel, the king always was a human agent of Jehovah, charged with governing God's people. Also, by God's design, the king was not a priest; in this aspect of the kingdom, there was a separation between "church and state." The priesthood existed as a separate entity and institution, independent of the monarchy.⁷

When Jehovah gave the Law to Moses He prescribed a theocracy. Moses, in his valedictory address, summarized the Law that God had imparted to him. He also, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, added a few practical details concerning the implementation of the Law. Prophetically, he also looked to the future. By the foreknowledge that Jehovah imparted to him and by his knowledge of human nature, Moses prophesied concerning the time when Israel would insist on having a king. Moses gave instructions as to how a king was to be chosen and how this theocratic king was to conduct himself (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). . He was not to be, *like other nations*.

When you enter the land which Jehovah your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, "I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,"

*you shall surely set a king over you whom Jehovah your God chooses,
one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves;
you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.*

*Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself,
nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses,
since Jehovah has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.'*

*He shall not multiply wives for himself,
or else his heart will turn away;*

nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

⁷ During certain periods, the king appointed the High Priest.

Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.

*It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life,
that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God,
by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes,
that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen
and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left,
so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of
Israel.*

Sadly, none of Israel's kings met these standards.

Excursus: What kind of king, like other nations?

When the Israelites asked for a king, *like other nations, what did they have in mind?*

There were three models before them.

- To the north and south of Canaan, there were absolute monarchies, based on the idea that the king was somehow descended from deity. Therefore, absolute dynasties existed.
- The Canaanite kings were city monarchs. Most were viewed as the representative of the gods and played an important part in the worship of the city gods.
- Moab and Edom were led by constitutional monarchies. The list of their kings in Genesis 36:31ff makes it evident that their monarchies were not hereditary.

Saul, Israel's first King

After Jehovah instructed Samuel to grant the elders' request for a king, Samuel sent the elders to their homes while he waited for instructions from Jehovah. Samuel was not long in waiting for Jehovah's instructions. As Samuel prepared to travel to a city in Zuph, where he would lead them in a religious celebration, Jehovah revealed to him that on the morrow Jehovah would send a man from Benjamin seeking audience with Samuel. This man was to be anointed *prince over my people, Israel; and he shall deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people because their cry has come to me.* (1 Samuel 9:15)

Indeed, as Samuel was approaching the city, he was met two men who sought the seer's aid in finding their lost donkeys. One of these was Saul, son of Kish, a Benjamite.

When Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people." (1 Samuel 9:17)

The next day, after the religious celebration had ended, Samuel anointed Saul as king. Samuel then prophesied three events that would take place as Saul and his servant traveled back to their home. All of these took place, confirming to Saul that the private anointing was more than just a ruse (1 Samuel 10:1-16)

Shortly thereafter, Samuel called a national meeting at Mizpah. He repeated his earlier charge that Israel had rejected Jehovah by asking for a king, but that Jehovah had granted their request. Lots were cast and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen by the lottery. Lots continued to be taken, narrowing the survivors down to one family and from that family Saul was chosen. Because he already had been anointed king, Saul knew what would be the outcome of the lottery. Being a shy farmer's son, Saul hid himself among the baggage and forcibly had to be led before the people (I Samuel 10:17-22). Upon seeing Saul, the bulk of the crowd was impressed by his striking physical appearance. He was a head taller than anyone else, and quite handsome. He looked like a king (I Samuel 9:2; 10:23-24).

Before surrendering the crowd to their own pursuits, Samuel recited the ordinances of the kingdom (no doubt the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, plus the comments that Samuel had made earlier – I Samuel 8:11-18) and then wrote them in a book.

There were two responses to Saul's being chosen as king. A number of valiant men, whose hearts God had touched at this time, went home with Saul to his house in Gibeah. They became Saul's faithful supporters. Others in the crowd, described as *worthless men*,⁸ rejected Saul. Saul did not respond to this affront (I Samuel 10:26-27).

Shortly after this public announcement of God's choosing Saul as king, the city of Jabesh-gilead was besieged by Ammonites. When word of the siege reached Saul, the Spirit of God came upon him. He sent out a call to the men of Israel to join him in a deliverance of Jabesh, warning them of dire consequences if they did not respond (I Samuel 11:7). The fear of God fell on the people and 330,000 men showed up. Under Saul's leadership, the Israelites totally routed the Ammonites. This victory secured Saul's role as king. His enthusiastic followers wanted to put to death those who earlier had mocked Saul as God's choice. Saul, however, displayed godly humility in declaring,

But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today Jehovah has accomplished deliverance in Israel." (I Samuel 11:13)

Samuel then led the people to Gilgal⁹ where Saul, with great national celebration, formally was made king (I Samuel 11:14-15). Following the joyous celebration, Samuel again reminded the people of the fact that their asking for a king was a rejection of Jehovah. His persuasive speech, accompanied by a miraculous appearance of out of season thunder storm, brought conviction to the crowd. In fear, they confessed that their asking for a king was a

⁸ Literally, *sons of belial*. This expression originally meant a worthless or base person. There was no suggestion of a proper name. Later, Jewish apocalyptic writings, the name came to be used for Satan or the Antichrist.

⁹ Gilgal was the location of the first encampment of the Israelites after they crossed the Jordan River and began their conquest of Canaan. It also was the place where the 12 memorial stones were set up, to remind the people of God's miraculous acts in their behalf; it was the place where the Passover was first observed in the promised land, and the place where the manna ceased. It always was a place of sacrifice and sacred activity. It was one of the three cities that Samuel included in his judicial circuit. In later years, it became a place of idolatry.

sin. Samuel told them that God was overlooking this sin, but that from this time forward they should be careful to serve God with all of their heart. He warned them,

"Only fear Jehovah and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away." (1 Samuel 12:24-25)

The story of Saul is a tragedy worthy of Shakespeare's highest genius. At times, Saul displayed great nobility; he was generous; his personality was such that men were drawn to him and many were loyal to him, even to the point of death.

The traits that destroyed Saul were two:

- He was governed by his emotions
- He was unduly subject to external influences

Thomas Hunter Weir aptly describes Saul's character (biblical references are I Samuel).

"Like everyone else, Saul had his virtues and his failings. His chief weakness seems to have been want of decision of character. He was easily swayed by events and by people. The praises of David (18:7f) at once set his jealousy on fire. His persecution of David was largely due to the instigation of mischievous courtiers (24:9). Upon remonstrance his repentance was as deep as it was short-lived (24:16; 26:21). His impulsiveness was such that he did not know where to stop. His interdict (14:24ff) was quite as uncalled for as his religious zeal (15:9) was out of place. He was always at one extreme [or the other]. His hatred for David was only equal to his affection for him at first (18:2). His pusillanimity led him to commit crimes which his own judgment would have forbidden (22:17). Like most beaten persons, he became suspicious of everyone (22:7f), and like those who are easily led, he soon found his evil genius (22:9, 18, 22). Saul's inability to act alone appears from the fact that he never engaged in single combat, so far as we know. Before he could act at all, his fury or his pity had to be roused to boiling-point (11:6). His mind was peculiarly subject to external influences so that he was [at one moment] a respectable man of the world and [the next moment] a [bizarrely behaving] prophet (10:11; 19:24)."¹⁰

One has to admire Saul in that after he knew that he had been cast off by Jehovah and forsaken by Samuel, he fought on to the end.

The three events that resulted in Saul's rejection by Jehovah were manifestations of the above listed traits.

1. The inappropriate sacrifice at Gilgal (I Samuel 10:8; 13:1-14)

Samuel had instructed Saul to assemble his forces at Gilgal, and then to tarry seven days before engaging in battle with the Philistines. Samuel told him that at the conclusion of

¹⁰ *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, James Orr, General Editor, Volume IV (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.) 1952 page2699

the seven days, he would come to Gilgal and offer burnt offerings and peace offerings for the battle. After the offerings had been made, Samuel would tell Saul what to do.

As instructed, Saul assembled his army at Gilgal and began the seven day wait for Samuel. In the meantime, the Philistine army showed up with so many chariots, horsemen, and footmen, that the Israeli citizens in the area either fled the area or hid out in caves, thickets, pits, etc. Saul and his trembling army began their vigil, waiting for Samuel to arrive. When Samuel did not arrive on time, some of the army began slipping away. Saul took matters into his own hands. He assumed the role of priest and offered the offerings. Just as Saul finished making the offering, Samuel arrived. The rebuke given to Saul was absolute and final:

Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of Jehovah your God, which He commanded you, for now Jehovah would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. Jehovah has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Jehovah has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what Jehovah commanded you." (I Samuel 13:13-14)

2. The failure to annihilate the Amalekites (I Samuel 15)

Early in the Exodus from Egypt, when the Israelites were weary and there were many stragglers, the Amalekites attacked the stragglers. At one point they engaged in direct battle with the Israelites. The Amalekites had a disrespectful and mocking attitude toward Israel and Jehovah Himself. At the conclusion of the battle, Moses declared,

Jehovah has sworn; Jehovah will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." (Exodus 17:16)

When prophesying concerning the future of Canaanite nations, Balaam the prophet declared,

And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end shall be destruction." (Numbers 24:20)

In his valedictory address, Moses commanded Israel concerning their future obligation toward Amalek

Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. Therefore it shall come about when Jehovah your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which Jehovah your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget. (Deuteronomy 25:17-19)

Saul's commission to annihilate Amalek and all that pertained to the city was in direct obedience to the mandate that had been given from the Exodus onward. Samuel's charge to Saul was clear.

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Jehovah sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of Jehovah. "Thus says Jehovah of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'" (I Samuel 15:1-3)

Saul and the Israelites achieved total victory over Amalek, but they did not fulfill their commission to destroy Amalek, every inhabitant, and everything that pertained to the city.

But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. (I Samuel 15:9)

Further evidence of Saul's growing need to affirm his importance is seen in his effort to memorialize himself and his victory over Amalek.

Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal." (I Samuel 15:12)

When Samuel caught up with Saul and the army, he was greeted by an enthusiastic Saul, flush with victory.

Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of Jehovah! I have carried out the command of Jehovah." (I Samuel 15:13)

Samuel's response is one of the most memorable verses in the Bible. In essence, Samuel said, "Saul, you are caught red handed!"¹¹

But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" (I Samuel 15:14)

As king and leader of the army, Saul was responsible for enforcing the command of God. It is clear from other episodes that he could have controlled the people and done exactly as God had commanded (the foolish command to fast at Gibeah – I Samuel 14:24-35). However, not being centered in Jehovah, external considerations won the day and he allowed the people to take as spoil the valuable livestock from Amalek. Not only did he take a hands-off policy with the people's plundering, but as a personal trophy he spared the life of Agag, the Amalekite king.

¹¹ There is a close similarity between this sin and the sin of Israel in the conquest of Ai (Joshua 7:2-26)

Saul's rationale is obvious –

“We accomplished the goal; Amalek is gone forever; what harm is there in taking some trophies; it would be a terrible waste to destroy this valuable livestock; I will be a popular leader if I make my troops wealthy; I, like all other great kings, will keep a conquered king as my trophy/vassal.”

All of this was thinking *like other nations*.¹²

Samuel's response, once again is one of the classic passages of Scripture

Has Jehovah as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Jehovah, He has also rejected you from being king." (I Samuel 15:22-23)

For the second time, Samuel announced that Jehovah had rejected Saul as king.

3. Saul's consulting the medium of Endor (I Samuel 28:3-19; I Chronicles 10:13-14)

After the incident involving Amalek, Samuel had nothing to do with Saul. Saul continued to hold on to the kingship even though he had been rejected by Jehovah and his successor, David, had been anointed to replace him. As king, he continued to battle the Philistines. In the meantime, Samuel died and was buried with honors.

There came a day in which largest Philistine army that Saul had ever faced bivouacked at Shunem. When Saul saw the huge encampment of Philistines, *he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly* (I Samuel 28:5). Saul sought direction from Jehovah, but because Saul had been rejected by Jehovah, he received no response, *either by dreams, or by Urim¹³ or by prophets* (I Samuel 28:6).

This was the setting for Saul's final failure. Jehovah had warned Israel to stay away from those who practiced the dark arts of spiritism and to execute those who practiced them (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:9-12). One of the things that Saul had done

¹² Of interest is the manner in which Saul briefly changed the terms that he used in describing Jehovah. He always had described God as, *Jehovah*. When Samuel leveled his charge against him, Saul referred to *Jehovah your God* (I Samuel 15:21). One wonders if there might have been a bit of sarcasm in his voice.

¹³ The *Urim* is an abbreviated expression for *The Urim and Thummim*. No one can say for certain what this term describes, other than that it was a part of the High Priest's garb and was a venue that Jehovah used for revealing His will. All sorts of theories have been put forth as to how this instrument functioned. Some have said that there were stones that glowed – the Urim glow meant “yes” and the Thummim glow mean, “no.” Another old view is that the UT contained the alphabet and words were spelled out, miraculously, when Jehovah was revealing His will. All that we know for certain is that the UT was a part of the High Priest's garb (Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Deuteronomy 33:8) and that it was an instrument for revealing God's will (Numbers 27:21; I Samuel 23:9-12; 30:-8; etc.). Anything beyond this is mere speculation.

correctly was to rid the land of mediums and spiritists. However, when Jehovah did not respond to Saul, he became desperate. He instructed his servants to find a woman who was a medium so that he might go to her and seek direction from the spirit-world. (I Samuel 28:3, 6-7). His servants knew of a woman medium who lived at Endor – one who had escaped Saul’s pogrom. Saul went to her and asked her to bring Samuel up from the place of the dead. When the medium began her necromancy, she saw Samuel, who spoke to Saul and told him that because he had disobeyed Jehovah in the matter of Amalek that he had been rejected; furthermore, the Philistines were going to be victorious in the coming battle and Saul and his sons would be killed (I Samuel 28:8-19). Indeed, such did happen. The Chronicler summarized Saul’s failure,

So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against Jehovah, because of the word of Jehovah which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it, (I Chronicles 10:13).

Saul’s exact age and how long he lived is uncertain.

- The NAS and NIV render I Samuel 13:1

Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel.

- The King James renders the verse,

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel...

- Literally the verse in the Hebrew reads,

A son of a year is Saul in his reigning, yea, two years he hath reigned over Israel,

Neither the literal rendering, nor the KJV make any sense, when we read the biblical record. Originally, Hebrew numerals were not written in words, but individual letters were used as numerals. It seems clear that the letters that denoted the age of Saul and the number of years that he reigned were dropped from the text by an early copyist. Considering the fact that when Saul was made king, he already had a son, Jonathan, who was a mature warrior, capable of leading an attack on the Philistines. We would assume that Jonathan was at least twenty years old at this time. That being true, Saul probably would have been about 40 years of age. Thus, the NAS and NIV add *forty* to the text.

Clearly, Saul’s reign lasted longer than two years. For one thing, he could not have carried out all of the campaigns listed in I Samuel 14:47 (Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines) in just two years. Material outside of Samuel (Acts 13:21, for example) contribute to the construction of a chronology of the period. On the basis of independently constructed chronologies, some have concluded that his reign last at least twenty-two years.¹⁴ The translators of the NAS and NIV have concluded that the reign lasted forty-two years and have inserted that information into the text. For a full discussion of this topic, see ADDENDUM B.

¹⁴ C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 2 (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers) 1989, page 124

David, Israel's second King

A man after God's own heart

When Saul failed to obey the explicit command given concerning the offering at Gilgal, Samuel spoke prophetically,

Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of Jehovah your God, which He commanded you, for now Jehovah would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. Jehovah has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and Jehovah has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what Jehovah commanded you."

(I Samuel 13:13-14)

What does the expression, *a man after His own heart*, mean? How was David a man after God's own heart, in ways that Saul was not? Like Saul, David was a man of mixed character. On the one hand, David, like Saul, frequently displayed the highest character traits. On the other hand, like Saul, David at times displayed a flawed character. There were situations in which he was generous toward his enemies. There were situations in which he was vindictive. There were situations in which he displayed the highest morals. There were other situations in which he was driven by lust. There were occasions when he lied and practiced deceit to save himself.¹⁵ He even resorted to murder to hide an adulterous tryst. How were Saul and David different? Saul was a man whose record is spotless, concerning morality and honesty. In some respects, he appears morally superior to David.

The essential difference between David and Saul was their understanding of Jehovah. The record of Saul's life presents the picture of a man who is trying to do his job. He was quite aware of himself and afraid of anything that threatened him or his position. The one thing that was lacking in the atmosphere that surrounded Saul was the sense that *God is God*.

It is in that respect that David and Saul were different. For David, God was God and to him that was an absolute. David displayed both a cognitive and emotional reverence for Jehovah.

- Cognitively, David never violated a direct command given to him from Jehovah, whereas Saul did. Cognitively, he refused to take on Jehovah's role in removing Saul (when he had opportunity to kill Saul, he did not do so because Saul was God's anointed – Saul was God's business, not David's).¹⁶
- Emotional reverence for Jehovah is seen in many of David's psalms. David was a musician and poet. He had the emotional intensity that is inherent in artistic temperaments, even dancing before the Ark when it was brought to its resting place in Jerusalem.

Paul reflected this understanding of David in his speech given in the synagogue at Perga. After rehearsing the history of Israel as an introduction to his declaration that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, Paul quoted I Samuel 13:14. In so doing, he interpreted

¹⁵ David's lying and deception mainly are associated with his survival among the gentile tribes in which he took refuge (I Samuel 21:10ff; 27:8-12). A glaring example of manipulation and deception was David's conspiracy to hide his adultery through the death of Uriah (I Samuel 11).

¹⁶ I Samuel 24; I Samuel 26

the final phrase, to mean that in every situation in which Jehovah had given him a command, David did exactly as he was told.

After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all My will.' (Acts 13:22)

The final term in Greek is plural, *wills*, not, singular, *will*. The implication of this difference is important, i.e. Paul interpreted the final phrase of I Samuel 13:14 to mean that David did not just have a heart to obey God as a general trait, but that in every specific situation he would do exactly what Jehovah commanded him to do when Jehovah commanded him to do it. This was because David revered God as God.

The Spirit of God upon David and Saul, versus Saul's being afflicted by an Evil Spirit from Jehovah.

Following Jehovah's choosing David from the sons of Jesse, and Samuel's anointing David before his brothers, the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David. The same thing happened to Saul shortly after he had been anointed by Samuel. In Saul's case, there was an outward manifestation; in David's case, there was no immediate outward manifestation.

Then it happened when he [Saul] turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day. When they came to the hill there, behold, a group of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily, so that he prophesied among them. (I Samuel 10:9-10)

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul... (I Samuel 16:13-14a)

The terms, *Spirit of Jehovah* or *Spirit of God*, occur fifteen times in I and II Samuel. Eight times, the true Spirit of Jehovah/God is mentioned. Five of these eight references have to do with prophesy,¹⁷ one refers to military might,¹⁸ one to his coming upon David,¹⁹ and once to his leaving Saul.²⁰ Throughout the Old Testament, there are thirty-nine references to the *Spirit of Jehovah/God*, plus numerous other references to *His Spirit, Your Spirit, The Spirit*.²¹

¹⁷ I Samuel 10:6, 10; 20:20, 23; II Samuel 23:2

¹⁸ I Samuel 11:6

¹⁹ I Samuel 16:3

²⁰ I Samuel 16:14

²¹ In addition to the occurrences in I Samuel, Judges 9:23 states that God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. It is noteworthy that only in connection with these first two kings of Israel is an evil spirit from God mentioned. Both of these kings proved to be unworthy candidates for the office.

Seven times an *evil spirit of/from Jehovah/God*²² is mentioned. This evil spirit, as experienced by Saul, must be understood as more than a mere mental imbalance. The results were melancholy, depression, etc., but these were the result of an external influence sent from Jehovah. Some have speculated that this might have been a demon. Truth is, no more is known about this spirit, other than what is said in the passages mentioned, i.e., Jehovah was the source of the spirit, and mental instability (fear, distrust, suspicion, etc) was the result.

Of very great interest is the effect that David's "music therapy" had upon this spirit.

Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah terrorized him. Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well."... So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

(I Samuel 16:14-16, 23)

Commenting on these verses, Kiel and Delitzsch write,

"When Saul's attendants, *i.e.* his officers at court, perceived the mental ailment of the king, they advised him to let the evil spirit that troubled him be charmed away by instrumental music. The powerful influence exerted by music upon the state of mind was well known even in the earliest times; so that the wise men of ancient Greece recommended music to soothe the passions, to heal mental diseases, and even to check tumults among the people."^{23 24}

The effect of David's music was not just upon Saul's mental state, but the evil spirit departed when David played (I Samuel 16:23). Since the origin of Saul's mental turmoil was the spirit that Jehovah sent, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Jehovah was force that withdrew the spirit when David played his harp. Jehovah used the situation to bring David into the royal household. If David's music had not dispelled the evil spirit, then David's presence in the royal household would not have continued.

After Saul had made David a military commander, he sent David on a mission against the Philistines. David was so successful, that when he returned from the battle, the women came out of the cities singing,

²² I Samuel 16:14, 15, 16, 23 (two times); 18:10; 19:9

²³ Keil & Delitzsch, page 171

²⁴ A number of years ago, at a time that I was somewhat beaten and weary, I heard a program on NPR discussing the use of Pachelbel's Canon in D Major as an agent in healing people with various mental problems. The piece was played at the conclusion of the discussion and as I lay upon the bed and listened, I experienced a wonderful peace. Indeed, this marvelous but simple composition from the pen of Johann Pachelbel (Bach's organ teacher was one of Pachelbel's pupils), seems to have that calming effect on me, each time I listen to it. - JWG

*The women sang as they played, and said,
"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."
(I Samuel 18:7)*

Immediately, Saul became jealous of David's popularity and began to see him as a threatening contender for the throne. After this, David's harp music did not cause the evil spirit to depart.

Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul's hand. Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence twice. (I Samuel 18:10-11)²⁵

Saul's rage seemed to come and go. A bit later, after Jonathan pointed out to Saul that David had been very beneficial to both Saul and the nation, Saul pledged David's safety. Once again David was sent on a military mission and he achieved great success. Once again, the evil spirit came upon Saul. David played his harp in an effort to calm Saul, but the spirit did not depart and for the second time, Saul tried to kill David.

When there was war again, David went out and fought with the Philistines and defeated them with great slaughter, so that they fled before him.⁹ Now there was an evil spirit from Jehovah on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp with his hand. Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night. (I Samuel 19:8-10)

If David's harp music had continued to succeed in making Saul passive, then Jehovah's plan for both Saul and David would have taken a different direction. David's anointed skill had served its purpose for the time that had been intended. After that, the evil spirit did not leave in response to the music.

David's transition from farmer's son to king can be described in three phases:²⁶

1. The first phase: David in Saul's court (I Samuel 16 -20). During this time, he and Saul's son, Jonathan, forged a life-long friendship and David married Saul's daughter, Michal
2. The second phase: David flees from Saul (I Samuel 21 – 30). David became the leader of a guerilla band and in that role he had a number of experiences in which he providentially was extracted from a dilemma.
3. The third phase: David becomes king, following the death of Saul and Jonathan. (II Samuel 1– 5).

²⁵ Most kings held a scepter as a sign of their station and power. It seems that Saul's spear fulfilled that function during his monarchy.

²⁶ Claus Westermann, *A Thousand Years and a Day* (Philadelphia, Muhlenbeg Press)1957, page 122

An Overview of David's life

David reigned over the nation for forty years. David's regency began when Judah crowned him their king and established his headquarters in Hebron. David reigned in Hebron for seven years. At the end of this time, Israel (the northern tribes) received him as king and he moved his capital to Jerusalem, from whence he reigned for thirty-three years.

1. Chosen by Jehovah and anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel (I Samuel 16:1-13)
2. As a musician, a temporary member of Saul's household (I Samuel 16:14-23)
3. Slayer of Goliath (I Samuel 17:1-58)
4. Permanent member of Saul's retinue (I Samuel 18:1-30)
 - David and Jonathan, Saul's son, enact a covenant of friendship
 - David succeeds as a battle commander
 - David's music fails to placate Saul's rage; Saul attempts to kill David with a spear
 - David made commander of 1000 warriors
 - Saul's ploy to cause David's death by demanding 100 foreskins of Philistines as a dowry for Michal, Saul's daughter; David's successful provision of that dowry
 - David's growing esteem as a military commander
5. Saul's repeated attempts to kill David (I Samuel 19:1-24)
6. Jonathan's scheme to deliver David – the sign of the arrows (I Samuel 20:1-42)
7. David flees and begins living as a fugitive (I Samuel 21:1-15)
 - He received the Bread of Presence from Ahimelech, the priest
 - He appropriated the sword of Goliath, which had been stored in the tabernacle
 - He fled to Gath, where he took up residence with Achish, the king of Gath
 - He feigned madness, so that his life would be spared
 - Saul gave David's wife, Michal to one of Saul's retainers, Palti. (25:43-44)
8. David's years as the leader of a band of outlaws (I Samuel 22-27; 29-31; II Samuel 1:1-27)
 - Four hundred men, including the members of his father's household, join David at the Cave of Adullam. (22:1-2)
 - David deposits his aged parents with King of Moab (22:3-4)
 - In response to a word from the prophet, Gad, David and his company relocate to Judah (22:5)
 - Abiathar, the son of the High Priest, Ahimelech, brings David the news that on Saul's orders Doeg, the Edomite, had killed all of the priests of Jehovah. Only Abiathar had escaped. Abiathar, who was the remaining heir to the role of High Priest, became a member of David's band. (22:20-23)
 - David's company, by now numbering six hundred, delivers the city of Keilah from a Philistine attack. (23:1-5)
 - Abiathar, the priest, using the Urim, gives guidance that enables David and his men to avoid discovery and capture by Saul and his army. (23:6-18)
 - David and his men are constantly on the move, finally settling in Engedi. (23:29)

- Saul and 3000 experienced warriors come to Engedi to capture David. In order to be hidden from Saul, David and his men hide in the inner recesses of a cave. Saul entered the mouth of the cave where he squatted to defecate. David slipped up behind him and cut off a piece of Saul's robe, then did not allow his men to kill Saul. After Saul left the cave, David revealed himself to Saul, held up the piece of the robe, and pled for Saul to recognize that he had refused to take Saul's life when he had the chance. The result was Saul's repentance and his acknowledgement that Jehovah had chosen David. He extracted from David a pledge that after he became king that he would not kill all of Saul's descendants. (24:1-22)
- David and his men return to their Judean stronghold. (24:22)
- The business man, Nabal refuses to give food to David, even though for a long time David's men had protected Nabal's shepherds. Following Nabal's sudden death from natural causes, David marries Nabal's widow, Abigail. (25:1-42)
- David and his company, including David's two wives, Abigail and Ahinoam, continue to dwell in the wilderness of Ziph in Judah.
- Saul launched another campaign to capture David. David learned the location of Saul's army; in the dead of night, while Saul and his men were asleep with Saul in the middle of their circle, David and his cousin, Abishi, stealthily made their way into the camp. David forbade Abishi from killing Saul. When they reached Saul, David took Saul's spear and water jug, then he and Abishi retreated a safe distance. David aroused the camp by shouting at Saul. As he had done at the cave in Engedi, David held up the spear and the jug, showing that he could have killed Saul, but had spared his life. Saul again repented of his pursuit of David's life. David allowed a young man to come and retrieve the spear; David was allowed to leave in peace. (26:1-25)
- Once again David takes refuge in Gath. This time he is not alone; he has 600 seasoned warriors with him, plus his two wives. When Saul learned that David was in Gath, he decided to stop pursuing him. (27:1-4)
- Achish, the King of Gath (a Philistine city), seeing David as an enemy of Saul and the armies of Israel, gives him and his men the Philistine city of Ziklag. From Ziklag, David and his men make raids on the Geshurites, Girzites, and Amalekites. Achish believes that they are attacking cities of Judah, not Canaanite tribes. When the Philistines begin amassing a mighty army to fight Saul, Achish takes David and his men to be a part of the Philistine army. The other Philistine lords do not trust David and so he and his men are told to go home. Thus, David is delivered from this dilemma. (27:5-28:2; 29:1-11)
- When David and his men return to Ziklag, they find the city burned and empty. The Amalekites had captured the city in the men's absence. Abiathar discerns through the Urim that David should pursue the Amalekites. David and his men find the Amalekites drunk and celebrating their victory. Except for 400 young men who escaped on camels, the entire Amalekite army is destroyed. David and his men retrieve their wives, children, and all of their possessions. Nothing is lost. (30:1-31)
- Two days after David and his men return to Ziklag, word is brought to him that the Philistines had killed Saul and his son, David's friend, Jonathan. (II Samuel 1:1-27)

9. David's years in Hebron (II Samuel 2:1 – 5:5)

- David was instructed by Jehovah to move his company to Hebron, where he lived for the next seven years and six months. The men of Judah anoint David over Judah. While living at Hebron, David increased the number of his wives. Six sons were born to David while he lived at Hebron. (II Samuel 2:1-7, 11; 3:2-5; 3:13-16)
- Following the death of Saul, Abner, the commander of Saul's army made Saul's son, Ishbosheth, king over Israel (the northern tribes). A lengthy war ensues between the followers of David and the followers of Ishbosheth. (II Samuel 2:9-32; 3:1, 6)
- Abner regrets that he had made Ishbosheth king and determines to lead Israel to accept David as king of the entire nation. He meets with David and then sets out on a journey to gather the leaders of Israel to come and receive David as king. (II Samuel 3:7-11, 17-21)
- Joab, David's commander, learns of Abner's mission. Through treachery, he kills Abner. David is shocked and grieved. He enters an extensive time of mourning for Abner, declaring him to be a man of noble character. He also prayed, concerning Joab and his brothers, "May Jehovah repay the evildoer according to his evil." (II Samuel 3:22-39)
- Upon learning of Abner's death, Ishbosheth and his followers became fearful. Two of Ishbosheth's commanders, Baanah and Rechab, thinking that they would win David's favor by killing Ishbosheth, decapitate him while he is sleeping. Declaring that David now had vengeance on his enemy, they deliver Ishbosheth's head to David; they expect the ghastly trophy to put them in good stead with David, but instead he is incensed. He never considered Saul to be his enemy. Declaring that they had killed an innocent man, David had them executed on the spot. (II Samuel 4:1-12)
- All of the tribes of Israel gather at Hebron and crown David their king, thus making him king of the entire nation. (II Samuel 5:1-5)
- David captured the seemingly impregnable Jebusite stronghold of Zion. He and his troops gained entrance to the city through the water tunnel. Zion then became David's home, known as "the City of David," which was enlarged into Jerusalem. (II Samuel 5:6-10)

10. David's thirty-three year rule with Jerusalem as his capital. (II Samuel 5:5, 9 - 24:25)

- Hiram, King of Tyre, befriends David and assists in the building of David's palace (II Samuel 5:11-12)
- David increases the number of his wives and fathers more children (II Samuel 5:13-16)
- By carefully following directions from Jehovah, David and his army defeats a superior Philistine force in two separate battles (II Samuel 5:17-25)
- David and thirty-thousand chosen men bring the Ark of the Covenant from Baalejudah to Jerusalem (II Samuel 6:1-23)
- David yearns to build a temple for Jehovah, to replace the tent that has been the worship site since the Exodus (II Samuel 7:1-3; I Chronicles 17:1-2))
- Jehovah instructs the prophet Nathan to tell David that he cannot build the temple, but that his son would do so (II Samuel 7:4-13; I Chronicles 17:3-4, 11-12)

- Jehovah promises David that his throne and “house” would endure forever; David responds to this promise with a prayer that indeed it might be so. (II Samuel 7:14-29; I Chronicles 7:16-7)
- David begins to gather all the materials needed for the erection of the temple. (I Chronicles 22:1-5)
- David and his armies subdue the surrounding nations and tribes, establishing Israel’s dominance over the region (II Samuel 8; I Chronicles 18:1-17)
- David provides for the one remaining son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth (II Samuel 9)
- An attempted rebellion by the Ammonites, assisted by their hired mercenaries, the Arameans, is put down by Joab and David. (II Samuel 10; I Chronicles 19:1-19)
- David’s sin with Bathsheba, the murder of Uriah, and David’s taking Bathsheba as his wife. (II Samuel 11)
- Jehovah’s displeasure with David. David’s repentance for the sin of adultery and murder; Jehovah’s punishment of David’s sin; the birth of Solomon (II Samuel 11: 27b; 12:1-25)
- The final defeat of the Ammonites (II Samuel 12:26-31; I Chronicles 20:1-3))
- Amnon’s defilement of his half-sister, Tamar (Absalom’s full sister), followed by Absalom’s revenge (II Samuel 13:1-39)
- Absalom’s exile, followed by Joab’s successful effort to have him restored to Jerusalem and ultimately to be received by David (II Samuel 14:1-33)
- Absalom’s rebellion, David’s humiliating escape, and Absalom’s defeat and death at the hand of Joab (II Samuel 15-18)
- David’s extended mourning for Absalom (II Samuel 19:1-8)
- The men of Israel hesitate to approach David, because they had followed Absalom; the men of Judah go to the Jordan to accompany David back to Jerusalem (II Samuel 19:9-39)
- The men of Israel express their displeasure with Judah, for assuming the role of David’s escort (II Samuel 19:40-43)
- Sheba, a Benjamite (the tribe of Saul) lead the men of Israel in rebellion against David; Joab and the army pursue Sheba, who is killed by the citizens of Abel-Bethmaacah, in order to prevent Joab’s army from destroying their town.(II Samuel 20:1-26)
- A three year famine comes upon the land. Jehovah reveals that this was punishment for Saul’s breaking the covenant with the Gibeonites. Saul had sought to exterminate this Gentile tribe with which Joshua had made a covenant (Joshua 9:3ff). David asked the Gibeonites what might be done to make atonement for this misdeed in order to bring blessing back upon the land. The men of Gibeon asked that seven of Saul’s sons, who were still alive, be given to them to be hanged. David granted their request (II Samuel 21:1-14)
- Four sons of Goliath – all giants - lead the Philistines in a new uprising against Israel. All four were killed by Israelite soldiers. David’s troops decide to not allow David to continue to go forth into battle, lest he be killed (II Samuel 21:15-22; I Chronicles 20:4-7)
- David presumptuously takes a census of the people (*Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel* I Chronicles 21:1), to see how many warriors are

in the land. After this is done, David realizes that he has sinned in seeking to rely on the number of soldiers that could be mustered. He repented. Gad the seer, was sent to David with a message from Jehovah, offering three punishments, from which David was to choose: seven years of famine, David to flee three months before his enemies, or a three day pestilence to come upon the land. David chose the latter and as a result 70,000 people died of the pestilence, which was abated when David bought the threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. (II Samuel 24; I Chronicles 21)

Solomon, Israel's Third King

As already noted, Jehovah sent word to David, through Nathan the prophet, that he was not going to be allowed to build a temple for Jehovah. That prophetic word also stated that David would have a son named Solomon, a man of peace, who would succeed him and build the temple (I Chronicles 22:6-11). Thus David knew Jehovah's will concerning his successor. After the birth of Solomon, David, knowing the will of God, promised Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, that her son would be the next king.

When David grew weak in his old age, one of his sons, Adonijah, the son of Haggith²⁷, sought to grasp the throne before any other could claim it.²⁸ Adonijah was the oldest living son and by right of primogeniture the throne would have been his, had not Jehovah chosen Solomon. Adonijah had grown up having his own way – he had been a spoiled child. Like Absalom before him, Adonijah was a very handsome man with a charismatic personality. Adonijah consulted with Joab the military commander and Abiathar the priest, and he won them to his cause (again, probably because of primogeniture). He put on a big ceremony of sacrifice and feasting, to which he invited Joab, Abiathar, his brothers and all of David's servants. He intended to follow up the big event with a coronation parade using chariots, horsemen, and fifty footmen running before him.

Nathan the prophet learned of the plot and went to Bathsheba and advised her on how to approach the feeble David with the news that Adonijah was claiming the throne, against David's wishes. Bathsheba and then Nathan spoke to David of the plot, which already was under way. David immediately dispatched Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah David's chief counselor, to take David's loyal servants and conduct a coronation of Solomon. Solomon was to ride on David's mule in the midst of this cortege which would ceremoniously proceed to Gihon. At Gihon, Zadok and Nathan were to anoint Solomon King of Israel, blow the trumpet and then shout, "Long live King Solomon." Following this, they were to have a parade, conducting Solomon to the throne room, where Solomon would sit on the throne of David.

Nathan, Zadok, and Benaiah did as they were told. All of the people of the city became caught up in the event. They began shouting, playing on flutes, and rejoicing so much that the earth shook with their noise.

The group that was with Adonijah heard the uproar and when word came to them about what had happened, they were filled with fear and fled the scene. Adonijah, out of fear of Solomon,

²⁷ Adonijah, David's oldest surviving son, was younger than the deceased Absalom, but older than Solomon

²⁸ This is a summary of I Kings Chapter One

rushed to the Tabernacle, where he grabbed hold of the horns of the altar.²⁹ He sent word to Solomon, "Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword."

Solomon said, "If he is a worthy man, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he will die." So King Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and prostrated himself before King Solomon, and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house." (I Kings 1:52-53)

David's charge to Solomon

As David grew weaker, and it was apparent that the moment of his death was growing near, he gave a charge to Solomon.

I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man. Keep the charge of Jehovah your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that Jehovah may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.' (I Kings 2:2-4)

David's words are very important to us, because they make clear David's understanding of Jehovah's promise.

When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.... Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever. (II Samuel 7:12-13, 16)

Jehovah had stated, *I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever... your throne shall be established forever.* In this record of the promise, the term, *forever*, prevails. However, at the close of his life, David repeated this promise to Solomon with a condition, *If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.* The *if* always was implied, even if not spoken. This is an important point when we consider all of the times in Scripture when the term, *forever*, is attached to a promise.

David commissioned Solomon to tie up loose ends that were the residue of David's reign.

1. Joab, who had been David's commander, often had been conniving. He had manipulated David and sometimes took things into his own hands to achieve what he thought was best

²⁹ The "horns of the altar" refers to the projections at the four corners of the altar of burnt offering. They were of one piece with the altar and overlaid with brass. Fugitives seeking asylum might cling to the horns of the altar, while a reasonable decision was made concerning his fate.

for the kingdom – in spite of what David wanted. Joab and his brothers (the sons of Zeruiah) were violent, pragmatic, and often impulsive. There were times when David restrained Joab and his brothers, but more often than not, he failed to confront them.

- Joab unjustly had taken the life of Abner, Saul's commander, while Abner was on a mission to bring Israel under David's rule. David's mourning for Abner was intense and he prayed that those who slew Abner would not escape restitution. (I Samuel 3:26-39).
- Joab killed Absalom, even though David had instructed his army to spare Absalom's life. When all of the men of war would not kill Absalom because of David's prohibition, Joab took the matter into his own hands. (II Samuel 18:5, 9-15)
- Joab killed Amasa, who had led the Israelis when they followed Absalom, but to whom David not only promised amnesty, but had offered to give him Joab's role as commander of David's army. Joab killed Amasa. (II Samuel 19:13; 20:4-13)
- Joab also promoted the installing of Adonijah, rather than wait on David to declare Solomon as king. (I Kings 1:7 ff)

Because of these and other matters in which Joab had acted as if he were the king, David charged Solomon,

Now you also know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed; he also shed the blood of war in peace. And he put the blood of war on his belt about his waist, and on his sandals on his feet. So act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace. (I Kings 2:5-6)

2. When David fled to the eastern side of the Jordan, in order to escape Absalom, Barzillai the Gileadite had provided food and other essential items for David and his retinue (II Samuel 17:27-29). David urged Solomon to reward Barzillai's descendants for this kindness.

But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table; for they assisted me when I fled from Absalom your brother. (I Kings 2:7)

3. When David was fleeing from Absalom, Shimei, a Benjamite, had walked along a ridge and shouted curses at David. He even hurled stones at David and his company. David restrained his warriors from killing Shimei. (II Samuel 16:5-13). Following Absalom's death, Shimei rushed to David and begged for mercy. Joab's brother, Abishai wanted to kill Shimei, but David extended mercy to him. Now that David was preparing to die, he commissioned Solomon to deal with Shimei.

Behold, there is with you Shimei the son of Gera the Benjamite, of Bahurim; now it was he who cursed me with a violent curse on the day I went to Mahanaim. But when he came down to me at the Jordan, I swore to him by Jehovah, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' Now therefore, do not let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man;

and you will know what you ought to do to him, and you will bring his gray hair down to Sheol with blood." (I Kings 2:8-9)

Thus, David charged Solomon to clean up these three matters, left over from David's rule.

Solomon's grand coronation

David experienced a resurgence of strength and used his final days to put into order governmental and religious matters so that he could hand over to Solomon a well organized society. I Chronicles 23:1 – 27:34 contain these details. David then assembled in Jerusalem all of the responsible leaders of the nation for a formal passing of the crown to Solomon. Details of this event are in I Chronicles 28:1 – 29:30. At this event, all of the nation's leaders pledged allegiance to King Solomon. The Chronicler then summarized the future character of Solomon's reign.

Jehovah highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him royal majesty which had not been on any king before him in Israel. (I Chronicles 29:25)

Tying up the loose ends (I Kings 2:13-46)

Immediately after David died, Adonijah began to scheme to find a way to unseat Solomon. He approached Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, with a request.

*"You know that the kingdom was mine and that all Israel expected me to be king; however, the kingdom has turned about and become my brother's, for it was his from Jehovah. Now I am making one request of you; do not refuse me." And she said to him, "Speak." Then he said, "Please speak to Solomon the king, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife."¹⁸
Bathsheba said, "Very well; I will speak to the king for you." (I Kings 2:15-18)*

When Adonijah approached Bathsheba, she apprehensively asked him, *Do you come peacefully?* She suspected an evil intention. Adonijah reminded her that by right of succession, the throne should have been his, but cleverly hid his intentions by stating that Solomon became king because it was of Jehovah. Bathsheba was deceived and did not detect his artifice.

Abishag was the young virgin that had been selected to be the aged David's nurse, at times even lying with her head on his shoulder to keep him warm. They did not have sexual intercourse. She remained a virgin (I Kings 1:1-4). Yet, although she had been his nurse, and no more, in the eyes of the people she would have been David's concubine. In the Middle-eastern cultures of that era, taking the harem of a deceased king was equivalent to establishing a claim for the throne. Bathsheba, in her motherly way, had not thought this through and so she naively presented the request to Solomon. Solomon immediately recognized Adonijah's ploy.

When Adonijah had clung to the horns of the altar, and pled with Solomon for mercy, Solomon had promised,

If he is a worthy man, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he will die. (I Kings 1:52)

Thus, when Bathsheba presented the request, Solomon vigorously responded,

"And why are you asking Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him also the kingdom-- for he is my older brother-- even for him, for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah! ... May God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life. ... surely Adonijah shall be put to death today." So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him so that he died. (I Kings 2:22-25)

After this episode, Solomon dealt with Abiathar the priest. Abiathar and Joab had been the two leading conspirators in Adonijah's aborted effort to become king. Solomon noted that as a leader of the insurrection of Adonijah, Abiathar deserved to die; however, because he had carried the Ark of Jehovah as a part of David's company, and because he had been a companion of David's throughout David's years as a fugitive, Solomon would spare Abiathar's life. Even so, Abiathar was removed from the priesthood. He was told to leave the precincts of the tabernacle and go to his inheritance in Anathoth. This is one of those times in which Jehovah used circumstances to accomplish what He had declared at an earlier time. (I Samuel 2:27-36)

Joab, hearing that Abiathar had been dismissed from the priesthood and banished to his farm in Anathoth, feared for his own life. He rushed to the Tabernacle and grabbed hold of the horns of the altar. Solomon sent Benaiah to execute Joab, but Joab refused to leave the altar, the place of refuge. Joab declared, *No, I will die here.* Benaiah returned to Solomon and told him what Joab had said. Solomon instructed Benaiah,

The king said to him, "Do as he has spoken and fall upon him and bury him, that you may remove from me and from my father's house the blood which Joab shed without cause. (I Kings 2:31)

Thus, the first of David's instructions to Solomon was carried out.

Benaiah was appointed commander of the army, in place of Joab. Zadok was appointed priest in the place of Abiathar, in fulfillment of the prophecy noted above.³⁰

The next thing that Solomon did to comply with David's commission was to deal with Shimei. He instructed Shimei to build a house in Jerusalem and to consider himself under city-arrest for the rest of his life. Should he leave Jerusalem, he would be executed. After three years, two of Shimei's slaves ran away to Gath. Shimei pursued them and brought them back. When Solomon was told that Shimei had left the city, he had him executed (I Kings 2:36-46)

After these matters had been disposed of, *Thus the kingdom was established in the hands of Solomon.* (I Kings 2:46)

³⁰ I Samuel 2:35

Solomon's inaugural prayer meeting (I Kings 3:II Chronicles 1:1-13)

Following the above events, Solomon assembled the nation's leaders at the Tabernacle in Gibeon. This was the original Tabernacle, known as The Tent of Meeting, that had been constructed by the Israelites during the Exodus. Jehovah had given the precise design for the Tabernacle. It was the place of sacrifice and had as its central item, the Holy of Holies, wherein dwelt the Ark of the Covenant. However, when Solomon became king, the Ark was not in the Holy of Holies.

During Samuel's earliest years as a prophet, when Eli was the priest, the Israelites were engaged in a losing battle with the Philistines.³¹ Someone came up with the idea that if they would remove the Ark from the Tabernacle, and have the Levites carry it before them into battle that they would gain the victory – Jehovah would be compelled to fight for them. This they did, but to their dismay, the Ark was of no benefit. The Philistines captured the Ark. For seven months, the Ark was kept in various locations among the Philistines, but in every place that it was kept, the Philistines experienced a curse. They realized that they needed to get rid of it. They put the Ark on a cart, pulled by two milk cows, and sent it down the road. It ended up in the Israelite territory of Bethshemesh. The men of Bethshemesh did not respect the Ark, they opened it and looked into it. As a result, many of that region were struck down with a great slaughter.

The people of Bethshemesh sent word to the inhabitants of Kiriathjearim that the Ark had been returned by the Philistines. The people of Kiriathjearim reverently retrieved the Ark and deposited it in the house of Abinadab. His son, Eleazar was consecrated to keep the Ark. There it remained for twenty years.

Early in his reign, David and thirty-thousand select people went to Kiriathjearim and, with difficulty, brought the ark to a special tent in Jerusalem that David had constructed for that purpose. For reasons that are not clear, David did not return the Ark to the Holy of Holies in the Mosaic Tabernacle, which by this time was situated at Gibeon.

After gathering before the Tabernacle at Gibeon, Solomon led the people in offering a thousand burnt offerings on the altar, signifying their acknowledgement that Jehovah was their God. That night, Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, *Ask what I shall give you.* (I Kings 3:5; II Chronicles 1:7). Solomon's response demonstrated the humble heart with which he began his reign.

Now, O Jehovah my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? (I Kings 3:7-9)³²

Jehovah was pleased. Solomon had not asked anything that was of a personal nature, but he had asked for that which would enable him to fulfill the role to which God had called him.

³¹ The following is a summary of events recorded in I Samuel 4:1 – 7:2

³² The II Chronicles 1 record of this prayer is briefer

God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days. If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days." (I Kings 3:11-14; see also II Chronicles 1:11ff)

When Solomon awoke, he went to Jerusalem where the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Tabernacle that David had erected for it. There he offered burnt offerings, peace offerings, and made a feast for his servants. (I Kings 3:15) Thus, at the beginning of his reign, he in a great national gathering offered burnt offerings at the legal place of making offerings (at the Tabernacle of Moses) and at the emotional place of offerings, before the Ark.

Solomon's wisdom and his knowledge of God's creation became famous throughout the region. He was somewhat of an authority on botany and zoology.

Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish. Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom. (I Kings 4:29-34)

Shortly after God had granted his request for wisdom, a case was presented to him that gained him an immediate reputation. Two prostitutes who lived together both become pregnant and delivered baby boys within three days of one another. While both of the babies were but a few days old, one of the women rolled over on her baby, in her sleep, and the baby died. When this woman woke to nurse her baby, and found the baby dead, she quietly put the dead baby in bed with the other woman and took the live baby for her own. In the morning, both women claimed the live baby. How was anyone to decide which woman was telling the truth? The case was brought before Solomon. Solomon asked for a sword and prepared to cut the baby into two halves, so that each woman would have a half. The true mother of the child quickly spoke up and told the king to not kill the child, but to give him to the other woman; the woman who was not the mother urged Solomon to divide the child and that way neither of them would have a child. By this scheme, Solomon had determined the identity of the mother – the one who had pled for the child's life. (I Kings 3:16-28)

When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice. (I Kings 3:28)

During Solomon's reign, Israel enjoyed peace and safety on all sides. Many of the surrounding people groups became Solomon's vassals and paid tribute to Solomon. In order to maintain his royal household, Solomon appointed twelve deputies over Israel who were responsible for providing daily supplies. Each deputy was responsible for providing the household's needs for one month. The requirements for the royal household were somewhat staggering.

Each day the royal household required:³³

300 bushels of fine flour

1800 bushels of meal

10 fat oxen

20 pasture-fed oxen

100 sheep

Unnumbered deer, gazelles, antelopes, and fattened fowl.

Solomon's Israel

(I Kings 5:15-32; 9:26-10:29; II Chronicles 1:15-17; 2; 8:17-9; 28)

David had transformed Israel from a small state into a nation of power. Solomon transformed it from a country with narrow horizons into an international center. The Israelite cities suddenly entered the circle of the most advanced cultures of that era. Solomon became known as one of the great builders of history.³⁴ He extended the limits of Jerusalem, fortifying and embellishing it so that it was a fitting capital for his enlarging kingdom.

Solomon controlled the important trade routes that passed through Palestine, thus greatly enriching the royal coffers. He raised a large army, based on chariots and stationed these in "chariot cities." He also became a broker in the important horse and chariot trade. His rule in Edom and the Gulf of Elath gave him access to the luxury articles of southern Arabia and east Africa.

One thing that the Kingdom of Israel lacked was the technical knowledge required to develop a seafaring commerce. In order to cover this need, Solomon sought help from the experienced mariners of Hiram, king of Tyre, who sent out "ships of Tarshish"³⁵. These were large ships suitable for long sea voyages.

The Building of the Temple

(I Kings 5:1-6:38; 7:13-51; II Chronicles 2:1-5:17)

Solomon's crowning achievement was the building of the Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem. Hiram, King of Tyre, had been a friend and ally of David. He and Solomon continued that relationship. Solomon needed cedar and cypress for the Temple project. He made a deal with Hiram to trade him food for timber. The city of Tyre was the capital of the Sidonians and

³³ I Kings 4:22-23

³⁴ I Kings 9:10-14 hints that at one point, Solomon's building enterprises exceeded his assets. He obtained money from Hiram, King of Tyre, by giving Hiram cities in Galilee; Hiram sent Solomon 120 talents of gold. Hiram was not pleased with the cities that Solomon had given him, calling them, "cabul," which means, "as good as nothing."

³⁵ Tarshish probably was the present day Sardinia.

Lebanese. Israelites were drafted to spend time in Lebanon working with Hiram's Sidonians, cutting down trees, hauling them to the coast and lashing them together into rafts. The rafts were floated south to near Joppa where they put ashore. Then the rafts were broken up and the timber was hauled to where Solomon's craftsmen could prepare it for use in the Temple construction.

In order to accomplish all of this construction, Solomon drafted the men of Israel into work crews of considerable size. 30,000 Israelites were conscripted as forced laborers. They were sent to Lebanon in staggered relays – 10,000 per month. Each man would spend one month in Lebanon and then two months at home.

In addition to these laborers, Solomon determined that there were 153,600 aliens dwelling in Israel. These also were put to forced labor. 70,000 of these were involved in transporting materials to the building site; 80,000 became stonemasons in the mountains; 3,600 were given the responsibility of supervision. Every stone was cut according to the proper shape and dimension so that it could be put together at the Temple site without any sound of hammers or cutting instruments.

One of the chief workers in these projects was a skilled craftsman that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent to make the more technical and artistic items. Coincidentally, this craftsman had the same name as his king, "Hiram."³⁶ He was a half-breed Israelite. His mother was an Israelite who had been born in Dan. She had married into the tribe of Naphtali and when her husband died, she married a Tyrian to whom she bore a son, Hiram. Hiram is described as a man of great skill as an artisan. All of the artistic work, both that which was massive and that which was delicate, was created by Hiram or under his supervision (I Kings 7:14-47; II Chronicles 2:14).³⁷

Solomon began the construction of the Temple in the fourth year of his reign (971 BC) and completed it seven years later (I Kings 6:1, 38). In addition to the Temple of Jehovah, Solomon built a palace for himself. It also was quite elaborate and took thirteen years to construct. Thus for twenty years he was engaged in the construction of these two structures (I Kings 7:1-12; II Chronicles 8:1).

The dedication of the Temple (I Kings 8:1-9:9; II Chronicles 5:1-7:27)

The solemn event of dedicating the Temple consisted of four acts which are summarized to some degree in either the Kings or Chronicles account. The two accounts agree in their main substance, in most cases they agree word for word, but their emphasis is different

1. The transfer of the Ark to the Temple
2. Solomon's dedicatory prayer
3. The sacrifice upon the altar
4. Jehovah's answer to Solomon's prayer

³⁶ In II Chronicles 2:11-14, both the name of the King of Tyre and the name of this craftsman are spelled, "Hiram."

³⁷ The skill of Hiram is described in almost the same terms as those used in Exodus 31:3, to Bezaleel, the master craftsman in the construction of the Tabernacle. The difference is in the source. Bezaleel's skill was a supernatural endowment, whereas Hiram's seems to have been a natural endowment.

After the Temple was completed, the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the Temple and placed in the Most Holy Place. At this time, there was nothing in the Ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses had put there at Horeb.³⁸ When the Ark was deposited in its proper place and the priests retired from that room, the entire Temple was filled with a cloud, so thick that the priests could not stand to minister. (I Kings 8:10-11)

Solomon stood upon the altar, in front of all of the assembly, then he knelt and prayed a lengthy dedicatory prayer. In the prayer there was a rehearsal of God's promises and His faithfulness, followed by a very long recitation of situations in which Israel or individuals in the nation might repair to the Temple as a place where God would hear prayer and respond.

*But will God indeed dwell on the earth?
Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You,
how much less this house which I have built!*

Yet have regard to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer which Your servant prays before You today; that Your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place of which You have said, 'My name shall be there,' to listen to the prayer which Your servant shall pray toward this place.

Listen to the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place;

hear in heaven Your dwelling place; hear and forgive.
(I Kings 8:27-30; II Chronicles 6:12-21)

Solomon acknowledged that God cannot be contained in a building. Yet, he prayed that this building would be a special place toward which God's ear would be tuned. Solomon then began a long recitation of situations in which that might occur (I Kings 8:31-53; II Chronicles 6:18-42)

- If someone swears an oath in this place, hear the testimony so sworn and bring judgment against the evil doer and justifying the righteous;
- If Israel is defeated by an enemy because they have sinned, if they turn again and make supplication in this house, then hear from heaven and forgive their sin;
- When there is no rain because we have sinned, and we turn from our sin and pray toward this place, hear from heaven and forgive the sin and bring rain;
- If there is famine or pestilence, crops destroyed by insects, if their enemy besieges them, if there is plague or sickness, and people repent and spread their hands toward this Temple, then hear from heaven and respond to the hearts of the people;
- If a foreigner hears of how you answer prayer in this place, and he comes to pray in this place, hear from heaven and grant his requests;
- When Your people go out into battle and while in that place they turn toward Jerusalem and pray toward this Temple, hear their prayer and respond;

³⁸ Hebrews 9:4 states that in addition to the tablets, the Ark contained a golden jar of manna, and Aaron's rod. Such was the original content of the Ark (Exodus 16:32-34; Numbers 17:1-11). Evidently, by the time the Ark was placed in the Temple, two of the items had vanished. Perhaps they were lost when the Philistines captured the Ark, or when the men of Beth-shemesh looked into the Ark.

- When they sin, and you allow them to be captured by enemies, and they repent in that distant land and pray toward this Temple, hear their prayer, forgive them, and restore them.

After Solomon finished the prayer, fire came down from heaven and devoured the offering that had been placed upon the altar (II Chronicles 7:1). The priests had been divided into 24 courses, each course having a period of time to serve. On this day, all of the courses had sanctified themselves and all took part in praising God in song, with musical instruments and occasional outbursts of praise. The people of Israel spent the next seven days before the Temple, praising God and making offerings. Coincidentally, when the seven days ended, it was time to observe the feast of Tabernacles. So, the people celebrated that feast for seven days, bringing to a total, fourteen days that the people spent in Jerusalem in this grand celebration. (II Chronicles 7:4-10; I Kings 8:2, 65; Leviticus 23:33ff)

Following this fourteen-day dedication and celebration, Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream and assured him that He had heard Solomon's prayer and that the Temple would be all that Solomon had prayed.

I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

*If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain,
or if I command the locust to devour the land,
or if I send pestilence among My people,
and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray
and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways,
then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

*Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.
For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever,
and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.*

As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, even to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel.'

But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

As for this house, which was exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has Jehovah done thus to this land and to this house?'

And they will say, 'Because they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers who brought them from the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this adversity on them.'" (II Chronicles 7:14-22; I Kings 9:1-9)

How tragic to survey the history of Israel from this point forward. Jehovah had made a contract/covenant with them. They could have had a blessed existence far beyond anything that any people anywhere experienced, before or after, because Jehovah keeps His word. They broke the contract.

Solomon's failure

Solomon was known as the wisest man of his time. That wisdom was displayed in three ways that were highly regarded at that time:

1. Judging was one of the areas in which wisdom was highly prized in rulers of that era. Solomon early on displayed that wisdom, as illustrated in the matter of the two prostitutes. This account is included in I Kings 3 as an illustration of Solomon's wisdom.
2. A second way in which wisdom was valued in that culture was the ability to answer riddles. The Queen of Sheba (southern Arabia) came to visit Solomon because she had heard of his great wealth and wisdom. She tested him with riddles and soon discovered that he could give an answer to any puzzle that she presented (I Kings 10:1-13; II Chronicles 9:1-12). Claus Westermann commented, "This game of asking and answering riddles was the form of intellectual competition which once occupied something like the place in men's social life that book reading occupies today. Reading detective novels is for a well educated people today a very similar form of participation in a riddle game."³⁹
3. A third way in which Solomon exercised wisdom was in composing maxims, songs, and fables about animals or plants (I Kings 5:9-14). Recent studies of Middle-eastern cultures demonstrate that in these pre-literary societies, proverbial wisdom gave birth to riddles, maxims, songs and stories or fables of animals and plants. Solomon's three thousand proverbs, and one thousand-five songs (I Kings 4:32) had their place in the festivals, village gatherings and festival evenings where this sort of conversation was fostered.

Wisdom in that time was a type of international currency. People were willing and eager to learn from other nations in this field. The Queen of Sheba was not the only ruler to seek out Solomon's wisdom and to bring gifts when they came to receive it.

So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth were seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart. They brought every man his gift, articles of silver and gold, garments, weapons, spices, horses and mules, so much year by year. (II Chronicles 9:22-24)

Indeed, Solomon was intellectually and practically wise. However, he was human. His humanity was displayed in many ways that resulted in the downfall of all that he had built. First was his creating a monarchy that mirrored the monarchies of surrounding empires. One way that this is displayed is in his making of alliances through marriage. The most notable was his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (I Kings 3:1; 7:8; II Chronicles 8:11), but he also developed one of the largest harems of any ever recorded which included princesses from surrounding nations (I Kings 11:1-3). Sadly, Solomon not only permitted these women from other nations to worship their false gods, in time he provided places for them to worship and even, in his old age, began to worship these false gods alongside of his worship of Jehovah (I Kings 11:4-10).

³⁹ Westermann, page 140 Westermann wrote this in 1962, when reading detective novels was much more popular than it is in the 21st Century.

As a result of this apostasy, Jehovah informed Solomon that the kingdom would be torn away from him and his family. Jehovah would not do this in Solomon's lifetime because of the promise that He had given to David. Jehovah also said that he would leave one tribe with Solomon's son (see following frame, *Counting the Tribes*), but the other tribes would be torn away and give to Solomon's servant (I Kings 11:9-13). However, the peace that characterized the earlier years of his reign would end. Jehovah raised up adversaries against Solomon: Hadad, the Edomite, Rezon of Zobah, and one of Solomon's own military leaders, Jeroboam. (I Kings 11:9-40). After his death, because of his unfaithfulness to Jehovah, the kingdom was divided between one of Solomon's sons and Jeroboam.

Solomon's reign differed from that of Saul and David in many respects.

- Saul and David remained men of the people. Solomon's rule was impersonal, a type of kingship that needed to make itself seen and felt by a brilliant display of power and pomp.
- Solomon was the first Israelite king to maintain a harem like the other oriental kings.
- He was the first to have a great crowd of servants, magnificent buildings and huge expenditures.
- A great distance separated the king from the people. The king was surrounded by a ceremonial court that hardly allowed him to come into contact with the people. The king became "His Majesty."
- A ruling privileged class developed and for the first time in Israel there were two classes who were opposed to one another.
- When Solomon became king, the nation was a confederation of tribes. During his reign, the central government dominated the land and tribal government became a thing of the past.
- Previously, the army of Israel would be mustered out when there was an enemy to fight. Solomon conscripted and kept a large standing army.
- No significant taxes were imposed for the support of the monarchy under Saul and David. Under Solomon, significant levies were imposed on the populace.

The record of the reigns of Saul and David differs significantly from the record of Solomon's reign as far as prophecy is concerned. No prophetic word is heard in the record of Solomon's reign until the closing chapter; that word is Ahijah's announcement to Jeroboam that the kingdom would be divided and that he would become the leader of ten tribes. (I Kings 11:29ff).

The exact age of Solomon at the time of his death is uncertain. He was one of three sons born to David and Bathsheba⁴⁰ during David's thirty-year reign in Jerusalem. His birth is recorded in II Samuel 12:24. Several events requiring a number of years transpired before Solomon was born. Harmonizing II Samuel 11:1ff with I Chronicles 20:1ff, it would appear that Solomon was born at least two years after the final defeat of the Ammonites (see #10 in Overview of David's Life – bullet 14).⁴¹ Although the exact timing of Solomon's birth must remain speculation, considering

⁴⁰ I Chronicles 3:5

⁴¹ David's adultery with Bathsheba occurred while the army of Israel was fighting the Ammonites. Nine months later, the child that resulted from their adulterous act was born. That child died. Some time after that, following an appropriate time of mourning, David and Bathsheba had intercourse again and nine months later Solomon was born. Fitting this into the narrative of David's thirty years in Jerusalem

the events that transpired before his birth, and the fact that he was coronated at the close of David's thirty-year reign in Jerusalem, and the fact that he called himself a "child" at the time of his dedicatory prayer (I Kings 3:7), he probably was 18 – 20 years old when he became king. Josephus, the Jewish historian, in writing the history of the Jews for the Romans, emphasizes Solomon's youthfulness at the time of his enthronement. He sets Solomon's age at fourteen, but the method by which he determines this doesn't fit the biblical account.⁴² Since Solomon reigned forty years, he would have been about 60 years old when he died. The date of his death was 931 BC. See ADDENDUM C for the method of dating this period.

As we close our glimpse of Solomon, we cannot avoid the obvious – Solomon violated the clearly stated standards that Jehovah had set for Israel's kings (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). We recall the wonderful prayer that Solomon offered at the dedication of the Temple and Jehovah's strong and marvelous response – including the firm promises of blessing and protection along with the warnings of dire results for breaking the covenant. Solomon chose to experience the latter, rather than the former and the nation of Israel still is experiencing the consequences.

The Kingdom Divided

One of the many building projects undertaken by Solomon was the unifying of the city of Jerusalem within a single wall. David had built a strong wall around the City of David (Zion) and no army had attempted to breach it. However, just outside of the wall was a ravine that separated Zion from Moriah and Ophel. Solomon built a fortified citadel and closed the ravine gap in the wall, thus encircling the entire city with one unbroken wall. The aliens living among the Israelites were conscripted into forced labor crews to construct all Solomon's building projects undertaken after the completion of the Temple. No Israelites were among these post-Temple forced labor crews; Israelites either were conscripted into the army, or were overseers of the alien forced labor crews (I Kings 9:15-23).

One of the men overseeing a portion of the Jerusalem project was an Israelite soldier named Jeroboam, from the tribe of Ephraim. Jeroboam fulfilled his duties so well that he was promoted to the position of overseer of all the forced laborers that had been conscripted from within the borders of Ephraim. One day, as Jeroboam was leaving the city, he was approached by the prophet, Ahijah, who was wearing a brand new cloak. As they walked along together, Ahijah suddenly took off the new cloak and tore it into twelve pieces. He told the startled Jeroboam to pick up ten pieces of the torn garment and then declared,

requires us to conclude that at least a decade, and possibly more, had passed between the time of David's beginning rule in Jerusalem and the birth of Solomon.

⁴² Josephus, in *Antiquities of the Jews* (Book VIII, 7:8), wrote, "So Solomon died when he was already an old man, having reigned eighty years, and lived ninety-four." All biblical records state that Solomon reigned forty years. This is typical of the manner in which Josephus described Jewish history; he spun it to impress the Romans with the ancient status of Jewry.

for thus says Jehovah, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give you ten tribes ... because they have forsaken Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon; and they have not walked in My ways, doing what is right in My sight and observing My statutes and My ordinances, as his father David did. (I Kings 11:31, 33)

The prophecy continued with the statement that because of His promise to David, Jehovah would not rend the kingdom during Solomon's lifetime, nor would the Davidic dynasty lose the entire kingdom; they would be granted one tribe. (I Kings 11:34-36).

Counting the Tribes

The twelve tribes of Israel descended from the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel).

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

However, when the aged Jacob (Israel) met Joseph, he declared that Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, would not be counted as his grandsons but would be considered his sons. Thus, Ephraim and Manasseh were consecrated as tribes, resulting in thirteen tribes [some classify Ephraim and Manasseh as half-tribes] (Genesis 48:8-22). Ephraim and Manasseh were given land allotments the same as the other tribes. Since the descendents of Levi were the priestly tribe, they were not given a geographical territory, but were given cities scattered throughout the allotments of the other tribes. Because of this, Levi usually was not counted when the tribes were numbered. The result was twelve tribes with twelve territories, plus the Levites. As prophesied by Jacob (Genesis 48:13-20) Ephraim became stronger and more dominant than Manasseh and thus Ephraim frequently was called the House of Joseph, as in I Kings 11:28

In reality, three tribes fell to the Kingdom of Judah (Judah, Benjamin, and when Jeroboam apostatized, most of the Levites moved to Judah). Judah and Benjamin were on the border near Jerusalem, and because of their geographical location and their common history with David, they frequently were thought of as being one tribe rather than two (According to I Kings 12:21 and II Chronicles 11:3, 23, Judah and Benjamin are reckoned as belonging to Rehoboam - the Kingdom of Judah). The prophecy that one tribe would be left to the Davidic dynasty reflects this understanding.

The same general promises and warnings were given to Jeroboam that had been given to Saul, David, and Solomon,

Then it will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. (I Kings 11:38)

After this prophecy, Jeroboam attempted a revolt, which seems to have been influenced not only by the prophecy of Ahijah but also by the heavy taxes and other burdens that Solomon had imposed upon the people.⁴³ Solomon crushed the revolt and Jeroboam fled to Egypt where he remained until after Solomon's death.

The Meeting at Shechem and its Aftermath

I Kings 12:1-24 II Chronicles 10:1- 11:4

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, inherited the throne from his father but inheritance did not guarantee kingship. Although the three previous kings of the nation were chosen by Jehovah, those over whom they were to reign, by common consent, had accepted them as the king. In each instance, a covenant of sorts had been enacted at the time of the coronation. Rehoboam and the tribal leaders gathered at Shechem for this confirmation event. Shechem was in the northern territory (Israel). It was the location where Joshua had held the general assembly of the tribes after the completion of the conquest of Canaan – the time that they renewed their covenant with Jehovah (Joshua 24). Shechem was an appropriate place for the installation of the new king. Before the planned confirmation event, the leaders of the northern tribes summoned Jeroboam to return from Egypt. The northern tribes had a petition that they wanted to present to Rehoboam before they installed him as king. They wanted Jeroboam to be one of their spokesmen when they met with Rehoboam. The petition consisted of a plea for Rehoboam to lighten the heavy burden of taxes and other obligations that Solomon had imposed upon the people.

Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you. (I Kings 12:4; II Chronicles 10:4)

Rehoboam told the Israelites to give him three days to think about their request. He immediately turned to the elders who had served with his father, Solomon. These were experienced men, seasoned by years of service. They knew the people. Their counsel was to yield to the request.

Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." (I Kings 12:7; II Chronicles 10:7)

Evidently Rehoboam did not like this counsel and so he turned to the young men who grew up with him. These were young men who had grown up as a part of the privileged class. They never had worked at hard labor. Throughout their lives they had been the benefactors of Solomon's heavy taxation policies. Their counsel was the opposite of that which the older men had given.

The young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!' But you shall speak to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins!'¹¹ 'Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my

⁴³ Such implication can be seen in the words of the Israelites to Rehoboam (I Kings 12:1ff)

father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions." (I Kings 12:10-11; II Chronicles 10:10-11)

When the Israeli delegation returned to Rehoboam on the third day, he ignored the advice of the elders and gave the arrogant reply of his young companions. The result was the immediate defection of the northern tribes.

When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; To your tents, O Israel! Now look after your own house, David!" So Israel departed to their tents. (I Kings 12:16; II Chronicles 10:16)

Thus, the kingdom was divided. These events turned out this way because God was behind the scenes orchestrating the division. Rehoboam evidently remained in Shechem for a brief time. He sent Adoram, who was over all of the forced labor, to insist that the people return to their work. The Israelis responded by stoning him to death. When word of this rebellious act reached Rehoboam, he jumped into his chariot and sped back to the safety of Jerusalem. (I Kings 12:18; II Chronicles 10:18)

The northern tribes quickly installed Jeroboam as their king. This kingdom became known as the Kingdom of Israel. Rehoboam ruled the southern kingdom, which came to be known as the Kingdom of Judah. (I Kings 12:17, 20; II Chronicles 10:19)

Upon his return to Jerusalem, Rehoboam called out the armies of Judah and Benjamin and prepared to launch a military campaign against Jeroboam. Rehoboam was determined to put an end to what he saw as rebellion and that he had a right to suppress it. Jehovah spoke through the prophet, Shemaiah, that Rehoboam and the people of Judah should not fight against their relatives, the people of Israel, because the division was instigated by Jehovah. The army disbanded and the mission did not take place. (I Kings 12:21-24; II Chronicles 11:1-4)

Jeroboam's Religious Innovations

Jeroboam quickly initiated his own building program. Shechem and Peniel were cities with a long history. Both had experienced decay and some destruction in previous wars. He rebuilt and fortified both of these cities, because of their strategic locations on the roads that traversed the area. Shechem became his first residence, although he later relocated to Thirza (I Kings 14:17).

Jeroboam realized that the security of his kingdom was threatened because of the religious nature of his people. The Ark of the Covenant, residing in the Temple in Jerusalem, had become the central place of worship for all of the tribes, since David had brought the Ark to that location. According to Mosaic Law, there were national religious feasts and ceremonies that took place throughout the year that required gathering before the ark (first before the Tabernacle and later before the Temple). Jeroboam reasoned, and probably correctly, that if the people of Israel traveled to Jerusalem for religious festivals throughout the year that they would tend to reunite with their relatives in Judah and in time they would return to Rehoboam. Jeroboam consulted with his advisors and they decided that in order to prevent this from happening, Jeroboam should create an alternative to the Ark.

Two sites were chosen at which this alternative would be presented. The first was Bethel. Bethel long had been considered somewhat of a sacred site because this is where Jacob had experienced the dream of the ladder to heaven and the promise that his descendents would be as numerous as the dust of the earth, etc. Originally named *Luz*, Jacob renamed it, *Bethel*, meaning, *house of God*. Jacob placed a memorial stone and gave it that same name, *House of God – Bethel* (Genesis 28:10-22). Bethel was in Ephraim, the southern portion of Jeroboam's kingdom. Jeroboam may have tried to convince his people that Jehovah would reveal Himself to them at this place, even as he had revealed Himself to their forefather, Jacob.

The other site was Dan. Dan was at the northern extreme of Jeroboam's kingdom. It was located on the source of the Jordan River, and had been considered to be a sacred site since ancient times. During the period of the judges a man named, Micah, living in the hill country of Ephraim, had created for himself a shrine, which included some images that he had made, and he hired a Levite from Bethlehem to be his priest. This was his private place of worship. When the Danites passed through the region on their way to the northern part of Canaan, looking for a permanent place to settle, they stole the shrine and took the Levite with them. After capturing the Sidonian city of *Laish*, they renamed it, *Dan*. They set up the shrine that they had stolen from Micah and installed the Levite as the priest in that location. Later, one of Moses' grandsons and his descendents served as priests at this shrine. (Judges 17:7- 18:31)

Thus, two locations that already had some sort of religious connotations were selected as worship sites. Since one was in the far north and one was in the south, they were convenient places to which the people could go for religious activities. Scripture calls these sites *high places*, because they are not places of worship prescribed by Jehovah. Erecting worship buildings as shrines could not compete with the Temple which contained the Ark. Therefore, Jeroboam erected golden calves at these sites, and said to his people.

It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt. (I Kings 12:28)

It is somewhat striking that Jeroboam used the same language for his images that Aaron had used for the golden calf, which he had made during the Exodus (Exodus 32:4). The only difference is Aaron's singular – *your god*, whereas Jeroboam spoke in the plural – *your gods*. Jeroboam was playing religious games with the people. In essence he was saying that this was not a new religion but that this was the form of worship which our fathers used in the desert, with Aaron himself leading the way.

In Canaanite religion, as well as other religions of that era, a bull calf was a symbol of power and fertility. The focus in worship before these objects was not on the idol itself, but on the God that it symbolized. The same symbol was used for the worship of different Gods. In none of the relics that have been discovered is the bull-calf itself the object of worship, but rather it is the throne, or pillar on which the god rests. Thus, Jeroboam was creating a different sort of Jehovistic worship, other than that which was prescribed by Jehovah Himself. Regardless of the rationale, it is easy to see how Canaanite influences quickly entered into the worship of the northern tribes.

Another move that Jeroboam made was to move to the eighth month the feast which should be kept on the seventh month.

Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. (I Kings 12:32)

The feast for which Jeroboam's feast was the substitute was the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34ff), which was celebrated at harvest time. The corn in the north matured later than it did in the south, so this made it easier for Jeroboam to create an alternate feast. He did retain the day of the month, the fifteenth, in his innovation.

The sin of Jeroboam is multifaceted (I Kings 12:27-33; II Chronicles 11:14-15)

- He either forbade or induced the people to forsake going to the House of Jehovah in Jerusalem.
- He set up houses of "high places" as substitutes for Jehovah's sanctified place of worship. These lacked the presence of God, the *Shekinah*, for which no symbol invented by man could be a substitute.
- He ordained priests who were not Levites
- He created a feast for the people, in opposition to the one ordained by Jehovah
- He created graven images
- He sought to create a substitute for the annual atonement that Jehovah had prescribed as necessary for the removal of individual and national sins.

To their credit, the Levites who lived in Israel, as well as those in Israel who had their hearts on seeking Jehovah, left Israel and moved to Judah. These innovations were too much for them to bear. (II Chronicles 11:13-16)

Jehovah did not leave Jeroboam alone in his apostasy. While Jeroboam was standing beside the altar at Bethel, preparing to burn incense, a prophet appeared. God had sent the prophet from Judah to Bethel to deliver a word of condemnation against Jeroboam's innovations. His word was predictive as well as condemning.

He cried against the altar by the word of Jehovah, and said, "O altar, altar, thus says Jehovah, 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" ... "This is the sign which Jehovah has spoken, 'Behold, the altar shall be split apart and the ashes which are on it shall be poured out.'" (I Kings 13:2-3)

Jeroboam immediately reacted, he pointed at the man and said, *seize him*. As soon as he spoke these words, Jeroboam's outstretched arm and hand were paralyzed and he could not withdraw it. Immediately the altar split apart and the ashes were poured out on the ground.

The king pled with the prophet to entreat Jehovah, that his arm and hand might be restored. The prophet did so and Jeroboam's limb was restored to normal (for further information on this prophet see ADDENDUM A, page 5, "The Unnamed Prophet who Believed a Lie").

Even this episode did not cause Jeroboam to repent. He continued in his religious aberrations, resulting in his dynasty's destruction.

Another episode took place that confirmed Jehovah's rejection of Jeroboam and his dynasty. Jeroboam's son, Abijah,⁴⁴ became sick. Jeroboam, anxious about the future of his dynasty, and also concerned about his son, sought assurance. He instructed his wife to disguise herself and take some gifts to the aged prophet Ahijah, who lived in Shiloh. This was the prophet who had torn his cloak into twelve pieces and told Jeroboam that Jehovah had chosen him to lead Israel. Ahijah was almost blind, so the disguise really wasn't needed. When the woman came into the house, Ahijah, by a word received from Jehovah, knew who she was, even though he could not see her. He greeted her with a declaration that he had a harsh message for her from Jehovah. In summary, the word was that Jeroboam not only disobeyed Jehovah, but had not respected Jehovah as God; He had been cavalier in his disobedience. Therefore, every male descendent of Jeroboam would die. None would be left to carry on the family name. The son who was sick at home would die as soon as his mother stepped into the house, and he would be the only male who would be buried with respect. Every other male who died would be eaten by dogs or devoured by vultures. Not only will the House of Jeroboam suffer, but because the people of Israel made private idols for themselves, Jehovah will allow them to be conquered and as a captive people removed to a region beyond the Euphrates River. Indeed, as soon as the woman stepped into the house, the boy died (I Kings 14:1-18).

Jeroboam ruled Israel for twenty-one years (I Kings 14:20). By contrast, Rehoboam reigned in Jerusalem for seventeen years, having become king when he was forty-one years old (I Kings 14:21). War and conflict between the two kingdoms was constant.

Rehoboam

I Kings 14:21-31; II Chronicles 11:1 – 12:16

For the first three years of his reign, Rehoboam earnestly followed the Law of God. Early on, Rehoboam and his kingdom were strengthened by the Levites and other righteous people who left Israel and became residents of Judah (II Chronicles 11:13-17). He built up and fortified the cities of Judah, appointing his sons as rulers in some of the cities. It appeared that Judah under Rehoboam had a great future.

Sadly, once his kingdom was established and all was secure, he began to forsake the Law of God. He created a harem, although much more modest than Solomon's – Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, fathering twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters (II Chronicles 11:21).⁴⁵ He named his son, Abijam, as his successor.

⁴⁴ Abijah means, *Jehovah is Father*, or *My Father is Jehovah*. The fact that Jeroboam gave such a name to this son indicates that in spite of his apostasy, there still was some sort of formal attachment to Jehovah.

⁴⁵ Interestingly, the language of the text implies that the first step in his apostasy was the setting up of his harem. After describing the faithfulness of Rehoboam in II Chronicles 11:14-17, verse 18 begins with, a

Perhaps the haughtiness displayed in his reply to Jeroboam and the people of Israel at Shechem began to emerge. Even though the worship of Jehovah continued according to all that Jehovah had commanded, the various religions of the Canaanites and their sensuous worship practices were added to Judean life..

Judah did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done, with the sins which they committed. For they also built for themselves high places and sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree. There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which Jehovah dispossessed before the sons of Israel. (I Kings 14:22-24)

As a result of this glaring apostasy, Jehovah released Shishak, the Egyptian Pharaoh to come against Judah during the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign. The fact that a Pharaoh came against Judah signaled a change of Egyptian attitude toward Judah and Israel. Solomon had married the daughter of one of the last Pharaohs of the twenty-first dynasty. Because of this marriage alliance, Egypt had protected Israel's southern border. A new dynasty, the twenty-second, began with the enthronement of Shishak. Initially, Shishak was friendly toward Jeroboam, providing him refuge when he rebelled against Solomon, but that changed sometime after the division of the kingdom. Although the biblical record focuses on Shishak's invasion of Judah, the Egyptian record, along with archeological discoveries in northern Palestine, verify that he also made an incursion into Israel, although it was not as severe as his invasion of Judah.⁴⁶

When Shishak began to succeed in conquering the Judean fortified cities, the rulers of these cities flocked to Jerusalem. They hoped that they could find safety by huddling together within its walls. The prophet, Shemaiah, brought to this trembling crowd a word from Jehovah,

Thus says Jehovah, 'You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak. (II Chronicles 12:5)

Fearfully, Rehoboam and the princes of Judah humbled themselves before Jehovah, declaring that His judgment was righteous – they deserved what they were getting (II Chronicles 12:6). Jehovah responding by promising that He would not allow Shishak to destroy Jerusalem, However, Rehoboam and the princes would become vassals to Shishak so that they might learn the difference between serving Jehovah and serving an earthly potentate.

Jerusalem surrendered to Shishak and, as Jehovah had promised, the city was not destroyed and its occupants were not slain nor carried away as prisoners. However, Shishak ravished the city of its opulent appointments. He took all of the treasures out of the Temple and all of the

particle which is reflected in the NAS but not the KJV or NIV, "they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years (faithful to Jehovah), then..."

⁴⁶ Shishak (Shishonq in Archaeological data) was the founder of the Twenty-second dynasty. The gold-masked body of Shishak was discovered intact in his burial chamber at Tanis in 1938. His triumphal inscription at Karnak (ancient Thebes) gives a long list of his conquests, which include towns in all parts of Judah and extend up the coastal plain, across the Plain of Esdraelon into Gilead. A part of Shishak's stela has been excavated at Megiddo, proving that he did take and occupy this important city, as recounted in the Karnak inscription. (see Merrill Unger, *Archeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) 1954) pages 221 FN, 237-238, 240

treasures out of the palace. He even took the 500 golden shields which Solomon had made to hang on the walls of the palace.⁴⁷

After Shishak had abandoned Jerusalem and the kingdom tried to get back to normal, Rehoboam replaced these shields with ones made of brass.⁴⁸ However, instead of hanging them on the walls of the palace, they were kept in the guard house. When Rehoboam would go to the Temple, he did so with great pomp. His guards would carry these shields as a part of the parade and then after the show was over, they stored them back in the guard house (I Kings 14:26-28; II Chronicles 12:10-11).

There were some good things that remained in Judah and Jerusalem, even during and after Rehoboam's apostasy. Rehoboam was able to regain some strength and power (II Chronicles 12:13).

In spite of his repentance and humiliation, Rehoboam's epithet is a sad one: *He did evil because he did not set his heart to seek Jehovah*. (II Chronicles 12:14)

Abijam, Judah's Second King I Kings 15:1-8; II Chronicles 13:1-14:1

One of the problems immediately encountered in attempting to harmonize the Kings and Chronicles records of Rehoboam's successor is the matter of names and identity.

I Kings	II Chronicles
14:31 <i>And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. And Abijam his son became king in his place.</i>	11:22 <i>Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as head and leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king.</i>
15:1-2 <i>Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom.</i>	13:1-2 <i>In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.</i>

At first glance, there seems to be a contradiction in the accounts concerning the name of the new king and the identity of his mother. First we consider the matter of the king's name.

- I Kings identifies Rehoboam's successor as Abijam, which means, *father of the sea*.
- II Chronicles identifies the new king as Abijah, which means *Jah is father, or my father is Jah*⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold and 300 normal sized shields of beaten gold, and these were hung as ornamentation on the interior walls of the palace (II Chronicles 9:15-16)

⁴⁸ Both the Hebrew and Greek terms used here can mean copper, brass, or bronze.

⁴⁹ *Jah* is a shortened form of *Jahweh* (Jehovah)

In Hebrew, the names appear quite similar. The vowel points are identical; the only difference is in the final consonant of each name (Hebrew is read right to left).

Abijam: אַבִּיָּם

Abijah: אַבִּיָּה

The complimentary records in Kings and Chronicles clearly indicate that both names are applied to the same man. It appears that in the transmission of the text, someone at some point mis-copied the final letter of one or the other forms of the name.⁵⁰ Since the textual scholars that we have researched are of the opinion that Abijam was the original form, we will use that name in the following discussion of this king.

The other question has to do with identity of the King's mother. From the above chart it is observed that both I Kings 15:2 and II Chronicles 11:22 state that Abijam's mother was Maacah. I Kings 15:2 adds the information that she was *the daughter of Abishalom*. For the following reasons we conclude that this name refers to David's son, the rebellious Absalom.

- This name, spelled in this manner, only occurs twice in the Old Testament and in both instances it is in association with this Maacah⁵¹
- Both *Absalom* and *Abishalom* are different spellings of the expression, *My Father is Peace*. Therefore, they are the same name.

Absalom had only one daughter, Tamar (II Samuel 14:27), who was fifty years old when Solomon died. Maacah probably was the daughter of Tamar who had married Uriel of Gibeah. If that is the case, Maacah was the grand-daughter of Absalom. It is not unusual in Scripture for a grand-child to be classed as the child of his grandparent, indicating his or her lineage, especially when the ancestor was an important person. This is the explanation that Josephus gives of the king's lineage.⁵²

The spelling of Abijam's mother's name, *Micaiah*, in II Chronicles 13:2 (*Micayahu* in Hebrew - מִיכָיָהוּ), is just a different spelling of the same name. Elsewhere in II Chronicles (11:20-21) the name is spelled as it is in the passages cited above, *Maacah* (מַעַכָּה).

Abijam reigned only three years and during that time followed in the footsteps of his father, Rehoboam. Although he claimed to be faithful to Jehovah and boasted about Judah's faithfulness to the Temple rites (II Chronicles 13:10-11), his heart was not wholly given to God.

⁵⁰ According to Hebrew and textual scholars, C.F. Keil and Frederich Delitzsch, “אַבִּיָּם (Abijam) *i.e.* father of the sea, is unquestionably the older form of the name which was reduced to אַבִּיָּה...” K&D, Volume III, page 216

⁵¹ I Kings 15:2, 10

⁵² Josephus, *Antiquities*, 10, 1

For David's sake and because of the promises given to David, Jehovah did not reject Abijam, but allowed him to pass the throne on to his son, Asa (I Kings 15:4-5)

During his brief three year reign, Abijam and Jeroboam engaged in a significant war, which consisted of one decisive battle. The battle was fought near Bethel, at the southern end of the Ephraim mountain range. The armies that faced each other were of considerable size. The army of Israel consisted of 800,000 warriors, whereas the army of Judah was half that size, 400,000 warriors.

The engagement began with Abijam's climbing to one of the small peaks of the Ephraim Mountain range, Mount Zemariam,⁵³ and shouting an accusation against the army of Israel. The location is near the Benjamin/Israel border, but it appears to have been in the territory claimed by Israel.

Abijam's speech and the result of that speech is both interesting and informative. Abijam declared that the existence of Jeroboam's kingdom was the result of a revolt against Jehovah who had given the kingdom to David and his sons forever. He stated that Jeroboam, with the help of worthless and frivolous men, rebelled against Solomon, who was his lord.

Abijam was careful to put the entire blame on Jeroboam and not acknowledge any culpability on the part of his father, Rehoboam. Abijam declared that the reason that Rehoboam was not able to put down this rebellion was because he was an inexperienced man and soft of heart. The second of these attributes certainly does not fit the facts; Rehoboam did not demonstrate any soft-heartedness when he responded brashly to the leaders of Israel at Shechem.⁵⁴

Abijam declared that Judah would win the coming conflict in spite of Israel's huge army because of the difference in their religion. In his tirade he declared,

- That Israel's army was a great multitude
- Israel had the golden calves
- Israel had driven out the Levites, the true priests
- Israel had installed priests who were not of the priestly tribe
- Israel installed as priests anyone who wanted to be one, and who brought a young bull and seven rams as a consecration offering.
- The gods that these priests served were "no gods."

Concerning Judah, Abijam declared,

- Jehovah is our God
- The descendents of Aaron the true priests, minister in the Temple at Jerusalem
- The priestly tribe of Levi ministers in the Temple
- All of the prescribed Temple rites are observed by these priests and Levites in the Temple
- We have true priests with us, today, who will sound the trumpets.

⁵³ Identifying the exact location of Mount Zemariam is difficult. There is a city by that name mentioned in Joshua 18:22, and the natural conclusion is that this small mountain was near this city.

⁵⁴ I Kings 12:10-11; II Chronicles 10:10-11

Abijam closed his speech with a confident declaration,

Now behold, God is with us at our head and His priests with the signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against Jehovah God of your fathers, for you will not succeed. (II Chronicles 13:12)

Abijam cites the signal trumpets blown by the priests as a major reason for his confidence. Numbers Chapter 10 records Jehovah's words to Moses, instructing him in the construction of these trumpets. The trumpets fulfilled the same function that bugles occupy in more modern day armies. Depending on how they were blown, they were used to

- summon the congregation to gather before the Tabernacle
- summon the leaders to come and meet with Moses
- direct the various portions of the camp as to when they were to begin the march as Israel set out on the next leg of the exodus
- celebrate their offerings on special days, as a reminder that Jehovah was their God

In addition to these utilitarian and celebratory uses, when going into battle, the trumpets were a means of engaging Jehovah in their battle.

When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before Jehovah your God, and be saved from your enemies.

Thus, when Abijam spoke of the trumpets of Jehovah, the army of Israel had to be impressed, because they knew the history of the use of these instruments.

While Abijam was making his speech Jeroboam was executing a maneuver calculated to destroy the army of Judah. Because he had 800,000 warriors – double the size of Judah's army – he was able to divide his troops into two companies. One company was in front of the Judean army (this was the only group that the Judeans thought that they were facing). Jeroboam had the other half of his army travel through a ravine and come up behind the army of Judah. When the army of Judah prepared to launch the attack against the army of Israel, to their consternation they found themselves being attacked front and rear.

The Judeans cried out to Jehovah; the priests blew the trumpets; the Judean warriors raised a war cry; at that moment Jehovah routed the army of Israel. Jeroboam's army fled in fear and Jehovah gave them into the hands of Judah - *500,000 chosen men of Israel fell slain. (II Chronicles 13:14-17)*

The explanation for this turn of events is not that King Abijam was a righteous man, but rather that the army of Judah trusted in Jehovah.

Thus the sons of Israel were subdued at that time, and the sons of Judah conquered because they trusted in Jehovah, the God of their fathers. (II Chronicles 13:18)

Abijam captured several cities of Israel in this battle and extended the border of Judah further north. Jeroboam was not able to regain strength and in time, *Jehovah struck him and he died* (II Chronicles 13:20; I Kings 14:20)

Abijam increased in power after the defeat of Jeroboam. He, like those before him, created a harem, having eighteen wives and producing twenty-sons and sixteen daughters. He died peacefully and was buried in the City of David.

Asa, Judah's Third King

I Kings 15:9 – 24; II Chronicles 14:1-16:14

I Kings thrusts us into another question concerning the identity of the new king's mother.

He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. (I Kings 15:10)

As we already noted, verse 2 states that Abijah's mother was Maacah, a descendent of Abishalom. In verse 10, we are told that this same Maacah was the mother of Asa. Does this mean that Abijam had his own mother for a wife? Hardly so. The Rabbis, as well as other older scholars and exegetes, put forth the view that Asa's mother probably had died at an early age. Therefore, Maacah continued to occupy the post of Queen Mother during the reign of her grandson, Asa, as she had done during the reign of her son, Abijam. She fulfilled the role of Asa's mother.

The account of Asa's reign begins with the encouraging description,

Asa did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, like David his father. (I Kings 15:11).

Asa ruled for forty-one years (I Kings 15:10). The first ten years were years of peace (II Chronicles 14:1), enabling him to build fortified cities in Judah. Asa acknowledged that the season of peace was a gift from God.

He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because Jehovah had given him rest. For he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought Jehovah our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered. (II Chronicles 14:6-7)

During the first decade of his rule, Asa embarked on a vigorous campaign within the boundaries of Judah to stamp out idolatry and the worship of all foreign gods. II Chronicles 14:2-5; 15:16 and I Kings 15:11-13 describe the thoroughness of the activity.

Asa did good and right in the sight of Jehovah his God, for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim, and commanded Judah to seek Jehovah the God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment. He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. And the kingdom was undisturbed under him. (II Chronicles 14:2-5)

He also removed Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the position of queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her horrid image, crushed it and burned it at the brook Kidron. (II Chronicles 15:16; I Kings 15:13)

He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols which his fathers had made. (I Kings 15:12)

In spite of his best efforts, he was not able to remove, all of the high places from Judah, where Jehovah was worshipped in violation of the Law (I Kings 15:14).

At the same time that he was working to eradicate from Judah all vestiges of the worship of false Gods, Asa also restored the fortunes of the Temple and commanded the people to seek Jehovah (I Kings 15:15)

The time of peace ended when the Ethiopian, Zerah⁵⁵, launched a campaign into Judah. Zerah had a huge army of a million men and 300 chariots. He proceeded east and north, plundering the cities of Judah. Asa's standing army consisted of 580,000 warriors. 300,000 were spearmen from Judah. 280,000 were archers from Benjamin. The record notes that all of his army carried large shields and were valiant warriors (II Chronicles 14:8). Asa and his army confronted the invaders at Mareshah, in the valley of Zaphathah. Vastly outnumbered by the huge Ethiopian army, Asa declared his dependency upon Jehovah.

Then Asa called to Jehovah his God and said, "Jehovah, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Jehovah our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O Jehovah, You are our God; let not man prevail against You." II Chronicles 14:11)

God responded and the Ethiopians were routed. So many of the Ethiopians were killed that they could not mount a counter offensive. The Judeans pursued the invaders as far as Philistine city of Gerar, destroying other Philistine cities that surrounded Gerar. The army of Judah was able to capture much plunder which they took back to Jerusalem. (II Chronicles 14:9-15)

Jehovah sent a prophet, Azariah, to meet Asa as he was returning to Jerusalem. He rehearsed the destructive past of Israel but that future would be better if the people sought God.

Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. (II Chronicles 15:2)

After this prophetic word, Asa put forth more effort to rid the land of idols, especially the land that his father, Abijam, had captured from Jeroboam. He moved forward in further restoration of the Temple.

⁵⁵ Shishak, the Pharaoh who had assaulted Judah and Israel during the reign of Rehoboam, was a Lybian. Many students of this era believe that Zera was Pharaoh Osorkon I, who was Shishak's son. The fact that his army consisted of Ethiopians and Lubim (Lybians) as well as the date of his invasion, does fit this hypothesis.

Many people from Israel defected to Judah, when it became apparent that God was with Asa. In the third month of the fifteenth year of his reign, he called the people together for a renewal of the covenant with Jehovah. From the plunder that they had brought back from Gerar, they sacrificed 700 oxen and 7000 sheep in offerings to Jehovah. They concluded their celebration by swearing an oath to remain faithful to Jehovah – promising to seek Jehovah with all of their heart and soul, pledging to put death anyone who lived in their midst who did not seek the God of Israel. They concluded this ceremony with loud blasts on the trumpets and shouts of praise.

Asa's Big Mistake (II Chronicles 16:1-12)

For the next twenty years, there was peace in the land. Then Asa made a big mistake. Israel had begun to recuperate from its previous defeat, at the hands of Abijam. Baasha, the third King of Israel (we will return to the history of Israel in the next section) was strong enough to retake most of the land that was lost in the final battle between Jeroboam and Abijam. When large numbers of his citizens began defecting to Judah (because they recognized God's obvious blessing on Asa), Baasha decided to create a barrier that would end this traffic. He sought to do this by fortifying the city of Ramah. Ramah was five miles north of Jerusalem, strategically located on the main north/south central highway from Israel to Judah.

To the north and east of Israel lay the Arameans, often referred to as, *Damascus*, because that was its capital city. The kings of Damascus bore the title, *Ben-hadad*, which means, "the son of (the god) Hadad." The Arameans had made a treaty with Baasha. Asa, realizing that Baasha's army was growing, knew that if the Arameans joined Baasha in combat against Judah, the threat would be severe. Asa sent to Ben-hadad all of the silver and gold from the Temple, plus all of the silver and gold from his own palace. The message that accompanied these gifts was,

Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me. (I Chronicles 16:3)

Ben-hadad accepted the offer, broke the treaty with Baasha and sent his armies against Israel. The Arameans conquered many significant cities in the north and east of Israel. Being pressed on the north and east by the Arameans and facing the Judeans to the south, Baasha abandoned Ramah and retired to the capital city of Tirza. Asa then drafted Judeans to take the stones and timber that Baasha had gathered to build a stronger Ramah and use them to fortify the border cities of Geba and Mispah. This established the border between the two kingdoms which remained unchanged until Israel was carried into captivity.

Following this series of events, Jehovah sent the prophet Hanani to Asa with a dire prophetic word. The word declared that Asa had not trusted in Jehovah as he had in his previous times of distress, but had trusted in the Arameans. Furthermore, if Asa had trusted in Jehovah as he had in the past, the Arameans would have been destroyed. The prophecy concluded with the declaration that from that time onward Asa would have wars. One of the great lines in the Bible is found in this prophecy,

For the eyes of Jehovah move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. (II Chronicles 16:9)

This event marks the time when something shifted Asa's heart. He threw Hananai into jail, for bringing forth this prophecy. He began oppressing some of the people. A year or so later, in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a very serious disease in his feet. Even in this time of severe suffering he did not seek God, but sought physicians. (II Chronicles 16:12)

After his death, in the forty-first year of his reign, he was buried with great ceremony. In spite of his failures in the final few years of his life, Judeans extolled his memory because he had made the nation strong and prosperous. (II Chronicles 16:13-14)

Throughout most of the years of his monarchy, Asa was the epitome of a godly ruler. How tragic to read of his spiritual decline in the final five years of his life.

The End of Jeroboam's Dynasty: Nadab

I Kings 15:25-31

Asa's reign overlapped eight kings of Israel, if we include Zimri who reigned for just one week. There were 19 kings of Israel and eight of them died a violent death. Jeroboam's immediate successor and the last member of his dynasty was his son Nadab, who ruled for a little less than two years. The only comment that scripture makes on his reign is that he followed in his father's sinful footsteps. He continued to lead Israel into the false worship established by his father.

In the second year of his reign, Nadab led Israel in an attack on the city of Gibbethon. Gibbethon was a city on the border with Philistia in the territory belonging to the Israelite tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:40-44). The Philistines evidently had driven out the Danites and had occupied the city. Both Nadab and his successor, Baasha, tried unsuccessfully to wrest the city from the control of the Philistines. While Nadab and the Israelites were laying siege before the walls of Gibbethon, Baasha (who had some position in the army) assassinated Nadab. Baasha then killed all of the male descendents of Jeroboam, fulfilling the prophecy given by Abijah.

...therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for Jehovah has spoken it." (I Kings 14:10-11)

The Founding of a New Dynasty: Baasha

I Kings 16:1-7

Baasha reigned in Israel for a twenty-three years and a few months (rounded to twenty-four years in I Kings 15:33). The comments on his reign are very brief, but those that are recorded, refer to his continuing in the sins of Jeroboam. Because of this, Jehovah sent Jehu to him with a prophetic word. The words of Jehu to Baasha coincide exactly with the words given to Jeroboam through Abijah (see I Kings 14:10-11 above).

behold, I will consume Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Anyone of Baasha who dies in the city the dogs will eat, and anyone of his who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat. (I Kings 16:3-4)

It is important that verse 2 of I Kings 16 be read in conjunction with verse 7, lest a misunderstanding of the matter develop. If we only had verse 2, it would appear that Baasha had exterminated Nadab and his family by divine command. Verse 7 seems to have been added by the author of I Kings to make certain that this misunderstanding did not prevail.

Verse 2 Inasmuch as I exalted you from the dust and made you leader over My people Israel,

Verse 7 Moreover, the word of Jehovah through the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani also came against Baasha and his household, both because of all the evil which he did in the sight of Jehovah, provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he struck it.

Verse seven cites two reasons for God's coming against Baasha and his dynasty

- being like the dynasty of Jeroboam
- striking the dynasty of Jeroboam (by killing Nadab)

Although Jehovah had given a prophecy concerning the fate of Jeroboam's dynasty, Baasha had no right to put himself forward, arbitrarily, as the one to be the fulfiller of that prophecy. He took it on himself, not in response to a command from God. Jehovah had not appointed him to be the executioner. After Baasha had slain Nadab, Jehovah *allowed* Baasha to become the king of Israel.

The fact that Baasha is described as being exalted *from the dust* rather than *from the people*, leads to the conjecture that he probably had risen to be king from a very low position. Baasha evidently died of natural causes and was succeeded by his son, Elah.

The End of Baasha's Dynasty: Elah

I Kings 16:6, 8-14

Once again, we are faced with a king about which little is written. Upon Baasha's death, Elah occupied the throne at Tirzah. Elah reigned only two years. He seems to have been a debauch. One day, while he was *drinking himself drunk*, Zimri, one of his military commanders, killed him. Zimri was the commander in charge of one half of the military chariots of Israel.

After Zimri took the throne, he killed off all of the descendants of Baasha, thus putting an end to that dynasty.

A Temporary King: Zimri

I Kings 16:9-20

Zimri has the remarkable legacy of having ruled only seven days. At the time that he killed Elah, the army of Israel once again was laying siege to Gibbethon. Word reached the army that Zimri had killed Elah and had declared himself king. The army immediately decided that their commander, Omri, should succeed Elah. They proceeded to declare him the King of Israel.

Omri led the army from Gibbethon back to Tirzah, the capital of Israel, and laid siege to the city. When Zimri realized that he was about to be taken prisoner, he went into the citadel of the king's house and set the structure on fire. He died in the fire.

Scripture makes the same pronouncement over Zimri that has been stated concerning all of the previous kings of Israel,

because of his sins which he sinned, doing evil in the sight of Jehovah, walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, making Israel sin. (I Kings 16:19)

The Beginning of the Dynasty of Omri

I Kings 16:16-28

Not everyone in Israel was happy with the decision to make Omri king. A sizeable segment of the nation wanted Tibni to be the king. The nation was divided about half and half. Even though the Omri faction, consisting of military men, was the stronger party, the opposition party wouldn't go away. Omri conducted himself as if he were king, during these confusing years. The conflict ended when Tibni died in the fourth year of the disputed monarchy. Omri continued to rule for eight more years after Tibni's death – a total of twelve years as monarch.

Omri made his mark on the history of Israel. During the four years of conflict with Tibni, Omri ruled from Tirza for two years. Then, for some unknown reason (probably because the site was more easily defended than Tirza), he bought the hill, *Shomron* (Samaria) from *Shemer*. He built houses upon the hill, named the town after its previous owner, and moved the capital to that city. Samaria remained the capital of Israel until the time of its removal from the land by the Assyrians.

Omri received the same evaluation that had been given to his predecessors, – that he followed the sins of Jeroboam and led the people into sin.

Although the biblical record of Omri's reign is brief, secular sources and hints elsewhere in Scripture reveal that he was very significant in the history of the region. The Assyrians, from the days of Shalmaneser II (860 BC) to the time of Sargon (722 BC) called Israel, "The House of Omri." Of special note is the Moabite Stone, which indicated that Omri regained control over northern Moab (See ADDENDUM F). Micah 6:16 hints that Omri was a leading instrument in bringing the foreign religions into Israel.

One of the worst things that Omri did was to enter into an alliance with the Phoenicians by obtaining Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaaal, king of the Sidonians, as a wife for his son.

Upon his death, Omri was buried in Samaria, the city that he had founded and made capital of the nation of Israel.

Omri's Legacy: Ahab

I Kings 16:29 – 22:40; II Chronicles 18

Ahab, Omri's son and successor, continued the pattern of exceeding his predecessors in evil.

Now Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.

Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of Jehovah more than all who were before him.

It came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,

that he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshiped him.

So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he built in Samaria.

Ahab also made the Asherah.

Thus Ahab did more to provoke Jehovah, God of Israel, than all the kings of Israel who were before him. (1 Kings 16:29-33)

In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho;

he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his firstborn,

and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub,

according to the word of Jehovah, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

In this introduction, six specific sins of Ahab are listed:

1. He married a heathen woman
2. He served and worshipped Baal
3. He erected a temple for the worship for Baal
4. He erected an altar for Baal
5. He made an Asherah
6. He commissioned the rebuilding of Jericho.

The closing comment in the introduction to Ahab's reign, i.e., that Jericho was rebuilt during his reign, is not just a passing comment of historical interest. Jericho was on the border between Ephraim and Benjamin. It had come into the possession of Israel when the ten tribes rejected Rehoboam and established the Kingdom of Jeroboam. Jericho was on the main road that led to the place where travelers forded the Jordan River.

Because of Jericho's strategic location, Ahab had hoped to secure himself a passage across the Jordan. The centuries-old curse of Joshua was fulfilled in Hiel, the man who was assigned the task of rebuilding Jericho. Although this event is a bit of a diversion from the historic narrative of Ahab's reign, it is reported as a comment on how far ungodliness had progressed in Israel – even attempting to rebuild a city upon which a curse had been pronounced.

**EXCURSUS:
The Meaning of Joshua's Curse**

After the Israelites had conquered Jericho,⁵⁶ Joshua pronounced a curse upon the fallen city.

Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before Jehovah is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." (Joshua 6:26)

The manner in which different English versions have rendered the Greek (Septuagint) and Hebrew of Joshua 6:26 display two different understandings of the curse of Joshua.

KJV *he shall lay the foundation thereof **in his firstborn**, and **in his youngest son** shall he set up the gates of it.*

NAS ***with the loss of his firstborn** he shall lay its foundation, and **with the loss of his youngest son** he shall set up its gates.*

NIV ***At the cost of his firstborn son** will he lay its foundations; **at the cost of his youngest** will he set up its gates.*

The NAS implies that some tragedy, resulting in the loss of the builder's children, awaited the one who attempts to rebuild Jericho.

The KJV implies that the laying of the foundation and setting up of the gate involved the physical placement of the builder's children.

The NIV could be understood either way – in some form or fashion, the foundation and gate would be established at the cost of the builder's children.

In both the Hebrew and Greek texts, the question revolves on the meaning of a preposition.

The Hebrew preposition is, **ב** that can be understood to mean, *in, at, by, with, among*

The Greek preposition is **ἐν**, which can mean *in, with, by*.

The NAS and NIV interpret these prepositions, rather than translate them. The NAS adds the words, *with the loss of*; the NIV adds the words, *at the cost of*. The KJV attempts a literal rendering by translating the prepositions as *in*. So, what did Joshua's curse actually mean?

Archaeology has provided an interesting answer. Professors Ernst Sellin and Karl Watzinger led a German-Austrian team that excavated Jericho 1907 – 1909. Their findings were consistent with the biblical account in Joshua. In 1930, a British team, led by Professor John Garstang, engaged in a six-year exploration of the site. It became clear that Jericho was inhabited continuously from pre-Abrahamic times until about 1400 BC – the date of Israel's entering into the Promised land. The site showed no signs of habitation until the 9th Century BC, the time of Ahab, thus confirming, again, the biblical account. In the 9th Century stratrum a large house was uncovered, which may have been the house of Hiel. A burial jar containing the remains of a child was found in the masonry of a gate and two such funeral jars in the walls of the house.

Thus, whatever the curse of Joshua might have meant, it is clear that children were sacrificed and their bodies placed in the walls of the city and in the structure supporting the gate.

⁵⁶ Joshua 6:12ff

The significance of the lengthy narrative of Ahab's reign

More space is given to the record of Ahab's twenty-two year reign than is devoted to any other of the kings of Israel. Several reasons can be put forth for giving so many pages of Scripture to the story of Ahab.

- The story of Ahab is in many respects the story of God's amazing prophet, Elijah.
- Ahab's story is a clear record of the consequences of idolatry.
- The story of Ahab impresses upon us the important truth that God, in His grace, usually delays the execution of His judgment. When God delays judgment, two things are accomplished:
 1. Time is given for repentance
 2. People have time to display the fullness of their reprobate nature and thus there is no question that doom is justified.

When God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, he told him that the land would not become his, nor his descendants for four generations, because the Amorites' cup of iniquity was not yet full.⁵⁷ His long patience with Israel, in spite of the nation's obstinacy, call to mind Peter's statement,

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (II Peter 3:8-9)

Twice the psalmist described God as being gracious, merciful, and slow to anger

Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (Psalm 103:8)
Jehovah is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. (Psalm 145:8)

- The story of Ahab also is a reminder that justice, though delayed, is certain if God's call to repentance is ignored

Ahab was not satisfied with the sins of Jeroboam (Jehovistic worship through the use of golden calves). He went a step further and introduced the worship of Baal as a national religion in Israel. He not only built a temple to Baal in the capital city of Samaria but he also built an altar dedicated to Baal. In association with his idolatrous wife, Jezebel, Ahab appointed a sizeable priesthood to maintain the Baalistic worship. Jezebel was a heathen princess from Phoenicia, who was an ardent worshipper of Baal. She was determined to stamp out the worship of Jehovah and the replace it with Baal worship.

⁵⁷ Genesis 15:12-16

EXCURSUS: BAAL WORSHIP

Although informal worship of the Baalim by landowners and farmers was practiced by the Canaanites, formal worship of Baal was the national religion of many of the cultures that surrounded Israel.

The term, *Baal*, means, "master." This was the name given by various nations to their own presiding gods. At one time the title was used by the Israelites for Jehovah, since He was viewed as their national God. In the prophecy given to Hosea, Jehovah spoke of the time when the relationship between Israel and Jehovah would be such that the Canaanite term, *Baal*, would not be *appropriate*; instead the term, *Ishi*, meaning, "my husband," would better describe that relationship. (Hosea 2:16)

The Baal of Phoenicia (Jezebel's home) was known as *Baal-Shemaim*, "Jehovah of Heaven." The Babylonian, *Bel-Merodach*, and the Greek, *Zeus*, are equivalent to *Baal-Shemaim*, in that both terms mean, "Sun God." This was the basic concept of *Baal-Shemaim*, in that his first revelation to man is said to have occurred when the first inhabitants of the earth raised their hands to the sun and worshipped.

The various forms of Baal were as numerous as the communities that worshipped him. Thus, we find, *Baal-Zur*, *Baal-Hermon*, *Baal-Lebanon*, *Baal-Tarz*, etc. The second half of these names signify the locality of Baal's domain (Baal of Zur, Baal of Hermon, etc.). Sometimes the form of the name contains a particular noun, such as *Baal-Zebub*, "Lord of Flies." All of these different forms of the Sun-god were collectively known as the *baalim*, who took their places beside the female *Ashteroth* and *Asherim*.

Baal worship normally consisted of stretching forth the hands toward the sun, the burning of incense to Baal, and burnt sacrifices. On special occasions, the offering was human, usually the first-born of the worshipper (The Old Testament euphemism for this practice is "passing the victim through the fire" [I Kings 18:26ff]). At other times, the rites were very sensual, especially when the worship of Baal and Ashtarte were associated. Baal always was worshipped as a god of fertility and abundance. He was worshipped in order to guarantee rain and good crops.

Baal is a name that can be applied, appropriately, to Satan. Satan worshippers worship in the name of Baal. Satan is the ultimate Baal that stands in opposition to Jehovah. All of the titles and forms of Baal worship are different manifestations of the spirit that seeks to rob Jehovah of the worship that rightly is His alone.

Elijah and the drought (I Kings 17 – I Kings 18)

Immediately after the I Kings 16:29-34 factual introduction of Ahab as the new King of Israel, Chapter 17 begins with the abrupt appearance of the prophet, Elijah. Without a word of introduction, Elijah, burst on the scene with the pronouncement,

Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As Jehovah, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." (I Kings 17:1)

The only identifying statement made concerning this startling man is that he was a Tishbite.⁵⁸ His name, *Elijah*, also is revealing, meaning, *Jehovah is God*. The next three chapters (Chapters 17-19) are more the record of Elijah's experience than they are that of King Ahab. Because the biblical record gives so much attention to the ministry of Elijah, and because his relevance extends far into the history of Israel and the Messianic Kingdom, we will follow the biblical trail into the historical diversion of the Elijah story.

After delivering his severe message, Elijah was instructed by Jehovah to head east, and hide out beside a brook that flowed into the Jordan River (IKings 17:3)⁵⁹. Two reasons can be surmised for this command to go into hiding:

- (1) for protection from Jezebel, who already was killing off the prophets
- (2) to avoid all earnest entreaties to remove the drought.

Elijah's experience in his hiding place was similar to that of the Israelites during the Exodus. Each morning and evening ravens⁶⁰ brought Elijah bread and meat for his campfire. The brook provided water. (I Kings 17:2-7)

After a period of time, because there was no rain, the brook dried up and Jehovah gave Elijah fresh instructions. He was to travel northwest, all the way across Israel to the Mediterranean coast. His destination was the Gentile city of Zarephath in Sidon.⁶¹ Again, we must surmise that the reason he was sent to a Gentile city was because it was a safe place. Even so, it is apparent from the narrative that the drought was not limited to Israel; the condition effected the entire eastern Mediterranean.(I Kings 17:8-9)

Of note is the fact that Jehovah first commanded ravens to care for Elijah, then commanded a Gentile widow to care for him. How Jehovah "commanded" the ravens and then the widow are not clear.

Because of the danger that Elijah faced if anyone reported his presence to Ahab and Jezebel, it required total trust in Jehovah to make the journey across Israel and then to reveal himself to Gentile widow. When Elijah approached the gates of Zarephath, he met a woman who was gathering sticks in preparation for the last meal that she and her son would eat prior to their unavoidable death by starvation. Elijah tested the woman to see if she were the one to whom he

⁵⁸ The exact location of the city, Tishbeh, is unknown. It would have been in the hill country of Gilead, on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

⁵⁹ Although some versions state that the brook Cherith was on the east side of the Jordan, such a location cannot be determined with certainty. The Hebrew states that the brook was "before the Jordan," language which is used in Scripture to mean both "to the east of," and "in the face of." From ancient times, this brook has been identified with a spring currently named, *Phasaelis*, which springs forth in the mountains on the west side of the Jordan valley, near the town of *Phasaelis*, and empties into the Jordan at that point. Although various scholars have tried to identify this brook at various locations, no one can identify the stream with absolute certainty; tradition must carry some weight on this point.

⁶⁰ A century ago, various scholars argued that the Hebrew word rendered, *ravens*, should be rendered *Orebites*, supposedly an Arabian tribe that brought food to Elijah. Few now would argue for that position, if for no other reason than that the city of Oreb is something that was conjured up in the imagination of those who were looking for some explanation other than that of a Living God who orders His creatures.

⁶¹ Of great interest to Christians is Jesus use of this episode to point out that God is not bound by racial barriers (Luke 4:23-26)

had been sent. He requested a jar of water, and in spite of the shortage of water, the woman immediately proceeded to fulfill his wish. He further tested her by stopping her as she was leaving to get the water and also asking for a piece of bread. In her desperate response she acknowledged that Jehovah, the God whom Elijah served, is the Living God.

But she said, "As Jehovah your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." (I Kings 17:12)

Elijah continued to test the woman by telling her to prepare a bread-cake for him, then she could prepare a cake for herself and her son. He told her to not be afraid of the drought because Jehovah, God of Israel, promised that neither the cruse of oil nor the bowl of flour would diminish until He send rain upon the land. The woman demonstrated her faith in the word of Jehovah by doing exactly as Elijah directed. Indeed, the word of Jehovah spoken through Elijah proved to be true. (I Kings 17:13-16)

After an unstated period of time, the woman's son became sick and quit breathing. The woman immediately reacted by acknowledging that she was a sinner and that Elijah had come into their home to bring about the son's death as punishment for her sins. Elijah took the son from her arms, carried him upstairs to the room in which he had been staying and placed the child on the bed. He stretched himself upon the child three times and implored Jehovah to restore to child to life. Jehovah heard Elijah's supplication and the child was restored alive to his mother. Her response was an enthusiastic declaration of her faith in the word spoken through Elijah. (I Kings 17:17-24)

Sometime in the third year of Elijah's sojourn in Zarephath,⁶² Jehovah directed Elijah to leave Zarephath and confront Ahab (I Kings 18:1-2). The horrible drought had not brought Ahab to his senses and caused him to turn from his idolatrous ways. Instead, he became angry and exasperated with the prophet who had brought the word of Jehovah. Jehovah, therefore, planned a public display that would turn the tables on Ahab and Jezebel.

Obadiah, the man who was the governor of Ahab's castle, was a very God fearing man. When Jezebel had launched her campaign to kill all of the prophets of Jehovah, Obadiah had hidden in caves 100 prophets of God and had supplied their needs.⁶³ When the drought had become so severe in Samaria that it was going to be necessary to kill off the royal horses and mules, Ahab divided the land into two sections and told Obadiah to travel throughout one section seeking hay for the royal livestock. Ahab searched the other section of Israel.

Elijah met Obadiah as he was conducting the search. Immediately, Obadiah fell before Elijah, acknowledging that he was a servant of Jehovah. Elijah told Obadiah to tell Ahab that he had found Elijah. Obadiah's response indicated that he believed that Jehovah had been protecting Elijah. Ahab had searched through all of the region and made every city that he had searched give its word that none of the citizens knew the whereabouts of Elijah. Obadiah said that if he

⁶² Both Luke 4:25 and James 5:17 state that the drought lasted three years and six months. Since this is so clearly stated, the reference to the "third year," in I Kings 18:1 must refer to the third year of Elijah's sojourn in Zarephath, not to the third year of the drought.

⁶³ Since Obadiah was over the household of Ahab, he would have had access to stores that were supplied for the royal palace and from these stores he could have supplied the prophets in hiding.

told Ahab that he had found Elijah and then the spirit of God caught Elijah up and transported him somewhere else, that Ahab would kill Obadiah. Obadiah pled his case by citing how he had faithfully followed Jehovah from his youth and how he had saved 100 prophets of Jehovah. Elijah assured Obadiah that he wasn't going anywhere and swore an oath that on that very day he was going to confront Ahab. Obadiah found Ahab and told him that Elijah was ready to meet with him.

Ahab sought to intimidate Elijah when they met, by saying, *"Is this you, you troubler of Israel?"* (I Kings 18:17) Elijah threw back the charge, *"I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah and you have followed the Baalim.* (I Kings 18:18)

Elijah made what must have appeared to Ahab to be an unusual request. He called upon Ahab to call all Israel to an assembly at Mount Carmel⁶⁴. A special call was to be given to two groups:

- the 450 prophets of Baal
- the 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah who were maintained by Jezebel.

For some unknown reason, possibly because the drought had convinced him that Elijah was to be heeded, Ahab did as Elijah had instructed him. (I Kings 18:19-20)

The 450 prophets of Baal responded to the king's order to assemble at Carmel. Since the prophets of Asherah are specifically mentioned as a separate group in 18:19, and since only prophets of Baal are mentioned in 18:20, 22, 40 (especially verse 22), it appears that the prophets of Asherah, having some foreboding about the meeting, had found a way to evade the command to assemble at Mount Carmel. Because the prophets of Asherah had a special connection with Jezebel (18: 19) they probably secured her protection.

The ensuing scene is one of the most dramatic in all of Scripture. Elijah threw down the gauntlet.

Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah, and the God who answers by fire, He is God." And all the people said, "That is a good idea." (I Kings 18:23-24)

The proposed contest was risky, especially for any combatant who was not convinced of the reality of his religion. Three possibilities presented themselves:

- Both sides would be shamed by total failure – neither Jehovah nor Baalim were god
- Both gods would prove themselves to be gods – polytheism was a spiritual reality
- One god would respond and the other religion would prove to be false – there is but one true God.

⁶⁴ Mount Carmel is a mountain ridge with many peaks, intersected by hundreds of ravines. The western side of the mountain declines to the Mediterranean Sea. Given the topography of the mountain, the most likely spot for the meeting is a location known as el Mohraka. The lay of the land and the provisions needed for the events recorded are present at this location (wood, stones, water). No other spot on Carmel is consistent with the described gathering.

Elijah instructed the prophets of Baal to go first, stating that they should do so because there were so many of them. They did as instructed and began to implore Baal to answer their cries. When nothing happened, they began to leap about in ecstasy, but still no response. At noon, Elijah mocked them,

It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." (I Kings 18:27)

In response to this mockery, they became more intense, shouting with louder voices and cutting their flesh so that they would bleed, as further incentive for Baal to respond.⁶⁵ The noisy, violent, activity continued to receive no response.

Late in the afternoon, after the prophets of Baal had been given all day to drag a response from their god, Elijah said, *now it is my turn.*

Elijah asked the people to draw closer to him. He wanted both eye-witnesses to the event and ear-witnesses to what he said to Jehovah. A broken down altar dedicated to Jehovah already existed at that location on Carmel.⁶⁶ While everyone watched, Elijah, using stones available at that site (he used twelve stones, symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel), repaired the altar, then dug a trench around the base of the structure.

After placing the wood on the altar, he slew the sacrificial ox, cut it up, and placed it on top of the wood. Then he told the people to pour four pitchers of water on the ox and the wood. He told them to do this three times. The ox and the wood were drenched and the trench around the base of the altar was filled with water.

By this time, it was the hour of the evening sacrifice, which was being conducted in Judah at the Temple of Jehovah. At this time, Elijah approached the altar and instead of exuberant shouting as the prophets of Baal had done, he merely spoke to Jehovah,

At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Jehovah the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. "Answer me, O Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Jehovah, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again." (I Kings 18:36-37)

Jehovah's response was immediate and total. Fire fell from heaven and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones of the altar, the dust that was around it and "licked up the water that was around it." (I Kings 18:38)

⁶⁵ The behaviour of these prophets is identical to that which is practiced currently in a number of heathen religions in various countries. It is intriguing that in different centuries and in different cultures satanic worship styles are similar.

⁶⁶ The origin of that altar is uncertain. It may have been built before the building of the Temple, when altars to Jehovah were erected in various places throughout the land (I Kings 3:2). It also is possible that the altar was erected by pious worshippers after the division of the Kingdom and which later were destroyed by Ahab (implied by I Kings 19:19).

The result that Elijah had prayed for, *that this people may know that You, O Jehovah, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again*, was achieved.

When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "Jehovah, He is God; Jehovah, He is God." (I Kings 18:39)

In response to Elijah's command the people seized the prophets of Baal, took them to the nearby brook Kishon, and executed them, according to the Law of Moses.⁶⁷

Elijah immediately showed concern for Ahab. Ahab had not eaten all day, because he was so intensely focused on the events of the day. Elijah told Ahab to leave the brook Kishon and go back up Carmel to the place of sacrifice and there to eat and drink, because rain was coming. While Ahab was doing this, Elijah and his servant climbed to a peak above the sacrificial site where Elijah began praying that Jehovah would fulfill his promise to send rain (18:1).⁶⁸ His servant was told to look out over the Mediterranean and watch for a coming rain storm. The servant was told to do this seven times and on the seventh time he saw a small cloud rising on the western horizon.⁶⁹ Ahab hurriedly sent his servant to tell Ahab to get down off the mountain, and head for his summer residence at Jezreel (14 miles away) before the rain-caused mud would make travel difficult (after a more than three-year drought, all of the vegetation would have been gone and rain on the dusty ground would have produced a bed of mud). After Ahab left, Jehovah supernaturally endowed Elijah so that he was able to catch up with the chariot and run ahead of it into Jezreel. All of this concern for Ahab should have shown the king that Elijah was not just a stern prophet, but a loyal subject who was not trying to bring about the king's ruin, but his repentance. (I Kings 18:41-46)

Elijah's depression and restoration (I Kings 19:1-15)

When Ahab told Jezebel all that had happened on Carmel, instead of bring brought to a place of the acknowledgement of Jehovah as God, she became angry and determined to kill Elijah. Fearing for his life, Elijah and his servant fled to Beersheba, in Judah. It is significant that he did not just go into Judah, where he would have been safe from Jezebel. He went to Beersheba on the southernmost border of Judah. It seems that not only was he running for his life, but also struggling with an inner turmoil, as is made clear by what he did upon his arrival in Beersheba. Elijah left his servant in the city and went a day's journey into the wilderness where asked Jehovah to allow him to die. Although this attitude might surprise some, anyone who preaches

⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20; et. al.

⁶⁸ Further evidence that el Mohraka is the probable site of this event is the topography of the site in its relationship to the Mediterranean. Geographer Van de Velde comments, "on its west and northwest side the view of the sea is quite intercepted by an adjacent height. That height may be ascended, however, in a few minutes and a full view of the sea obtained from the top." *Syria and Palestine*, p. 326

⁶⁹ Many Word of Faith teachers cite James 5:17 to argue for the power of faith. The point that they miss is that faith in this instance is not exercised as a power. The faith that Elijah modeled is belief that God would keep His promise. Elijah had a direct word from God that he was going to send rain. So, when Elijah prayed, he was praying what God already had said that He was going to do. Elijah's faith did not compel God to send rain. Since God had promised rain in conjunction with Elijah's showing himself to Ahab, we would assume that rain would have been sent even if Elijah would not have prayed. Elijah's prayer could be seen as anxiety on his part, "Oh God, please do what you promised."

or gives himself wholeheartedly to ministry understands Elijah's mental and emotional state. Depression following ministry of the word is almost a universal experience for those who serve God in this way.

Exhaustedly, he fell asleep. An angel awakened him and supplied him with food and drink. He fell asleep again, and after a time the angel awakened him and told him to eat and drink because the journey was too much for him. The food supernaturally supplied sufficient strength for him to travel forty days to Mount Horeb, in the Arabian peninsula (Horeb and Sinai are the same mountain, often referred to in Scripture as *The Mountain of God*). This is the mountain where Moses experienced the burning bush as well as the mountain where the Law was given. The distance between Beersheba and Horeb is about 200 miles.

Elijah took up residence in a cave. Both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint have the definite article, so verse 9 literally says, *he came there to the cave*. The indication is not that it was just any cave, but, *the cave*. Most exegetes believe that this language points back to Moses' experience recorded in Exodus 33:22, in which he was hidden in the cleft of the rock and from whence he beheld the glory of God.

While in the cave, the word of Jehovah came to him, *What are you doing here, Elijah?* Obviously this question was not a reproof, but a question to lead Elijah to express his thoughts and feelings of his heart. Elijah's response showed his despair, but also a bit of carnal zeal, in that he would have called down the wrath of the Almighty on the idolaters. There also was a bit of reproof of God; Elijah's response contained the unspoken question, "I have done my part, why have you let all of this go on, why haven't you smashed these evildoers?"

He said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (I Kings 19:10)

In response to Elijah's reply, Jehovah had him come to the mouth of the cave. Elijah witnessed three violent phenomena: a wind so strong that it rent the mountains and broke up rocks, an earthquake, and a fire. Jehovah was not in any of these. Then there was a gentle breeze. It was in the gentle breeze that Jehovah revealed Himself and spoke again. Jehovah had revealed Himself in violent phenomena upon Sinai during the Exodus, to impress upon the people of Israel the appropriateness of the dread of his Majesty, of the fiery zeal of His wrath and His love (Exodus 19:16ff) The lesson being presented to Elijah was a different lesson. Jehovah was revealed to him as a merciful, longsuffering, gentle and gracious God.

The voice of Jehovah asked him the same question that had been asked earlier, *What are you doing here, Elijah?* Elijah answered with the same words that he had spoken before. Jehovah answered Elijah's complaint by giving him a command, which showed that Jehovah did not leave guilt unpunished.

Jehovah 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; 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. It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. (I Kings 19:15-17)

Jehovah then revealed to Elijah that things looked worse to him than they actually were. Jehovah told him that there 7000 people in Israel who had refused to bow to Baal.

The commission to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael, King of Aram, and anoint Jehu, as King of Israel, were not accomplished immediately. Elijah did seek out Elisha and anoint him as his successor. Elisha, in the spirit of Elijah, anointed Hazael and Jehu after Elijah's ascension into heaven.

Ahab's war with the Arameans (I Kings 20)

Ben-hadad II, the son of the Ben-hadad who had conquered several cities in Galilee during the reign of Baasha (I Kings 15:20), came against Israel with a huge army. The army consisted of thirty-two vassal kings and their horses, chariots, and infantry. They surrounded the capital, Samaria and Ben-hadad sent a message to Ahab, who was cowering within the city,

Your silver and your gold are mine; your most beautiful wives and children are also mine (I Kings 20:3).

Ahab submissively replied, *It is according to your word, my lord, O king; I am yours, and all that have.* Evidently, Ahab thought that Ben-hadad meant that Ahab was to give him what he asked for in order to purchase peace.

Ben-hadad was emboldened by Ahab's submissive reply and so he sent messengers into the city with the notice that he intended to thoroughly plunder the city, not just receive some payment for peace. When Ahab realized that this is what he was facing, he sought the counsel of the citizens of Samaria and they advised Ahab that Ben-hadad's demand should be rejected. Ahab then sent a message to Ben-hadad that he would submit to the first demand (as Ahab understood it) but not the second.

The boastful exchange between Ben-hadad and Ahab are memorable:

Ben-hadad sent to him and said, "May the gods do so to me and more also, if the dust of Samaria will suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me." (I Kings 20:10)

Then the king of Israel replied, "Tell him, 'Let not him who girds on his armor boast like him who takes it off.'" (I Kings 20:11)

When Ben-hadad received this response, he ordered his army to set up a siege against Samaria.

An unnamed prophet came to Ahab with a word from Jehovah, that He would deliver the Arameans into the hand of Ahab that day, so that Ahab, once again, would have evidence that Jehovah is God. (I Kings 20:13). Ahab asked by whom this deliverance would be accomplished. The prophet said that the 232 young men who were retainers to the governors of the provinces would be the deliverers. These young men, along with the governors, had fled to Samaria before the army of Ben-hadad. Ahab then asked who should begin the battle – "How do we start this thing?" The prophet, replied, *You*. So, Ahab called together the 232 young men from the provinces and 7000 other warriors who remained in Israel and went out the gate of Samaria at noon, prepared to engage the enemy. Ben-hadad and his thirty-two vassal kings were sitting at

leisure in tents, drinking themselves drunk. They thought that they had Ahab shut up in Samaria and so they were partying while they waited out the siege. Messengers brought word to Ben-hadad that Ahab and a small army had emerged from Samaria. Ben-hadad in drunken arrogance ordered his troops to take the Israelite army alive, regardless of what their intentions might be – whether they came in peace or ready to fight.

When Ben-hadad's warriors approached the band of Israelites, intending to take them captive, the 232 young men from the provinces and the army that followed them killed those sent to take them captive. This put fear into the Arameans and they began to flee in a panic. Ahab and his troops slaughtered the Aramean army, including the horsemen and those in chariots.

After this signal victory, the same prophet as before came to Ahab and told him to strengthen himself for another battle, because at the first of the year Ben-hadad would attack once again. Indeed, this happened.

Ben-hadad's counselors argued that the reason that they had lost the fight with Ahab was because Ahab's gods were gods of the mountains, whereas the gods of the Arameans were gods of the plain. This reflected the Canaanite understanding of each piece of real estate's being the property of a particular Baal. Their Baal was a "plains Baal," whereas the Israelite Baal was a "mountain Baal." Samaria was in the mountains of Ephraim. The counselors also told Ben-hadad that he should not have his vassal kings over the army, but experienced military men should be in command.

Ben-hadad listened to this counsel and raised an army equal to the one that he had with him the year before. At the turn of the year, he and his new army with his new commanders went out to meet Israel at Aphek. As had so often been the case, Israel was well outfitted, but they were hugely outnumbered. Once again, a prophet came to Ahab with word that the Israelites would be victorious. The reason for Jehovah's involvement in this battle was the limitation ascribed to Him by the Arameans. This victory, as was the previous victory and the conflict with the prophets of Baal on Carmel, was a message to Ahab that Jehovah is the only living God.

Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, "Thus says the Jehovah,, 'Because the Arameans have said, "Jehovah is a god of the mountains, but He is not a god of the valleys," therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am Jehovah.'" (I Kings 20:28)

The two armies camped facing each other for seven days and then on the seventh day the battle was joined. The Arameans were routed, 100,000 were killed in the field; 27,000 fled into the city of Aphek and the wall of the city collapsed on them. Ben-hadad hid in an inner chamber in the city.

Ben-hadad's servants counseled him that the kings of Israel were merciful men and that if they appealed to that merciful trait that Ahab probably would spare them. So, Ben-hadad sent his servants, clothed in sack cloth with ropes on their heads, to Ahab with a word from Ben-hadad, *Your servant Ben-hadad says, "please let me live."* Ahab replied, *Is he still alive? He is my brother.* The servants quickly picked up on the word, *brother*, and said, *Your brother, Ben-hadad.* The outcome of this exchange was Ben-hadad's promise to restore to Israel the cities that his father had taken from Israel during the reign of Baasha. On this basis, Ahab's and Ben-hadad made a covenant and Ben-hadad was sent home.

his father had taken from Israel during the reign of Baasha. On this basis, Ahab's and Ben-hadad made a covenant and Ben-hadad was sent home.

As Ahab was traveling back to his palace, he was confronted by a prophet with a dire word from Jehovah. The prophet told Ahab that because he had let Ben-hadad live, whereas Jehovah had devoted Ben-hadad to destruction, the fate that should have been Ben-hadad's was going to be the fate of Ahab and the people of Israel. Needless to say, Ahab went home vexed and sullen. (I Kings 20:42-43)

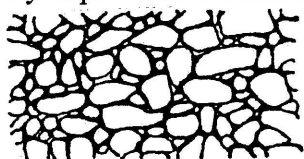
EXCURSUS: AHAB'S SAMARIA

Two archaeological assaults have been made on the ruined mound of Samaria. The first was led by a Harvard University team, consisting of George A Reisner, Clarence S. Fisher, and D.G. Lyon. Their excavations were conducted from 1908 to 1910. The second excavation was conducted by an Anglo-American team, led by the British archaeologist J.W. Crowfoot, from 1931 to 1935.

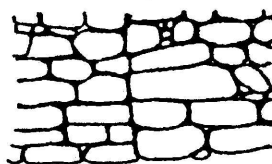
The excavations proved that Omri had built the city on virgin soil, even as the biblical record indicates. During the six years that Omri reigned in Samaria the peaceful, lonely hill must have been the scene of a bustling building site. The huge blocks of the strong fortifications make clear the intention of the builder. The walls are fifteen feet thick. On the west side of the hill, on an acropolis, foundations and walls of a building were exposed which proved to be the royal palace. The walls surrounding this structure included a wide courtyard.

Ahab continued building in accordance with his father's plans. The construction was carried out with remarkable skill; only huge, carefully dressed limestone blocks were used. Note the contrast in these drawings of construction used in various excavated biblical sites.

"Cyclops" wall at Jericho



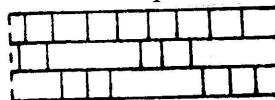
Wall of Saul's "Royal Earth" at Gibeah



Wall of Solomon's "Chariot City" at Megiddo



Wall of Ahab's palace in Samaria



As the rubble was being carried off, the diggers quickly noticed that the ground was covered with splinters of ivory. This is not unusual, in that ivory usually is found at most excavations of palaces. However, the ivory pieces tend to be isolated. At Samaria, however, they covered every square yard. Some of the fragments were large enough to show elegant reliefs carved by Phoenician masters. Many skeptics had dismissed the biblical record that Ahab had built an ivory palace (I Kings 22:39). The proof of that verse of Scripture lay on the ground around the diggers. Clearly, Ahab had the rooms of his palace decorated with this wonderful material and filled them with ivory furniture.

Naboth's Vineyard (I Kings 21:1-24)

Ahab and Jezebel had two homes. The official royal residence was in Samaria, but they also had a palace in Jezreel. Some commentators describe Jezreel as Ahab's "summer home," but it may have been their private residence, similar to that which many rulers and heads of state maintain in order to have a place to retreat from governmental responsibility.

A man named, Naboth, owned a vineyard adjacent to the palace in Jezreel. Ahab decided that Naboth's vineyard would make an excellent vegetable garden and so he offered either to buy the vineyard, or to give Naboth a superior plot of ground in exchange for the vineyard. Naboth refused to sell or to trade the property – his reasons were religious. The sale of a paternal inheritance was forbidden in the Law. Because of this, he was not at liberty to make the exchange, even if he had wanted to do so.

The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me. Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property. (Leviticus 25:23-28)

Then Moses commanded the sons of Israel according to the word of Jehovah, saying, "... no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. Every daughter who comes into possession of an inheritance of any tribe of the sons of Israel shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that the sons of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. Thus no inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the sons of Israel shall each hold to his own inheritance." (Numbers 36:5-9)

Instead of respecting Naboth's conscience about violating the Law, Ahab went back to Samaria in a sullen mood. He went to bed, turned his face to the wall, and pouted. When Jezebel heard of Ahab's behaviour, she came into the bedroom and mockingly said, *Do you now reign over Israel?* More in the tone of a mother speaking to a little boy, than that of a queen speaking to a king, she said, *Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.*" (I Kings 21:7)

The shameless queen then wrote a letter in Ahab's name (making it official by placing the royal seal at the bottom of the letter) and sent it to the elders of Jezreel. The letter ordered the city elders to execute a plot whereby innocent Naboth would be killed, and it would be legal.

Now she wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death." (I Kings 21:9-10)

In obedience to the letter's instructions, the plot was carried out exactly as outlined. Even though the letter was supposedly from the king and had his seal, the elders of Jezreel evidently knew that Jezebel was the author, because it was to her that they sent word of the completion of the plot (I Kings 21:14). No doubt they feared the ruthless queen. According to II Kings 9:26, Naboth's sons also were executed, thus removing anyone who could compete with the king for possession of the vineyard.

Jezebel informed Ahab that Naboth was dead and that he was free to go to Jezreel and take possession of the property. He immediately arose (had he stayed in bed all of this time???) and started out for Jezreel (I Kings 21:16) to take possession of his new piece of real estate.

In sync with Ahab's trip to Jezreel, God instructed Elijah to go to Jezreel and deliver a word of doom to Ahab. A significant amount of time had passed since the Mount Carmel episode and it appears that Elijah and Ahab had not seen one another since that event. Before any introductions or greetings were spoken, Elijah spoke the word that Jehovah had given him to deliver.

Thus says Jehovah, "Have you murdered and also taken possession... In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours." (I Kings 21:9)⁷⁰

Ahab sought to deflect Elijah's words with a curt response, *Have you found me, O my enemy?* As always, Elijah's reply was straight to the point, *I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD.* (I Kings 21:20)

Elijah then announced the coming extermination of Ahab's dynasty, as well as the ignominious end of Jezebel, the instigator of much of the evil that was rampant in Israel (I Kings 21:25). The prophecy concerning the fate of Jezebel was akin to the prophecy concerning the fate of Ahab with which Elijah had greeted the king.

Of Jezebel also has Jehovah spoken, saying, "The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel." (I Kings 21:23)

This terrible prophecy of doom reached Ahab's wicked heart. He felt deep remorse and humbled himself before God, tearing his clothes, putting on sack cloth, and fasting. God acknowledged that Ahab's actions expressed a contrite heart and because of this the threatened calamity would not take place in Ahab's lifetime, but in the days of his son (I Kings 21:27-29). Sadly, there was no lasting change in his life.

⁷⁰ The prediction concerning Ahab's death was not fulfilled to the letter, because Ahab humbled himself and God responded with compassion. When he was slain, the dogs licked up Ahab's blood, not in Jezreel, but in Samaria, as his chariot was being washed.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCURSIS

SHALMANESER'S VICTORY MONUMENT AND THE BEHISTUNE STONE

The only time that Ahab and Ben-hadad were not in conflict with one another was the three year period following the battle described in I Kings 20. That being true, this is the period in which the Battle of Karkar (Qarqar) took place (see ADDENDUM C and ADDENDUM G).

The story of the discovery of the record of this battle is another one of those wonderful archaeological fortuitous events. A young English lawyer, Henry Layard, was an attaché-elect with the British Ambassador at Constantinople. He was an archaeology novice who hoped to make some significant discovery while in the Middle East. In 1845, with very little money, he set out to excavate an old mound on the Tigris River, Tell Nimrud. On the third day he came upon the remains of a palace. He and his workers began digging a trench, but found nothing of interest. When the trench was twenty-feet deep, Layard ran out of money and so he had to give up his hope of achieving archaeological discovery. Depressed, he loaded his few tools onto the pack mules and prepared to head back to Constantinople. He was halted by excited cries from his native workers. They called to him, gesturing that he should come to the end of the trench where something dark showed up against the golden-yellow sand. Quickly they dug around the object and found it to be a huge pure-black obelisk. Layard carefully cleaned off the dust and dirt and began to see reliefs, pictures, and inscriptions in cuneiform writing on all four sides.

After securely wrapping the stone, Layard and his workers transported it to the Tigris River where it was placed in a fragile riverboat and transported up river. Upon arrival in Constantinople, Layard presented his find to the astonished officials of the British Embassy. They shipped the stone to London where it proudly was put on display in the British Museum. Thousand of Londoners and European scholars marveled at this six-foot obelisk of black basalt. The top of the stone is in the shape of a three tiered temple tower. Reliefs are displayed in five rows circling the column. Individuals attired in magnificent royal robes, prostrating themselves before a royal figure, are portrayed. The relief pictures long columns of porters bearing costly treasures and an assortment of tethered wild animals. Even though the obelisk impressed all who looked at it, no one could interpret the cuneiform script until....

In 1835, a young British officer stationed in Persia, Henry Rawlinson, discovered and began to copy a trilingual inscription on the Behistun Rock in the Zagros area. The large relief display, occupying a prepared surface measuring 25 X 50 feet, represents Darius's reception of rival kings. It took Rawlinson four years to copy the inscriptions (he did so at the risk of his life). The relief contains the same account in three languages (the Old Persian with 39 letters, the Babylonian with its hundreds of signs, and the Susian [Elamite]). By comparing the languages, Rawlinson and scholars who worked with him over the next several years were able to translate the inscriptions. In 1846, the year after Layard found obelisk at Tell Numrud, Rawlinson published the translation of the Persian text, which became the basis for deciphering the other two languages. After a few more years, the cuneiform language of Babylon was translated. After that, it was a short leap for the scholars of the British Museum to translate successfully the inscriptions on the obelisk found by Layard.

The black obelisk was a victory monument by Shalmaneser III, and records an endless succession of bloody campaigns. One of these campaigns was the Battle of Karkar in which Shalmaneser faced the coalition consisting of Ahab, Ben-hadad, and the other kings who joined together to oppose the Assyrian invader.

Judah's Righteous King: Jehoshaphat

I Kings 15:24; 22:1-50; II Chronicles 17; 18:1-21:1

In the waning years of Asa's reign, when he was ill, his son, Jehoshaphat became co-regent with his father. Upon Asa's death, during the fourth year of Ahab's reign in Israel, Jehoshaphat became King of Judah. Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king and he reigned for twenty-five years (I Kings 22:41-44).

Jehoshaphat was an admirable king. He sought to strengthen the kingdom both spiritually and militarily. He placed soldiers in the fortified cities of his kingdom, established military garrisons in Judah and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa had captured in his conflict with Baasha.

The introductory comments on Jehoshaphat's reign point to his dedication to Jehovah and his efforts to make Judah as God had intended it to be.

Jehovah was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father⁷¹ David's earlier days (i.e. before David's sin with Bathsheba and before he numbered Israel) and did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ... He took great pride in the ways of Jehovah and again removed the high places⁷² and the Asherim from Judah. (II Chronicles 17:3-4, 6)

He walked in all the way of Asa his father; he did not turn aside from it, doing right in the sight of Jehovah... The remnant of the sodomites who remained in the days of his father Asa, he expelled from the land.. (I Kings 22:43a, 46)

In the third year of his reign, Jehoshaphat put forth a concentrated effort to improve Judah's spiritual level. He organized teams, consisting of a combination of government officials and Levites, and sent them to every city in his realm. Each team carried a copy of the Torah and they taught the Law of God in each location. Jehoshaphat sought to remove ignorance as an excuse for disobedience.

Because of his godly life style and his dedication to bringing the nation up to God's standards, Jehovah firmly established Jehoshaphat's kingdom. The surrounding nations experienced a fear of Jehovah, and recognized His hand of blessing and protection upon Judah. As a result, not only did the people of Judah bring tribute to Jehoshaphat, but the surrounding kingdoms also brought tribute to him. (II chronicles 17:5, 10-11). He became very wealthy.

Ahab, Jehoshaphat, and Ben-hadad (I Kings 22; II Chronicles 18)

Jehoshaphat and Ahab had been a part of the coalition that had fought Shalmaneser at Karkar. Following that battle, they continued to be at peace with one another and nurtured the camaraderie that had developed between them. They formed a marriage alliance; Jehoshaphat's son, Joram, married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah (II Chronicles 18:1; 21:6; II Kings 8:16-18).

⁷¹ David was Jehoshaphat's great-grandfather, but in Scripture the one who began a dynasty, or the one whose character matches the character of the individual being described, often is called one's father.

⁷² I Kings 22:43 informs us that even though he did remove the high places where false gods were worshipped, he was not able to stop, completely, the illegal folk practice of worshipping Jehovah in high places (I Kings 22:43b). This is the same situation faced by his father, Asa (I Kings 15:17). Habits so ingrained in a people are difficult to root out.

After the coalition disbanded, following the battle of Karkar, Ahab began to be irritated by the fact that Ben-hadad had violated the covenant that they had made at Aphek (I Kings 20:28ff). According to the covenant, Ben-hadad was to restore to Israel the cities that the Arameans had taken during Baasha's monarchy (I Kings 20:34). Ben-hadad had not fulfilled the conditions of the armistice. He had continued to occupy Ramoth-gilead. Ahab decided that it was time to retake the city.

Sometime in the third year following Ahab's resounding defeat of Ben-hadad (I Kings 20), and after the Battle of Karkar, Jehoshaphat visited Ahab. Ahab put on a large feast in Jehoshaphat's honor, hoping to induce Jehoshaphat to join him in his planned campaign to retake Ramoth-gilead. In the midst of the festal conviviality, Ahab put the question to Jehoshaphat, *Will you go with me against Ramoth-gilead*, Jehoshaphat warmly replied, *I am as you are, and my people as your people, and we will be with you in battle.*

In spite of the fraternal mood at the banquet, Jehoshaphat wanted to know God's will in the matter. He said, *Please inquire first for the word of Jehovah.*

Ahab called together four-hundred prophets. These probably were the prophets who were associated with the Jehovah worshipped at the altars dedicated to the golden calves and Bethel and Dan. They were professional prophets who practiced a trade, but were not prophets called by God. These false prophets, knowing what the king wanted to hear, said, *Go up, for Jehovah will give it into the hand of the king.*

Jehoshaphat realized that these men were not true prophets of God and he asked, *Is there not a prophet of Jehovah here, that we might inquire of him?* Ahab said that there was one man, Micaiah, son of Imlah. However, Ahab said that he hated Micaiah because he always prophesied something bad, rather than something good about Ahab. Jehoshaphat said, *Don't say that!* So, Ahab sent for Micaiah.

While the messengers were going after Micaiah, one of the false prophets, a man named Zedekiah, had some horns that he had made out of iron. He held these horns to his head and acted as if he were a bull goring someone. He told Ahab that he would gore the Arameans until they were consumed. All of the other prophets kept declaring that Ahab should go against Ramoth-gilead because Jehovah was going to give the city to him.

The messenger who was escorting Micaiah told him that all of the prophets had spoken favorable words to the king and that he should do the same thing. Micaiah replied that he could only speak what Jehovah gave him to say.

When he came into the presence of the two kings, Micaiah, sarcastically mimicking the other prophets, said, *Go up and succeed, and Jehovah will give it into the hand of the king.* Ahab, in frustration, told him to stop the ruse and tell him what Jehovah really had to say. Micaiah then prophesied the death of Ahab and the scattering of the army of Israel. He further said that he had seen in a vision, Jehovah's commissioning a spirit to enter into the false prophets, using them to entice Ahab to go against Ramoth-gilead in order to bring disaster to Ahab.

Immediately, Zedekiah struck Micaiah and mockingly asked, *How did the spirit of Jehovah pass from me to speak to you?* Micaiah told Zedekiah that he would know the answer to that question when he, Zedekiah, was hiding in fear, after Ahab's defeat

Ahab, in anger, told his servants to take Micaiah back to his home town, where he was to be kept in prison and fed only bread and water until Ahab returned in victory. Micaiah said that if the

king returned safely, then he had not spoken the word of Jehovah. As he was being escorted from the presence of the kings, Micaiah urged the people to listen to what he had said.

After Micaiah's word, one might expect Jehoshaphat to refuse to accompany Ahab into battle. Pride probably compelled Jehoshaphat to join the campaign, not wanting to retract the sweeping statement that he had made earlier at the banquet (I Kings 22:4).

Ahab, no doubt apprehensive because of the many prophecies that had been given concerning his death and because of the immediacy of the prophecy of Micaiah, chose to not lead the battle attired as the King of Israel. Instead, he would go into the battle disguised as a charioteer. He told Jehoshaphat that there was no reason that he should not go ahead and wear his royal attire.

Ben-hadad had instructed his chariot corps to not bother fighting with the troops from Israel, but to spot Ahab and go after him. When the battle was joined, the Arameans saw Jehoshaphat in royal robes and assumed that he was Ahab. They initially went after Jehoshaphat, but when they realized that he was not their man, they turned away from pursuing him and began looking for Ahab.

In the midst of the battle, an Aramean archer released an arrow into the conflict – aiming at no one in particular – and the arrow went straight into a joint in the armor of Ahab. The Hand of God guided the arrow. Ahab directed his chariot driver to take him out of the fight. He was propped up in the chariot, watching the battle from the sidelines, where he died at sunset. The blood from his wound covered the floor of the chariot. The army of Israel quickly broke apart and every man fled toward his home.

Ahab was buried in Samaria. Ahab's chariot was taken to a pool in Samaria, where his blood was washed from the floor of the vehicle. In keeping with the prophecy that Elijah had given to Ahab in Jezreel,⁷³ the dogs licked up the king's blood, not in Jezreel, but in Samaria (see footnote on page 65).

Jehoshaphat models godly rule (II Chronicles 19)

After Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem, Jehu the seer came to him with a rebuke from Jehovah, rebuking him for making an alliance with the ungodly Ahab. However, because of Jehoshaphat's dedication to Jehovah, no consequence was imposed upon him.

Jehoshaphat continued to travel, from the southernmost point in his kingdom to the northernmost point, calling his people to faithfulness to Jehovah. He also set up judges in each of the fortified cities and in Jerusalem. These judges were to hear various cases brought before them and Jehoshaphat urged them to remember that they were representing Jehovah and that they should beware of bribes, partiality, or any unrighteousness. He especially warned those who were judges in Jerusalem that they should not allow family ties to influence them, but should warn everyone who was a transgressor, so that the wrath of God would not come on them or on any of their families.

⁷³ I Kings 21:19

Judah delivered from the coalition of surrounding nations (II Chronicles 20:1-30)

The Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites formed an alliance and invaded Judah with the intent of driving the Israelites out of Palestine. When Jehoshaphat learned of this coming invasion, he fearfully turned to Jehovah. He proclaimed a fast throughout all of Judah and the people of Judah came from their cities to Jerusalem. The men of Judah gathered before the Temple, standing before Jehovah with their infants, wives, and children. King Jehoshaphat stood before the people and prayed to Jehovah:

- He declared that Jehovah is God over all – creation, nations, and that no power is strong enough to resist Him.
- He rehearsed the history of God’s giving the land to the descendents of Abraham.
- He declared that God’s People had built a Temple in Jerusalem to Jehovah.
- He repeated the sense of the Temple dedicatory prayer, i.e., that Jehovah’s name was in the Temple and that if enemies threatened God’s people, they could come to the Temple, where God’s name dwelt, and seek His face and He would hear and deliver them.
- He described how Israel had not driven out the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, when they were occupying the land.
- These three tribes now were rewarding Israel’s mercy by coming to drive God’s people out of Judah.
- He then pled with God to judge the army coming against Jerusalem, declaring that Judah was powerless against such a large force.
- He declared that their eyes were upon Jehovah – they looked nowhere else for help. invading nations.

In the midst of the assembly, as Jehoshaphat was praying, the Spirit of God came upon Jahaziel. He brought forth a prophetic word,

*Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat:
thus says Jehovah to you,*

*'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude,
for the battle is not yours but God's.*

Tomorrow go down against them.

*Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz,
and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel.*

You need not fight in this battle;

station yourselves,

stand and see the salvation of Jehovah on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.

Do not fear or be dismayed;

tomorrow go out to face them,

for Jehovah is with you.

(II Chronicles 20:15-17)

In response to this prophecy, Jehoshaphat and the people fell on their faces and worshiped Jehovah. The Levites stood up and began to praise God with a loud voice.

The next morning, in obedience to the prophetic word, the Judeans went out to meet the invaders. Jehoshaphat urged the people to trust Jehovah and to trust the prophetic word that had come to them. As an expression of their trust, they sent worshippers in front of their army. God responded to their trust by fulfilling His promise. The three different nations allied against Judah began to fight among themselves and these three armies completely destroyed one another. When the Judeans came to the battleground, they found the place littered with corpses. It took the Judeans three days to collect all of the spoil from the bodies of the fallen. On the fourth day, they gathered in a valley and had a great praise service, ending with a grand celebratory parade praising God on harps, lyres, and trumpets, arriving at the Temple where they concluded the day with another great praise service.

NOTE: Occasionally, some one will declare that this event proves that worship is a force in spiritual warfare. They contend that it was the praise and worship that defeated the enemy. This is not true. What brought the victory was trust in God and His promise. God had given a specific clear prophetic promise and the people believed Him. They believed that He would do what He said that He would do. The act of sending worshippers before the army, instead of chariots and experienced warriors, was an expression of that trust. God responded to their trust, not their worship.

A closing sad note and Jehoshaphat's death (I Kings 22:47-49; II Chronicles 20:35-37)

Jehoshaphat decided that he wanted a navy, so that he could resume the gold trade at Ophir. He entered into a partnership with Ahaziah, Ahab's son, who ruled briefly in Israel (see next section). Jehovah declared that in aligning himself with Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat had done wickedly. Eliezer, a prophet, was given a disapproving word for Jehoshaphat,

Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, Jehovah has destroyed your works." (II Chronicles 20:37)

The ships were broken up at Eziongeber, no doubt by a storm. Ahaziah then approached Jehoshaphat with a proposal that they try again, and this time Ahaziah's men would sail with the Judeans. In the light of Eliezer's prophecy and the destruction of the ships, Jehoshaphat declined Ahaziah's offer.

Not long after this event, Jehoshaphat died. His son, Jehoram, who had been co-regent with his father in the closing days of Jehoshaphat's reign, ruled in his place.

The Beginning of the Destruction of Ahab's Dynasty : Ahaziah

I Kings 22:51-53; II Kings 1:1-18;

Following the death of Ahab, his son, Ahaziah ascended to the throne. Ahaziah's father was Ahab and his mother was Jezebel. He displayed the characteristics of both.

He did evil in the sight of Jehovah and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. So he served Baal and worshiped him and provoked Jehovah God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done. (I Kings 22:52-53)

David had subjugated the Moabites (II Samuel 8:2) and after the division of the Kingdom they had remained in a tributary relationship with the ten tribes of the north. When Israel was defeated by the Syrians in the battle at Ramoth-gilead (the battle in which Ahab was slain), the Moabites took advantage of the weakening of the Israelites' power and shook off the yoke of Israel. In time, as described above, Moab joined with Edom and Ammon in a failed attempt to invade Judah (II Chronicles 20). That coalition fell apart after being soundly defeated by Judah.

No doubt Ahaziah would have launched a military campaign to bring the Moabites back into full subjection, but he had an accident that curtailed any action on his part. He fell through the lattice-work that covered a door or a window (the text does not tell us which) in the Samaritan palace. Not only was Ahaziah injured, but following the injury he became grievously ill. As the sickness drug on, he wanted to know whether or not he ever would recover. He sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, concerning the prospects of his recovery.

As the messengers were on their way to Ekron, Elijah met them, with a message that an angel had given him for Ahaziah. The message was that because Ahaziah had turned to a Baal, rather than to Jehovah, he would die.

The messengers returned to Ahaziah, without finishing the journey to Ekron. Ahaziah, surprised by their early return, asked them why they had not completed their mission. They told him about being intercepted by a prophet and the message that he gave them. The king asked them to describe the man. By their description, he knew that the prophet was Elijah.

Ahaziah sent a captain with fifty men to arrest Elijah. They found him sitting on the top of a hill. When the captain ordered Elijah to come down, Elijah responded, *If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.* Fire did come down from heaven and consumed the captain and his men. Ahaziah sent another captain with fifty men to arrest Elijah, and the same thing happened again.

Ahaziah then sent a third captain with fifty men to arrest Elijah. When this captain approached Elijah, he knelt before him and pled for the life of himself and his men. The angel of Jehovah then told Elijah to go down from the mountain and accompany this captain and his company to the king's chamber in Samaria. When Elijah entered the room, he spoke the same message that he had spoken to the messengers on the road – Ahaziah was going to die.

After being king for only two years, Ahaziah died, leaving no heirs. The dynasty of Ahab was almost over. Jehoram, Ahaziah's brother, became king. Interestingly, the co-regent of Judah at this time also was named, Jehoram (the names of both of these kings occasionally are spelled *Joram*).

<p>At this point in the narrative, II Kings includes the story of Elijah's ascension and Elisha's miraculous acts (II Kings 2, 4, 5, 6, 7). Because most of these events do not impact the story of the nations, but are more personal accounts, we will pass over them without comment. We will look at the activity of these prophets when such activity is intertwined with the fate of the nations.</p>

The death of Ahab's Dynasty: Jehoram

II Kings 3-9

Jehoram, another one of the sons of Ahab and Jezebel, succeeded his brother, Ahaziah, and reigned in Israel for twelve years. The attempt of Jezebel to stamp out worship of Jehovah had failed. The people were on the side of Jehovah, although their commitment was shallow. Later, when Jehu carried out his bloody reform, all of the worshippers of Baal could be gathered into one temple (II Kings 10:18ff).

Realizing that the people favored Jehovah, Jehoram posed as a reformer by putting away the pillar of Baal. The biblical record implies that he secretly worshipped Baal, but expected to receive help from Jehovah when he got into difficult straits. The introductory comments on his reign describe his character.

He did evil in the sight of Jehovah, though not like his father and his mother; for he put away the sacred pillar of Baal which his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin; he did not depart from them. (II Kings 3:2-3)

Now Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What do I have to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and to the prophets of your mother." And the king of Israel said to him, "No, for Jehovah has called these three kings together to give them into the hand of Moab." (II Kings 3:13)

The Campaign against Moab (II Kings 3)

Upon becoming king, Jehoram immediately was thrown into conflict with Mesha, king of Moab (II Kings 3:4ff). Moab had become a tributary to Israel in the days of Omri and remained in that position for forty years. Moab rebelled in the days of Ahab and Jehoram was determined to conquer Moab and bring it back under Israelite control.

According to Josephus,⁷⁴ Jehoram had been invited to Jerusalem, where Jehoshaphat had entertained him lavishly, in the fashion that Ahab had entertained Jehoshaphat. So, when Jehoram decided to begin a campaign against Moab, he turned to Jehoshaphat and asked him to join in the crusade. Interestingly, Jehoshaphat responded to Jehoram with almost the identical words that he had spoken to Ahab.

And he said, "I will go up; I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." (II Kings 3:7c)

The King of Edom, who at this time was a vassal of Judah, joined the coalition. The allies marched against Moab, taking a circuitous route around the southern end of the Dead Sea. The invaders found themselves in a dry land and they feared perishing for lack of water. Jehoram was ready to give up, saying that Jehovah had brought them into this land to give them into the hands of the Moabites. Jehoshaphat, however, asked if there were a prophet of Jehovah nearby. One of the soldiers from Israel informed them of Elisha's being in the vicinity. The three kings quickly traveled to Elisha to seek a word from God.

⁷⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, IX, iii, 1

When the kings came into Elisha's presence, he rebuked Jehoram as an idolator. However, he said, that because of the presence of Jehoshaphat, a godly man, he would give them an interview. Elisha asked for a minstrel to begin playing, and when that was done, the word of God came upon him, giving him instructions for the kings. They were to dig trenches in the valley. There would be no rain, nor any wind, but Jehovah miraculously would fill the valley and the Moabites would be given into their hands. In their conquest of Moab they were to strike every fortified city, fell every good tree, cap off all of the springs of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. In other words, make Moab a place that no one would want to live.

Immediately, they did as they were told and the next morning, at the time of the morning sacrifice in the Temple back in Jerusalem, the valley was filled with water.

The Moabites heard about the coming invasion and every male, young and old, was conscripted into the army. When they went out in the morning to scout out the situation, the angle of the morning sun made the water appear red. The Moabites surmised that the armies of the three kings had become distrustful of one another and had engaged in a mutual slaughter. The Moabites rushed forward to gather the spoil from the dead bodies. When the Moabites came into the valley, the Israelites slaughtered them. The coalition invaded Moab and did to the cities, the springs, the forests, and the trees exactly as Elisha had commanded.

The King of Moab, realizing that he could not defeat his enemy fled to the city of Kirhareth. In a desperate attempt to ward off his enemies, he made an offering to his god, Chemosh. The offering was his oldest son, the one who would succeed him as king. The son was offered as a burnt offering upon the wall of the city, in sight of the coalition army.

Human sacrifice was strictly forbidden in the Law (Leviticus 18:21; 20:3). The besiegers consciences were disturbed and they felt in themselves the wrath of God because they felt that they had caused such an abomination. As a result, they broke off the siege and ended the campaign without achieving their goal of bringing Moab under the subjugation of Israel.

The Syrian incursion (II Kings 6:8-23)

The Syrians made frequent forays into Israel, operating more as robber bands than invasions by a regular army. Elisha, by revelation, was able repeatedly to send word to Jehoram about the locations where the Syrians planned to camp. When Jehoram received such a word from Elisha, he would send troops to occupy that location and when the Syrians arrived they were unable to attack that city or village. The Syrian King accused his officers of spying for Jehoram – there could be no other explanation for Jehoram's ability to anticipate their flying forays into Israel. One of the officers protested that Jehoram's intelligence did not come from spies but from the prophet Elisha, who knew even the conversations that the Syrian King had in his bedroom.

When he was told that Elisha was staying in Dothan, he dispatched a powerful army to take Elisha captive. The next morning, when Elisha's servant went out, he saw the army that had come to the town during the night. They occupied the hills that surrounded Dothan. In a panic, the servant rushed back to Elisha and asked, *What shall we do?* Elisha asked God to give the servant the ability to see things in the spirit and the servant then saw the mountain on which Dothan stood, full of fiery horses and chariots around Elisha.

Elisha asked Jehovah to strike the Syrians with blindness. From the succeeding account, it seems that the blindness which resulted from this request was a mental blindness in which a man can see, but not correctly. Elisha went out of Dothan and met the troops, telling them that they

had come to the wrong place, offering to take them to the right place. He led them on a four-hour walk to Samaria, where they entered the city and were surrounded by Israelites. Elisha asked that their eyesight be restored, and when that took place, the invaders were bewildered to find themselves in the middle of the city of Samaria. Jehoram asked Elisha if he should have the captives killed. Elisha forbade it, and instead, had a great feast prepared for them and then sent them back to the King of Syria. After that, the marauding bands of Syrians stayed out of Israel.

Ben-hadad besieges Samaria (II Kings 6:24 – 7:20)

Even though the plundering bands of Syria ended their forays into Israel, the war with Syria was not over. In time, Ben-hadad led the entire Syrian army into Israel and besieged the city of Samaria. The siege was so successful that famine in Samaria became extreme. People were reduced to eating anything they could swallow, including the dung of pigeons. One day, as Jehoram was walking on the wall, wearing sackcloth under his garments, a woman began shouting at him to help her. He rebuked the woman, stating that there was no way that he could help her. The woman then told him a horrible story. A neighbor woman had proposed that they eat their sons. The woman had agreed and they had boiled her son and eaten it. The next day, they were to eat the other woman's son, but the other woman hid her son. This was the literal fulfillment of the law (Leviticus 26:23-29ff; Deuteronomy 28:52-57). This story broke the king's heart and he tore his clothes, revealing that he was wearing sackcloth next to his skin. He then declared, *Then he said, "May God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today."* (II Kings 6:21)

This outburst reveals what the record assumes:

- Elisha must have advised that on no condition should the city be surrendered to Ben-hadad, but that Jehovah would deliver the city if they humbled themselves in sincere humility before Him and prayed for Jehovah's deliverance;
- The king had put on sack cloth under his robes, as a mark of humility, but had not openly humbled himself before God.

The outburst was an expression of frustration, in that he sent a man to behead Elisha, then immediately regretting what he had done, he ran as fast as he could to stop the executioner. Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders of the city who, no doubt, were seeking his counsel. It was revealed to Elisha what was happening and so he told the elders to hold the door shut so that the executioner could not get in. This delay allowed Jehoram to arrive in time to stop the execution. Elisha had done the king a favor.

The king was admitted into the room and he asked, *Behold, this evil is from Jehovah; why should I wait for Jehovah any longer?* Elisha then stated that within twenty-four hours the very best food would be for sale in Samaria for just a few pennies. Jehoram's royal officer said that even if God opened up windows in heaven such could not happen. Elisha told the officer that he would see it with his own eyes, but he would not eat any of it.

That night, just after the sun had set, Jehovah caused the air around the camp of the Syrians to be filled with the sound of chariots, horses, and a great army. In the twilight, the Syrians could not see what was happening, but they concluded that Jehoram had hired the Hittites and Egyptians to attack the Syrians. The besiegers fled in the night, leaving everything behind. Four lepers in Samaria, thinking that death by starvation was inevitable, decided that they would go the Syrian camp and seek mercy. If the Syrians killed them, they were going to die anyway. When they

came to the camp they found it empty. They began gorging themselves and taking spoil, then their consciences told them that they should inform those who were starving in Samaria. They rushed back to the city and told the gatekeepers that the Syrians had vanished. Word quickly spread to the palace. Jehoram thought that it was a Syrian trick and so he sent out to chariots to see. When the report came back that the camp was empty and supplies in abundance were waiting, the people rushed out of the city and in the process trampled to death the officer to whom Elisha had prophesied the day before that he would see the food but not eat it.

A new king in Syria (II Kings 8:7-15)

I Kings 19:15-17 records an instruction and a prophetic word given to Elijah at the conclusion of his cave experience in Mount Horeb.

Jehovah 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; 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. It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death.

Elijah accomplished only one of these things – he anointed Elisha to be his replacement. Elisha was to be the one who would carry out the other instructions, in the spirit of Elijah. After Ben-hadad's troops had fled in fear from Samaria, the Syrian King returned to Damascus. Shortly thereafter, he became sick. The Spirit led Elisha to visit Damascus. He had been sent there to anoint the man who would become the King of Syria – the agent that God was going to use to punish Israel. When Ben-hadad heard that Elisha was in the city, he had his aide, Hazael, take a huge gift to the prophet⁷⁵ for the purpose of asking, *Will I recover from this sickness?* Elisha told Hazael to tell Ben-hadad that he would recover, but that he would die. The implication is that Ben-hadad would not die from the sickness, but would die by another means.

Then a striking thing happened. Elisha looked so intensely at Hazael that Hazael became embarrassed. Elisha began to weep. When Hazael asked him why he was weeping, Elisha told him that in coming years Hazael would do horrible things to the people of Israel. Hazael immediately asked how that was possible – he was just a nobody in the service of his king. Elisha then told him that Jehovah had revealed that Hazael would become the next King of Syria.

When Hazael returned to Ben-hadad, he told him that Elisha had stated that he would recover from the illness. The next day, Hazael took the coverlet that was upon Ben-hadad's bed, soaked it in water and used it to smother the king. Hazael then became King of Syria.

One of the first things that King Hazael did was to launch a campaign to retake Ramoth-gilead from Israel.

The defense of Ramoth-gilead and Jehoram's death

When Hazael attacked Ramoth-gilead, Jehoram recruited Ahaziah, who was king of Judah at that time, to assist him in defense of this important outpost. In the ensuing conflict, Jehoram was

⁷⁵ *Every good thing of Damascus, forty camel loads (II Kings 8:9)*

wounded and had to repair back to Jezreel. The Judean King, Ahaziah, left the battle field and went to Jezreel to check on the gravity of Jehoram's wounds.

Jehu had been left in command of the Israelite troops before Ramoth-gilead. Elisha commissioned one of his young prophets to take a flask of oil and go to Ramoth-gilead and anoint Jehu as King of Israel. The young man did as he was told. In private, he delivered the prophetic word to Jehu that Jehovah had chosen him to be King of Israel, then he anointed him. With the anointing the young prophet delivered Jehovah's commission to Jehu to obliterate the family of Ahab.

You shall strike 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 Jehovah, at the hand of Jezebel.

'For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male person both bond and free in Israel. 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.

The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her. Then he opened the door and fled. (II Kings 9:7-10)

Jehu's fellow military commanders had been just outside of the room where this prophecy had been given and they asked Jehu to tell them what had taken place behind closed doors. He told them what the prophet had said and about the anointing; they immediately responded by declaring Jehu King of Israel. Jehu then said to his fellow commanders, if this is what you really want, then don't let anyone leave this town to tell Jehoram what has happened.

Jehu mounted a chariot and a company of chariots followed him as he raced toward Jezreel. The watchman on the Jezreel tower saw this company in a distance and not knowing who it was, sent out a horseman to inquire, When the horseman approached Jehu he asked if this company were coming in peace. Jehu responded curtly and told the horseman to join his company. The horseman did so. The watchman sent out a second horseman and the result was the same. The watchman reported to those below him that he couldn't see who was in the chariot, but that the driving was like the driving of Jehu *for he drives furiously.*

Jehoram and Ahaziah mounted a chariot and went to intercept Jehu to see what this was all about. The two kings met Jehu at the site of Naboth's vineyard. Jehoram asked Jehu, *Is it peace?* Jehu replied, *What peace, so long as the harlotries of mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?* Jehoram quickly turned his chariot around and started to flee, but Jehu drew his bow and shot him in the back as he was fleeing. The arrow went through Jehoram's heart. Jehu and his chief officer, Bidkar, were veteran soldiers. They had been with Ahab when Elijah had delivered the oracle that Ahab would be repaid for his sin of killing Naboth and his sons – that the repayment would happen on this piece of ground. Therefore, Jehu told Bidkar to take Jehoram's body and cast it into the field of Naboth.

In the meantime, the King of Judah, Ahaziah fled in a separate chariot. Jehu's archers shot Ahaziah while he was fleeing. Morally wounded he continued to flee but he died at Megiddo. Judeans carried his body back to Jerusalem where he was buried.

Jehu killed all of the remaining descendants of Ahab, thus ending this dynasty. We will continue the story of Jehu after looking back at the succession of kings in Judah.

The Succession in Judah: Jehoram, the bad son of a good father

II Kings 8:16-24; II Chronicles 21:1-20

During the last two years of his reign, Jehoshaphat made his son, Jehoram, coregent. Jehoram reigned six more years after Jehoshaphat died. Both Israel and Judea had kings named, *Jehoram* at this time. Jehoram's wife was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Jehoram followed the ways of his in-laws and his wife, rather than the godly example of his father.

He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife; and he did evil in the sight of Jehovah.

Jehoshaphat had given each of his seven sons great wealth, as well as cities for each of them to rule. When Jehoram became king he killed all of his brothers as well as some of the rulers of Israel. He sought to exterminate anyone who might challenge to his monarchy.

He made *high places of worship* in the mountains of Judah and caused the nation to become religious harlots. He led the nation away from the True God. As punishment for his sins, Jehovah caused Edom to revolt against Jehoram. In spite of Jehoram's evil, Jehovah did not destroy Judah, because of the promise to David to *give him a lamp and to his sons, forever*.

A prophet was sent to Jehoram with the message that because of his sins, his family would be stricken and that he would develop a horrible bowel disease. The word was fulfilled when both the Philistines and the Arabs attacked Judah and carried away all of the king's treasures, along with his wives and, with one exception, his sons. Soon after this calamity, the prophesied bowel disease attacked Jehoram and he died an horrible death. He was buried without honor in Jerusalem, but not in the tombs of the kings (II Chron. 21:18-20).

OBADIAH

Obadiah denounces Edom because of its attitude toward Jerusalem during a recent pillage of the city. There are five sacks of Jerusalem that are possibilities for the event that produced this prophecy.

1. **Shishak of Egypt (I Kings 14:25-26; II Chronicles 12:-12)** Edom was subject to Judah, during this period. As one studies the historical situation, this invasion does not fit the scene described in Obadiah.
2. **Philistines and Arabians (II Chron. 21:16-17)** There is much to commend this event as the background for *Obadiah*
3. **Jehoash of Israel (II Kings 14:8-14; II Chron 25:17-24)** Verse 11 in Obadiah would rule out this pillage as being the one referred to, because Jehoash was neither a stranger nor a foreigner.
4. **Calamities in the reign of Ahaz (II Kings 16:6; II Chron. 28:6-8, 17-18)**
5. **Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 25; II Chron. 36:11)** This particular sack of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the citizens in Babylonian exile. The Edomites did rejoice over the destruction of the city on this occasion (Ezekiel 35:1-15; Psalms. 137:7). However, it would seem that Obadiah would have mentioned the Babylonians in his prophecy if they were the culprits. (Note- this pillage could be the one referred to by an earlier prophecy if the language of verses 10-11 is prophetic perfect).

Although the decision cannot be absolute, Events 2 and 5 best fit both the theme and the historical conditions described in Obadiah. Thus, either 845 B.C. or 545 B.C. would be the date. The early position of Obadiah in all three canons (English, Hebrew, and Septuagint) favors the early date. More liberal critics who do not allow for predictive prophecy would choose the later date.

Ahaziah: One year as King of Judah

II Kings 22:1-9

Ahaziah is known by two names in Scripture: *Ahaziah* and *Jehoahaz*. He reigned for only one year. Tragically, his mother and her family were his counselors, resulting in his downfall.

...his mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. He did evil in the sight of Jehovah like the house of Ahab, for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. He also walked according to their counsel (II Kings 22:2-5a)

Earlier, we recounted his involvement with Jehoram at the battle of Ramoth-gilead and his death at the hands of Jehu.

The Dynasty of David interrupted: Athaliah, the Queen-Monarch of Judah

II Kings 22:10 – 23:15

After the death of Ahaziah, his mother, Athaliah, seized the throne and ruled for six years. Athaliah attempted to destroy all male descendants of David. She would have succeeded had it not been for courageous princess Jehoshabeath. Jehoshabeath was the daughter of Jehoram; she was Ahaziah's sister. She also was the wife of the godly priest of Jehovah, Jehoiada. When Athaliah began slaughtering all of the royal family, Jehoshabeath spirited away her nephew Joash, hiding the boy and his nurse in her bedroom. As soon as she could, she smuggled them into the Temple, where the boy and his nurse lived for the next six years.

In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada acted. He met with the commanders of Judah's army, explained the situation to them. The commanders knew that Jehovah had declared that a descendant of David should be on the throne. The commanders entered into a covenant with Jehoiada. Next he toured Judah and asked the Levites and the heads of the various clans to come to Jerusalem. These assembled at the appointed time and were in full agreement that a descendant of David should be on the throne. All present entered into a covenant with Joash.

Jehoiada divided the assembly into companies and armed them with spears and shields that had belonged to David, which had been stored in the Temple. These were to guard the young king against Athaliah and her agents. After this preparation, they brought out Joash, put the crown on his head, and declared him king. They gave a great shout, *Long live the king!*

Athaliah heard the commotion and rushed to the Temple. When she arrived she saw Joash standing by the king's pillar at the Temple entrance. All of the military host, the trumpeters, and the Levites were attending him. She tore her clothes and shouted, *Treason, treason*. Jehoiada told the captains to seize her and to take her out of the Temple, because no one should be executed in the Temple. She was executed at the Horse Gate of the king's house.

David's Dynasty restored: Joash

II Kings 12: II Chronicles 24

After the execution of Athaliah, Jehoiada led the people to the Temple of Baal, which they destroyed and executed the Priest of Baal, Mattan. Jehoiada then put in order all of the things

related to the Temple and its ministry that had been suspended during the previous three reigns. There was a general sense that things had been put right, the people of the land rejoiced and there was peace in the city.

Joash was seven years when he began to reign and he reigned for 40 years (some scholars calculate that the forty years included the six years that Athaliah reigned – in their estimation the reign of Athaliah is not calculated in the reigns of the kings).

JOEL

Joel has had more dates suggested for its historical setting than any other book, except Isaiah. They range from 900 BC to the Fourth Century BC. The most probable date for the writing of this prophecy falls between 835-817 BC, during the childhood of Joash, the boy-king of Judah. The book of Joel is a call to repentance. God's punishment and justice are prominent in the book. One of the main features is the prediction of a coming drought and a plague of locusts.

As long as Jehoiada was alive, Joash followed Jehovah. The king was very devoted to the Temple. He ordered the people of Israel to bring to the Temple the levies that had been decreed by Moses. The people gladly responded and the Temple was restored.

Jehoiada lived until he was 130 years of age. He was buried among the kings of Judah, because everyone recognized the significant role that he had occupied in establishing right rule in Judah. Following Jehoiada's death, the Judean princes that had known the licentious worship of Ashtoreth began to influence the king. He listened to them and followed their way – abandoning the Temple and serving the Asherim and Baalistic idols.

Jehovah sent prophets to call Joash and the princes back to Jehovah, but they did not listen. One notable prophet was Jehoiada's son, Zechariah. When Zechariah stood up and spoke against what they were doing, the king commanded that he be stoned to death. Thus Joash repaid the kindness of Jehoiada – he killed his son.

Jehovah unleashed the Syrians against Jerusalem. The Syrians had a small army, but Jehovah delivered the large Judean army into their hands. The Syrians destroyed all of the officials of Judah, took great spoil and left Joash sick. Joash's servants had been shocked by the manner in which Joash had caused Zechariah to be killed. So, while Joash was sick in bed, they murdered him. The people had such disrespect for Joash that they did not bury him among the tombs of the kings.

A Half-hearted King in Judah: Amaziah

II Kings 14:1-22; II Chronicles 25

Joash's son, Amaziah became the next King of Judah. He was twenty-five years old when he became king and reigned for twenty-nine years. The comment concerning the character of his rule anticipates a mixed reign.

He did right in the sight of Jehovah, yet not with a whole heart. (II Chronicles 25:2)

One flaw in his reign that is noted is his failure to rid the country of the high places where illegal worship was conducted (II Kings 14:4)

After he had established himself as king, Amaziah executed those who had killed his father. He honored the Law of Moses to the point that he did not kill the children of those whom he executed.

However, he did not put their children to death, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, which Jehovah commanded, saying, "Fathers shall not be put to death for sons, nor sons be put to death for fathers, but each shall be put to death for his own sin." (II Chronicles 25:4; II Kings 14:6)

Amaziah planned a campaign against Edom. He took a census of his the men who were twenty years old and upward, and found that he had 300,000 men who were qualified to serve in his army. He also hired 100,000 experienced warriors from Israel, paying them 100 talents of silver. A man of God, possibly a prophet, warned Amaziah that if he went into battle with the Israelite mercenaries in his army, he would lose, because Jehovah would not be with these warriors from Israel. Amaziah asked what he should do about the 100 talents of silver investment – he didn't want to just throw it away. The man of God replied that Jehovah had a lot more than this to give to Amaziah. So Amaziah dismissed the Israelites. In anger, they went home, but on the way they plundered the cities that they passed through, killing 3000 people.

Amaziah then mounted his campaign against Edom, engaging the enemy in the Valley of Salt. 10,000 Edomites were killed and 10,000 were taken captive. The captives were marched to a cliff from whence they were thrown to their death.

Amaziah brought back to Jerusalem the gods of Edom that he had captured. He set them up as gods and worshipped them. Jehovah was angry with Amaziah and sent a prophet to him with the question, *Why have you sought the gods of the people who have not delivered their own people from your hand?* Amaziah, in his pride, said to the prophet, *Have we appointed you to be a royal counselor? Be quiet!!! Why should you be struck down?* (Amaziah probably was recalling the manner in which his father had killed Zechariah?) The prophet replied that Jehovah had planned to strike down Amaziah because of he had set up the gods of Edom and because he would not listen to the prophetic word.

Amaziah was full of pride. He and his counselors decided that they would challenge Joash⁷⁶, the King of Israel, to meet Judah in combat (this is another situation in which names can be confusing. Amaziah's father was Joash of Judah; Amaziah's contemporary King of Israel also was named, Joash). The Judean's attitude was similar to that of one who proposed an athletic competition. Joash tried to dissuade Amaziah from this idea, delivering one of the more notable fables of Scripture (II Kings 14:9-10; II Chronicles 25:18). Joash said that Amaziah should be satisfied with his victory over Edom and that he should stay at home and not do anything that would result in his own downfall as well as the destruction of his people. Amaziah, boasting, insisted that the proposed battle take place. Jehovah had deafened his ears to any wise counsel because he had turned to the gods of Edom.

So, Israel and Judah faced off before the Judean town of Bethshemesh. Judah was soundly defeated and Amaziah's proud warriors fled from the field. Joash captured Amaziah and took him to Jerusalem, where the Israelites tore down a significant portion of the Jerusalem wall. Joash took all of the gold and silver and the utensils from the Temple, the treasures from Amaziah's house, plus a large number of hostages, and returned to Samaria.

⁷⁶ Also known as Jehoash

Amaziah outlived Joash by fifteen years, but his final years were not pleasant. From the time that he had installed the gods of Edom, certain influential people in Judah had conspired against him. When the plot became evident, he fled to Lachish, but he could not escape. His Judean enemies tracked him down and killed him, then hauled his body back to Jerusalem where he was buried with his ancestors.

Jehu begins a new dynasty in Israel II Kings 9-10; II Chronicles 22:7-9

We already have been introduced to Jehu, in the account of the deaths of Jehoram, of Israel, and Ahaziah, of Judah. He had been one of Ahab's bodyguards and had witnessed the exchanges between Ahab and Elijah. After Ahab's death, following the battle for Ramoth-gilead, Jehu continued to serve successively under Ahab's sons, first King Ahaziah and then King Jehoram. When Elisha anointed Jehu as the King of Israel, he gave him a very specific mission; i.e. to cut off the house of Ahab and to eliminate Baal from Israel. As recounted earlier, he immediately and furiously proceeded to fulfill his bloody mission.

After Jehu and his company had dispatched Jehoram, King of Israel, and Ahaziah, King of Judah, he proceeded to Jezreel. Jezebel was residing in Jezreel at the time. She received word of Jehu's rebellion and his execution of her son, Jehoram. When a messenger brought word that Jehu was proceeding to Jezreel, Jezebel prepared to face this man who recently had become her foe.

When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it, and she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out the window. (II Kings 9:30)

In addition to the Samaritan excavation discoveries that we have described above (see page 64), archaeologists found cosmetic paraphernalia at the site of the palace, including saucers and small stone boxes with cosmetic residue. The saucers had a number of small depressions, each one containing ground colored material used in blending cosmetics: kohl for black, turquoise for green, ochre for red, etc. In the center of the saucer was a depression where the colors were mixed. Traces of red were in the central depressions. Whether or not these are the specific cosmetic instruments used by Jezebel (as some claim) they at least confirm the biblical record of the use of such items.

When arrived at the palace, Jezebel looked out of the window and asked, *Is it well with you Zimri, your master's murder?*⁷⁷ Jehu shouted up to the window, *Who is on my side? Who?* Two or three officials looked down on him and he shouted to them to throw Jezebel out the window. The officials did as Jehu had commanded. When Jezebel hit the pavement blood splattered on the horses and on the wall – then Jehu ran over her with his chariot. After going indoors for a meal, Jehu told his men to bury Jezebel, because, after all, she was a king's daughter. When they went to take up the body, all that they could find was her skull, the palms of her hands, and her feet. The prophecy of Elijah had been fulfilled,

Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' (I Kings 21:23)

⁷⁷ Jezebel labeled Jehu, *Zimri*, because the military commander, Zimri, had killed king Elah and the assumed the throne of Israel (see page 50)

Ahab had seventy sons and grandsons living in Samaria. The elders of the city could have chosen to enthrone any one of them, as Jehoram's successor. Before marching against the fortified city of Samaria, Jehu sent a letter to the elders of the city to see where he stood in his relationship with them. He challenged them to put one of these seventy descendants of Ahab on the throne and let him lead the Samaritans to battle against Jehu. He told them that they had a fortified city, chariots, horses, and all of the weapons. When the elders of Samaria received this letter they said among themselves, *two kings couldn't stand before him, how can we?* They quickly sent back a letter declaring their submission to Jehu and that they would not make anyone king. He sent them a second letter, stating that if they were on his side, they should behead all seventy of Ahab's descendants and deliver the heads to Jehu at Jezreel. This they did. Jehu had the heads piled up into two stacks and then said to all present that he had killed Jehoram, but that these seventy had been killed by the elders of the city; he and they had done the same thing – he declared that he and they were innocent. Jehu then promised that what Jehovah spoke through Elijah, concerning the house of Ahab, would be fulfilled without any exception. He executed all of Ahab's great men, his acquaintances and his priests, leaving no one alive in Israel who had been a part of Ahab's family or regime.

Shortly thereafter, as Jehu was traveling from Jezreel to Samaria, he encountered a company of forty-two men from Judah. They were relatives of the Judean King, Ahaziah, whom Jehu had executed a day or two before. This company was on the way to Jezreel to visit the family of Ahab and Jezebel. Jehu and his escort quickly executed this group of Ahab's distant relatives.

When Jehu arrived in Samaria, he slew anyone related to Ahab that still remained in the city, *according to the word of Jehovah that he had spoken by Elijah (II Kings 10:17).*

So far, the citizens of Israel were not certain about Jehu's intentions. The only thing of which they were certain was his dedication to the destruction of the house of Ahab. Jehu gathered the people together and declared, *Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much.* (II Kings 10:18) He then made a grand display of demonstrating that he was going to outdo Ahab in his devotion to Baal. He called together all of the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal – there was not a single worshipper of Baal who did not respond to the command to come to the celebration. They assembled in the Temple of Baal, where Jehu ordered that the special robes stored for the priests of Baal be distributed in preparation for a great sacrifice. Jehu then told the worshippers of Baal to search through the crowd and make certain that no worshippers of Jehovah had snuck in to spy on them. He wanted to make certain that only Baal's devotees were present. Jehu secretly instructed eighty armed men to encircle the temple and at his signal to kill all who were within – none were to be allowed to escape. Jehu made a great show of offering a burnt sacrifice to Baal, then he gave the signal and the eighty executioners promptly slew all of the occupants of the temple. Jehu led in the total destruction of the temple and its appointments. Scripture concludes the account by tersely stating, *Thus Jehu eradicated Baal out of Israel.* (II Kings 10:28)

Even though Jehu eradicated from Israel the worship of Baal, he allowed the illegal worship of Jehovah through the golden calves to continue. It is obvious that the motives that drove him to exterminate the family of Ahab and to eliminate the worship of Baal were not totally pure

motives. Even so, because he had carried out his commission as directed, Jehovah promised that his sons, to the fourth generation, would sit upon the throne in Israel.

Before Jehu's death, the prophetic words that had been spoken concerning Israel's demise began to be fulfilled. Portions of the kingdom began to be taken away by Hazael and the Syrians. Israel lost the land on the east side of the Jordan that belonged to the tribes of Manasseh and Reuben.

After reigning twenty-eight years in Samaria, Jehu died and was succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz.

Jehu's Dynasty Continues: Jehoahaz

II Kings 13:1-9

Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, reigned in Samaria for seventeen years. His life is summarized

He did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel sin; he did not turn from them. (II Kings 13:2)

Even though Jehoahaz did not stray into worship of Baal, he did continue the worship of Jehovah through the golden calves. In each generation, sin became more inherent in the nation. Therefore, during Jehoahaz' lifetime, Jehovah allowed the Syrians to gain dominance over Israel. The Syrians decimated the army of Israel, leaving Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and 10,000 infantry.

Jehu's Dynasty Continues to the Second Generation: Jehoash

II Kings 13:10-25; 14:8-14; II Chronicles 25:17-24

Jehoash also is known in Scripture by the name, Joash. He reigned fifteen years. This is another of those instances in which a King of Judah and a King of Israel had the same name, although they were a generation apart. Even though Jehoash continued in the sins of his predecessors, Jehovah heard the pleas of the people and brought some relief from the oppression of the Syrians. He retook cities that his father had lost. Jehoash visited Elisha in the final hours prior to the prophet's death, and received a prophecy concerning the degree of his success against the Aramaeans (Syrians).

As noted above (page 82), the Judean king, Amaziah foolishly challenged him to a battle in which the Judeans were defeated. Following that victory, Jehoash plundered Jerusalem.

Jehu's Dynasty Continues to the Third Generation: Jeroboam II

II Kings 14:23-29

Jeroboam II, who ruled for forty-one years, continued in the same religious pattern that his predecessors had followed. Even so, Jehovah continued to show mercy toward the nation. Jehovah, through the prophet Jonah, declared that Jeroboam would extend the borders of Israel farther than any of the Israeli kings who reigned before or after him. This indeed did take place. He extended the borders to the limits that had been achieved by Solomon, before the division of the Kingdom. One writer has commented, "It would be difficult to exaggerate the military exploits of Jeroboam II."⁷⁸

⁷⁸ George Mark Elliott – *Classroom Notes*

The idolatry and abominable social conditions of Jeroboam's reign called forth the prophetic ministry of Amos and Hosea. Both of these prophets condemned the worship that was conducted at Bethel and Dan. Hosea compared the idolatry of the nation to that of a woman who sold herself to many lovers. Amos, not only condemned the idolatry but also the injustice that was done to the poor and weak of the nation – the people in power used their position to keep people oppressed and in debt.

EXCURSUS: The Seal of Jeroboam's Servant

While excavating Megiddo (1903-1905) the archeological team found a beautiful jasper seal, bearing the inscription, "Belonging to Shema, the Servant of Jeroboam." The seal was located in strata that would have placed it in the reign of Jeroboam II. After its discovery, the seal was placed in the royal treasury of the Sultan of Turkey.

Jehu's Dynasty Ends in the Fourth Generation: Zechariah

II Kings 15:8-12

Zechariah was the last of the four generations that Jehovah had promised to the dynasty of Jehu. He ruled only six months. He also continued in the sins of his fathers. Shallum, the son of Jabesh, formed a conspiracy and publicly killed Zechariah.

The nation of Israel was hastening toward its downfall. After the death of Jeroboam II, six kings quickly followed one another in the space of less than thirty-five years. Only one of these, Menahem, died a natural death and was succeeded by his son.

Shallum's Short Reign in Israel

II Kings 15:13-15

Shallum reigned only one month. Menahem, whom Josephus describes as the commander-in-chief of the army, assaulted Samaria and killed Shallum.

Menahem: A Cold-blooded King

II Kings 15:16-22

Menahem reigned for a full ten years and the scanty comments concerning this king picture a man of unusual cruelty. It appears that he and his army were stationed at Tirza when Shallum killed Zechariah. They were planning an attack to reclaim Tiphshah (no longer exists) which had revolted after the death of Jeroboam II. When Shallum assassinated Zechariah, Menahem took a small number of troops to Samaria and killed Shallum. After declaring himself king, he finished the campaign against Tiphshah. When the city did not immediately surrender, he conquered it and ripped open the wombs of all pregnant women.

During the reign of Menahem, the Assyrian King, Pul, invaded Israel. Menahem paid Pul a large sum of money to get him to withdraw from Israel and to lend his support Menahem's monarchy. In order to raise the money needed to be able to give this gift to Pul, Menahem imposed a very heavy property tax on anyone who had wealth.

Pekahiah: An Insignificant King

II Kings 15:23-26

Pekahiah, Menahem's son, reigned only two years. When adding together the years in which the various kings served, and harmonizing this with the years of rule assigned to the Kings of Judah, it seems apparent that Pekahiah's aide-de-camp, Pekah, was coregent with both Menahem and Pekahiah. The same refrain concerning his sinful pattern is described in the slim comment on his reign (II Kings 15:24). Two years after Menahem's death, Pekah assassinated Pekahiah.

Pekah: The King who paved the Way for Israel's demise

II Kings 15:27-31; II Chronicles 28:5-15; Isaiah 7

After assassinating Pekahiah, and taking the throne of Israel for himself, Pekah reigned for 20 years. He continued the consistent pattern of sin that his predecessors had displayed. At one point, Pekah joined with Rezin, the King of Syria, to attack Judah. Jehovah was behind this because during the reign of Ahaz the people of Judah had turned away from Jehovah. This is one of the many examples in the Old Testament in which God used an evil ruler to chastise His own people.

Pekah's army killed 120,000 valiant Judean warriors in one day. Zichri, an Israelite warrior of the tribe Ephraim, killed Maaseiah, a relative of the Judean King, Azrikam the ruler of Ahaz' house, and Elkanah, the second in command under the king. In addition to the huge spoil that the army of Israel transported back to Samaria, they also took 200,000 women, sons, and daughters whom they planned to put into slavery.

As army returned to Samaria with the plunder and captives, a prophet of Jehovah named Obed stood before the army and pointed out the great cruelty that they had exercised on these prisoners. He began by telling them that Jehovah had been angry with Judah and for that reason had delivered the Judean army into their hands. However, he said, you have slain them in a rage that reached to high heaven. In other words, even though you were God's instrument of punishment, you have gone beyond what should have done, even going so far as to plan to make slaves out of these helpless, naked captives, who, by the way, are your relatives your slaves. He rhetorically asked, *Surely, do you not have transgressions of your own against Jehovah your God?* (II Chronicles 28:10). In other words, you have sins, just as the citizens of Judah had sins – do you want Jehovah to give you tit for tat? He then urged them to return the captives to their relatives, because the anger of Jehovah was burning against them for this inhuman attitude.

When prominent men of Ephraim heard Obed's words, they told those escorting the captives to not bring them into Samaria, because of the feared anger of Jehovah. From the spoil that the army had brought, the Samaritan leaders gathered clothes and sandals for the naked captives. They gave them food and drink, anointed them with oil, and then led them south to Jericho – those who were weak, they put them on donkeys. At Jericho, they delivered the company to their relatives, and then returned to Samaria.

The hostilities had not ended. Pekah and Rezin were not satisfied with capturing many cities and victory in the field. They planned to attack and conquer Jerusalem. In the meantime, Philistines and Edomites attacked cities in Judah and carried away captives. Ahaz, King of Judah, realized that he was facing forces on all sides that he could not withstand, instead of turning to Jehovah, repenting, and crying out for help, he turned to the gods of Syria. Of course, these false Gods were of no help. Next he turned to the rising world power, Assyria and their ambitious king,

Tiglath-pileser.⁷⁹ Ahaz sent Tiglath-pileser treasures from the Temple, the palace, and the richest residences of the city, thinking that he could buy the Assyrians help against his oppressors. Instead, Tiglath-pileser came with his powerful army and conquered not only Israel and Syria, but pushed on south to give misery to Judah.

In his last days, Pekah lost to the Assyrians the portion of Israel that belonged to the tribe of Naphtali. The Assyrians carried back to Assyria the inhabitants of north and east Israel. The year was 731 BC and is known as the *Galilee Captivity*. Tiglath-pileser did not destroy the city of Samaria, but left the city and a few surrounding fields to supply the food and grain needed for the city's survival.

Shortly thereafter, Pekah was killed by Hoshea, who then declared himself, King.

Hoshea: Israel's Last King

II Kings 17:1-6

After killing Pekah, Hoshea assumed the throne of Israel. Tiglath-pileser's account states that he made Hoshea king. Hoshea's Samaria was a tributary to Tiglath-pileser. After Tiglath-pileser III died, Hoshea conspired with Egypt in a plan to free himself from the Assyrians.

But the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea, who had sent messengers to So king of Egypt and had offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; so the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. (II Kings 17:4)

Part of the reign of terror was a widespread net of spies and informers. When Shalmaneser V, Tiglath-pileser's successor, learned of the conspiracy, he immediately came against Samaria. Surprisingly, Samaria was constructed so well and located in such a defensively advantageous location that the Assyrian army took three years to breach the wall and overcome the city. Shalmaneser V died suddenly during the siege, but his successor, Sargon II continued the attack and conquered Samaria. In his annals, Sargon II wrote, "In the first year of my reign, I besieged and conquered Samaria...I led away into captivity 27,290 people who lived there."

EXCURSUS: Archaeology fills in the gaps

Scripture makes only terse comments on many of the events that took place in the interplay between Israel, Judah, and the surrounding nations, during this period. Fortunately, a series of important archaeological discoveries that took place between the mid-1800's and the first half of the 1900's have given us a fuller understanding. In previous excursus we have touched upon the importance of the Shalmaneser III victory stele, discovered by Layard in 1845, and the Moabite Stone discovered by F.A. Klein and developed by Clermont-Ganneau in 1868. Another significant group of finds took place in the 1840's, in which elaborate palaces and libraries were discovered at Nineveh, Khorsabad, Nimrod, and Ashur. Especially important were the thousands of cuneiform tablets in the Assyrian libraries, containing all sorts of details of the history of the Empire. Not only did these Assyrian discoveries vindicate the biblical account (including the exact location of lost cities and structures), but they elaborated on the biblical account, filling in the gaps left vacant by Scripture. From these records, intertwined with the biblical record, the following scenario is presented.

⁷⁹ Also spelled, *Tiglath-pilneser*

Assyria had been established by a group of colonists from Babylon, sometime prior to 2000 BC. In its early days, Assyria was ruled by Babylon. About 1300 BC, Shalmaneser I threw off the Babylonian yoke and developed a powerful kingdom, ruling the entire Euphrates valley. Following his death, Assyria declined and then over the centuries experienced the ebb and flow strength and weakness. Tiglath-Pileser (c1114-1076 BC) brought the nation back to a season of greatness. After his death, the nation again had mixed seasons of strength and weakness. The nation was in one of its weaker periods when a former soldier, Pulu⁸⁰, usurped the throne. He assumed the name of the ruler who first had made Assyria a world power, Tiglath-pileser, and from that time onward was known as Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC).⁸¹ He was the first of a succession of brutal tyrants who set their sights on creating a huge empire by conquering Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt. Because of their strategic location in the region, both Israel and Judah were important conquests. From northern Syria Tiglath-pileser III swept through the Mediterranean countries and forced independent nations to become provinces and tributaries of the Assyrian Empire.

At first, Israel voluntarily submitted.

Pul, king of Assyria, came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver so that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his rule. Then Menahem exacted the money from Israel, even from all the mighty men of wealth, from each man fifty shekels of silver to pay the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria returned and did not remain there in the land. (II Kings 15:19-20)

In his annals, Tiglath-pileser wrote, "I received tribute from Menahem of Samaria," which agrees with the biblical account. Menahem paid this tribute by imposing a severe property tax on all people of wealth in Israel. Resentment against this tax festered in Israel and an anti-Assyrian party developed, which resorted to conspiracy and murder. When Menahem died, his son, Pekahiah was slain by an army officer, Pekah.

Rezin, King of Damascus, resurrected the former defensive league that had fought at Karkar. Phoenician, Arabian states, Philistine cities, Edom, and Israel quickly joined the league. Only King Ahaz of Judah balked at joining. Through violence, Rezin and Pekah tried to force Judah to join the league (as noted in the biblical account, Jehovah was the instigator of these maneuvers)

Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to wage war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. (II Kings 16:5)

In dire straits, Ahaz sent an SOS to Tiglath-pileser.

So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me." Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of Jehovah and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria. (II Kings 16:7-8)

⁸⁰ Pulu is known as Pul in II Kings 15:19; I Chronicles 5:26

⁸¹ It seems that he always known as Pulu in Babylon, where he also was recognized as king

The annals of Tiglath-pileser provide more details.

SECOND BOOK OF KINGS	CUNEIFORM TEXT OF TIGLATH-PILESER
<p>The king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin (II Kings 16:9)</p>	<p>His noblemen I impaled alive and displayed this exhibition to his land. All his gardens and fruit orchards I destroyed. I besieged and captured the native city of Rezin of Damascus. Eight hundred people with their belongings I led away. Towns in sixteen districts of Damascus I laid waste like mounds after the flood (From: Western Campaign, 734-733 BC)</p>
<p>In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria and took...Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria (II Kings 15:29)</p>	<p>Bet-Omri ("House of Omri" – Israel) all of whose cities I had added to my territories on my former campaigns and had left out only the city of Samaria... The whole of Naphtali I took for Assyria. I put my officials over them as governors. The land of Bet-Omri, all its people and their possessions I took away to Assyria (From: Western Campaign and Gaza-Damascus Campaign 734-733 BC)</p>
<p>And Hoshea...made conspiracy against Pekah...and slew him and reigned in his stead (II Kings 15:30)</p>	<p>They overthrew Pekah their king and I made Hoshea to be king over them...ten talents of gold...talents of silver, as their tribute I received from them and to Assyria I carried them. (From: Gaza-Damascus Campaign)</p>

Israel's final Captivity

As noted above the first removal of Israelis from their homeland occurred in 731 BC, during the Pekah's waning days. The final removal occurred in 721 BC with the fall of Samaria. The custom of the Assyrians, and later the Babylonians, was to remove people from their native soil to some other location and to move people from other locations onto the vacated region.

Usually, a few farmers of the original group were left to manage the land while the newcomers were being settled. This was done with Israel. People from various conquered nations were moved into Israel and the people of Israel were dispersed among a number of locations in the Assyrian Empire. The result was that the northern tribes ceased to exist. The Samaritans of Jesus day were a mongrel race who occupied that portion of Israel south of the Sea of Galilee and north of Jerusalem. For all practical purposes, the Samaritans were half-breed Jews with a mixture of other races homogenized into the gene pool.

The northern Kingdom had lasted about 200 years. All of Israel's 19 kings had walked in the sins of the nation's founder, Jeroboam. God had sent prophet after prophet, chastising experience after chastising experience, but the nation did not repent. Israel was seduced by its idols and could not be severed from them. There was no remedy and the nation ceased to exist.

Three great prophets, Hosea (in the north), Isaiah, and Micah (in the south) ministered during the era marked by Israel's final days.

Judah survived for more than a century after the fall of Samaria.

Uzziah: Judah's Righteous, Proud King

II Kings 14:21-22.; 15:1-7; II Chronicles 26:1-23; Isaiah 6:1

Following the death of King Amaziah, the people of Judah enthroned Amaziah's sixteen year-old son, Uzziah.⁸² He had as his counselor a prophet named, Zechariah, about whom nothing is known (this Zechariah cannot have been any of the other Zechariah's in Scripture, because the era and setting do not fit any of them). Uzziah's exceptionally long reign of 52 years was one of growth and strength for Judah. Uzziah began his reign very devoted to Jehovah and as long as he sought Jehovah, God prospered him (II Chronicles 26:5). The theme that runs through the record of each generation continued in Uzziah's reign,

Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. (II Kings 15:4)

Uzziah defeated the Philistines, destroying some key cities and replacing them with Judean cities occupied by Judean citizens. He also defeated the Arabs and the Meunites who lived in the region. All of these, including the Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah. Uzziah strengthened Jerusalem and equipped it with newly invented weapons designed for the defense of the city. He built garrisons throughout the more remote regions of Judah. He kept a well-equipped, efficiently organized, standing army, including 307,500 elite troops who could *wage war with great power* (II Chronicles 26:13). His reputation intimidated everyone in the region and extended all the way to the Egyptian border. He led a coalition of nations that withstood Tiglath-pileser III.

Uzziah was a farmer at heart, and so he developed substantial farms and vineyards, both in the highlands and the fertile fields.

Uzziah's reign was a total success and that became his downfall. In his pride, he committed an act that betrayed his lack of reverence for Jehovah and the things of the Temple. One day he went into the Holy Place and began to offer incense before the Altar of Incense. This was a role that was reserved for the priests, those who had been consecrated for this purpose. The High Priest, Azariah, accompanied by 80 courageous priests, confronted Uzziah, as he stood before the Altar of Incense with a censer in his hand. Azariah declared,

It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to Jehovah, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from Jehovah God. (II Chronicles 16:18)

Uzziah was enraged. Who are these priests who think that they can tell a king what to do! As he faced the priests in his anger, suddenly leprosy broke out on his forehead. The priests started to rush him out of the Temple, but they didn't have to, he fled because he knew that God had smitten him. As a leper, he no longer was fit to enter the Temple of Jehovah. He remained a leper for the rest of his life.

Because Uzziah was a leper, and thus ceremonially unclean, he could not fulfill the duties that were required of Judah's king. Because of this, his son, Jotham, became co-regent. When

⁸² Also known as Azariah (II Kings 14:21)

Uzziah died, he was not buried in a king's tomb, but was buried in the field adjacent to the tombs of the Kings of Judah.

Isaiah began his ministry in the year that Uzziah died (Isaiah 1:1; 6:1).

EXCURSUS: Archaeological Note

The cuneiform records of Tiglath-pileser, mentioned in previous excursus, contain four references to *Azariah, the Judean*.

Uzziah's gravestone has been found on the Mt. of Olives. The stone is inscribed in the Aramaic script of Jesus' day, and reads, "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah, do not open." For some unknown reason, it seems that the original gravesite was cleared and Uzziah's bones were moved to the site where the gravestone was found.

Jotham, a Godly King

II Kings 15:32-38; II Chronicles 27:1-9

Jotham became king when he was 25 years old and reigned in Jerusalem for sixteen years, many of these were as co-regent with his father. Jotham followed the example of his father's early years. During his reign, the people continued to worship in the high places.

Like his father before him, Jotham strengthened the defenses of Jerusalem and continued to build garrisons and forts in remote Judean locations. Evidently the Ammonites rebelled early in his reign but he subdued them and extracted from them a three-year payment of extra tribute for their rebellion.

Ahaz, the Wicked Son of a Godly Father

II Kings 16; II Chronicles 28

Ahaz began to rule when he was 20 years old and ruled for 16 years. In the early years of his reign he was co-regent with his father, but was totally different from his father and grandfather. He reintroduced the worship of Baal, and revived the worship of Moloch, even offering his own sons as a burnt sacrifice to this god.

In addition to the description of Ahaz' spiritual decline that we already have studied, II Kings records further details about his apostasy. After becoming a vassal of Tiglath-pileser, he traveled to Damascus to meet his new lord (Tiglath-pileser was staying in the recently conquered capitol of Syria). While there, Ahaz saw an altar that appealed to him. He sent a drawing and a model of the altar to Urijah the priest, and instructed him to make one exactly like it for use in Jerusalem. By the time Ahaz returned to Jerusalem, the new altar had been constructed. Ahaz immediately approached this altar, and in the role of a priest, he offered a burnt offering, a meal offering, a blood offering, and a libation upon this new pagan modeled altar. He moved the altar of Jehovah that was in front of the Temple, and put this new altar in its place. The original altar was placed on the north side of the new altar. Ahaz instructed the priest, Urijah, to use the new altar for all of the sacrifices; Ahaz planned to use the old altar as some sort of an oracle. He made other alternations to the Temple, some of which were done in order to be able to send gifts to Tiglath-pileser.

Hezekiah: Hope for Judah

II Kings 18 - 20; II Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-39

Hezekiah, Ahaz son, reigned for 29 significant years. It is striking that such an honorable son could proceed from such an evil father. Hezekiah's reign is the brightest spot in the record of the David dynasty.

He did right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father David had done. (I Kings 18:3)

He trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to Jehovah; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Jehovah had commanded Moses. (II Kings 18:5-6)

Hezekiah began his reign with a great reformation. He reopened and cleansed the Temple (II Chronicles 31). He broke down the idols that Ahaz had set up. Especially significant was his breaking into pieces the bronze serpent that Jehovah had commanded Moses to make (II Kings 18: 4). This bronze serpent was the antidote to the bite of the poisonous serpents that struck the people during the Exodus.⁸³ Originally, during the crisis that caused its construction, the bronze serpent was a means whereby they could express their trust in Jehovah. Over the years, it had become an idol, an object of worship. One can only imagine the impression it made on the people when Hezekiah destroyed this precious 700 year-old artifact. Hezekiah's courage brings to mind the words of Jesus, spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, declaring that anything in our life that is a threat to our spiritual life should be cast out, regardless of how precious it might be (Matthew 5:29-30).

After the Temple had been cleansed, reopened, and rededicated, a grand Passover was planned. Because the priests had not had sufficient time to cleanse and purify themselves, and because the invitation could not be circulated among the cities in time to hold the Passover in Nisan, they decided that they would hold the Passover one month later. Jehovah recognized the rightness of their hearts and their sincere effort to bring revival to the land, therefore, He did not censure them for celebrating the Passover one month late. Messengers were sent to the cities of the northern tribes, inviting them to come and participate. Most the messengers were mocked, as they traveled about extending the invitation in Israel. However, some from the north did come to Jerusalem for the grand Passover (II Chronicles 30:1-12). Indeed this Passover was the greatest that had been celebrated since the days of Solomon.

Following the Passover, the citizens went out to the countryside and broke down all of the idols that they could find, even going north and destroying idols in many locations in Israel.

The Assyrian Invasion (The following section is a harmony of the accounts in II Kings 18-19; II Chronicles 32:1-22, Isaiah 36-39, and information from Assyrian cuneiform tablets)

Sennacherib was the son of Sargon II⁸⁴. He began his reign in Assyria in 714 BC and reigned for eighteen years. Judah had been a vassal of Assyria since the days of Ahaz. Hezekiah rebelled against the Assyrians and stopped sending the annual tribute to Sennacherib.

⁸³ Numbers 21:8-9

⁸⁴ Shalmaneser V was succeeded by one of his generals, Sharrukin, who assumed the ancient and venerable name of Sargon.

In 713 BC, Sennacherib embarked on a campaign to achieve the dream of every Assyrian monarch - the subjugation of Egypt. He planned to re-subjugate Judah, enroute to Egypt. Sennacherib began by attacking the fortified cities, planning to lay siege to Jerusalem after overcoming the smaller strongholds.

As soon as Hezekiah received word that the Assyrians were heading toward Egypt, via Judah, he began to prepare Jerusalem to withstand the Assyrians. He already had sent troops to conquer surrounding kingdoms that had refused to join him in the confederacy, mainly in the direction of Gaza and Edom (II Kings 18:8; I Chronicles 4:41-43). He built up the walls, gathered shields and arrows in abundance, and took in food supplies. He stopped the waters that flowed in the neighborhood of the city so that the Assyrians would not have any water. One of the most significant things that he did to prepare for the siege was to secure a water supply for Jerusalem.

Archaeological Excursus: Hezekiah's Tunnel

2 Kings 20:20 *Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?*

2 Chronicles 32:30 *It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.*

On the southern slopes of Jerusalem there is a small pool of water known biblically as the Pool of Siloam. In 1880, two Arab boys were playing at this pool when one of them fell into the pool. Paddling for all that he was worth, he landed on the other side, where a rock wall rose above the pool. He groped about anxiously, trying to find a way out and discovered a small passage. He reported his fearful experience to his teacher, Dr. Schick, who immediately investigated the site. He found a long underground tunnel that had been cut through the limestone. It was two feet wide and about five feet high. Knee-deep water rushed through the tunnel. The 1700 foot long tunnel gradually wound uphill from the Pool of Siloam, ending at the Virgin's Fountain (Fountain of Gihon) which had been Jerusalem's water supply since ancient times. The Arab boy had discovered Hezekiah's aqueduct.

The Jebusites who founded Jerusalem sunk a shaft down through the rock to the Fountain of Gihon. Records surviving from different ages indicate that from earliest times the flow from Gihon had been important to the inhabitants of the city. The natural flow from the upper water course was eastward into the Kidron Valley. Hezekiah stopped up the upper water course, re-directing the flow through the tunnel, south and west, creating the Pool of Siloam.

Inside the tunnel, only a few paces from the entrance to the pool, an inscription in old Hebrew letters was scratched on the rock wall. The inscription commemorates the completion of the difficult task of boring through the solid rock, the moment when workmen with wedge, hammer, and pickax, boring from opposite directions, finally met.

“The boring through is completed. And this is the story of the boring: while yet they plied the pick, each toward his fellow, and while yet there were three cubits to be bored through, there was heard the voice of one calling to the other that there was a hole in the rock on the right hand and on the left hand. And on the day of the boring through the workers in the tunnel stuck each his fellow, pick upon pick. Then the water poured from the source to the pool twelve hundred cubits, and a hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the workers in the tunnel.”

This inscription is the only surviving contemporary document of any length in Hebrew dating from the Eighth Century BC or earlier. Small ostraca older than this inscription have been collected, but to find an inscription of this length was a major paleographic find. The Old Testament would have been written in a style of script similar to the Siloam inscription. The script is somewhat elongated in shape, as contrasted with the square shape of Hebrew that was developed in the Second Century BC. Here is the script that begins the inscription:

“...the boring through. And this is the story of the boring through; while yet...”

Before World War I, the Turkish government, which ruled the area at that time, had the inscription pried out and taken to the Imperial Ottoman Museum in Constantinople – now known as the Turkish Archaeological Museum of Istanbul.

The canal descends in a serpentine course through the rock from the Fountain of Gihon to the Pool of Siloam.

At this time, no one has an adequate explanation for the frequent changes in direction found in the tunnel. Had the workmen bored the tunnel in a straighter line it would have been 700 feet shorter and a lot of work would have been saved. Locally, there is an old story which states that the graves of David and Solomon lie deep in the rock between the spring and the pool. The circuitous route of the tunnel was chosen in order to avoid desecrating these graves. Archaeologists took this folklore seriously and sank exploratory shafts every few feet along the course of the tunnel, but found nothing.

When Sennacherib saw that Jerusalem was not going to be easy to conquer, and with the pressing need to get on to Egypt, he became open to negotiations with Hezekiah. Hezekiah had sent word to Sennacherib, declaring that he had erred in ceasing the payment of tribute and that he would give to Sennacherib whatever he required. Sennacherib demanded three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold (II Kings 18:13-16). Hezekiah's understanding was that if he met these conditions that Sennacherib would withdraw his forces and return to Assyria. In order to be able to pay this ransom, Hezekiah stripped the gold laminate from the doors and doorposts of the Temple.

Sennacherib and his army proceeded to Egypt. At first, he had great success, but when he laid siege to Pelusium, he found that he had encountered a rock that he could not break. Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, in a ploy designed to gain prominence throughout all of Egypt, came to the aid of the Egyptian ruler, Sevechus. When Sennacherib learned that Tirhakah was coming to

Pelusium, he lifted his siege and retreated to Judah. Sennacherib attacked Lachish, and after a lengthy siege, ultimately took the city. While engaged in the siege at Lachish, in disregard for his compact with Hezekiah, he sent an army under the command of Rabshakeh to lay siege against Jerusalem. It appeared that all of Judah was going to fall into the hands of the Assyrians.

Rabshakeh took up a vantage point outside of Jerusalem from whence he could look into the city. He summoned Hezekiah (II Kings 18:18). Hezekiah did not respond to the summons, but sent two representatives to meet with Rabshakeh.⁸⁵ In an oral address in Hebrew, spoken so that the citizens watching from the wall could hear and understand, Rabshakeh defied Hezekiah and Hezekiah's God. A faction in Jerusalem was trying to get Hezekiah to turn to Egypt for help in turning back the Assyrians. Rabshakeh revealed that Sennacherib knew about the Egyptian faction in Jerusalem. He displayed utter ignorance of Israel's God, confusing Jehovah with the idols that Hezekiah had removed.

But if you say to me, "We trust in Jehovah our God," is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, "You shall worship before this altar" (Isaiah 36:7)

Rabshakeh's speech, concerning Jehovah and "the gods," is confusing. First he goes one way and then the other. He declared that Sennacherib's campaign against Jerusalem had been commissioned by Jehovah, then he said that the gods of Assyria were more powerful than the gods of the nations that they had conquered and that Jehovah would fare no better.

The delegation that Hezekiah had sent to Rabshakeh wisely kept their mouths shut. They returned to Hezekiah in great sorrow, because of the insolence of Rabshakeh against their God and their king, as well as the threat of captivity.

When Hezekiah received the report from his delegation, he rent his clothes, went to the Temple, and sent a request to Isaiah to pray for Jerusalem. The committee that was sent to Isaiah received from the prophet positive assurance of Divine intervention. Isaiah reported that Jehovah had said that he would put a "spirit" in Sennacherib, so that he would hear a rumor that would cause him to return to his capital and in that place he would be killed.

Realizing that Jerusalem was not going to surrender, Rabshakeh traveled to Libnah to get further instructions from Sennacherib (Sennacherib, having subdued Lachish, had moved his army to Libnah). While Rabshakeh was in Sennacherib's camp, word came that the Ethiopian ruler, Tirhakah, whose intervention had caused Sennacherib to withdraw from Egypt, was planning to attack the Assyrians. Facing the impending attack by Tirhakah, Sennacherib was not able to send more troops to Jerusalem. Instead, he sent some messengers with an insulting letter, again exalting the achievements of his gods over the people whom he had subdued.

Hezekiah received the letters and took them to the Temple where he spread them out before Jehovah. In his prayer, Hezekiah pointed out the arrogance of Sennacherib, against Jehovah and pled with Jehovah to vindicate Himself. In response to the prayer, God spoke through Isaiah (II Kings 19:20-28; Isaiah 37:22-35).

Jehovah declared that He had preordained the rise of Sennacherib and that He had used Sennacherib to punish and subdue certain cities and nations. Therefore, the Assyrians were

⁸⁵ Note that Eliakim's involvement is consistent with Isaiah 22:20-21.

completely in Jehovah's hands. Jehovah assured Hezekiah that Judah would be delivered and that not even one arrow would be launched into the city.

Therefore, thus says Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, 'He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield, or throw up a siege ramp against it. 'By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he will not come to this city,' declares Jehovah. 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'" (Isaiah 37:33-35)

The prophecy was fulfilled, literally.

- Before any siege mound was erected,
- before any battering ram was constructed,
- before any military actions had begun,
- the Assyrian army that was assembled before Jerusalem died in a single night,
- Sennacherib hearing the rumor about the plans of Tirhakah to come against him, returned to Nineveh,
- Sennacherib was assassinated by his sons, shortly after returning to Nineveh.

Hezekiah's sickness (II Kings 20; Isaiah 38)

When Hezekiah was thirty-eight years old, a mortal sickness came upon him. His illness is described as a "boil," but it must have been the result of some pestilence, which would have immediate and dire results. One thing that would have caused him anxiety was the fact that at this time he was childless,⁸⁶ which would mean that if he did not recover, the dynasty of David, along with all of the Messianic hopes, would come to an end.

Isaiah was commissioned to pronounce the sentence of death. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, probably to hide his emotion from those in the room. He prayed to Jehovah, pleading on the basis of the integrity that he had shown throughout his life. In response to this prayer, Jehovah, *the God of David*, revoked the death sentence and added fifteen years to his life. Isaiah, we assume by Divine instruction, told those giving care to Hezekiah to apply a poultice of figs to the boil.

No explanation is given in the text as to why God had allowed this sickness. The inference from II Chronicles 32:24-26 is that the sickness came upon him because of pride. After Jehovah delivered Hezekiah from the Assyrians the surrounding nations esteemed him as being virtually invincible. The sickness may have come upon him to heighten Hezekiah's spiritual sensitivity and to awaken his concern for the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Indeed, as a result of this sickness, Hezekiah did ponder death and life, as demonstrated in the poem that he wrote after his recovery. Note that the poem displays a homocentric view, i.e., how death and the dead appear to those who are alive, especially in the era before the New Testament revelation was given.

⁸⁶ Since no prior mention is made of Hezekiah's children, and since Isaiah spoke of children that Hezekiah would beget (future tense) in II Kings 20:18, we assume that Hezekiah was childless when the illness struck him.

*A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery:
I said, "In the middle of my life I am to enter the gates of Sheol;
I am to be deprived of the rest of my years."*

*I said, "I will not see Jehovah. Jehovah in the land of the living;
I will look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world.
Like a shepherd's tent my dwelling is pulled up and removed from me;
As a weaver I rolled up my life. He cuts me off from the loom;
From day until night You make an end of me.*

*I composed my soul until morning.
Like a lion-- so He breaks all my bones,
From day until night You make an end of me.
Like a swallow, like a crane, so I twitter; I moan like a dove;
My eyes look wistfully to the heights;
O Lord, I am oppressed, be my security.*

*What shall I say? For He has spoken to me, and He Himself has done it;
I will wander about all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.
O Lord, by these things men live, And in all these is the life of my spirit;
O restore me to health and let me live!*

*Lo, for my own welfare I had great bitterness;
It is You who has kept my soul from the pit of nothingness,
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.
For Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your faithfulness.
It is the living who give thanks to You, as I do today;
A father tells his sons about Your faithfulness.
Jehovah will surely save me;
So we will play my songs on stringed instruments
All the days of our life at the house of Jehovah (Isaiah 38:9-20)*

Of special interest is the sign that Jehovah granted to Hezekiah, to assure him that the Assyrians would not conquer Jerusalem and that Hezekiah would live fifteen more years. II Kings records that Isaiah's message of healing to Hezekiah included the promise that in three days he would be able to go to the House of the Lord for worship (II Kings 20:5). In his despair, Hezekiah asked for some sign to assure him that this would happen (II Kings 20:8). The prophet told Hezekiah that Jehovah had granted a sign to assure him of the prophetic word – that Isaiah had not missed God, so to speak. The sign would be that the shadow on the sundial either would go forward ten degrees or backward ten degrees – Hezekiah could choose (II Kings 20:9). Hezekiah said that the greater sign would be for the shadow to go backward ten degrees and so that is what he asked for (II Kings 20:10) and indeed that is what happened. From his sick bed Hezekiah could see the staircase of Ahaz, whereby the king would go up to the House of the Lord. Hezekiah kept track of time from his sick bed by watching the shadow on these steps. The shadow was turned back "ten steps."

The delegation from Babylon (II Kings 20:12-19; Isaiah 39)

Because Sennacherib and his army were repelled from Jerusalem, various monarchs gave great honor to Hezekiah. He came to be viewed as invincible (II Chronicles 32:22-23). When he became ill and then recovered, the Babylonian, Merodach-baladan, sent a delegation with a letter of good wishes and gifts to celebrate Hezekiah's healing.

While the delegation was there, Hezekiah showed them through his house and the Temple. He gave them the full tour, showing them all the wealth stored in Jerusalem. II Chronicles 32:31 states that Jehovah left Hezekiah on his own, while the Babylonian ambassadors were visiting, in order for Hezekiah to display his true heart.

Even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

The prophecy of Isaiah 39, given after the visit of the Babylonians, and the statement made in II Chronicles 32:25 indicate that Hezekiah still struggled with pride.

Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's prophetic word (Isaiah 39) catches our attention. Isaiah declared that because Hezekiah (in pride) had displayed his amazing wealth (which had been provided by Jehovah's blessing) to the Babylonians, that the Babylonians would carry away everything, including Hezekiah's sons. Isaiah further prophesied that some of Hezekiah's descendents would become officials in the Babylonian government.

Hezekiah was delighted to learn that all would go well in his lifetime (Isaiah 39:8; II Kings 20:19). He didn't display any remorse over what would happen after his death – a tragedy that was the result of his allowing the Babylonians to audit the treasures of Jerusalem.

When Hezekiah died, he was buried in a place of honor in the tombs of David.

Manasseh, the Bad Son of a Good Father

II Kings 21:1-18; II Chronicles 33:1-20

As noted above, Hezekiah was childless when he was stricken with a mortal illness. Manasseh was born after God had granted Hezekiah an additional fifteen years of life. Hezekiah chose to name this son after the elder son of Joseph. This is one of the few royal names that is not a compound of some form of Jehovah. His mother's name, Hephzibah,⁸⁷ came to symbolize the happy union of the land with its loyal sons (Isaiah 62:4).

Manasseh inherited the throne of his father when he was 12 years old; he reigned for 55 years (the longest reign of an Judean king). The description of the evil that he brought into the nation is appalling.

He did evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah dispossessed before the sons of Israel. (II Kings 21:2; II Chronicles 33:2)

The sensuous religions of the Canaanites became his obsession. One has to wonder if the fact that he was just entering his teen years when he became king could have contributed to his casting off of the standards of his father. Both II Kings 21 and II Chronicles 33 list the abominations that Manasseh pursued and introduced:

- He rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah had broken down

⁸⁷ *my delight is in her*

- He erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim
- He worshipped all the host of heaven and served them
- He placed altars for the host of heaven in the two courts of the Temple
- He sacrificed his sons by fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom
- He practiced witchcraft
- He practiced sorcery
- He used divination
- He dealt with mediums and spiritists
- He personally carved an Asherah and placed it in the Temple
- He shed very much innocent blood, filling Jerusalem from one end to the other
- He misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations that Jehovah had displaced before them.

We can only speculate concerning the specifics of what Scripture describes as filling Jerusalem with innocent blood (II Kings 21:16). Whatever deeds these words describe were heinous enough to be mentioned later as one of the main reasons that Jehovah brought destruction upon Judah (II Kings 24:4). An old tradition states that Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah sawn asunder with a wooden saw. It is possible that this tradition is reflected in Hebrews 11:3.

Jehovah could not ignore such evil. Prophets were sent to call Manasseh to repentance, but he gave them no heed. Therefore, doom was pronounced on Manasseh and the nation.

Behold, I am bringing such calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.

I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies;

because they have done evil in My sight, and have been provoking Me to anger since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day." (II Kings 21:11-15)

When Manasseh came to the throne, Judah was in a period of quiet prosperity and healing of the deep wounds left by the campaign of Sennacherib. Assyria dominated the region (see accompanying map). On the north, Judah was bordered by the provinces directly ruled by Assyria. On the east and west were the kingdoms of Philistia (Ashdod) and the three small Transjordan kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom. Most of the small kingdoms of the area became vassals of the Assyrian monarch, Essarhaddon; some willingly chose to become vassals and some were conquered and made tributaries.

Neither the Bible nor Assyrian records translated thus far, reveal any details of Essarhaddon's conquest of Judah. Assyrian records do describe Essarhaddon's conquest of the area, mentioning various kings, but no mention of Manasseh is found in those accounts. However, in another section of Essarhaddon's journal, Manasseh is mentioned. Essarhaddon had decided that the palace in Nineveh was too small and so he decided to rebuild Babylon, the city that his father had destroyed and in the process to build himself a huge palace. In order to do this, he put all of

his subjects under forced labor and required those nations that he had subdued to provide materials. Manasseh is listed as one of 22 kings who were compelled to provide building materials.

Even though no details are given, Scripture is clear that the Assyrian invasion did take place and it was the result of the evil that Manasseh had brought into Judah.⁸⁸

Therefore Jehovah brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon. (II Chronicles 33:11)

A victory stele that Essarhaddon erected in Sinjirli, pictures Baalu, king of Tyre lifting manacled hands to Essarhaddon and next to Baalu is Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia with a hook through his lips that is tied by a rope to Essarhaddon's hands. Thus, the description in II Chronicles 33:11 probably is more than just figurative language.

While in this miserable state, Manasseh cried out to Jehovah and greatly humbled himself. He realized the error of his ways and pled for mercy and pardon. Jehovah was moved by his plea and Manasseh was restored to Jerusalem. From this point on, Manasseh was a different man. He knew that Jehovah was God. He busied himself rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He re-manned the fortified garrisons of Judah. He removed all of the idols, the altars to the pagan deities, and every evil thing for which he had been responsible. He made offerings to Jehovah and commanded the people to serve Jehovah, the God of Israel. The people still continued to worship Jehovah at the illegal sites – the high places (II Chronicles 33:12-18).

Even though Manasseh repented and vigorously sought to remove the objects of evil that he had installed in Judah, Jehovah decreed that destruction still was coming. The seed of rebellion against Jehovah had been sown into the spiritual soil of Judah and it only would be eradicated by the foretold exile.

Manasseh was buried in the garden of his own house, a garden known as “the garden of Uzza.” In his stead, his son Amon became King of Judah.

Amon, a Short and Wicked Rule in Judah

II Kings 21:19-25; II Chronicles 33:21-25

Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign and lived only two years after assuming the throne. Manasseh named this son after an Egyptian diety in Thebes, probably to declare that Jehovah had no more claim to Judah than did any other diety. Amon, like Manasseh, is among the few names of Judah's kings that are not in some sort of combination with the name, *Jehovah*. He mirrored the evil years of his father's reign.

Amon was assassinated by officials of his own royal court. This probably was the result of a planned rebellion, but because the inhabitants of Judah were so committed to there being a descendent of David on the throne, the coup failed. Those who killed Amon were killed by Judah's citizens who then placed Josiah upon the throne.

The servants of Amon conspired against him and killed the king in his own house. Then the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and the

⁸⁸ II Kings does not contain the record of the Assyrian conquest, nor of Manasseh's repentance.

people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place. (II Kings 21:23-24; II Chronicles 33:24-25)

Josiah, Judah Returns to Jehovah and a Last Moment of Greatness

II Kings 22-23; II Chronicles 34-35

Josiah began his reign when he was eight years old and reigned for thirty-one years. The biblical record makes little of his political and military exploits, but focuses instead on his extensive religious reforms.

He did right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. (II Kings 22:22; Chronicles 34:2)

When he was sixteen years old, he began earnestly to seek after the God of David. When he was twenty years old he began purging Judah of every vestige of the idolatry of his father.

For in the eighth year of his reign while he was still a youth, 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 Asherim, the carved images and the molten images.

They tore down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars that were high above them he chopped down; also the Asherim, the carved images and the molten images he broke in pieces and ground to powder and scattered it on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem.

In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, in their surrounding ruins, he also tore down the altars and beat the Asherim and the carved images into powder, and chopped down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel.

Then he returned to Jerusalem.

(2 Chronicles 34:3-7; similarly and in greater detail II Kings 23:4-20, 24-25)

Of historical significance is the fact that not only did Josiah purge Judah of idolatry, he also totally destroyed Jeroboam's altar at Bethel, the institution that Jeroboam had put into place, resulting in Israel's downfall. Since the record clearly states that Josiah not only purged Judah of idolatry but also the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, it is evident that he had established his rule in much of the former Israel. Secular history records that the Scythian invasion had swept over western Asia and greatly weakened Assyria, thus enabling Josiah to expand Judah's borders.

In the same year that he began to purge the land of pagan religions, Josiah began the restoration of the Temple and the restoration of the nation to Jehovah. A great offering for the restoration of the Temple was collected from every corner of the land. This money was given to those who were overseeing the work of restoration – the money was for salaries and supplies. Because Josiah had total confidence in the financial integrity of those who were doing the work, he forbade any accounting of the manner in which the money was spent.

Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully. (2 Kings 22:7)

In the process of cleaning and restoring the Temple, a copy of the Law was found. The book was brought to the king and read in his presence. When Josiah heard the words of the Law, and realized how much Judah and Israel had disregarded the Law, and the curses and disasters that the Law promised to those who departed from it, Josiah tore his clothes in remorse over the sins of his people. He sent the high priest and several other trusted people to the prophetess, Huldah, to inquire about the words of the book and the promised wrath of God. Huldah said that all of the tragedies spoken of in the book would come upon Judah, but because of Josiah's tenderness toward the things of God, he would die in peace and not witness the horrors.

Excursus: The Discovery of the Book of the Law

Archaeology has demonstrated that it was customary in ancient times to place significant documents in the foundations of buildings. Nabonidus, a Babylonian king of the Sixth Century BC, delighted in digging into the foundations of buildings that were ancient in his day, in order to obtain the documents deposited there centuries earlier.

The finding of the book in the Temple is closely linked with the work of stonemasons and carpenters. It is not improbable that this copy of the Law had been placed in the cornerstone of the Temple when it was erected by Solomon. As Merrill Unger states, "Doubtless the masonry had so cracked that this stone had to be replaced and so the documents came to light."⁸⁹ This is a far superior explanation than that of liberal scholars who contend that Deuteronomy, as a late document, was brought to light for the first time.

All of the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were called to assemble at the Temple. Josiah stood by the pillar while all stood and listened to the reading of the Law. Josiah and all present made a covenant with Jehovah that they would walk after His commandments and keep all of the words of the Law.

Having read the Law, Josiah commanded the nation to observe the Passover, exactly as Jehovah had prescribed. This was by far the greatest Passover observed in the history of the nation – even exceeding those that had taken place during the reign of Solomon. By now, Josiah was twenty-six years old.

For many years, scholars were perplexed over the biblical account that stated that Josiah advanced "against" Pharaoh Necho who was on his way to fight Assyria. Assyria was the ancient enemy of Judah and Israel – why would Josiah attempt to stop Necho? The Babylonian Chronicle, published by C.J. Gadd in 1923 put the matter in a new light that shows that Pharaoh Necho did not advance against Assyria, but went to the Assyrian's aid. Upon Ashurbanipal's death in 633 BC, the Assyrian Empire rapidly declined. In 612 BC, Ninevah was attacked by a coalition of Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians. A remnant of the Assyrian army fled west to Haran and made it a temporary capital. The king of Egypt came to help this Assyrian remnant and their king, Ashurballit. Josiah, no lover of Assyria and not wishing for any aid to reach the hard-pressed Assyrians, went to Megiddo to stop Necho, but was killed by the Egyptian. As had been promised by Jehovah, Josiah did not live to see the destruction of Judah.

⁸⁹ Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House) 1954, page 281

Jehoahaz, a Temporary King of Judah

II Kings 23:30-34; II Chronicles 36:1-4

In the latter years of Josiah's reign, Judah found itself between three empires which were in a contest to see who would become the dominant world power: Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah was active during this period. When Josiah was slain by Pharaoh Necho in 609-608 BC, the throne of Judah temporarily came under the control of Egypt. The people of Judah made Josiah's twenty-three year old son, Jehoahaz, king. In his brief reign, Jehoahaz turned to the evil of previous generations. Evidently, Necho suspected Jehoahaz of disloyalty, and after three months Necho deposed Jehoahaz and *imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of hamath that he might not reign in Jerusalem* (II Kings 23:33). Jehoahaz died while in captivity in Egypt.

Jehoiakim, a Judean King who failed to achieve independence

II Kings 23:34 – 24:7; II Chronicles 36:5-8

After Pharaoh Necho had removed Jehoahaz, he installed as king, Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons. Necho changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim became king when he was twenty-five years old and reigned for eleven years. Necho imposed a fine on Judah, evidently because of some seditious activity of Jehoahaz whom he had removed. The fine was quite substantial: 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold. In order to send Pharaoh Necho the required assessment, Jehoahaz imposed a heavy tax on everyone in Judah.

During the third year of Jehoakim's reign, Babylon swept through the land. The Egyptians were not able to venture north into Palestine because of the powerful Babylonian army that had won the day. Jehoiakim, ever the opportunist, switched loyalties and became a vassal of Babylon (II Kings 24:1).

Jeremiah and Jehoiakim

Babylonian dominance was exactly as Jeremiah had prophesied. Jeremiah was a patriot and he did not want to deliver the words that were given him to speak because they spoke of the destruction of his country. However, as a prophet of God he had to deliver the message that Jehovah had given to him. Jeremiah spoke of the ascendancy of Babylon and that Jehovah's will was for Judah to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim became Jeremiah's enemy. More than once, he sought to kill Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:21; 36:26). Because of Jeremiah's declaration that Jehovah's will was for Jerusalem to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar offered Jeremiah any honor that he would accept, even a place in the Babylonian court (Jeremiah 39:12). Jeremiah was repulsed by this offer; he also condemned Babylon, crying over and over that because Babylon was destroying God's people that Babylon would be destroyed (Jeremiah Chapters 50-51).

After three years of serving Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim decided that the time was right to declare his independence. He attempted to throw off the Babylonian control, as he earlier had done with Egypt. It seems that at first Nebuchadnezzar did not intervene in person. Local rebellions were not a rare occurrence in a great empire. Nebuchadnezzar sent to Jerusalem troops from Moab, Ammon, and Syria, with some Chaldean regulars. Even though these troops were able to enter Jerusalem and take Jehoiakim prisoner, the situation was not totally under control. While waiting to be deported to Babylon, it seems that Jehoakim was assassinated and given the shameful *burial of an ass* (Jeremiah 22:19; 36:30).

Jehoichin (Jeconiah) the Judean King who became a political prisoner

(II Kings 24:6-17; 25:27-30; II Chronicles 36:8-10)

Jehoichin, Jehoichim's son, was made king in 597 BC. Jehoichin was eighteen years old when he came to the throne.⁹⁰ Nebuchadnezzar had arrived in Jerusalem by this time and he cut short Jehoichin's reign. Jehoichin ruled in Jerusalem for only three months and ten days⁹¹. We must assume, once again, that the Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar II, suspected some sort of disloyalty in Jehoichin. Jehoichin, his family and many citizens of Jerusalem were carried to Babylon as captives. Jehoichin spent the next thirty-seven years in prison. Nebuchadnezzar II's successor, Evil-merodach, for some unknown reason, released Jehoichin from prison and gave him a place of honor on Babylon, where he later died.

Archaeological Excursus: Jehoichin in Babylon

In 1899, the German Oriental Society sent a well-financed expedition, under the direction of Professor Robert Koldewey, to explore the ruined mound of Babil on the Euphrates. The excavation took eighteen years and uncovered the most famous metropolis of the ancient world, the royal seat of Nebuchadnezzar. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the famous hanging gardens of Babylon, loudly extolled by Greek travelers, and E-Temen-An-Ki, which tradition said was the legendary Tower of Babel. Countless inscriptions were discovered, but nothing relating to Judah.

In the outhouses near the gate were found 300 cuneiform tablets, which were stored in the basement of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Koldewey's team had numbered the tablets, put them in boxes and stored them for future study. After 1933, E.F. Weidner, an Assyriologist, began the task of examining and translating the tablets, as well as shards stored with them. Weidner found that the tablets contained nothing but court inventories, receipted accounts from the royal commissariat, book entries of ancient bureaucrats – records of ordinary matters. One day, his monotonous job came alive. While translating receipts for supplies of oil and grain that were regularly supplied to various individuals, he discovered four different receipts for the best quality sesame oil issued for the support of, *Yaukin of the land of yahud*, (Jehoichin of Judah). This fits the biblical statement that when Evil-merodach released Jehoiakim, he was given a daily allowance of food for the rest of his life.

Other Jehoiakim finds include two jar handles stamped, *Belonging to Eliakim Steward of Jehoiachin*. found by M.G. Kyle and W.F. Albright in the ashes of Kiriath-sepher, 25 miles south of Jerusalem.

⁹⁰ The II Chronicles 36:9 statement that he was eight years old is generally viewed as a scribal slip of the pen.

⁹¹ Ezekiel 19:5-7 gives this length of his reign

Zedekiah, the end of David's Kingdom

II Kings 24:18 -25:7; II Chronicles 36:10-14; Jeremiah 27, 28, 52

After removing Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin's uncle, Mattaniah, king, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king and he ruled for eleven years. Zedekiah seems to have been friendly toward Jeremiah but he did not heed Jeremiah's words. Zedekiah was a weak king – he was a tool in the hands of wicked princes. As a puppet of Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah was under constant pressure from his advisors to align with Egypt and rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah constantly warned against this foolish course, but Zedekiah was persuaded to turn to Pharaoh-hophra (also known as Aries) for aid and then he revolted against Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean army fell upon Jerusalem. In the horrifying siege that followed, pestilence, famine and even cannibalism prevailed (II Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 32:24) The Egyptian army came on the scene briefly and gave a momentary respite to the city (Jeremiah 37:5) The city fell in 587 BC. Zedekiah tried to escape but he was captured at Jericho and brought to trial before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah (Jeremiah 39:5-7) on the Orontes River.

Nebuchadnezzar executed Zedekiah's sons, before his very eyes. Then, Zedekiah's eyes were put out and he was fettered and carried captive to Babylon where he was imprisoned until his death (II Kings 25:1-7; Jeremiah 52:11) Jerusalem was mercilessly sacked and razed to the ground (II Kings 24:17 – 25:10). Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, was placed in charge of the sacking of the city (he is listed in the Babylonian chronicles as Nabu-seri-Idinnam, a grand vizier). Nebuzar-adan collected everyone in Jerusalem who had any sort of a leadership role and took them to Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah, where they were executed. Every effort was made to kill all descendents of David. Citizens of Jerusalem were forced to march to Babylon where they were exiled for the next seven decades. Thus, 587 BC marked not only the end of a dynasty but of an age.

Archaeological Excursus: The Lachish Letters⁹²

The life and times of Jeremiah, which cover the final 40 years of Judah's monarchy, have been vividly illustrated by J.L. Starkey's 1935 discovery of eighteen ostraca inscribed in Hebrew in an ancient Phoenician script. These ostraca were found in the guardroom adjoining the outer gate of Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir), an ancient Judean fortress 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. In 1938, three more ostraca were found in this location. Ostraca are broken pieces of pottery that commonly were used in ancient times the same way that we would use stationery or note pads. These ostraca contain letters and lists of names from the period just preceding the final fall of Jerusalem. Most of them date from the autumn of 589 BC, two years before the fall of Jerusalem in August 587 BC. The ostraca are in the layer of the ash produced by the fire which Nebuchadnezzar accomplished before the final siege of Jerusalem. When Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Lachish, he found himself up against an almost impregnable fortress. The Babylonians had developed an incendiary tactic that they used against several of the fortified cities of Judah, including Lachish. They gathered all of the wood that they could find, stripping the whole area around Lachish of its forests and thickets, then cleared the hills of timber for miles around. All of this wood was piled against the stone walls of Lachish and set afire. Countless olive groves

⁹² This excursus is a summary of material found in Under, *Biblical Archaeology*, pages 285-288; Morrow, *The Bible as History*, pages 289-291

obviously were hacked down for this fire, because the layer of ashes contains the pits from olives. Day and night sheets of flame leapt sky high as fire licked the walls from top to bottom. More and more wood was piled on until the white hot stones burst and the walls caved in. When J.L. Starkey first began excavating the site, he was surprised to find that the layers of ashes are several yards thick and after 2500 years still were higher than the remaining solid walls of the fortress.⁹³

In one of his letters to Zedekiah, Jeremiah makes references to Judah's fortified cities, Lachish and Azekah, as being the only fortified cities remaining (Jeremiah 34:7)

- Letter IV contains the passage, *We are watching for the signal stations from Lachish, according to all the signals you are giving, because we cannot see the signals from Azekah.* Fire signals were the means whereby these outposts communicated with one another.
- Letter III was written by Hoshaiiah, who was stationed at some outpost, to Joash, who seems to have been the commanding officer at Lachish. The text is as follows:

The servant Hoshaiiah has sent to inform my lord Joash; May the Lord YHWH cause my Lord to hear tidings of peace! And now you have sent a letter but my lord has not enlightened your servant concerning the letter which you sent to your servant yesterday evening, for the heart of your servant has been sick since you did not write to your servant. And as for what my lord has said, "You do not know it! – read [any] letter," as the Lord lives no one has undertaken to read me a letter at any time nor have I read any letter that may have come to me nor would I give anything for it! – And it has been reported to your servant saying, "The commander of the host, Coniah son of Elnathan, has come down in order to go into Egypt and unto Hodaviah, son of Ahijah, and his men has he sent me to obtain supplies from him." – And as for the letter of Tobiah, servant of the king which came to Shallum son of Jaddua through the prophet, saying, "Beware," your servant has sent it to my lord.

Hoshaiiah, is one of a number of biblical names contained in these letters (Jeremiah 42:1 and Nehemiah 12:32). Joash is an abbreviated form of Josiah. All of the words and phrases are characteristically biblical and the Name of God used is the tetragrammaton YHWH (the consonants of the name that we would pronounce, Yahwey or Jehovah). The wordiness of the letter is due to the proper and idiomatic use of "my lord," (*adonai*), etc. The last part of the letter seems to refer to a visit of the commanding officer of the Jewish army on the way to Egypt for military conferences with the officials of Pharaoh Psammetichus II in preparation for the threatening Chaldean invasion (Jeremiah 37:5).

One of the most significant details of this letter is the reference to "the prophet." Some students of this material contend that this is in reference to Jeremiah. It may be, but it also may be a reference to one of the other prophets active at this time who did not leave behind any book. This is a significant find because this is a clear mentioning of a class of prophets that played such a large part in Hebrew history.

⁹³ This was Starkey's last excavation and the place of his death. It was a case of mistaken identity. While working at the site, he had grown a beard. When Arabs of the area saw the bearded Starkey they thought that he was a Jew and the killed him.

- Letter VI is highly reminiscent of Jeremiah 38:4, in which Jeremiah is accused by the princes before the king, *Then the officials said to the king, "Now let this man be put to death, inasmuch as he is discouraging the men of war who are left in this city and all the people, by speaking such words to them; for this man is not seeking the well-being of this people but rather their harm."*

Here is the text of the letter: *To my lord Yaosh, May YHWH cause my lord to see this season in good health! Who is thy servant but a dog that my lord hath sent the letter of the king and the letters of the princes, saying "Pray, read them!"? And behold the words of the princes are not good, but to weaken your hands and to slacken the hands of the men who are informed about them [?]...And now[?] my lord, will you not write to them saying, "Why do you thus even [?] in Jerusalem? Behold unto the king and unto his house [?] are you doing this thing!" And as YHWH your God lives, since your servant read the letters there has been no peace [?] for your servant...*

In this letter the discouragement is coming from the princes, not from the prophet. Even so, it seems that the patriot on the front lines is of one mind with the prophet, realizing that the glittering promises of Egypt were luring Judah to her doom and that true patriotism encouraged the people to face the certainty of a Babylonian victory.

The book of Jeremiah has been brought to life by many archaeological discoveries and as R.S. Haubert has stated, "They furnish what is without exaggeration a virtual supplement to Jeremiah."⁹⁴

Gedaliah, the Babylonian Governor of Judah

II Kings 25:22

Nebuchadnezzar left a few poor Jews in Palestine to serve as vinedressers and husbandmen (II Kings 25:12, 22). Also, some royal princesses and courtiers who were unlikely to cause any trouble were allowed to remain. Nebuchadnezzar installed Gedaliah as governor of the land. Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam, who was a friend and protector of Jeremiah and the grandson of Shaphan, who was the scribe in the reign of Josiah (II Kings 25:22-25; Jeremiah 39:14; 40:5-16; 41:1-18). Gedaliah chose Mizpah, a few miles northwest of Jerusalem, as his headquarters. Jeremiah joined him there (Jeremiah 40:6). The Jewish soldiers who had escaped capture had been hiding out. They, along with some of their officers, including two named, Ishmael and Johanan, came to Mizpah to have a conference with Gedaliah. After all, Gedaliah was a fellow countryman. Gedaliah assured them that if they would remain and cultivate the land and become peaceful subjects to the King of Babylon that they need have no fear of vengeance from their conquerors. For about two months, Gedaliah's beneficent and wise administration brought encouragement and hope to his feeble countrymen.

Gedaliah's death (II Kings 25:22-26; Jeremiah 41:1-18).

Peace in Judah proved to be as elusive as ever, because evil spirits were at work. Baalis, King of Ammon needed to find a way to remove Gedaliah from his post. Baalis hoped to begin making conquests in the area, now that the Chaldeans had departed from Judah. He knew that Gedaliah's successful administration stood in his way. (Jeremiah 40:13-16). He found a ready accomplice in Ishmael, a member of the Davidic family who had escaped the genocide. No

⁹⁴ R.S. Haubert, "Lachish-Frontier Fortress of Judah," *Biblical Archaeologist* (December 1938), p. 30

doubt Ishmael thought that since he was of the royal family he should be governor. Jonathan learned of the plot and revealed it to Gedaliah. Jonathan asked Gedaliah to give him permission to go and secretly kill Ishmael, because the fate of the Jews in Judah depended on the life of Gedaliah. Gedaliah refused to allow Johanan to do this, believing that his generous treatment of the remnant was such that Ishmael surely could not carry out such an heinous act against him. He was mistaken. Ishmael and ten companions came to visit Gedaliah. They were warmly hosted and entertained. After the dinner, Ishmael and his cohorts arose and killed not only Gedaliah but the Jews and Chaldean soldiers who were with him - these had been left in Judah to assist Gedaliah in administration. They also slew 80 pilgrims who happened to be passing through the area, in order to keep them from spreading the word about their crime. They threw the bodies of their victims into the cistern which Asa had made. Ishmael took as his prisoners the rest of the inhabitants of Mizpah. Jonathan and a group of commanders from the Jewish army who were with him learned of these murders and they set in pursuit of Ishmael. They overtook him at Gibeon and freed the prisoners; some of Ishmael's band quickly deserted him. Ishmael and eight of his co-conspirators escaped into Ammon.

Jonathan and the other captains feared that the Chaldeans would come upon them because of the murder of Gedaliah.⁹⁵ After several days, over Jeremiah's protest, Jonathan and the remnant went to Egypt, taking the protesting Jeremiah with them (Jeremiah 41-44). When the Jews arrived in Egypt, they founded military colonies, the most famous of which is Yeb in southern Egypt, which is well known from the Persian archives documenting events during Persian rule of Egypt.

Sadly, in Egypt the Jews obstinately persisted in their worship of Ashtarte, the Queen of Heaven. The women especially mocked Jeremiah's effort to call the refugees to forsake their apostasy. The sensual worship of the female goddess continued to seduce the remnant in Egypt (Jeremiah 44:15-19).

The Captivity of Judah by Babylon

As noted in the above accounts, Babylon's captivity of Judah was accomplished by stages. Nebuchadnezzar could have destroyed Jerusalem and taken the citizens into captivity in one fell stroke, but he tried to keep Judah alive as a source of tribute.

606 BC Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jehoiakim and took temple treasures and members of the royal family, including Daniel, to Babylon (II Chronicles 36:6-7; Daniel 1:1-3).

597 BC Nebuchadnezzar came again and carried to Babylon the rest of the treasures, king Jehoiachin, and 10,000 princes, officers, and chief men (II Kings 24:14-16).

586 BC Nebuchadnezzar came again. After a year and a half of siege, the Babylonians conquered the city.⁹⁶ Nebuchadnezzar put out the eyes of Zedekiah and carried him in chains to Babylon, along with 832 captives. One month later, under the command of Nebuzar-adan, the Babylonian troops broke down Jerusalem's walls and burned the city. Only a remnant of farmers was left in Judah under the oversight of Gedaliah (II Kings 25:8-12; Jeremiah 52:28-30).

⁹⁵ In memory of Gedaliah's death, the Jews established a fast day, on the 3rd day of the 7th month, Tishri (Zechariah 7:5; 8:9).

⁹⁶ Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in the 9th year of Zedekiah, in the 10th month, the 10th day. The city fell in the 11th year, 4th month, 9th day. One month later the city was burned on the 7th day of the 5th month.

581 BC The Babylonians came again (probably in retaliation for Ishmael's killing of governor Gedaliah) and took 745 more people to Babylon (Jeremiah 52:30). This was after a remnant had fled to Egypt, taking the aged Jeremiah with them.

Isaiah and Micah had predicted these events 100 years before they occurred (Isaiah 39:6; Micah 4:10). Jeremiah predicted that the captivity would last 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; Daniel 9:2; Ezra 1:1). After 400 years, David's earthly kingdom had ended. The spiritual kingdom of David was birthed with the coming of Christ and will be consummated when He returns in glory.

ADDENDUM A

This is an excerpt from a paper written for the Conclave in 2007, *The Question Of Unscriptural Practices In The New Testament Church* (James W. Garrett)

The primary truth communicated in the Old Testament is this: *God is God.*

Because God is God, no creature has a right either to ignore or to alter any of His orders. When Jehovah gave His people a command or an instruction, He expected explicit obedience. No substitute was acceptable in place of that which God had commanded or imparted. To offer something less than, or different from, what God prescribed or commanded, was to show irreverence and to commit blasphemy.

In the following section, we will note a number of examples, then we will draw conclusions from these episodes.

The Tabernacle and The Temple

A clear demonstration of the truth just stated is seen in God's design of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. Associated with these were God's instructions for how worship was to proceed as well as the proper conduct toward the holy items associated with these two worship structures.

When Jehovah gave the plan for the Tabernacle and the elements associated with it, He gave this warning:

According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it... And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain. (Exodus 25:9, 40)

Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to its plan which you have been shown in the mountain. (Exodus 26:30)

...who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." (Hebrews 8:5)

When the Tabernacle and its appointments were made, Jehovah's pattern was followed without deviation.

Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flowers, it was hammered work; according to the pattern which Jehovah had showed Moses, so he made the lampstand. (Numbers 8:4)

Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. (Acts 7:44)

Four hundred eighty years after the Israelites left Egypt, Solomon began the construction of the Temple. He did not employ great architects to design what would be the most important building ever constructed. He followed the plan and design that Jehovah had given to his father,

David. I Chronicles 28:11-18 records David's impartation of the plan to Solomon. Following the description of the future Temple, David declared,

"All this," said David, "Jehovah made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern." (I Chronicles 28:19)

Like the Tabernacle, the Temple of Jehovah was designed by Jehovah, Himself. When the Temple was dedicated, God demonstrated His approval by filling the Temple with a thick cloud that was permeated with His glory. (II Chronicles 5:13-14; 7:1-3)

All had been done according to God's plan.

Individual Experiences that shed light on the question

A number of episodes recorded in the Old Testament shed light on the question before us. The following are a few examples.

Moses and Gershom

The Old Testament records instances in which Jehovah, in His grace, sometimes tolerated less than perfect obedience for a season, but ultimately demanded conformity. An example is Moses' failure to circumcise Gershom. Circumcision had been established by Jehovah as the abiding seal of the Covenant for all Israelites. Moses' failure to circumcise his son was tolerated until he began the trip to Egypt to fulfill the ministry to which Jehovah had called him. The seriousness of this infraction is seen in that even though Jehovah had called Moses to be the human agent of Israel's deliverance, He sought to kill Moses because of this disobedience.

Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that Jehovah met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." So He let him alone. At that time she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood "-- because of the circumcision. (Exodus 4:24-26)

One can only speculate as to why Moses had failed to circumcise Gershom. Zipporah's statement, indicating resentment at having to circumcise Gershom, would lead us to believe that circumcising their son had been a point of contention between them and that Moses had bowed to her opposition. For whatever the reason, it would seem that obedience to this command outweighed God's call on Moses' life.

Again, the lesson is that God expects explicit obedience. He expects His people to do things His way. By our obedience we honor Him as God.

The Meribah Episode

Moses' most notable failure to obey God explicitly and the consequence therefrom is recorded in the Meribah episode, recorded in Numbers Chapter 20.

Thirty-seven years and six months after Jehovah miraculously delivered the Israelites from Egypt and two and one-half years before they entered the Promised Land, they faced a season of severe drought. Throughout the Exodus experience, even though Jehovah had provided for them in every circumstance, the people continually grumbled, whined, and complained. Facing this

shortage of water, they began to complain again. They even accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to die. Moses and Aaron went into the Tabernacle to seek Jehovah.

Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and fell on their faces. Then the glory of Jehovah appeared to them; and Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink." (Number 20:6-8)

Moses and Aaron took the rod and gathered the people before a specified rock, just as Jehovah had commanded. However, Moses' patience was at an end. After almost four decades of putting up with their constant complaining, Moses lost his temper. Instead of speaking to the rock, he spoke to the people and struck the rock.

"Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. (Numbers 20:10-11)

Jehovah responded immediately.

But Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:12)

The sin was two-fold.

- Moses, in his frustration, gave the impression that he and Aaron would bring forth the water.
- Instead of speaking to the rock, Moses vigorously struck the rock twice, as if human energy and effort would make the miracle more certain.

One year and eleven months after the experience in Meribah, just seven months before Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, God commanded Aaron to leave the assembly and ascend Mount Hor.

- Aaron climbed the mountain and died.
- No one was with him to bury him;
- Jehovah attended to these things.
- Aaron was not allowed to enter the Promised Land with Israel

Two and one half years after Meribah, Moses ascended to Nebo, the highest peak of Mount Pisgah, and looked over into the Promised Land; then he, like Aaron, died with only Jehovah as witness.

Moses and Aaron paid the penalty for Moses' failure at Meribah. He did not obey Jehovah, explicitly, and thus he failed to honor Him as God.

Nadab and Abihu

One of the most striking examples of God's displeasure with less than precise obedience involved Aaron's two eldest sons. Aaron had four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. The two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, were selected for a special role before Jehovah. They and their father, Aaron, along with seventy elders of Israel were invited by God to come to the base of the mountain when Moses ascended into the presence of God. They were given the privilege of experiencing a special epiphany (Exodus 24:1-11).

Later, Nadab and Abihu, along with their two brothers, were chosen by God to join their father, Aaron, as priests (Exodus 28:1). Yet, for Nadab and Abihu, this happy prospect was not to be. On the inaugural day of their priesthood, tragedy aborted the role to which God had assigned them.

Following the consecration of Aaron and his sons, the first offerings of consecration were presented to Jehovah. After Aaron had made the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering, he blessed the people and stepped down from the altar. Aaron and Moses then went into the Tabernacle for a brief time. When they came out, they again blessed the people and God responded – the glory of Jehovah appeared to all the people and fire came out from Jehovah and consumed the offerings that rested on the altar. (Leviticus 9)

The response of the people was ecstatic. The people shouted and fell on their faces. In the enthusiasm of the moment, Nadab and Abihu grabbed their respective firepans, put incense in them as an offering before Jehovah to accompany the praises of the people. Immediately, fire came from God and killed them. The record states that they had *offered strange fire before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them.* (Leviticus 10:1)

Various explanations have been given concerning the meaning of *strange fire*. What was the offense? It is most reasonable to conclude that they committed two sins:

- Clearly, they were presenting an incense-offering that was not commanded by Jehovah. Jehovah's ordained schedule for the offering of incense was at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice. (Exodus 30:7-8; Numbers 28:3ff)
- A probable additional sin was the offering of an incense other than that which was the prescribed incense (Exodus 30:9, 34-38)

Be that as it may, these two priests offered incense according to their own impulse, not in explicit obedience to Jehovah. Moses explained to Aaron,

*Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what Jehovah spoke, saying,
'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy,
And before all the people I will be honored."
So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.* (Leviticus 10:3)

By following their own impulse, rather than carefully complying with God's instructions, they were not treating Jehovah as holy. If this were the only example of God's emphasizing the

importance of explicit obedience (it is not), we would be warned sufficiently not to take the attitude,

“I know what God commanded, but I have something just as good.”

This episode strongly communicates the fact that God expects explicit, careful obedience, without deviation.

The Unnamed Prophet Who Believed a Lie

A strong lesson on explicit obedience is contained in the I Kings 13 record of an unnamed prophet whom Jehovah commissioned to go to Bethel and prophecy against the illegal altar. Jehovah told this prophet that he should neither eat nor drink while in Bethel, and that he was to return home by a road other than the one by which he came to that city. In obedience to this command, after his ministry was complete, the prophet refused the king's invitation to visit the palace and he began his journey back home by a different route (I Kings 13:7-10).

An old prophet who lived in Bethel heard about the exploits of this prophetic visitor. The old prophet pursued the visiting prophet and overtook him on the road. The old prophet invited the other man to return to Bethel and be refreshed with bread and water. When the visiting prophet reported that God forbade him from doing that, the older prophet lied and told him that an angel had appeared to him and had spoken by the word of Jehovah, commanding him to bring the visitor back to Bethel for refreshment. Believing the old prophet's lie, the visiting prophet returned to Bethel, where he ate bread and drank water. (I Kings 13:11-19)

Immediately, the word of Jehovah came upon the older prophet and he cried out that because the visiting prophet had disobeyed Jehovah, he would die away from home. The old prophet, evidently feeling remorse for what he had done, saddled a donkey for his visitor, who began the journey home. On the road, he was slain by a lion. (I Kings 13:23-25)

This is an instance in which God's word was clear. The visiting prophet was deceived into believing that God had changed His mind. Even though he was not disobeying God deliberately, he paid the price for not obeying God's command explicitly.

Of note is the fact that as far as the record goes, the deceitful old prophet was not punished for his deception.

This episode emphasizes the importance of being wary of anything that claims to be a substitute for or alternative to God's known command.

Many more Old Testament examples of the principle that God's plan, God's command, things imparted by God, were to be received, followed, and obeyed without failure. No deviation was sanctioned by the Ruler of the Universe.

Tolerated Deviations by Sincere Servants of Jehovah

Even though deviations were not sanctioned by Jehovah, fallen man created situations in which less than perfect conformity was tolerated by Jehovah. In such instances, Jehovah displayed both His grace and His severity. The outstanding example of this is the tent that David built for the Ark of the Covenant and the events surrounding the transportation of the Ark.

As already noted, Jehovah had given the design for the tent, which was to be the place where He met with Israel (the tent of meeting), while Israel wandered in the wilderness. It was the place of worship, and the home of the Ark,⁹⁷ During the priesthood of Eli, Israel's spiritual condition had deteriorated to the point that the Ark had become a superstitious symbol. When Israel was losing a fight with the Philistines, the priests audaciously removed the Ark from the tent and marched with it into battle. Their attitude was, "We are losing the battle...Go get God." Jehovah, via the ark, was regarded as a rabbit's foot – a good luck charm that Israel could use to guarantee the favorable outcome of its endeavor. Jehovah refused to be used by man; not only was Israel defeated, but the Philistines captured the Ark. (I Samuel 4)

Through the succeeding events associated with the Ark, Jehovah demonstrated that He was not just another god, but that He is God. Each place that the Philistines housed the Ark, there was evidence of His supernatural presence. The Philistines, suffering because of the presence of the Ark, sought to get rid of it (I Samuel 5; 6:19-21). The Ark finally was deposited in Kiriath-jearim, at the home of Abinadab.

After David was firmly established as king, he made plans to retrieve the Ark, and to bring it back into the heart of the nation. He erected a special tent to be the Ark's resting place. David and a selected retinue went to Kiriath-jearim to conduct the Ark to the resting place that David had prepared.

During this endeavor, Jehovah once again emphasized that He is to be obeyed, explicitly. God had designed the Ark to be carried by two special gold-covered poles. These poles were an essential part of the Ark and it was to be carried in this manner at all times – this was, after all, the most convenient way to carry the Ark. God had declared that no one was to touch the Ark; the porters were to touch only the poles. In all probability, David's men followed that instruction in lifting the Ark and placing it on the new cart - transporting it on a cart pulled by oxen was easier than carrying it by poles resting on the shoulders of the porters. When the oxen made a move that almost upset the cart, Uzzah, well intentioned, reached out to steady the Ark. Jehovah slew him instantly (II Samuel 6:6-7). After the slaying of Uzzah, David deposited the Ark in the nearby home of Obed-edom, the Gittite (II Samuel 6:9-11).

After three months, David and those with him moved the Ark according to God's original instructions (I Chronicles 15). They brought the Ark to a special tent that David had erected for this purpose (II Samuel 6:17; I Chronicles 16:1). David set worshippers before the tent,

⁹⁷Later events demonstrate that the tent was temporary - Jehovah had planned for a Temple when Israel became settled.

instructing them to sing, play instruments, and worship Jehovah night and day (I Chronicles 16:4ff).

The original Tabernacle and the altar of sacrifice, both of which had been designed by Jehovah Himself, remained at Gibeon. This continued to be the site where the people of Israel fulfilled the ceremonial and sacrificial commands of Jehovah. Both of these Tabernacles existed at the same time, and both were under the protection of the King. (I Chronicles 16:37-41)

The one thing that this arrangement did not allow was the fulfillment of the blood sacrifices on the Day of Atonement. According to Jehovah's instruction, once a year the High Priest was to take the blood of a sacrificial lamb, go through the veil into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle the sacrificial blood on the Ark. The original Tabernacle contained the Holy of Holies, but since the removal of the Ark in the Philistine episode, the Holy of Holies had been an empty chamber – the Ark wasn't there. On the other hand, there is no mention of such an arrangement in the Tabernacle that David had built. This second Tabernacle had the Ark, but no Holy of Holies and no Day of Atonement ceremonies. As best as can be determined, the ark was absent from the Holy of Holies for about 43 years.⁹⁸ After the construction of the Temple, all came together again and functioned in a manner consistent with the original instructions Jehovah had given to Moses.

Thus, from the time of Eli's death, when the Ark was captured by the Philistines, until Solomon completed the building the Temple, Jehovah allowed a temporary arrangement, while His ultimate plan – a Temple – was in developmental stages, both cognitively and actively.⁹⁹

DISCURSUS

Rebuilding the Tabernacle of David

In the late 1960's, various teachers stated that through the new worship forms in the church and the new release of the Holy Spirit, God was rebuilding the Tabernacle of David. Disparaging remarks were made about the Tabernacle that was at Gibeon, where the priests were conducting "old dead worship forms." This view of the rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David demonstrates poor exegesis and seems to reflect an agenda, more than sound hermeneutics.

The Tabernacle at Gibeon was God's plan. If that Tabernacle had been neglected, and the various God-commanded sacrifices and ceremonies had ceased, Israel's sin would have been compounded. The fact that all of the Tabernacle ceremonies were continued after the construction of the Temple, is evidence that God was not through with these acts of worship. There is no instance in which God suspended these Tabernacle services.

⁹⁸ The Ark spent seven months among the Philistines (I Samuel 6:1), 20 years at Kiriath-jearim (ISamuel 7:1-2), 3 months at the house of Obed-edom (II Samuel 6:11). By following the time-line of David's life and the fact that the Temple was completed in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign (I Kings 6:1, 38) the Ark would have been 22 years in the Tabernacle that David built.

⁹⁹ It seems that the Tabernacle (including all of its vessels and utensils) was kept in the Temple as a sacred relic (I Kings 8:4ff)

It is true that centuries later, Judah's hypocritical acts of worship in the Temple were condemned. Jehovah declared that their ceremonies were odious to Him (Isaiah 1:10-15), but the problem was not the ceremonies; the daily lives of the worshippers were not consistent with their religious activity. God's response was for them to repent (Isaiah 1:16ff).

Similarly, Amos condemned the worship of the Israelite nation in Bethel (Amos 5:21-24). This was done for two reasons:

1. The altar at Bethel was built by Jeroboam in order to keep the people of Israel (the northern kingdom) from going to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple that God had sanctioned.
2. As with the people of Judah, those who worshipped at Bethel did not live lives consistent with their acts of worship. Jehovah called Israel to repent of injustices.

In Acts 15:15ff, James applied the Amos quote, concerning the rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David, to the restoration of the dynasty of David. The term, Tabernacle, literally, *tent*, refers to where one dwells – it is symbolic of his family, which what comprises a dynasty.

James quoted this prophecy, declaring that it is fulfilled in the Church, consisting of people from all races. Not only that, James quoted Amos as if the rebuilding of David's tent were occurring in his day – through the birth of the Church. Those who declare that the rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David refers to a worship movement that developed in the later decades of the 20th Century are in disagreement with the apostles who in Acts 15 declared the Church to be David's rebuilt Tabernacle.

A number of important spiritual lessons can be seen in all of this, as well as major questions. The biggest question is, "why didn't David return the Ark to its rightful place – the Holy of Holies which Jehovah had designed for it?" For the purposes of this paper, we must not be side-tracked by such questions. The important point for our discussion is to note that God tolerated a temporary situation that was not according to the pattern that He had given to Moses, along with the dire warnings not to deviate from anything imparted. Linked with this illustration of God's tolerance is the importance of remembering the lesson associated with the death of Uzzah.

ADDENDUM B

I Samuel 13:1-2

Saul's age at the time of his coronation and the length of his reign

David M. Howard Jr. has aptly stated,

“The most difficult chronological problem in I Samuel concerns the length of Saul’s reign and his age at accession to the throne. The present Masoretic Text reads (in a literal translation) *a son of a year* [i.e., one year old] *was Saul when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel.*” These data clearly are incorrect and, many solutions have been advanced as corrections.¹⁰⁰

The translators who produced the King James sought solve the problem by linking the second phrase with the second verse, making the passage read,

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel...

The problem with this solution is three fold:

1. As a general rule (certainly not absolute) when the history of a king’s reign is reported, the most common pattern is to begin the account by making a statement concerning his age when he began to rule and the length of his reign (see, for example, II Samuel 2:10; I Kings 14:21; I Kings 22:42; II Kings 8:26).
2. The Hebrew expression, as it exists in the Masoretic Text, *a son of a year*, refers to a person’s age, i.e., *Saul was a year old when he became king*. There is no linguistic justification for rendering this as, *reigned one year*, other than to try to make some sense of it.¹⁰¹
3. Tying the last phrase to verse two is an unnatural construction; verse two begins with the name, Saul, which, in the view of many scholars, clearly indicates that verse 2 begins a new sentence and is not just an apodosis to verse 1b.¹⁰²

Observe from the following versions the various conclusions made concerning what to do with this verse in versions other than the Roman Catholic.

¹⁰⁰ David M. Howard Jr., *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*, (Chicago, Moody Books) 1993, page 168

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, Jerome, in creating the Vulgate, rendered the verse in this very manner *filius unius anni Saul cum regnare coepisset duobus autem annis regnavit super Israhel*. The footnote in the *New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible*, Confraternity-Douay Version (New York, the Catholic Publishing Company) 1957, page 332, FN 1, has this explanation, “*Of one year*: i.e., he was good and like an innocent child, and for two years continued in that innocence.” Of further interest, the Septuagint omits this verse.

¹⁰² C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 2, translated by James Martin (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers) 1989, page 124

New King James (following the format of the 1611 KJV) 1982

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel...

New American Standard Bible 1977

Saul was forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-two years over Israel. Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel...

New American Standard Bible 1995

Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel. Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel...

New International Version 1984

Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years. Saul chose three thousand men from Israel...

New Jerusalem Bible

Saul was . . . years old when he became king, and reigned over Israel for . . . years. Saul selected three thousand men of Israel...

New American Bible

Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel for forty-two years. Saul chose three thousand men from Israel...

The American Standard Version 1901

Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel... footnote: The number is lacking in the Hebrew text, and is supplied conjecturally.

Obviously, there is no consensus among Bible translators as to how verse 1 should be rendered. Note that the NJB didn't include any numbers, the ASV indicated that there was no number in the Hebrew text that declared Saul's age at the time of coronation. All others attempted some solution. Most versions italicized the number, indicating that it is not in the Hebrew text and was supplied by the translators.

All of the efforts to include a number were the result of studying material outside of this verse. Some were the result of chronologies of the period that have been constructed. Others gave weight to Paul's statement in Acts 13:21

Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Where did Paul get the number, *forty*? There was a tradition in Paul's time that Saul had reigned forty years. The source for this tradition seems to have been two:

1. According to Thenius, the tradition arose from the fact that Saul's son, Ishbosheth was forty years old when he began to reign (II Samuel 2:10). Ishbosheth was not mentioned in the list of Saul's sons in I Samuel 14:49, which describes Saul's family early in his

reign. Therefore, Ishbosheth must have been born after Saul's coronation. He became king after Saul's death. That being true, Saul must have reigned forty years.

2. The Jewish scribes always sought to present Scripture in an orderly manner, which aided memorization, something very important in the synagogue school. This is seen, for example, in the manner in which Matthew (who wrote his Gospel for a Jewish audience) organized the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew Chapter One. Thus, since David and Solomon ruled for 40 years, then Saul's reign was presented as 40 years.

Josephus' report of Saul's reign seems to reflect this tradition in his *Antiquities of the Jews* 6.378

To this sad end did Saul come, according to the prophecy of Samuel, because he disobeyed the commands of God about the Amalekites, and on the account of his killing the family of Ahimelech, the high priest, with Ahimelech himself, and the city of the high priests. Now Saul, when he had reigned eighteen years while Samuel was alive, and after his death two [and twenty], ended his life in this manner.

The reason that we must say, "seems to reflect this tradition" is the bracketing of the words, *and twenty*, indicating that these words do not occur in all Greek manuscripts of Josephus. Furthermore, in the Latin version of Josephus, the total years are twenty, not forty.

Elsewhere, Josephus presents the tradition as being twenty years.

And after this manner have the kings of David's family ended their lives, being twenty-one in number, (until the last king,) who all together reigned five hundred and fourteen years, and six months, and ten days; of whom Saul, who was their first king, retained the government twenty years, though he was not of the same tribe with the rest.

All of these things enter into the decision that translators have to make concerning the numerology of I Samuel 13:1.

It does seem clear that Saul was probably around forty when he began to reign because his son, Jonathan, was an able warrior at that time. Jonathan must have been at least twenty years old when Saul began to reign. That being true, we would assume that Saul probably was about forty years old at the time of his coronation.

The argument that Ishbosheth was not born when Saul was crowned (summarized above), is a reasonable argument. Since Ishbosheth was 40 years old when Saul died, that would indicate that Saul reigned at least 40 years.

Paul's repeating what seems to have been the First Century tradition, i.e., that Saul reigned 40 years, also gives credence to that figure.

How then do we explain the Hebrew of I Samuel 13:1? The solution probably lies in the manner in which Hebrew numbers were written. Early on, Numerals were not spelled out – i.e., one, two, three, but were indicated by an Hebrew letter - even as we use Arabic numerals rather than spelling out numbers. For example, here is how Hebrew numbers are indicated by letter:

1	א
2	ב
3	ג
4	ד
5	ה
6	ו
Etc...	

In all probability, a numeric letter was dropped from the text by a copyist, early in the history of the Masoretic manuscript family. Thus, when the translators sought to make sense out of I Samuel 13:1, they went outside of the text and looked at the materials which we have cited above.

ADDENDUM C

DATING OLD TESTAMENT EVENTS

The manner in which the dates of Old Testament events are established is achieved by identifying a biblical event also recorded in solidly dated non-biblical literature. The earliest event that can be so identified is the Battle of Karkar (also spelled, *QarQar*). Two methods are used to date the Battle of Karkar. One is by studying the Assyrian Canon, which contains a chronological list of the civil officers designated as *limmi* or eponyms. The other method is by studying the lists given by the Greek geographer, Ptolemaeus, in which he records the eclipses which occurred under the various Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian rulers of Babylon. The exact dates of these eclipses can be determined astronomically. Thus, an exact chronology of late Assyrian history is possible. See, J. McKee Adams, *Ancient Records and the Bible* (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1946) pp. 75-76, 168-174; Merrill F. Unger, *Archeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1954) pg 244

Battle of Karkar

854-53 B.C.

Ahab, King of Israel, and Benhadad I, king of Syria, united their armies to oppose the Assyrian invader, Shalmaneser III (859-824 BC). The Assyrian historical record, contained on a monolith now housed in the British Museum, describes this battle and those who participated. The Assyrian record fits the situation described at the close of I Kings 20, the only time when Ahab and Benhadad I were at peace with one another.

EXCURSUS: KARKAR

Assyria had been a minor player in events in the Middle East until Tiglath-pileser I, king of Assyria, led military expeditions as far as the northern Mediterranean around 1100 BC. After his death, Assyria again reverted to a minor status. At the beginning of the 9th Century Assurnasirpal II (833-859 BC) renewed the expansionist policy. His army reached the Mediterranean coastal cities of Phoenicia – Arvad, Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon – and put them under tribute.

Assurnasirpal II's son, Shalmaneser, set out from Ninevah to the central region of Syria. He crossed the Euphrates River, near Pethor, in a time of flood. His engineers built pontoon boats, using inflated animal skins. He conquered several cities as he proceeded west and south. A number of kings of the western nations realized the serious threat that the Assyrians posed and so they formed a league to oppose the further incursions of Shalmaneser. This mighty league included armies gathered from throughout Syria and Israel, as far south as Egypt. The league was led by Ahab of Israel, Ben-hadad of Damascus, and Irhuleni of Hamath. Ahab provided 2000 chariots, more than half of all of the “mounted” troops. Although Judah is not mentioned specifically, most scholars assume that Judah was a part of the league. Shalmaneser's record of the battle lists twelve kings, but only eleven countries. This probably is the result of a line's being broken off the bottom of the inscription. The major battle was fought at Qarqar (also spelled, Karkar). According to Shalmaneser, he was victorious. It does seem, however, that the league seriously undermined the Assyrians since Shalmaneser did not mount another campaign for another four years. With the passing of the danger, the league fell apart and the kings of the league went back to fighting one another.

This battle is significant in that Ahab and Ben-hadad were in the league. The only time that these two were not battling one another is in the brief truce that followed the first two battles between Ahab and Ben-hadad (I Kings 20:31-34; 22:1). Karkar thus becomes an historical peg on which to hang biblical dates

Division of the Kingdom (854 + 77)**931 B.C.**

The date of Solomon's death and the division of the Kingdom can be established by adding together the years that each king following Solomon reigned over Israel (see chart below) through the reign of Ahab, then adding that total to the date of Karkar: $854 + 77 = 931$.

Kings of Israel from Karkar to the The Divided Kingdom		
Jeroboam	I Kings 14:20	22 years
Nadab	I Kings 15:25	2 years
Baasha	I Kings 15:33	24 years
Elah	I Kings 16:8	2 years
Zimri	I Kings 16:15	(7 days)
Omri	I Kings 16:23	12 years
Ahab	I Kings 16:29	22 years
Total		84 years

Omri and Ahab (father and son) were co-regents for 7 years (I Kings 16:23 and I Kings 16:29). Thus 7 years must be removed from the total. Total years from Ahab to the Division of the Kingdom: $84 - 7 = 77$

ADDENDUM D

Kings and Prophets of the Divided Kingdom

Date	Northern Kingdom	Prophets	Southern Kingdom	Assyria	Syria	Babylon
931	<i>Jeroboam Dynasty</i> Jeroboam	Ahijah Shemaiah Iddo	Rehoboam Abijam Asa		Rezon	
909	Nadab <i>Baasha Dynasty</i> Baasha	Azariah Hanani Jehu				
885	Elah (Zimri) <i>Omri Dynasty</i> Omri (Tibni) Ahab	Elijah Micaiah Eliezer	Jehoshaphat	Ashurnarsipal	Benhadad	
	Ahaziah Joram	Elisha Jehoiada	Jehoram Ahaziah			
841	<i>Jehu Dynasty</i> Jehu	Zechariah	Athaliah Joash	Shalmaneser III	Hazael	
	Jehoahaz Jehoash Jeroboam II	Jonah Hosea Amos	Amaziah Azariah		Benhadad	
752	Zechariah <i>Last Kings</i> Shallum Menahem Pekahiah Pekah Hoshea	Isaiah Obed	Jotham Ahaz	Tiglath-Pileser III	Rezin	
722	<i>Fall of Samaria</i>	Micah	Hezekiah Manasseh	Shalmaneser V Sargon II Sennacherib Esarhaddon Ashurbanipal		
		Jeremiah Huldah	Jehoahaz Jehoiakim Jehoiachin Zedekiah			
586		(Ezekial) (Daniel)	<i>Fall of Jerusalem</i>			Nabopolassar Nebuchadnezzar

ADDENDUM E

The Hebrew Calendar

The Hebrew/Jewish calendar had three stages of development:

- The pre-exilic biblical period
- The post-exilic, or Talmudic period
- The post-Talmudic

In the first period the priests determined the beginning of each month by the appearance of the new moon and the timing of the various feasts by the appearance of the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. In the Old Testament the months usually are referenced by number (the first month, the seventh month, etc.) rather than by a given name.

Only four names of months in the pre-exilic period have come down to us.

- *Abib* the first month of the year – corresponding to the later *Nisan*¹⁰³
- *Ziv* the second month of the year – corresponding to the later *Iyar*¹⁰⁴
- *Ethanim* the seventh month of the year – corresponding to the later *Tishri*¹⁰⁵
- *Bul* the eighth month, corresponding to *Marchesvan*¹⁰⁶

These surviving names are descriptive of the time of year that they represent.¹⁰⁷

Abib – grain in the ear – just ripening¹⁰⁸

Ziv – refers to the beauty and splendor of the flowers in the spring

Ethanim – means “perennial,” probably referring to living fountains

Bul – rain or showers, being the month when the rainy season commenced

In the post-exilic period, Babylonian calendar names became the names of the months on the Jewish/Hebrew calendar. The same method of determining the beginning and ending of a month prevailed, but while in Babylon more precise methods of calculating this data developed.

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar. It is based on three astronomical phenomena:

- the rotation of the Earth about its axis (a day);
- the revolution of the moon about the Earth (a month);
- the revolution of the Earth about the sun (a year).

These three phenomena are independent of each other, so there is no direct correlation between them. On average, the moon revolves around the Earth in about 29½ days. The Earth revolves around the sun in about 365¼ days.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Exodus 12:2 compared to Deuteronomy 16:1ff)

¹⁰⁴ I Kings 6:1,37

¹⁰⁵ I Kings 8:2

¹⁰⁶ I Kings 6:38

¹⁰⁷ *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Volume I (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing) 1952, page 541

¹⁰⁸ Leviticus 2:14; Exodus 9:31

The phases of the moon indicated a new month – from new moon to new moon. Although not exact, there were approximately 30 days in each month (a combination of 30 day and 29 day months). The problem with strictly lunar calendars is that there are approximately 12.4 lunar months in every solar year, so a 12-month lunar calendar loses about 11 days every year and a 13-month lunar month gains about 19 days every year. The months on such a calendar "drift" in their relationship with the solar year. On a 12 lunar month calendar, the month of Nissan, which is supposed to occur in the Spring, would occur 11 days earlier each year, eventually occurring in the Winter, the Fall, the Summer, and then the Spring again. To compensate for this drift, an extra month was added. The month of Nissan would occur 11 days earlier for two or three years, and then the extra month would be added to the year and Nisan would jump forward 29 or 30 days, balancing out the drift.

When it becomes apparent that the 16th of Nisan (Abib) will occur before the vernal equinox, an extra *Adar* is added before the real *Adar*. The extra *Adar* becomes *Adar I* and the real *Adar* is *Adar II*. This happens four times out of every eleven years.

In post-exilic times, this extra month sometimes was added by observation of agricultural and climate conditions. If the weather and the crops and the livestock were not sufficiently advanced to be considered "spring," then the Sanhedrin inserted the additional month into the calendar to make sure that Pesach (Passover) would occur in the spring (In the Torah it is referred to as Chag he-Aviv, the Festival of Spring).¹¹⁰

A year with 13 months is referred to in Hebrew as *Shanah Me'uberet* (pronounced shah-NAH meh-oo-BEH-reht), literally: *a pregnant year*. Note that Adar II is the "real" Adar; it is the one in which [Purim](#) is celebrated and a boy born in *Adar* becomes a [Bar Mitzvah](#) in Adar II, not Adar I.

In the fourth century, Hillel II established a fixed calendar based on mathematical and astronomical calculations. This calendar, still in use, standardized the length of months and the addition of months over the course of a 19 year cycle, so that the lunar calendar realigns with the solar years. Adar I is added in the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th years of the cycle. The current cycle began in Jewish year 5758 (the year that began October 2, 1997).

Even though the Hebrew calendar became more standardized in the centuries following Christ, the 12 month/13month practice dates to Old Testament times.

The first month of the Jewish calendar is the month of *Nisan*, in the spring, when [Passover](#) occurs. However, the [Jewish New Year](#) is in Tishri, the seventh month, and that is when the year number is increased. Some consider *Abib* to be the religious New Year and *Tishri* to be the legal New Year. This concept of different starting points for a year is not as strange as it might seem at first glance. The American "new year" starts in January, but the new "school year" starts in September, and many businesses have "fiscal years" that start at various times of the year. Similarly, the Jewish calendar has different starting points for different purposes.

¹⁰⁹ The Gregorian calendar used by most of the modern world has abandoned any correlation between the moon cycles and the month, arbitrarily setting the length of months to 28, 30 or 31 days, with leap years added every four years

¹¹⁰ jewFAQ.org/calendar.htm

Months of the Jewish Year

Hebrew	English	Number	Length	Gregorian Equivalent
ניסן	Nissan	1	30 days	March-April
אייר	Iyar	2	29 days	April-May
סיון	Sivan	3	30 days	May-June
תמוז	Tammuz	4	29 days	June-July
אב	Av	5	30 days	July-August
אלול	Elul	6	29 days	August-September
תשרי	Tishri	7	30 days	September-October
חשוון	Cheshvan	8	29 or 30 days	October-November
כסלו	Kislev	9	30 or 29 days	November-December
טבת	Tevet	10	29 days	December-January
שבט	Shevat	11	30 days	January-February
אדר	Adar I (leap years only)	12	30 days	February-March
אדר ב	Adar (called Adar II in leap years)	12 (13 in leap years)	29 days	February-March

The length of Cheshvan and Kislev are determined by complex calculations involving the time of day of the full moon of the following year's Tishri and the day of the week that the first day of Tishri would occur in the following year.

The Relationship of Easter to the Date of the Passover

Before 325 CE, Christian communities celebrated Easter on a variety of different days of the week. The intention of each community was to celebrate the resurrection of Christ and various methods were used by the different communities in an effort to determine the exact date each year. Sometimes the disagreement over the date caused a bit of controversy. The Council of Nicea (325 AD) issued the "Easter Rule" which standardized Easter observance to the first Sunday after the first full moon (known as the paschal moon) on or after the vernal equinox (but never on the same date as the Jews celebrated Passover).

This "full moon" is not defined in a scientific manner; it is an "ecclesiastical full moon. The "ecclesiastical vernal equinox" is always on March 21st (originally, March 20). Thus Easter always occurs on a Sunday between March 22nd and April 25th, signaling the end of the season of Lent. Each year, the date moves progressively later in April until the year before leap-year. On leap-year, the date moves back to an earlier time and the four-year cycle is then repeated.

Current Jewish Calendar: First Quarter 2008

Shevat 5768 (January / February 2008)

Adar I 5768 (February / March 2008)

Adar II 5768 (March / April 2008)

Shevat 5768 (January / February 2008)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	<u>Shabbat</u>
		1 Shevat January 8 Rosh Chodesh	2 Shevat January 9	3 Shevat January 10	4 Shevat January 11	5 Shevat January 12 Parashat Bo
6 Shevat January 13	7 Shevat January 14	8 Shevat January 15	9 Shevat January 16	10 Shevat January 17	11 Shevat January 18	12 Shevat January 19 Parashat Beshalach Shabbat Shirah
13 Shevat January 20	14 Shevat January 21	15 Shevat January 22 Tu B'Shevat	16 Shevat January 23	17 Shevat January 24	18 Shevat January 25	19 Shevat January 26 Parashat Yitro
20 Shevat January 27	21 Shevat January 28	22 Shevat January 29	23 Shevat January 30	24 Shevat January 31	25 Shevat February 1	26 Shevat February 2 Shabbat Mevarekhim Parashat Mishpatim
27 Shevat February 3	28 Shevat February 4	29 Shevat February 5	30 Shevat February 6 Rosh Chodesh Adar			

Adar I 5768 (February / March 2008)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	<u>Shabbat</u>
				1 Adar I February 7 Rosh Chodesh	2 Adar I February 8	3 Adar I February 9 Parashat Terumah
4 Adar I February 10	5 Adar I February 11	6 Adar I February 12	7 Adar I February 13	8 Adar I February 14	9 Adar I February 15	10 Adar I February 16 Parashat Tetzaveh
11 Adar I February 17	12 Adar I February 18	13 Adar I February 19	14 Adar I February 20 Purim Katan	15 Adar I February 21	16 Adar I February 22	17 Adar I February 23 Parashat Ki Tisa
18 Adar I February 24	19 Adar I February 25	20 Adar I February 26	21 Adar I February 27	22 Adar I February 28	23 Adar I February 29	24 Adar I March 1 Shabbat Mevarekhim Parashat Vayaqhel
25 Adar I March 2	26 Adar I March 3	27 Adar I March 4	28 Adar I March 5	29 Adar I March 6	30 Adar I March 7 Rosh Chodesh Adar II	

Adar II 5768 (March / April 2008)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Shabbat
						1 Adar II March 8 Rosh Chodesh Shabbat Sheqalim Parashat Pequdei
2 Adar II March 9	3 Adar II March 10	4 Adar II March 11	5 Adar II March 12	6 Adar II March 13	7 Adar II March 14	8 Adar II March 15 Shabbat Zakhor Parashat Vayiqra
9 Adar II March 16	10 Adar II March 17	11 Adar II March 18	12 Adar II March 19	13 Adar II March 20 Fast of Esther	14 Adar II March 21 Purim	15 Adar II March 22 Shushan Purim Parashat Tzav
16 Adar II March 23	17 Adar II March 24	18 Adar II March 25	19 Adar II March 26	20 Adar II March 27	21 Adar II March 28	22 Adar II March 29 Shabbat Parah Parashat Shemini
23 Adar II March 30	24 Adar II March 31	25 Adar II April 1	26 Adar II April 2	27 Adar II April 3	28 Adar II April 4	29 Adar II April 5 Shabbat Mevarekhim Shabbat Ha-Chodesh Parashat Tazria

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Webmaster@JewFAQ.Org

Jewish Festivals and Holidays 2008 5768-9

<p><u>Tu B'Shvat</u> Shvat 15th New Year for Trees Tues Jan 22nd 2008</p>	<p><u>Lag Ba'Omer</u> Iyar 18th 33rd Day of the Omer Fri May 23rd 2008</p>	<p><u>Rosh Hashana</u> Tishri 1st & 2nd New Year Tues/Weds Sep 30/Oct 1 2008</p>
<p><u>Purim</u> Adar 14th Festival of Lots Fri March 21st 2008</p>	<p><u>Yom Yirushalayim</u> Iyar 28th Jerusalem Day Mon June 2nd 2008</p>	<p><u>Yom Kippur</u> Tishri 10th Day of Atonement Thurs October 9th 2008</p>
<p><u>Pesach</u> Nissan 15th - 22nd Passover Sun April 20-27 2008</p>	<p><u>Shavuot</u> Sivan 6th & 7th Feast of Weeks Mon/Tues June 9/10 2008</p>	<p><u>Sukkot</u> Tishri 15th - 21st Tabernacles Tues Oct 14-20 2008</p>
<p><u>Yom Ha'Shoah</u> Nissan 27th Holocaust Day Thur May 1st 2008</p>	<p><u>Fast of Tammuz</u> Tammuz 17th Fast of Tammuz Sun July 20th 2008</p>	<p><u>Shmini Atzeret</u> Tishri 22nd 8th day of Solemn Assembly Tues Oct 21st 2008</p>
<p><u>Yom Hazikaron</u> Iyar 4th Remembrance Day Wed May 7th 2008</p>	<p><u>Tisha B'Av</u> Av 9th Fast of the 9th of Av Sun August 10th 2008</p>	<p><u>Simchat Torah</u> Tishri 23rd Rejoicing of the Law Wed August 22nd 2008</p>
<p><u>Yom Ha'atzmut</u> Iyar 5th Israel Independence Day Thurs May 8th 2008</p>	<p><u>Tu B'Av</u> Av 15th Festival of Love Sat August 16th 2007</p>	<p><u>Chanukah</u> Kislev 25th - Tevet 3rd Festival of Lights Mon Dec 22-29 2008</p>

ADDENDUM F

The Moabite Stone

In 1868, a German missionary, F.A. Klein, was visiting biblical sites in Palestine. The route that he followed took him through Transjordan, Edom, and eventually through Moab. As he was riding his horse in the neighborhood of Diban, he noticed a large smooth stone. Klein dismounted to examine the stone and immediately recognized what appeared to him to be ancient Hebrew script. Klein dug the sand from around the stone, with great effort set it upright and with his pocket knife and handkerchief cleaned it carefully. It was a basalt stone, about three feet high and rounded on top. He wanted to take the stone with him, but it was too heavy. Before long he was surrounded by a mob of armed Arabs, signaling for him to leave and that the stone belonged to them. All that Klein could do was mark the spot on his map and head back home.

When he arrived in Germany, he got busy trying to raise the money to give to the Arabs. Word of his efforts spread into the academic community and a French scholar, Clermont-Ganneau, working in Jerusalem, heard about Klein's find. He quickly traveled to Diban and used all of his powers of persuasion to get the Arabs to allow him to examine the stone. While a crowd of suspicious Arabs watched, he took a squeeze (an impression made by pressing a soft substance onto a hard surface) of the surface of the stone.

Months later, French scholars deciphered the text from the squeeze and persuaded the French government to purchase the stone. When Clermont-Ganneau arrived at Diban with the funds to purchase the stone, and a caravan prepared to transport it, he found that the stone had disappeared. Realizing that Europeans were somewhat obsessed with such artifacts, the Arabs had build a fire around the stone and then poured cold water on it, shattering it into many pieces. They theorized that they could sell the pieces and get more money than if they sold the stone intact to just one person.

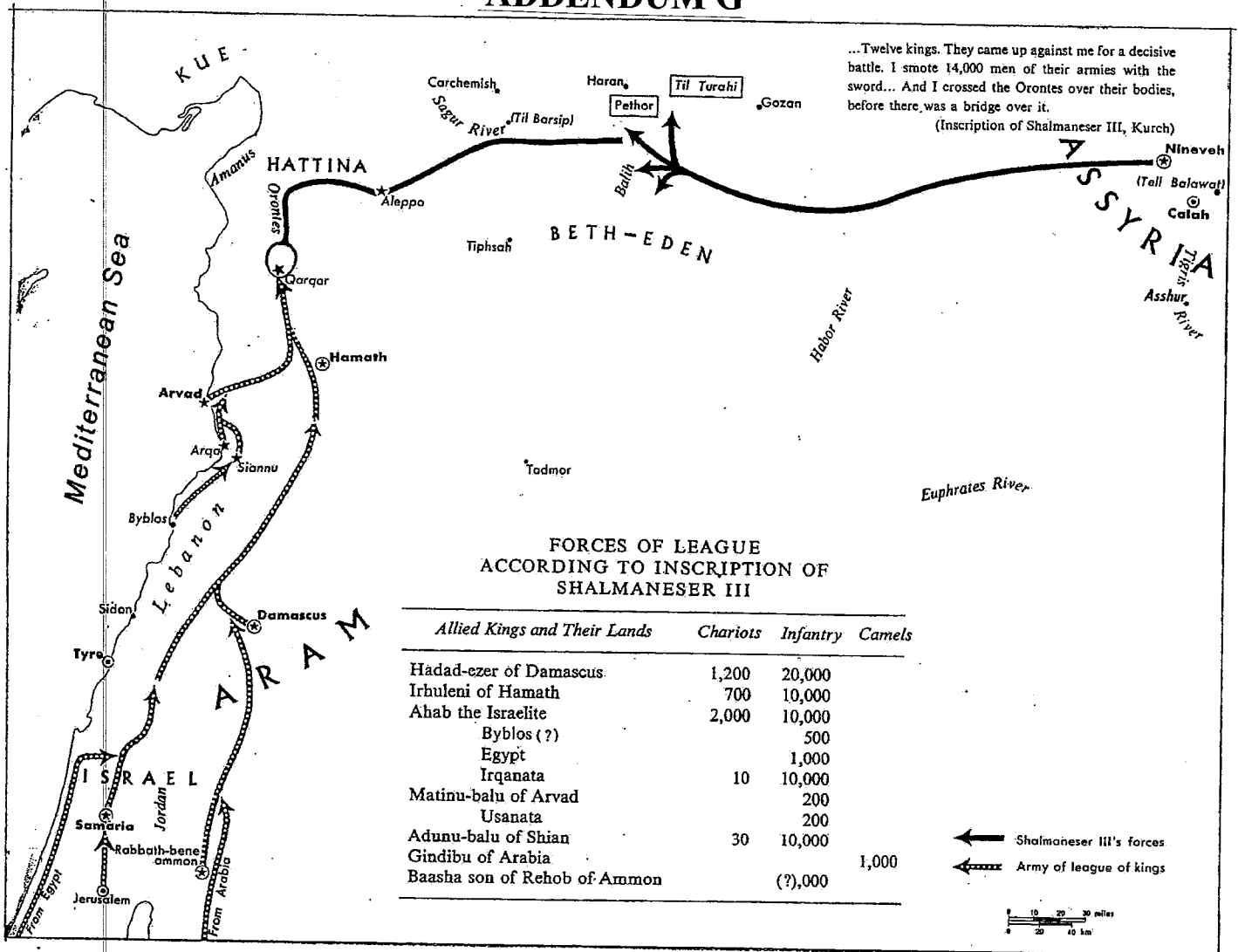
Clermont-Ganneau set out on the trail of each individual piece. Surprisingly, after much time and effort, he was able to obtain all of the pieces. Two larger blocks and eighteen smaller pieces were reassembled in accordance with the squeeze that Clermont-Ganneau had obtained earlier. Thus, before Klein had been able to gather together enough money, the French had installed the stone in the Louvre in Paris.

The stone is a monument created by Mesha, the king of Moab. It has interesting comments concerning his encounters with the armies of Israel, verifying the biblical account.

I am Mesha, son of Chemosh, king of Moab...My father was king of Moab for thirty years and I became king after my father: and I built this sanctuary Chemosh in Qerihoh, a sanctuary of refuge: for he saved me from all my oppressors and gave me dominion over all my enemies. Omri was king of Israel and oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with this land. And his son succeeded him and he also said, I will oppress Moab. In my days he said this: but I got the upperhand of him and his house; and Israel perished forever...I have had the ditches of Qerihoh dug by Israelite prisoners.

This is Palestine's oldest written document, dating from about 840 BC, in Moabite dialect, which is closely related to Biblical Hebrew. The discovery of this stone caused a sensation, because it verified the biblical record, some of which had been disputed by reductionist scholars.

ADDENDUM G



THE BATTLE OF QARQAR 853-854 BC

I KINGS 22:1; MONUMENT, SHALMANESER III—CALAH;
OTHER INSCRIPTIONS—ASSYRIA

Assyria had been a minor player in events in the Middle East until Tiglath-pileser I, king of Assyria, led military expeditions as far as the northern Mediterranean around 1100 BC. After his death, Assyria again reverted to a minor status. At the beginning of the 9th Century Assurnasirpal II (833-859 BC) renewed the expansionist policy. His army reached the Mediterranean coastal cities of Phoenicia – Arvad, Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon – and put them under tribute.

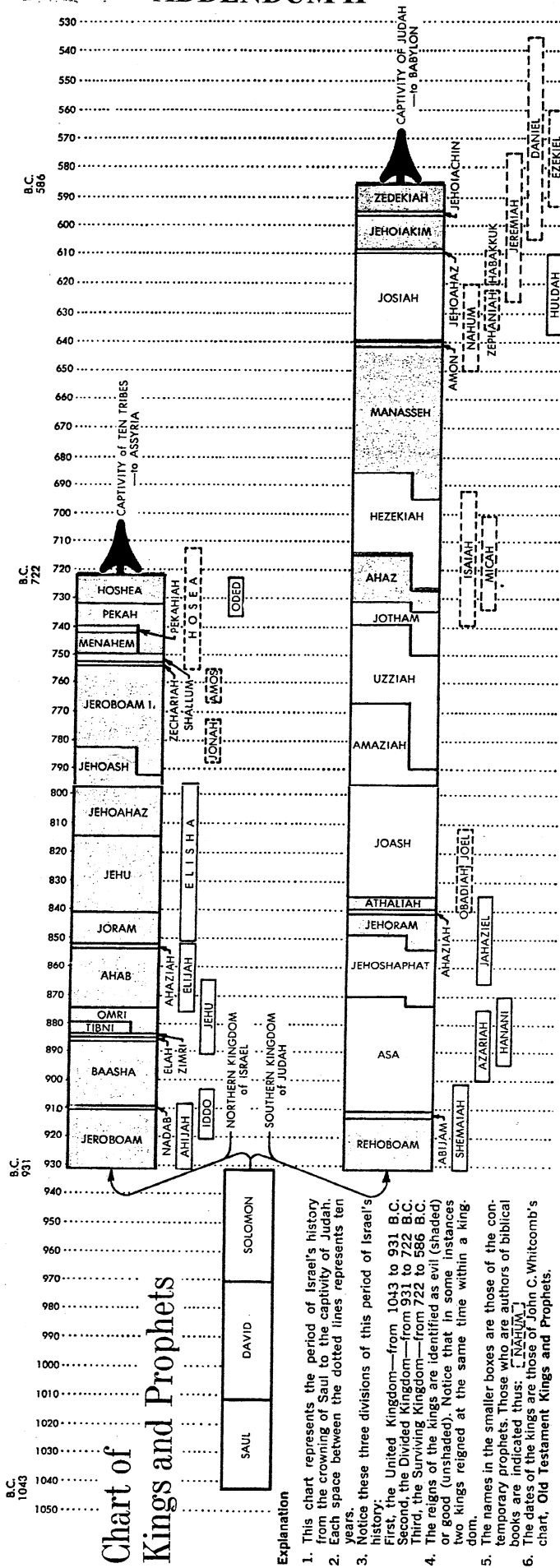
Assurnasirpal II's son, Shalmaneser, set out from Ninevah to the central region of Syria. He crossed the Euphrates River, near Pethor, in a time of flood. His engineers built pontoon boats, using inflated animal skins. He conquered several cities as he proceeded west and south. A number of kings of the western nations realized the serious threat that the Assyrians posed and so they formed a league to oppose the further incursions of Shalmaneser. This mighty league included armies gathered from throughout Syria and Israel, as far south as Egypt. The league was led by Ahab of Israel, Ben-hadad of Damascus,

and Irhuleni of Hamath. Ahab provided 2000 chariots, more than half of all of the "mounted" troops. Although Judah is not mentioned specifically, most scholars assume that Judah was a part of the league.

Shalmaneser's record of the battle lists twelve kings, but only eleven countries. This probably is the result of a line's being broken off the bottom of the inscription. The major battle was fought at Qarqar (also spelled, Karkar). According to Shalmaneser, he was victorious. It does seem, however, that the league seriously undermined the Assyrians since Shalmaneser did not mount another campaign for another four years. With the passing of the danger, the league fell apart and the kings of the league went back to fighting one another.

This battle is significant in that Ahab and Ben-hadad were in the league. The only time that these two were not battling one another is in the brief truce that followed the first two battles between Ahab and Ben-hadad (I Kings 20:31-34; 22:1). Karkar thus becomes an historical peg on which to hang biblical dates

ADDENDUM H



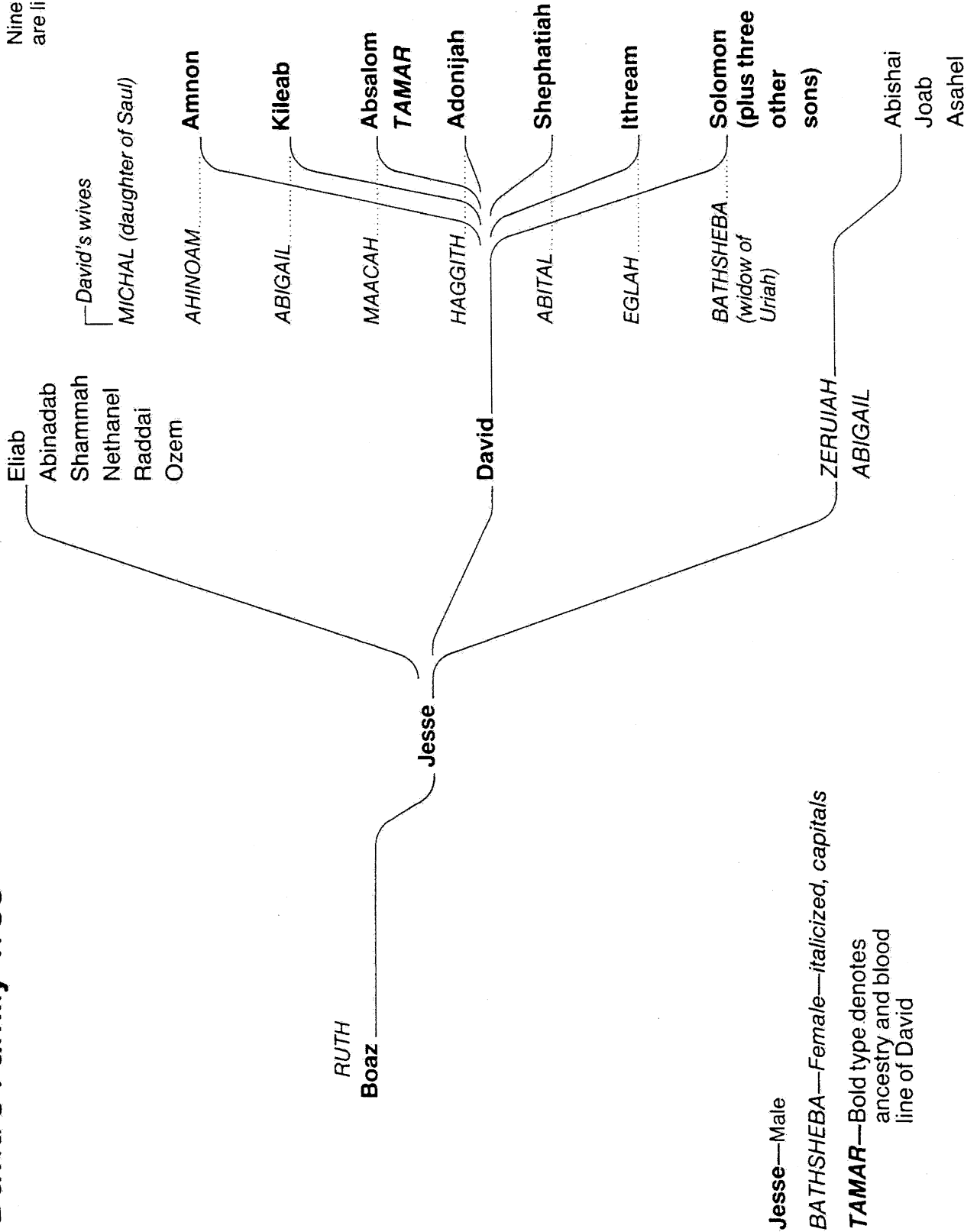
SUPPLEMENTS

1. David's Family Tree
2. Exploits of David and David the Fugitive
3. David's Conquests
4. The City of the Jebusites and David's Jerusalem
5. The floor plan of Solomon's Temple
6. Solomon's Temple and its Furnishings
7. Biblical Israel
8. The Tribal Allotments in Canaan
9. The Kingdom of Saul
10. The Location of the Tribes and Solomon's Twelve Districts
11. The Kingdom of David
12. The Ancient Near East
13. The Preparations of Hezekiah for Rebellion against Syria
14. Sennacherib's Campaign Through Sidon & Sennacherib's Campaign in Philistia & Judah
15. Judah and Her Neighbors During Manasseh's Reign
16. The Campaigns of Shishak
17. The Conquest of Abijah and the Campaign of Zerah the Ethiopian
18. The Rise of Omri
19. The Wanderings of Elijah
20. The War of Asa and Baasha & The Campaign of Ben-Hadad I
21. The Wars of Ahab against Aram
22. The Kingdom of Josiah
23. Nebuchadnezzar's Campaign against Judah & the Flight of Many Israelites to Egypt

David's Family Tree

Nine other sons of David are listed in 1 Ch 3:6-8.

SUPPLEMENT 1



Jesse—Male

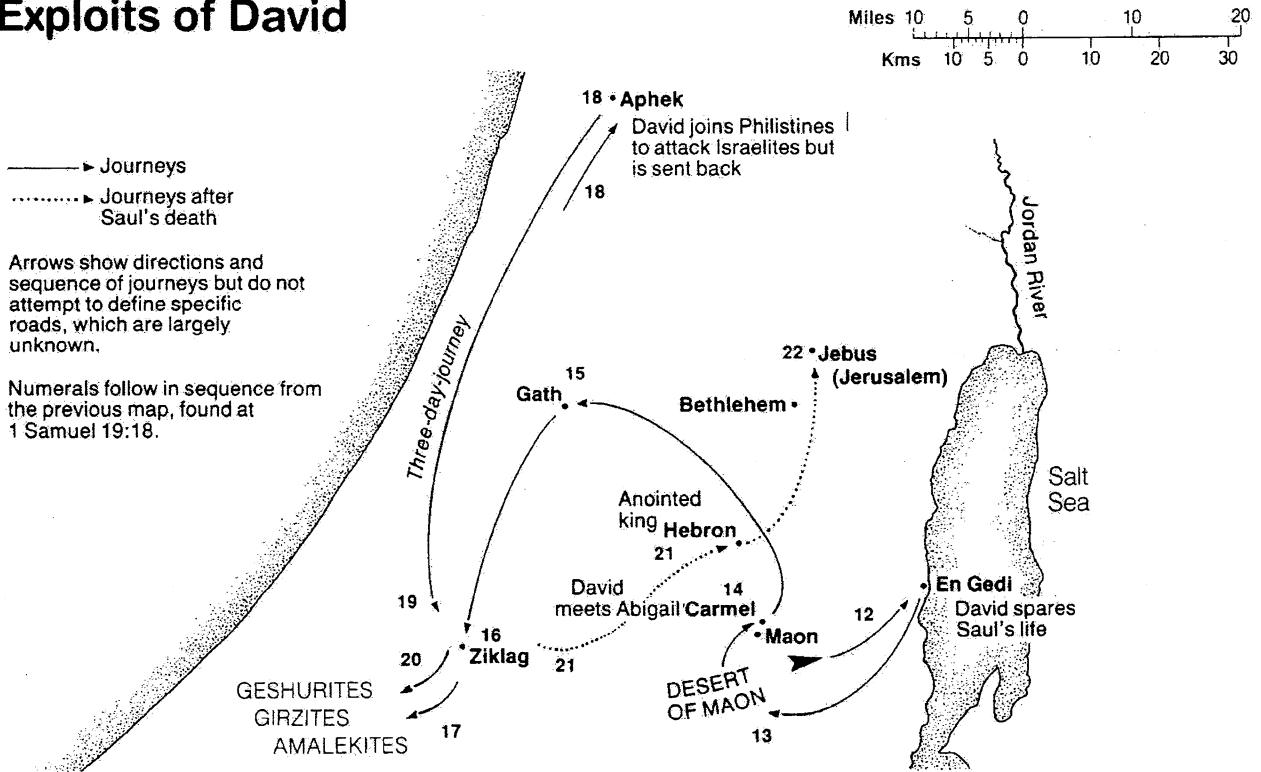
BATHSHEBA—Female—*italicized, capitals*

TAMAR—Bold type denotes ancestry and blood line of David

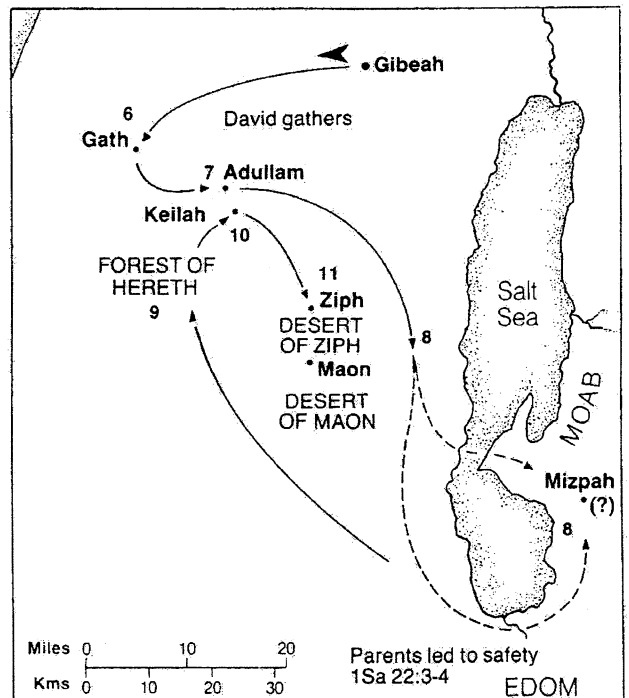
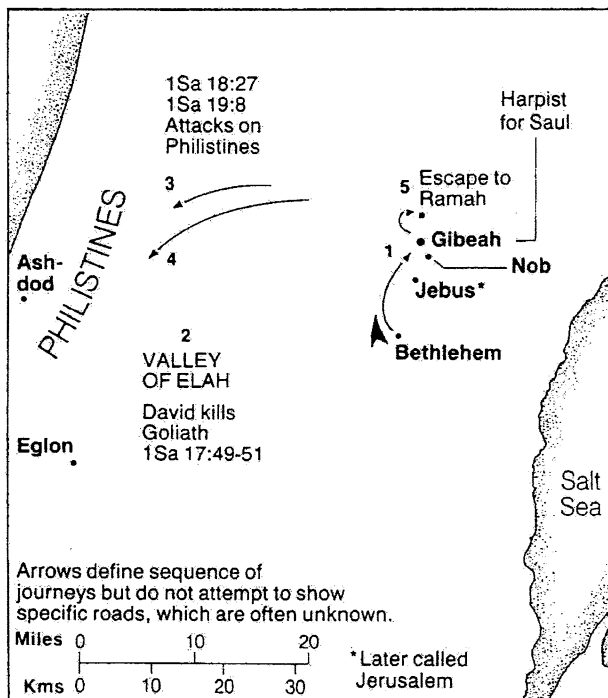
SUPPLEMENT 2

1 Samuel

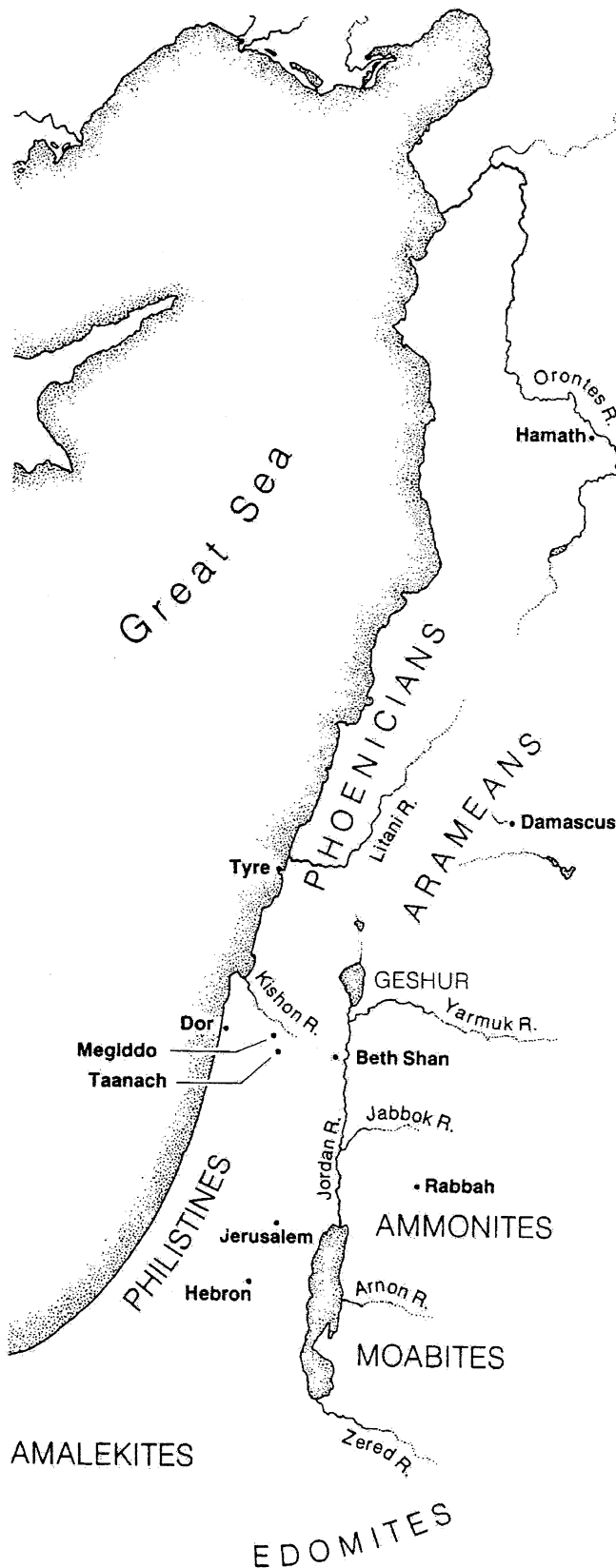
Exploits of David



David the Fugitive



David's Conquests



Miles 0 20 40 60 80 100
20 40 60 80 100 120 140

Once he had become king over all Israel (2Sa 5:1-5), David:

1. Conquered the Jebusite citadel of Zion/ Jerusalem and made it his royal city (2Sa 5:6-10);
2. Received the recognition of and assurance of friendship from Hiram of Tyre, king of the Phoenicians (2Sa 5:11-12);
3. Decisively defeated the Philistines so that their hold on Israelite territory was broken and their threat to Israel eliminated (2Sa 5:17-25; 8:1);
4. Defeated the Moabites and imposed his authority over them (2Sa 8:2);
5. Crushed the Aramean kingdoms of Hadadezer (king of Zobah), Damascus and Maacah and put them under tribute (2Sa 8:3-8; 10:6-19). Talmi, the Aramean king of Geshur, apparently had made peace with David while he was still reigning in Hebron and sealed the alliance by giving his daughter in marriage to David (2Sa 3:3; see 1Ch 2:23);
6. Subdued Edom and incorporated it into his empire (2Sa 8:13-14);
7. Defeated the Ammonites and brought them into subjection (2Sa 12:19-31);
8. Subjugated the remaining Canaanite cities that had previously maintained their independence from and hostility toward Israel, such as Beth Shan, Megiddo, Taanach and Dor.

Since David had earlier crushed the Amalekites (1Sa 30:17), his wars thus completed the conquest begun by Joshua and secured all the borders of Israel. His empire (united Israel plus the subjugated kingdoms) reached from Ezion Geber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea to the Euphrates River.

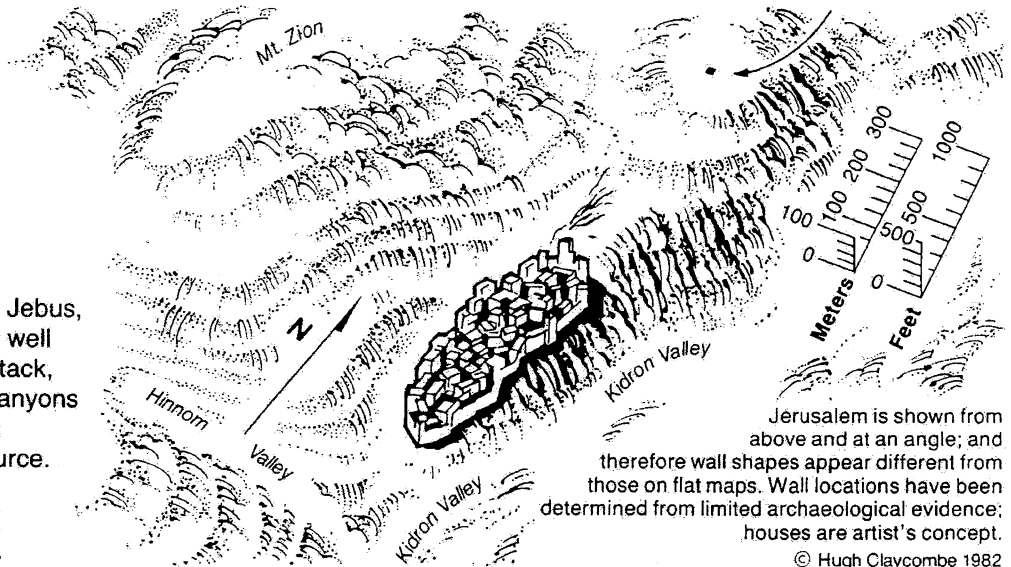
1. The City of the Jebusites and 2. David's Jerusalem

Substantial historical evidence, both Biblical and extra-Biblical, places the temple of Herod (and before it the temples of Zerubbabel and of Solomon) on the holy spot where King David built an altar to the Lord. David had purchased the land from Araunah the Jebusite, who was using the exposed

bedrock as a threshing floor (2Sa 24:18-25). Tradition claims a much older sanctity for the site, associating it with the altar of Abraham on Mount Moriah (Ge 22:1-19). The writer of Genesis equates Moriah with "the Mountain of the LORD," and other OT shrines originated in altars erected by Abraham.

c. 1000 B.C.

Barely 12 acres in size, Jebus, a Canaanite city, could well defend itself against attack, with walls atop steep canyons and shafts reaching an underground water source. David captured the stronghold, c. 1000 B.C. and made it his capital.



Jerusalem is shown from above and at an angle; and therefore wall shapes appear different from those on flat maps. Wall locations have been determined from limited archaeological evidence; houses are artist's concept.

© Hugh Claycombe 1982

For further reference to the development of Jerusalem see: page 73, *Solomon's Jerusalem*; page 99, *Jerusalem of the Returning Exiles*; page 139, *Jerusalem During the Time of the Prophets*.

2 Samuel 5:6-10

David Conquers Jerusalem

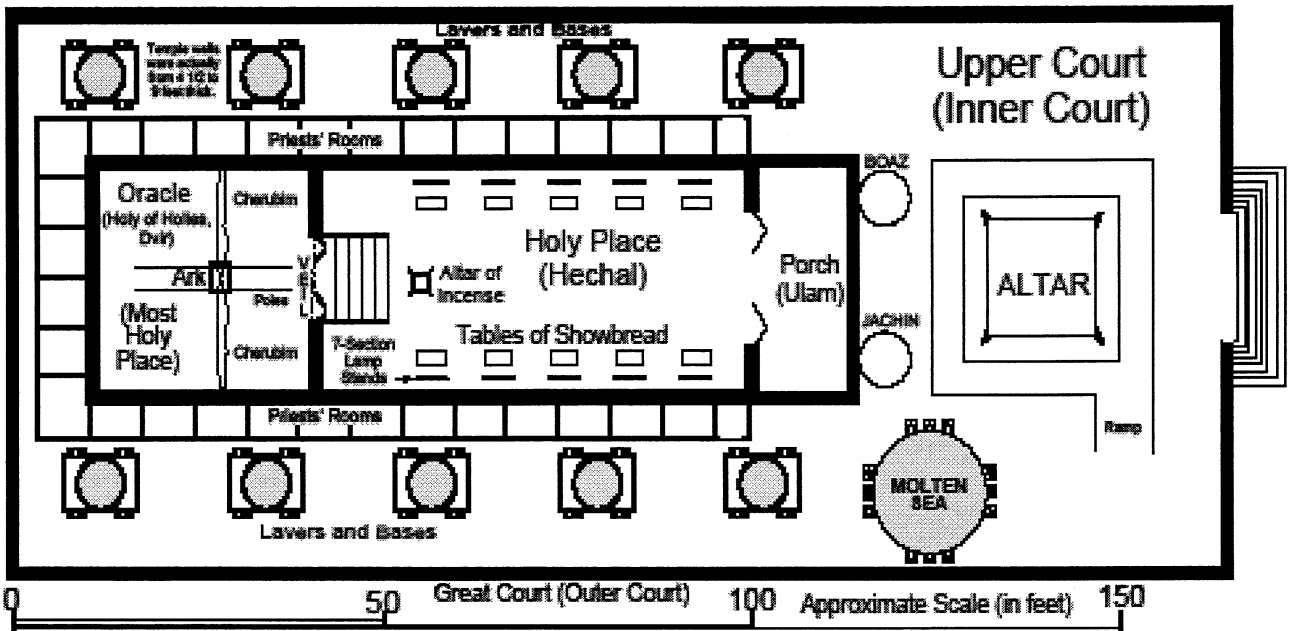
The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.

On that day, David said, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to

reach those lame and blind who are David's enemies." That is why they say, "The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace."

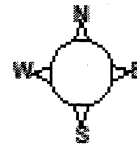
David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward. And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

SUPPLEMENT 5



5 SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

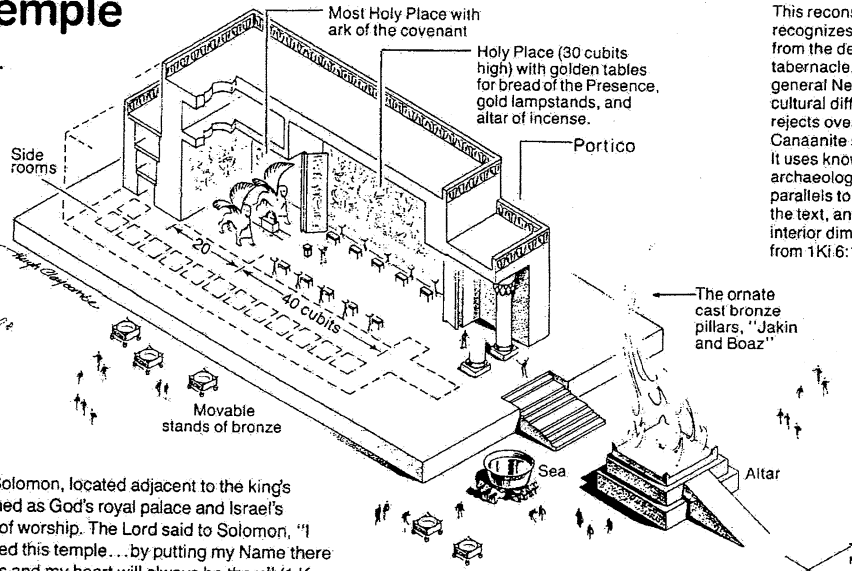
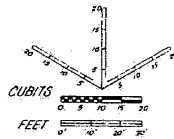
© 1995 SON Light Publishers, Ft. Smith, Arkansas



Solomon's Temple

960-586 B.C.

Temple source materials are subject to academic interpretation, and subsequent art reconstructions vary.



This reconstruction recognizes influence from the desert tabernacle, accepts general Near Eastern cultural diffusion, and rejects overt pagan Canaanite symbols. It uses known archaeological parallels to supplement the text, and assumes interior dimensions from 1Ki 6:17-20.

The temple of Solomon, located adjacent to the king's palace, functioned as God's royal palace and Israel's national center of worship. The Lord said to Solomon, "I have consecrated this temple... by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there" (1 K 9:3). By its cosmological and royal symbolism, the sanctuary taught the absolute sovereignty of the Lord over the whole creation and his special headship over Israel.

The floor plan is a type that has a long history in Semitic religion, particularly among the West Semites. An early example of the tripartite division into *'ulam*, *hekal*, and *debir* (portico, main hall, and inner sanctuary) has been found at Syrian Ebla (c. 2300 B.C.) and, much later but more contemporaneous with Solomon, at Tell Tainat in the Orontes basin (c. 900 B.C.). Like Solomon's, the

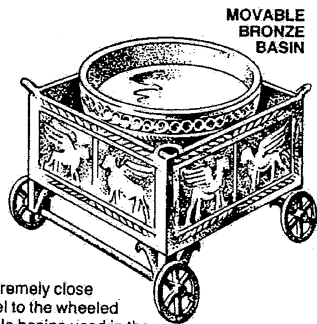
later temple has three divisions, contains two columns supporting the entrance, and is located adjacent to the royal palace.

Many archaeological parallels can be drawn to the methods of construction used in the temple, e.g., the "stone and cedar beam" technique described in 1Ki 6:36. Interestingly, evidence for the largest bronze-casting industry ever found in Palestine comes from the same locale and period as that indicated in Scripture: Zarethan in the Jordan Valley c. 1000 B.C.

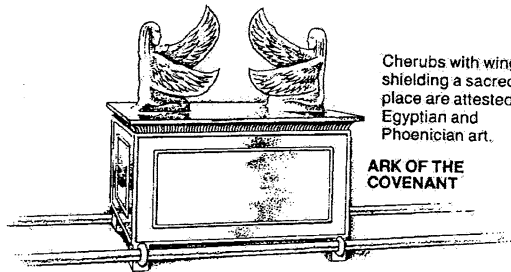
© Hugh Claycombe 1985

Temple Furnishings

Glimpses of the rich ornamentation of Solomon's temple can be gained through recent discoveries that illumine the text of 1 Ki 6-7.



An extremely close parallel to the wheeled portable basins used in the courtyard of the temple has come from archaeological excavations on Cyprus. This representation combines elements from the Biblical text with the archaeological evidence.



1 Kings 7:13-51

Cherubs with wings shielding a sacred place are attested in Egyptian and Phoenician art.

Ten lampstands were in the temple, five on each side of the sanctuary (1 Ki 7:49), to which were added ten tables (2 Ch 4:8). Ritual sevenfold lamps have been found at several places in Palestine, including Hazor and Dothan. The stand itself is modeled on bronze ones from the excavations at Megiddo.

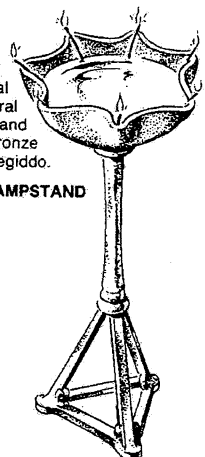
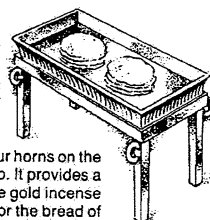
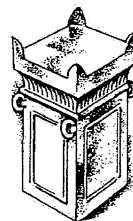


TABLE FOR THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE



A stone incense altar having four horns on the corners was found at Megiddo. It provides a clear idea of the shape of the gold incense altar in the temple. The table for the bread of the Presence was also made of gold.



INCENSE ALTAR

SUPPLEMENT 7

Biblical Israel

Enlarged View of Jerusalem Area (3 x)

(Each grid block in this section = approx. 1 2/3 miles)

Enlarged View of Jerusalem Area (3 x)

0 5 10 miles

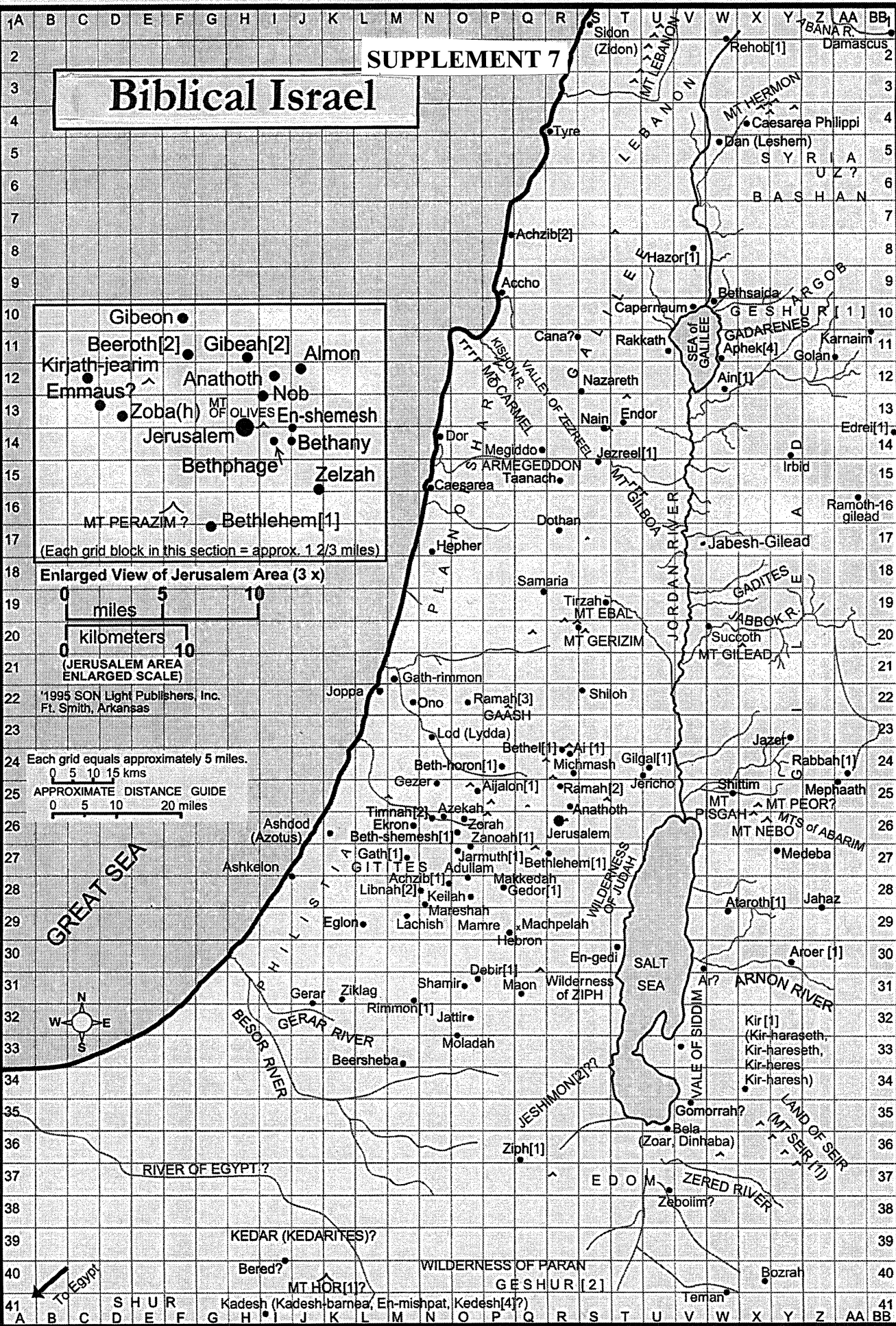
0 5 10 Kilometers
(JERUSALEM AREA ENLARGED SCALE)

©1995 SON Light Publishers, Inc.
Ft. Smith, Arkansas

Each grid equals approximately 5 miles.
0 5 10 15 kms

APPROXIMATE DISTANCE GUIDE
0 5 10 20 miles

GREAT SEA

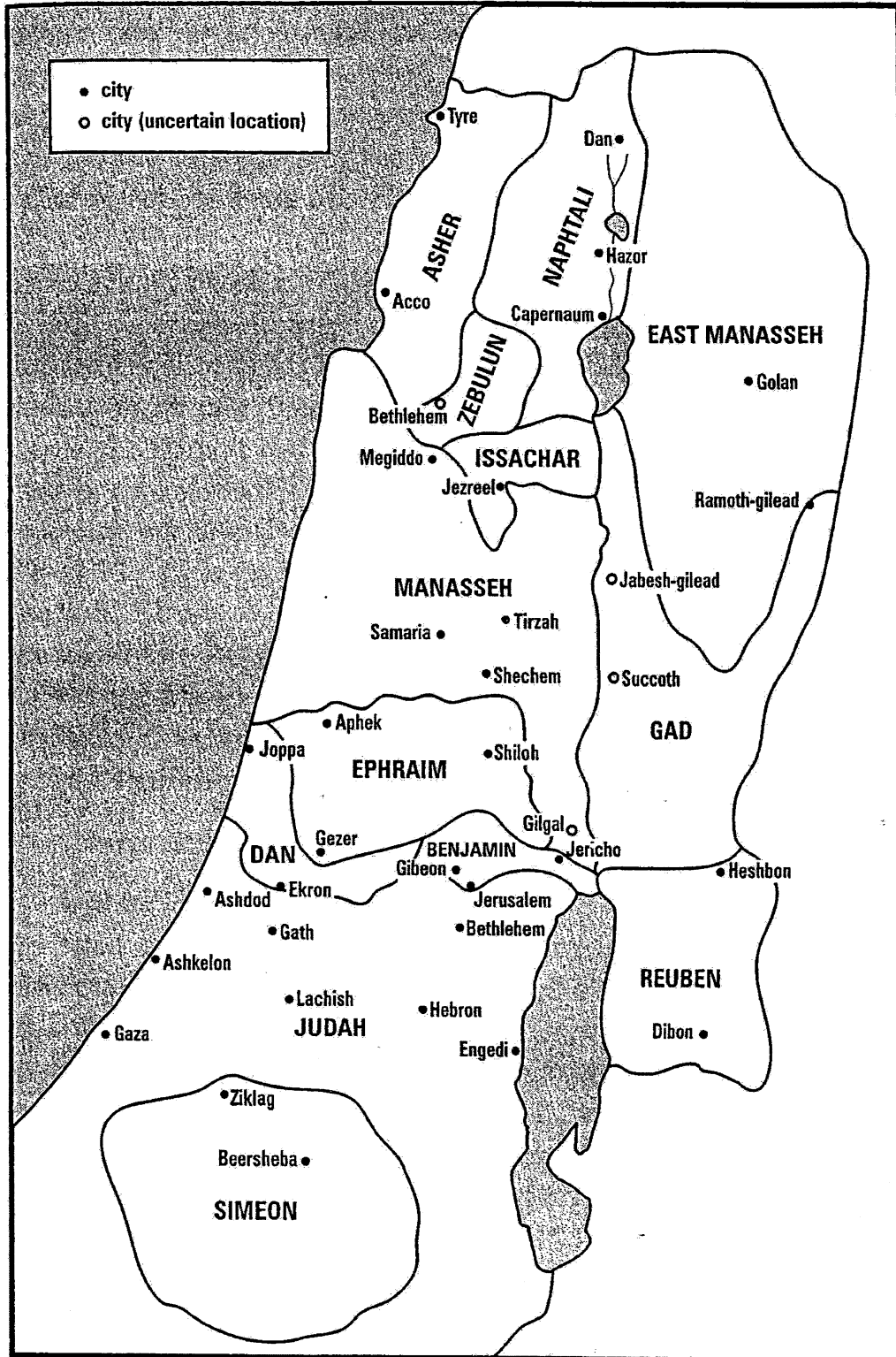


To Egypt

SHUR Kadesh (Kadesh-barnea, En-mishpat, Kedesh[4]?)
 GESHUR [2] Teman
 EDOM ZERED RIVER Zabolim?
 WILDERNESS OF PARAN Bozrah
 MOUNTAINS OF JUDAH
 VALLEY OF SIDDIM
 ARNON RIVER
 LAND OF SEIR (MT SEIR [1])
 GOMORRAH? Bela (Zoar, Dinhaba)
 JERUSALEM
 JERICO
 RAMAH [2]
 MICHAMASH
 GILGAL [1]
 SHITIM
 MT PEOR?
 PISGAH
 MTS OF ABARIM
 MT NEBO
 MEDABA
 JAHAZ
 ATAROTH [1]
 AROER [1]
 GERAR RIVER
 GERAR
 ZIKLAG
 SHAMIR
 MAON
 WILDERNESS OF ZIPH
 EN-GEDEI
 MACHPELAIH
 MAMRE
 LACHISH
 MARESHAH
 KEILAH
 GEDOR [1]
 MAKKEDEH
 ADULLAM
 JARMUTH [1]
 BETHLEHEM [1]
 BETH-SHEMESH [1]
 ZANOAH [1]
 ZORAH
 AZEKAH
 TIMNATH [2]
 GEZER
 BETH-HORON [1]
 AIAJALON [1]
 RAMAH [3]
 GAASH
 ONO
 LOD (LYDDA)
 SHILOH
 JAZER
 RABBAH [1]
 MEPHAATH
 JABESH-GILEAD
 SUCCOTH
 MT GILEAD
 MT GERIZIM
 MT EBAL
 TIRZAH
 SAMARIA
 HEBHER
 DOTHAN
 TAANACH
 MEGLIDDO
 JEZREEL [1]
 ENDOR
 NAIN
 NAZARETH
 RAKKATH
 CANA?
 CAPERNAUM
 BETHSAIDA
 GESHUR [1]
 GADARENES
 APHEK [4]
 KARNAIM
 GOLAN
 AIN [1]
 HAZOR [1]
 ACHZIB [2]
 ACCHO
 TYRE
 SIDON (ZIDON)
 REHOB [1]
 DAMASCUS
 BASHAN
 SYRIA
 UZZ?
 LEBANON
 MOUNT HERMON
 CAESAREA PHILIPPI
 DAN (LESHERN)
 GEBEON
 BEEROOTH [2]
 GIBEAH [2]
 ALMON
 KIRJATH-JEARIM
 ANATHOTH
 NOB
 EN-SHEMESH
 BETHANY
 BETHPHAGE
 ZELZAH
 BETHLEHEM [1]
 MT PERAZIM?
 GATH-RIMMON
 JOPPA
 GATH [1]
 GITHITES
 ASHDOD (AZOTUS)
 ASHKELON
 GERAR RIVER
 BESOR RIVER
 RIVER OF EGYPT?
 KEDAR (KEDARITES?)
 BERED?
 MT HOR [1]?

SUPPLEMENT 8

TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS IN CANAAN



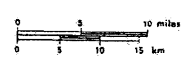
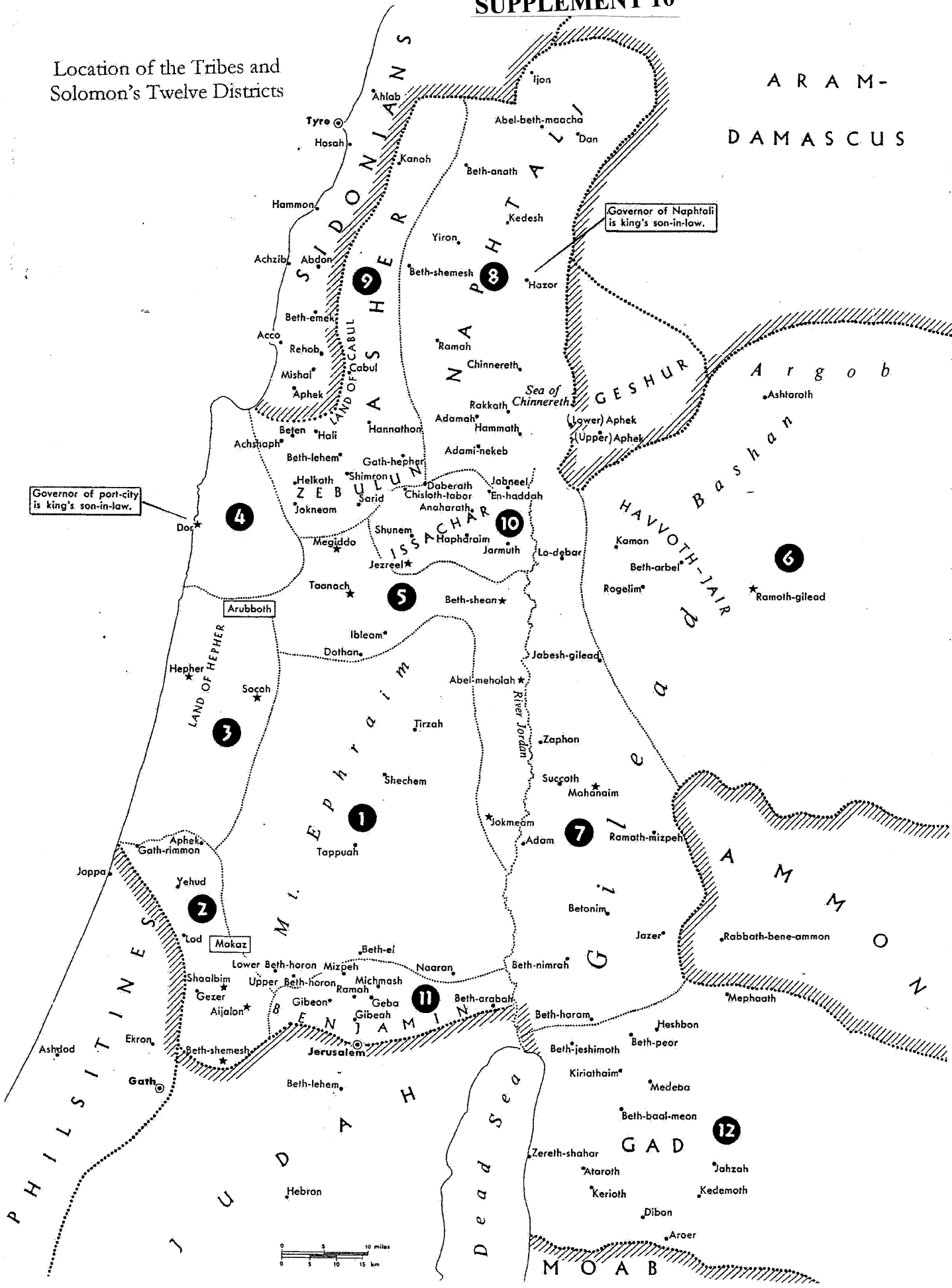
SUPPLEMENT 9

The Kingdom of Saul



Location of the Tribes and Solomon's Twelve Districts

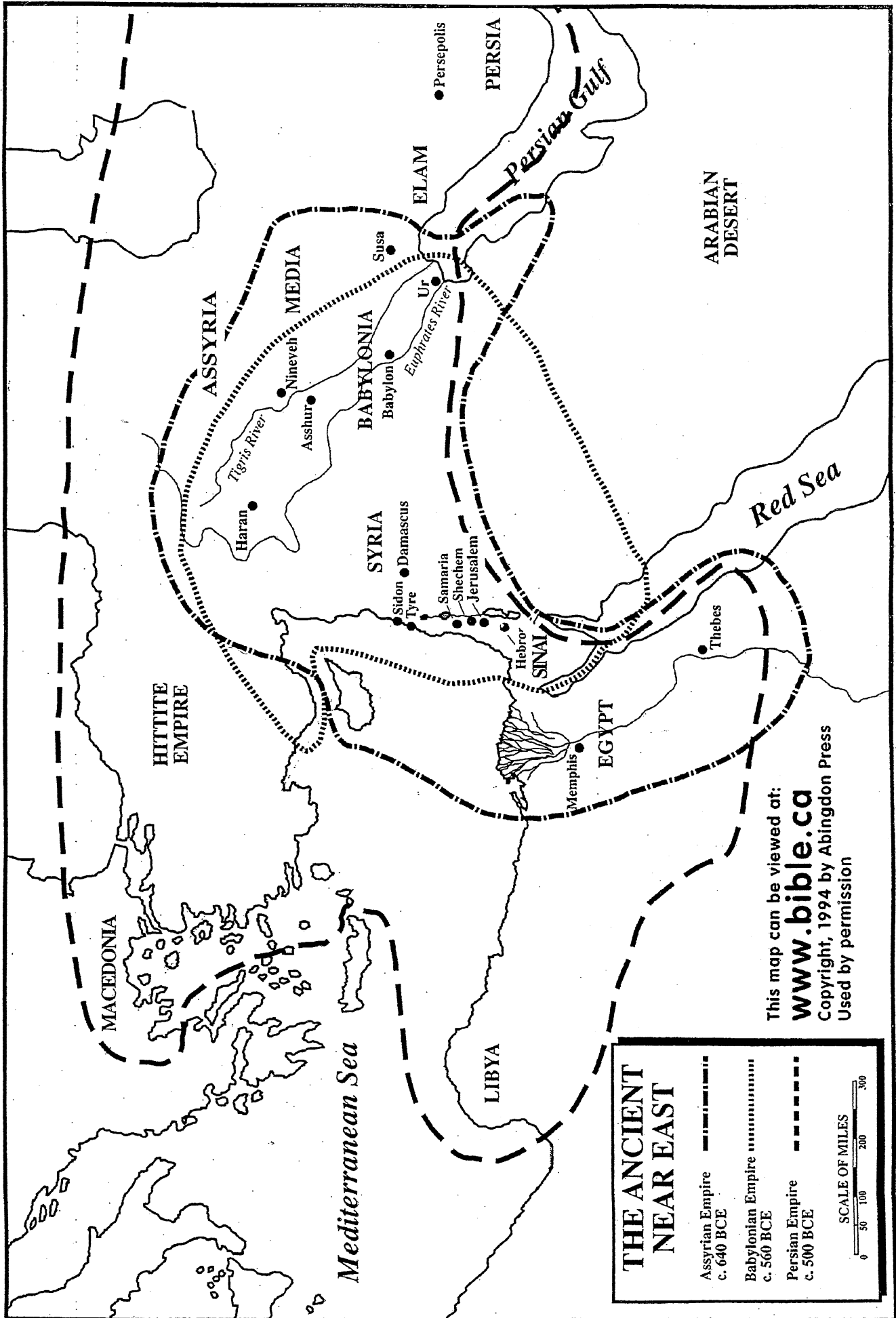
ARAM-
DAMASCUS



SUPPLEMENT 11

The Kingdom of David





This map can be viewed at:
www.bible.ca
 Copyright, 1994 by Abingdon Press
 Used by permission

THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

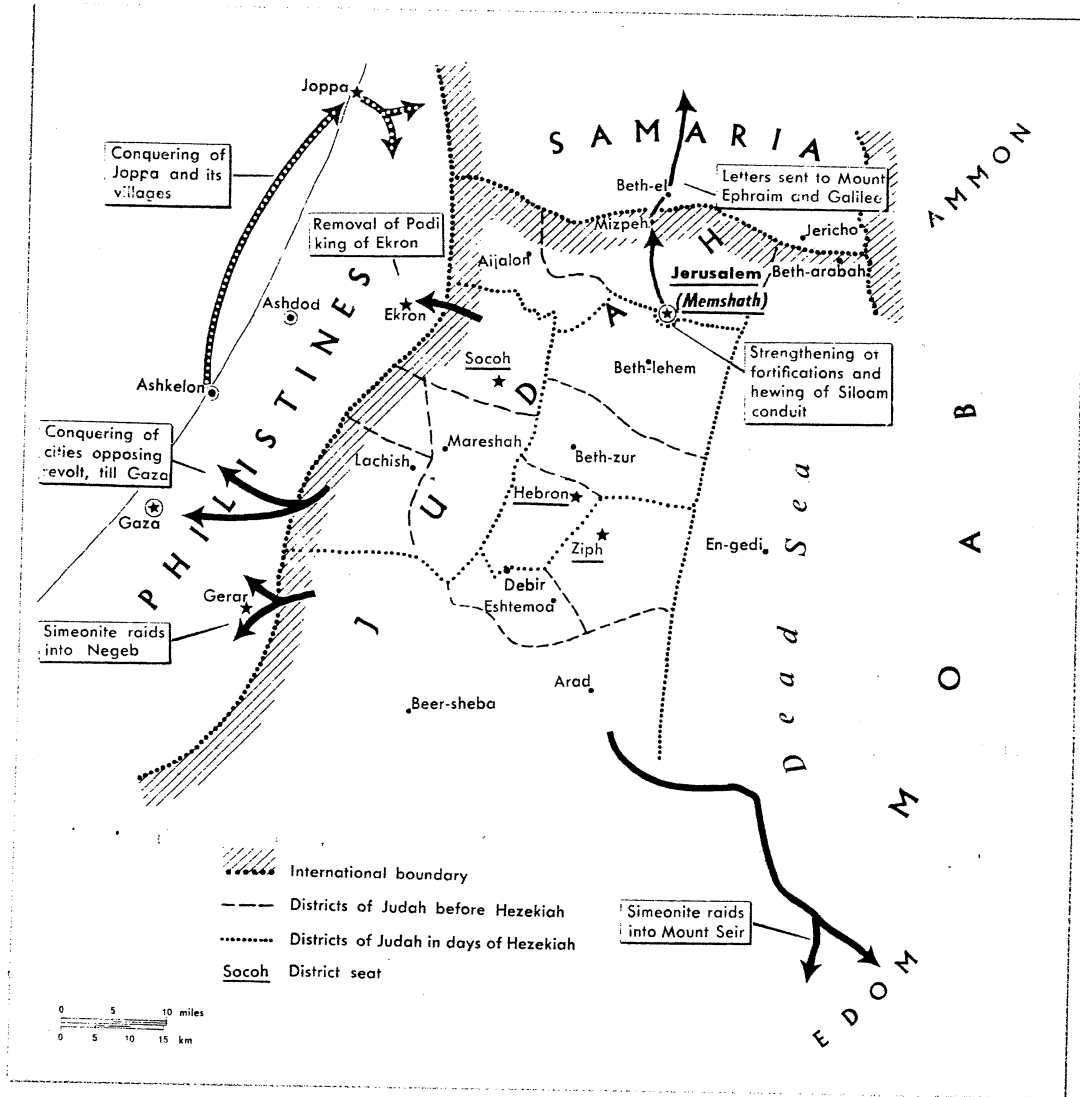
- Assyrian Empire c. 640 BCE
- Babylonian Empire c. 560 BCE
- Persian Empire c. 500 BCE

SCALE OF MILES

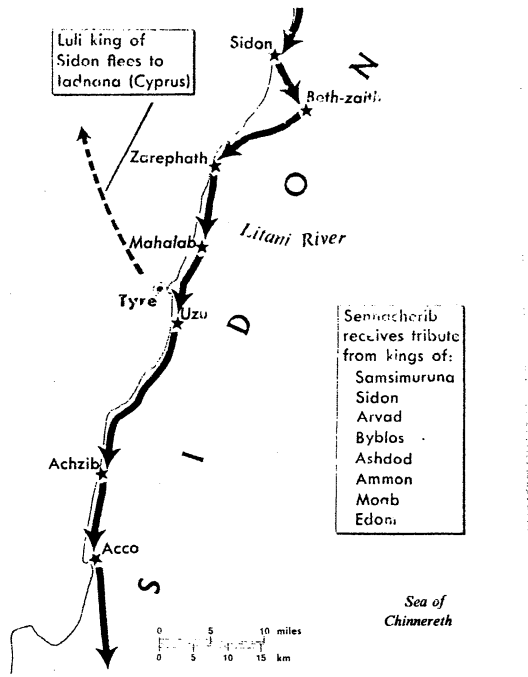
0 50 100 200 300

SUPPLEMENT 13

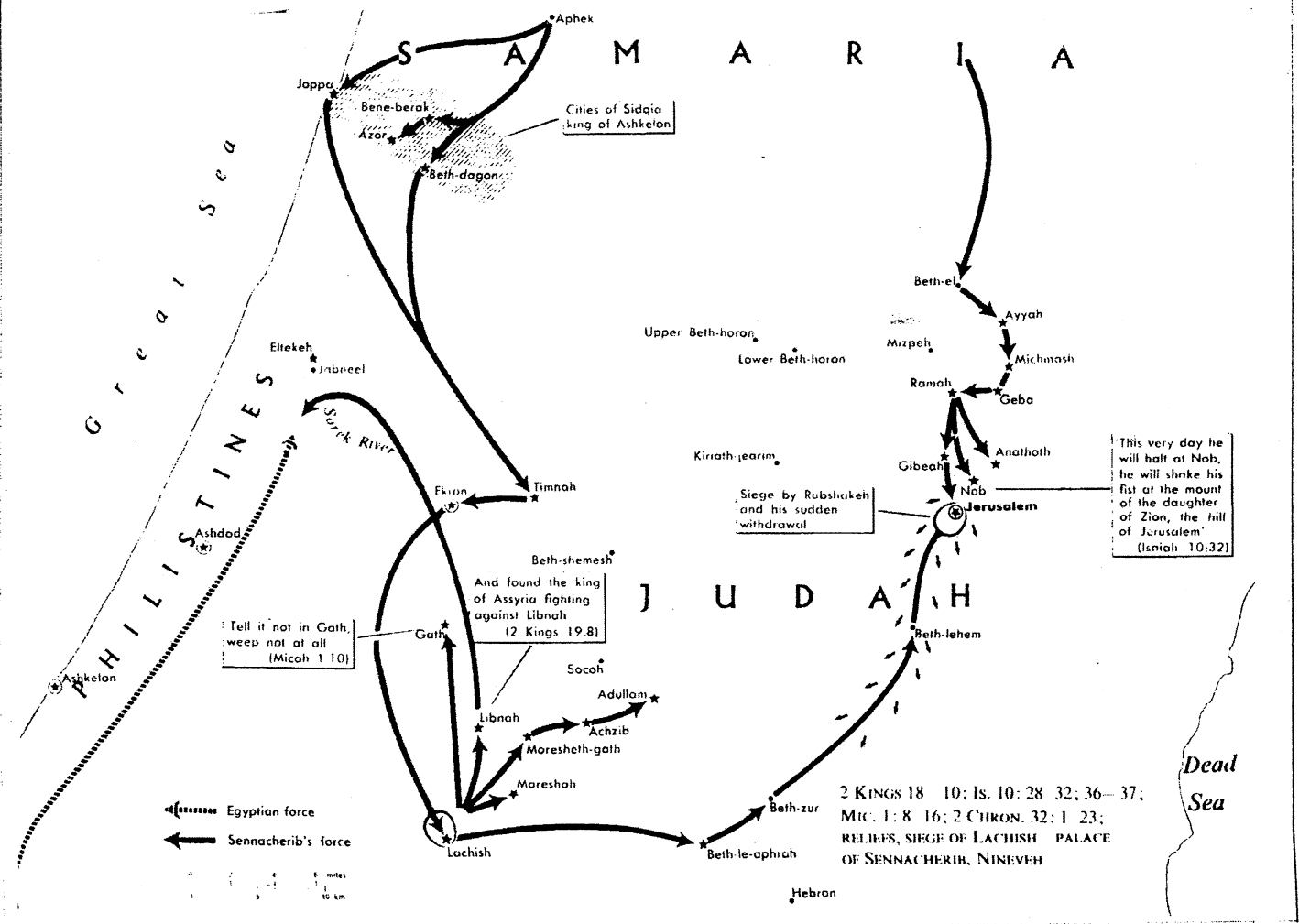
**THE PREPARATIONS OF HEZEKIAH
FOR REBELLION AGAINST SYRIA
705-701 BC**



SENNACHERIB'S CAMPAIGN THROUGH SIDON 701 BC

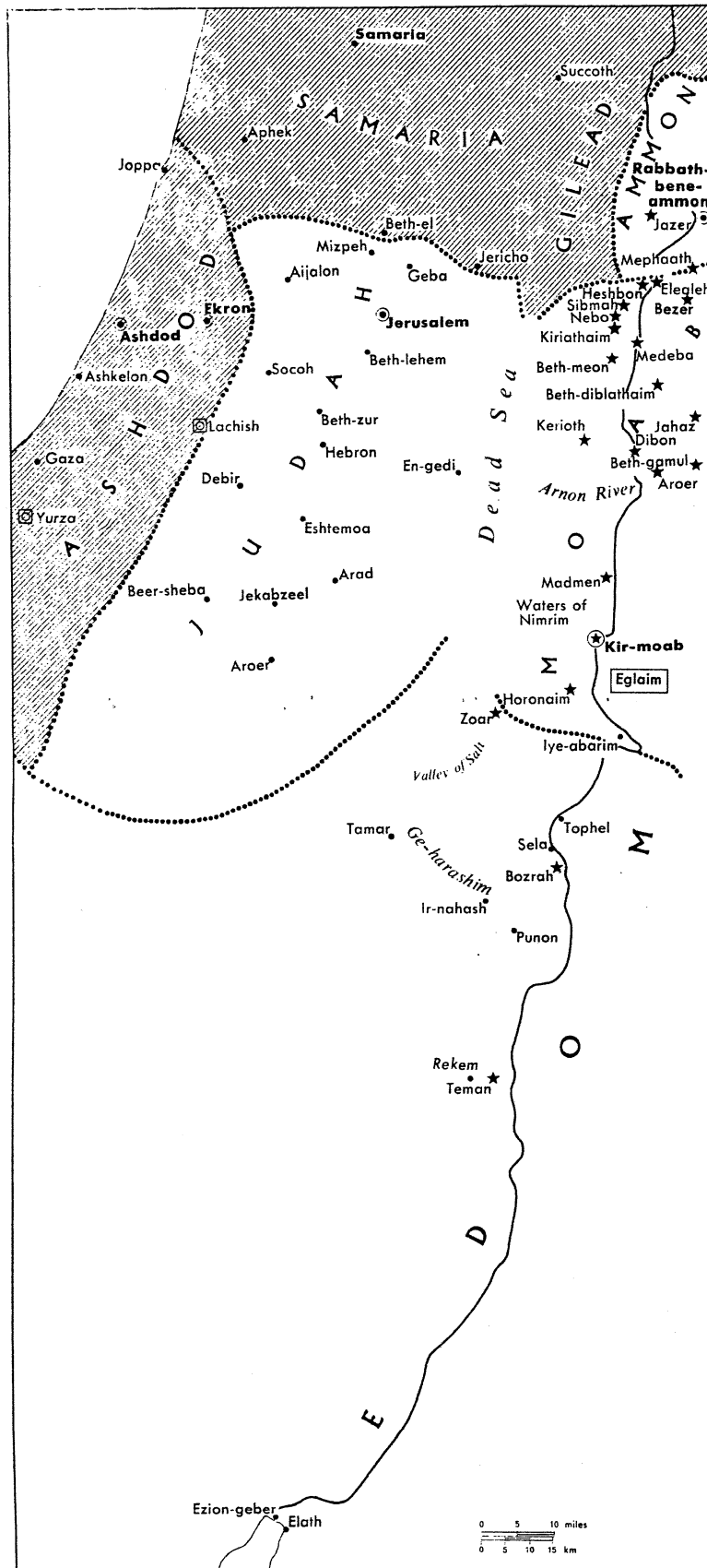


SENNACHERIB'S CAMPAIGN IN PHILSTIA AND JUDAH 701 BC



SUPPLEMENT 15

JUDAH AND HER NEIGHBORS DURING MANASSEH'S REIGN EARLY 7TH CENTURY BC

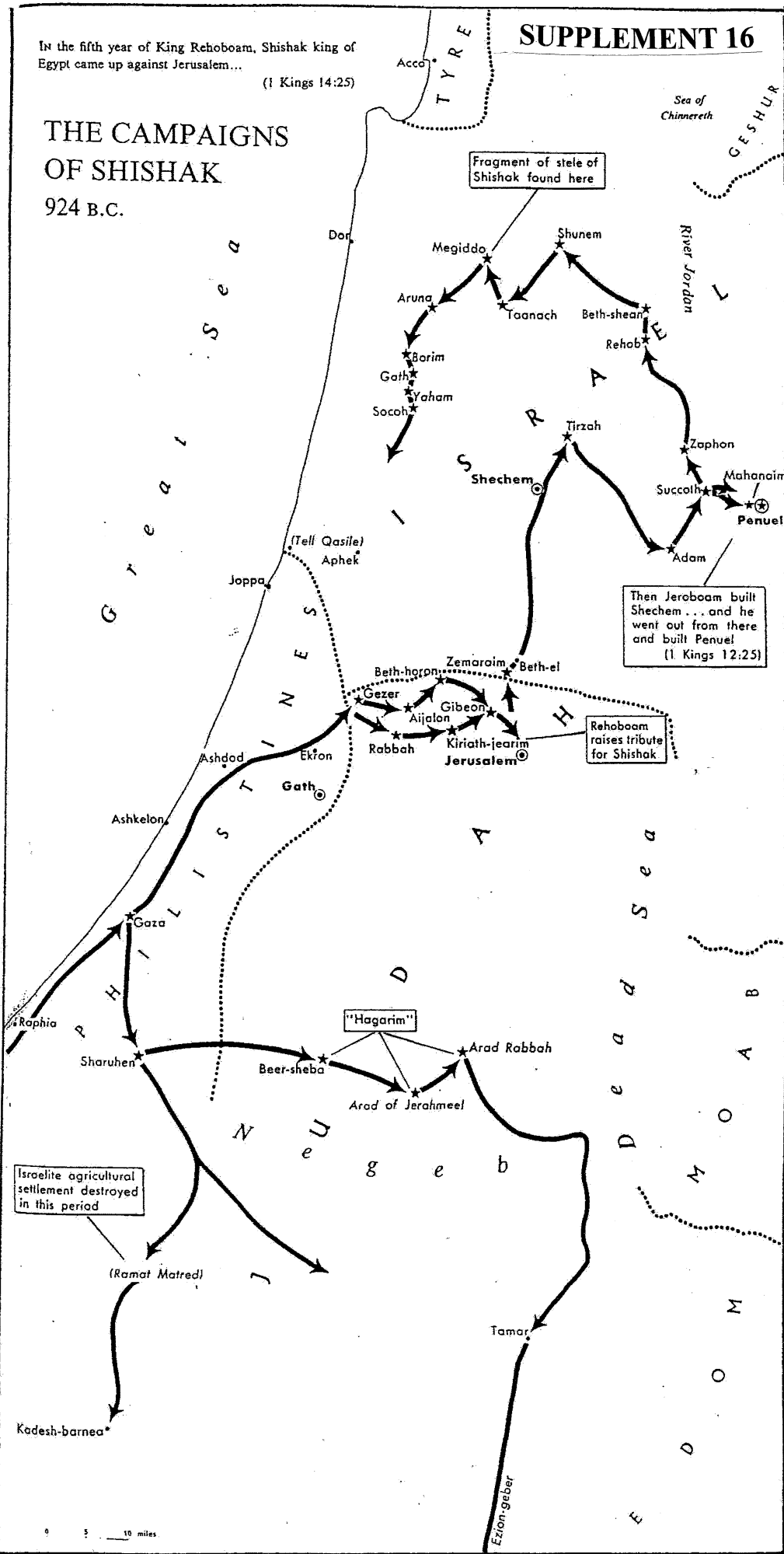


In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem... (1 Kings 14:25)

SUPPLEMENT 16

THE CAMPAIGNS OF SHISHAK

924 B.C.



SUPPLEMENT 17

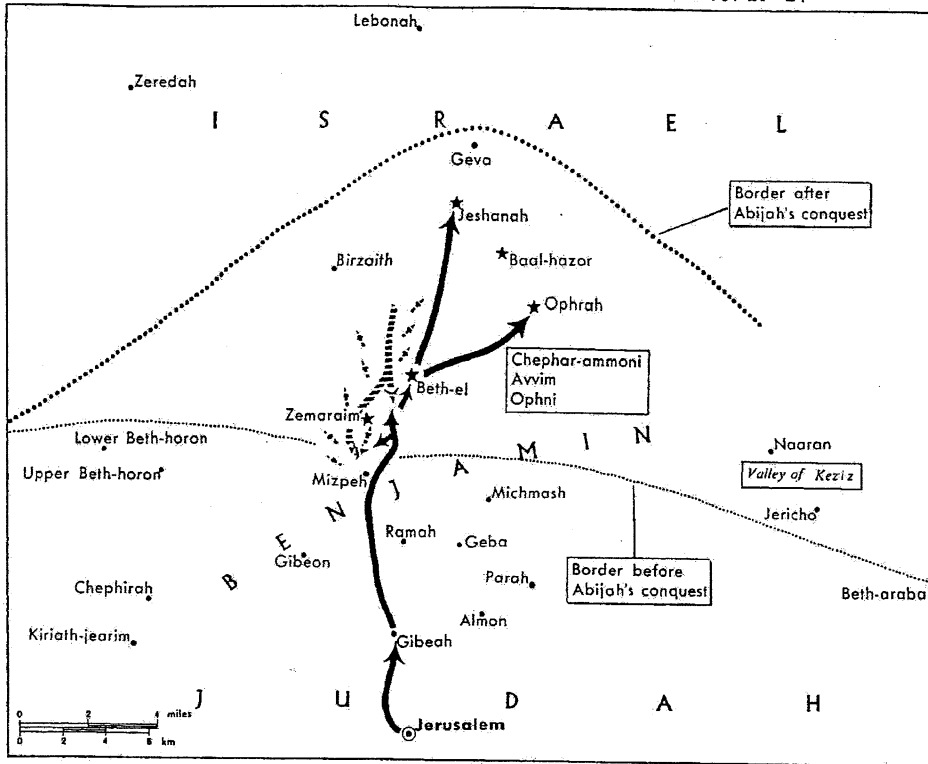
THE CONQUEST OF ABIJAH

CA. 911 B.C.

2 CHRON. 13

JOSH. 18: 21-24

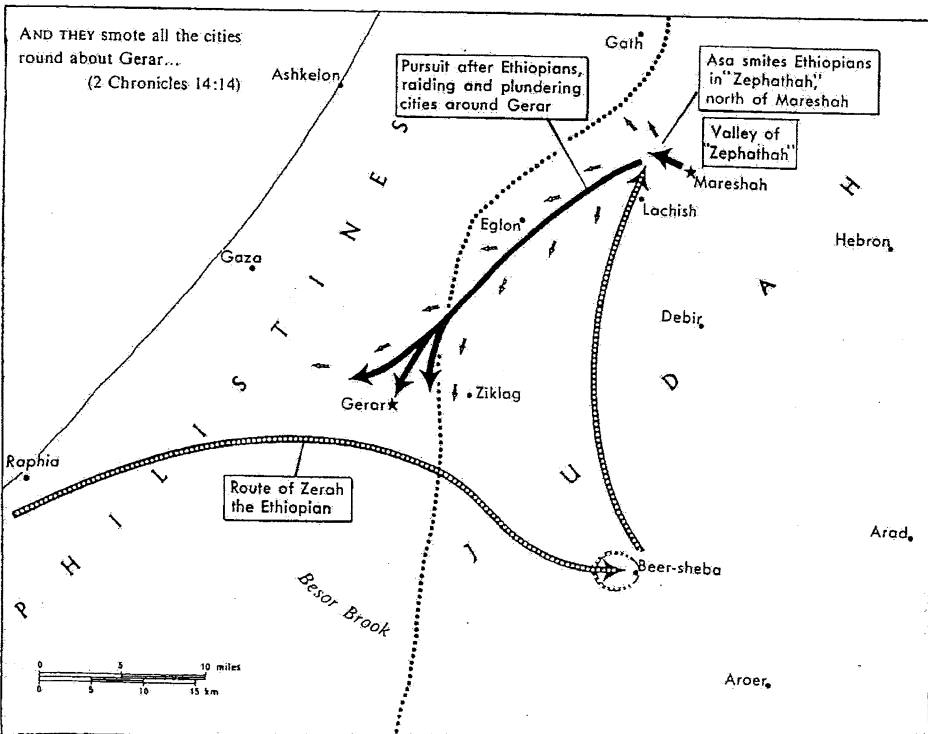
← Israelite force
 ← Judean force



THE CAMPAIGN OF ZERAH THE ETHIOPIAN

CA. 900 B.C.

2 CHRON. 14: 8-14; 16: 8



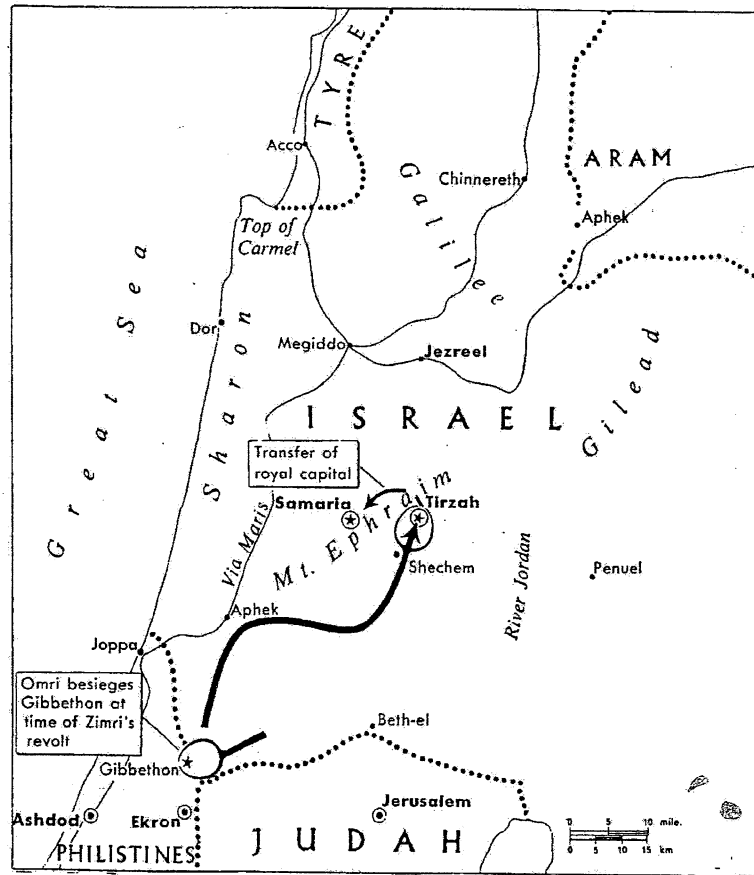
SUPPLEMENT 18

THE RISE OF OMRI

882 B.C.

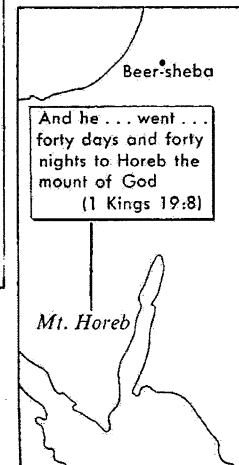
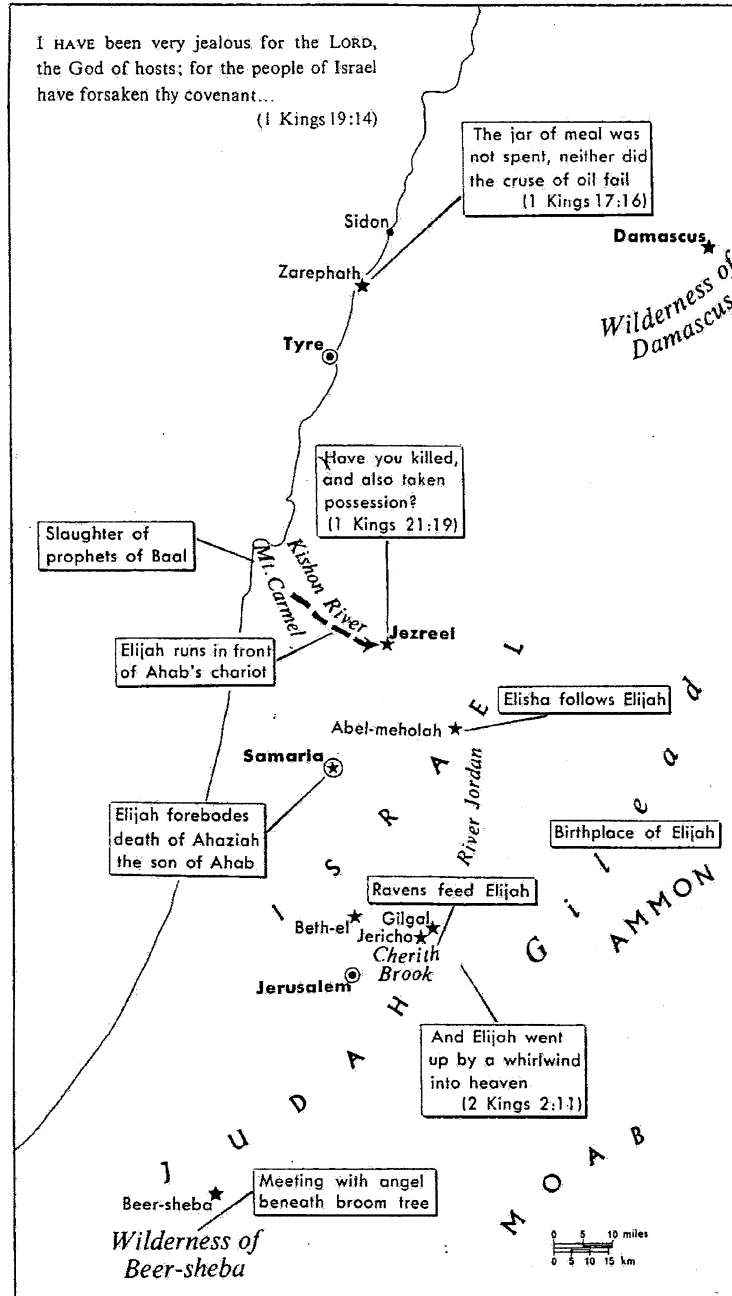
ALL ISRAEL made Omri, the commander of the army,
king over Israel that day in the camp.

(1 Kings 16:16)



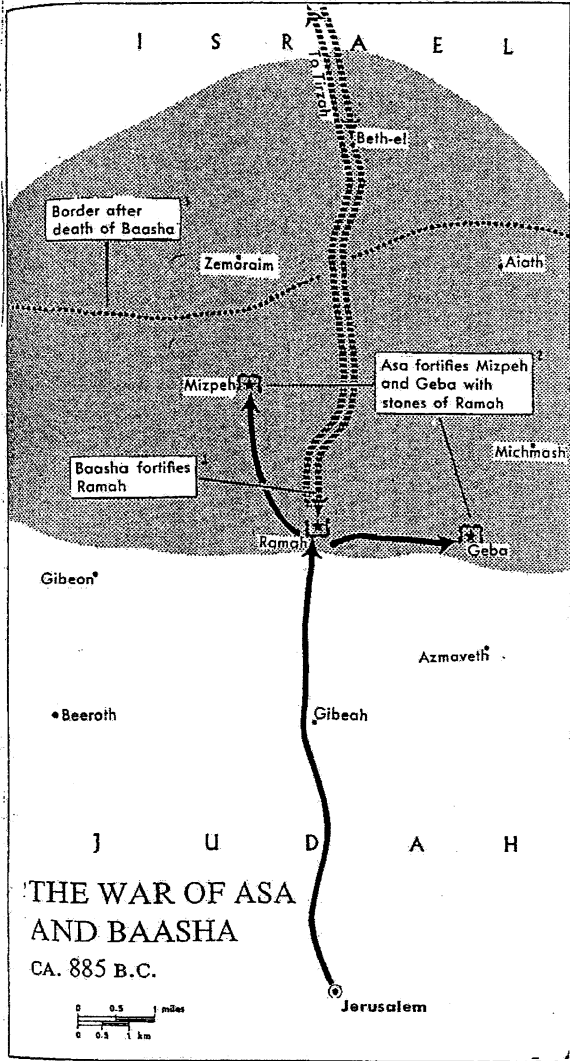
SUPPLEMENT 19

THE WANDERINGS OF ELIJAH MID-9TH CENTURY B.C.



AND THEY carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. (1 Kings 15:22)

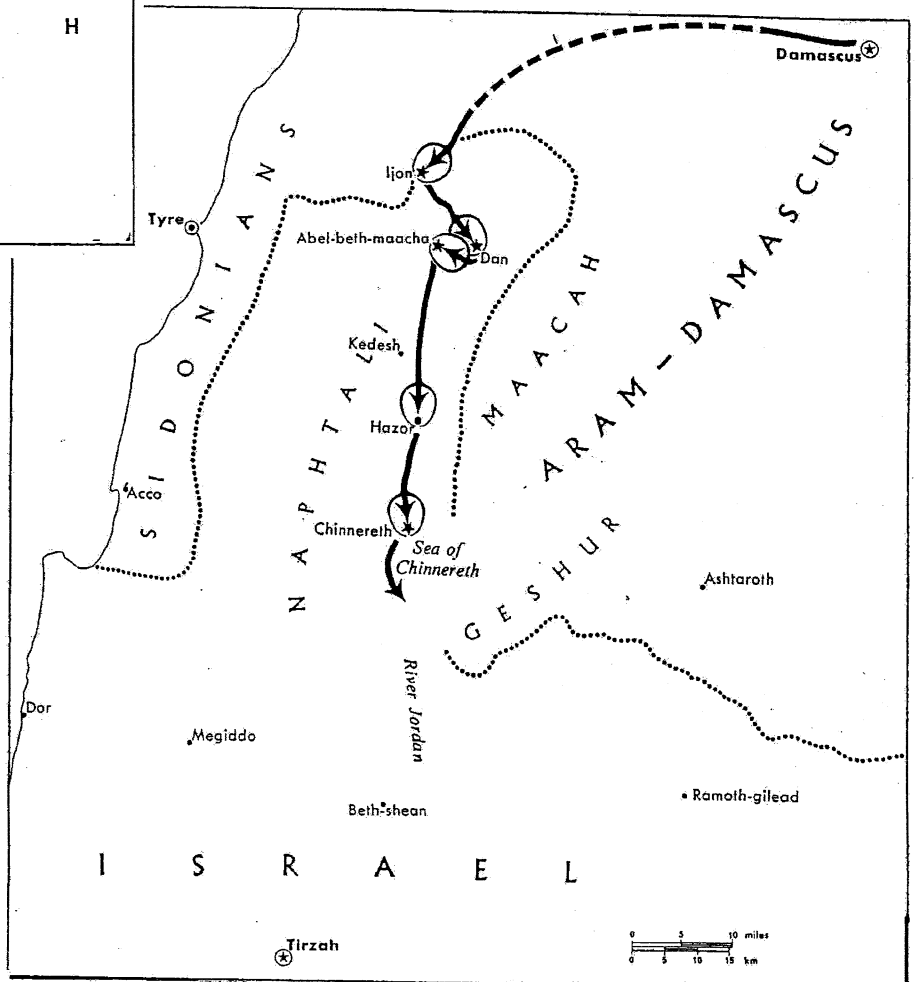
SUPPLEMENT 20



THE CAMPAIGN OF BEN-HADAD I

885 B.C.

1 KINGS 15: 18-21; 2 CHRON. 16: 2-5



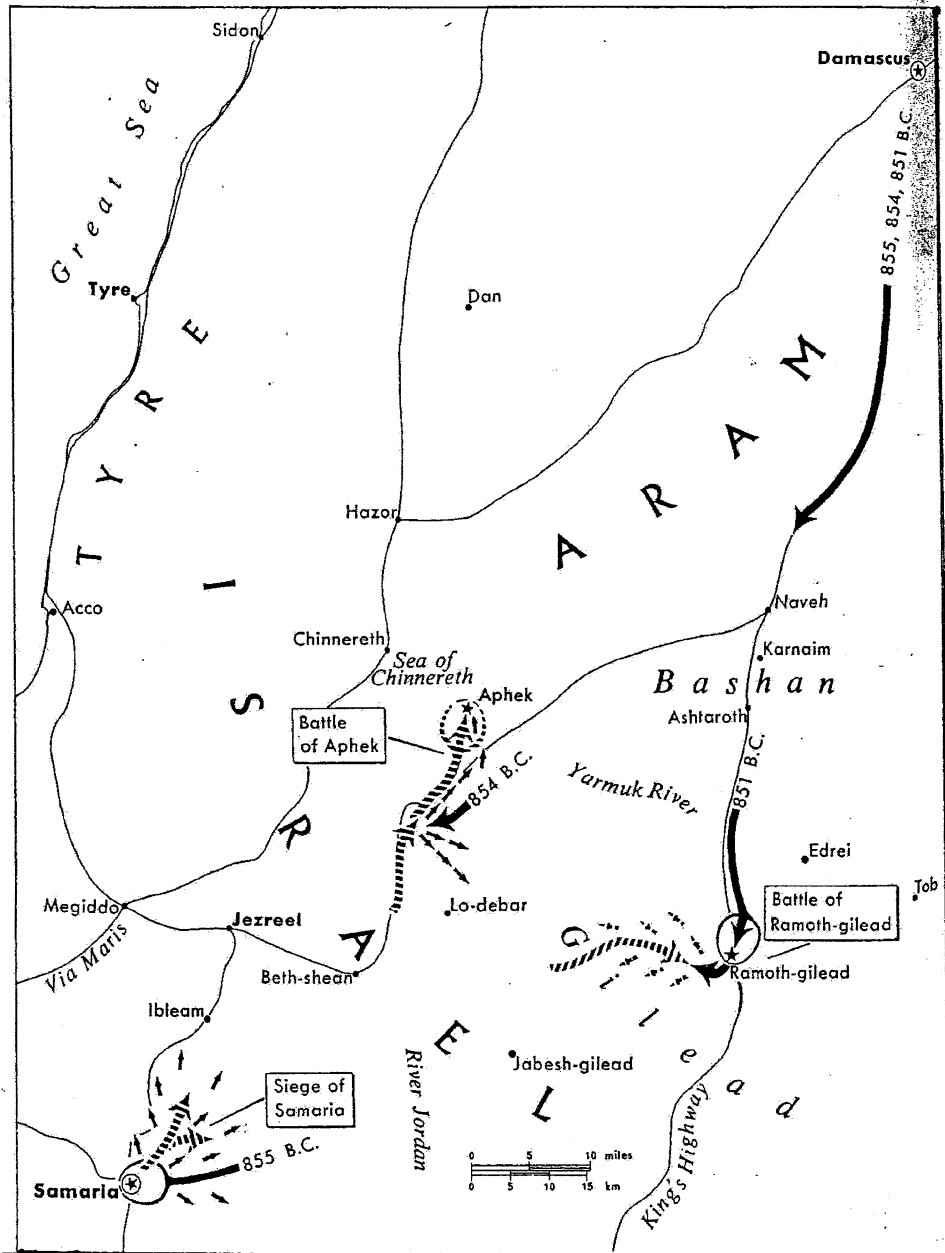
SUPPLEMENT 21

THE WARS OF AHAB AGAINST ARAM

855 TO 850 B.C.

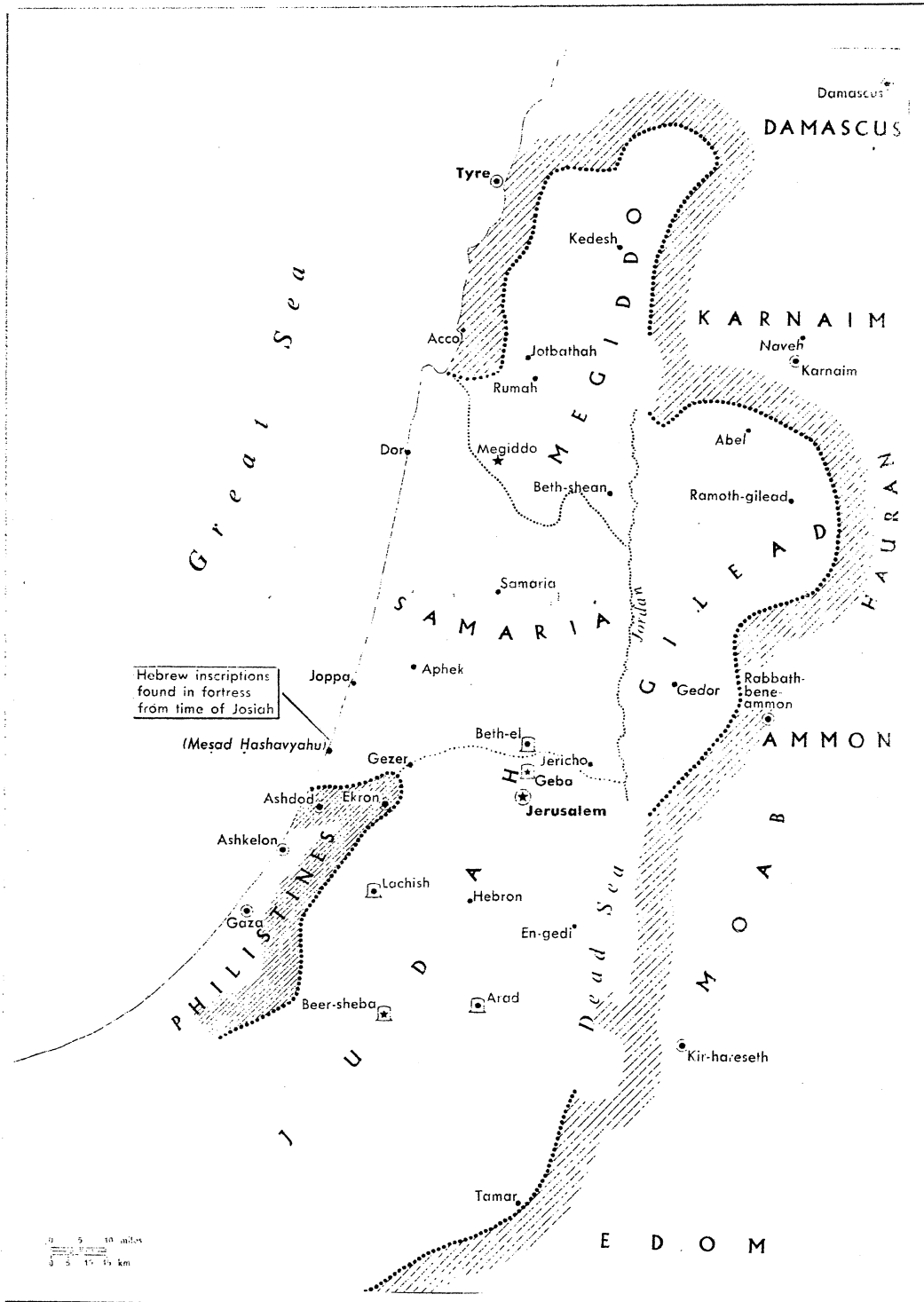
← Aramean force
← Israelite force

1 KINGS 20: 1-34; 22: 1-40;
2 CHRON. 18: 1-34



SUPPLEMENT 22

THE KINGDOM OF JOSIAH
628 – 609 BC



SUPPLEMENT 23

THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT
C. 586 BC

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S CAMPAIGN
AGAINST JUDAH 596 BC

