

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

2 KINGS

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**GOSPEL
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad!

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years—and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

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INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS

Author and Date of Writing.

1. "Authorship for Kings and Chronicles is difficult to determine by virtue of the fact that the author or authors do not identify themselves, which is the case with several books in the Bible....If we can establish the fact that the books in question are included as 'Scripture' then we can know they are inspired and profitable whether or not we ever come to know who the human author or authors are (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)....By virtue of the fact that inspired writers and speakers of the first century appealed to these books as authoritative we can know that they were received as Scripture" (Lloyd, ADL, pp.19f).
 - a. Jesus directly referred to the story found in 1 Kings 10 regarding the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here" (Matt. 12:42).
 - b. Christ also spoke of the famine that took place during the time of Elijah (1 Kings 17). "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow" (Luke 4:25-26).
 - c. The apostle Paul cited 1 Kings 19:18 as proof that God does not reject the faithful. "But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal" (Rom. 11:4).
2. The Lord authenticated the inspiration of all "the law and the prophets" in various reference to these Old Testament writings, which include the books of Kings.
 - a. Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
 - b. Luke 24:44: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me."
3. Other passages.
 - a. Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."
 - b. Acts 24:14: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets."
4. Jewish tradition attributes the authorship of both books of Kings to Jeremiah. Although this tradition cannot be considered authenticated, still there is no conclusive proof against it. The identity of the man who received and recorded the information that forms 1 and 2 Kings is unknown, and thus the date of its transcription has not been verified. With the foregoing information in mind, we are not concerned with his identity, since we have good reason to accept the contents of the books as inspired.

B. Purpose of 1 and 2 Kings.

1. "The First Book of Kings contains the history of one hundred and nineteen years, from A.M. 2989 to A.M. 3108. It contains a great variety of interesting particulars, the chief of which are the following: The death of David; the reign of Solomon; the building and dedication of the temple; the building of Solomon's palace; an account of his great wisdom; his magnificence, and his fall; the division of Israel and Judah under Rehoboam; the idolatry of the ten tribes over whom Jeroboam became king. It states how Judah,
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Benjamin, and Levi attached themselves to the house of David; how Rehoboam was attacked by Shishak, king of Egypt, who pillaged the temple; how Baasha destroyed the house of Jeroboam, and seized the government of Israel; how Jehu predicted the ruin of Baasha; how Ahab married the impious Jezebel, and persecuted the prophets of the Lord. It relates the acts of Elijah; the destruction of the prophets of Baal; the cruel death of Naboth; the death of Ahab; the good reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; and the wicked reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel..." (Clarke, p.382).

2. "The books of Kings and Chronicles were written looking back at the history of the United and Divided Kingdoms of Israel, their apostasy, captivity, and restoration. Apparently, the books were written during or after exile for the purpose of rehearsing for the people of that day why they suffered the humiliation of captivity and how the past gave significance to the present—or looking at it from the other end, how the present post-exilic Israelites were related to the Israel of the past" (Lloyd, ADL, p.22).
3. "With reference to the books of Kings, the writer helps his readers to see the connection between Babylonian exile and their unfaithfulness. God had foretold to Israel through Moses that retention of the land promised to Abraham was dependent on their faithfulness to God's will (Deu. 28:56-58). Jehovah said that if they did not observe to do all the words of the law, he would cause them to perish. He said, 'Ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goes in to possess it. And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth'" (28:63-64). The books of Kings draw the connection between what God had foretold through Moses, with their demise in 2 Kings 17:7-23; 18:10-12; 21" (Lloyd, ADL, pp.22f).

C. Outline of 2 Kings.

1. Chapter 1.
 - a. Verses 1-8: Ahaziah seeks help from Baalzebub.
 - b. Verses 9-18: Ahaziah vainly tries to arrest Elijah.
 2. Chapter 2.
 - a. Verses 1-8: Elisha is tested by Elijah.
 - b. Verses 9-15: Elijah's miraculous departure from earth.
 - c. Verses 16-18: Fifty prophets seek for Elijah.
 - d. Verses 19-22: Elisha Restores the water of Jericho.
 - e. Verses 23-25: The episode of the two she-bears.
 3. Chapter 3.
 - a. Verses 1-3: Jehoram reigns in Israel.
 - b. Verses 4-20: Jehoram and Jehoshaphat invade Moab.
 - c. Verses 21-27: The Moabites are defeated.
 4. Chapter 4.
 - a. Verses 1-7: The miracle of the oil.
 - b. Verses 8-17: The Shunemmite woman is given a son.
 - c. Verses 18-37: The Shunemmite's child raised from the dead.
 - d. Verses 38-41: Death in the pot.
 - e. Verses 42-44: Miraculous meal for a hundred men.
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5. Chapter 5.
 - a. Verses 1-7: Naaman the Syrian general.
 - b. Verses 8-14: Naaman cleansed of Leprosy.
 - c. Verses 15-19: Naaman vows to worship only God.
 - d. Verses 20-27: The sin and punishment of Gehazi.
 6. Chapter 6.
 - a. Verses 1-7: The ax-head that floated.
 - b. Verses 8-12: Elisha reveals the king of Syria's secret plans.
 - c. Verses 13-18: The Syrians surround Dothan to capture Elisha.
 - d. Verses 19-23: Elisha treats the captured Syrians with kindness.
 - e. Verses 24-33: The king of Israel seeks to kill Elisha.
 7. Chapter 7.
 - a. Verses 1-2: Elisha promises a quick end to the famine.
 - b. Verses 3-11: Four leprous men discover the Syrians had abandoned the siege.
 - c. Verses 12-16: The king hesitates to believe the good news.
 - d. Verses 17-20: The king's assistant trampled.
 8. Chapter 8.
 - a. Verses 1-6: Elisha warns the Shunammite woman of a famine.
 - b. Verses 7-15: Elisha visits Damascus.
 - c. Verses 16-20: The reign of Jehoram in Judah.
 - d. Verses 20-24: The Edomites rebel against Judah.
 - e. Verses 25-29: The reign of Ahaziah in Jerusalem.
 9. Chapter 9.
 - a. Verses 1-10: Elisha directs a young prophet to anoint Jehu as king.
 - b. Verses 11-26: Jehu slays Jehoram.
 - c. Verses 27-37: Jezebel meets her predicted end.
 10. Chapter 10.
 - a. Verses 1-7: Jehu's letters concerning the descendants of Ahab.
 - b. Verses 8-11: Jehu slays the rest of Ahab's house.
 - c. Verses 12-17: Others who followed Ahab are slain by Jehu.
 - d. Verses 18-28: Jehu slays the worshipers of Baal.
 - e. Verses 29-31: Jehu's sin.
 - f. Verses 32-36: God punishes Israel by the hand of Hazael.
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11. Chapter 11.
 - a. Verses 1-3: Athaliah usurps the throne of Judah.
 - b. Verses 4-12: Jehoiada the priest anoints Joash as king.
 - c. Verses 13-16: Athaliah slain.
 - d. Verses 17-21: Jehoiada overthrows Baal
 12. Chapter 12.
 - a. Verses 1-3: Jehoash's reign.
 - b. Verses 4-16: Jehoash endeavors to make repairs to the temple.
 - c. Verses 17-21: Jehoash gives the temple treasures to Hazael, and is slain.
 13. Chapter 13.
 - a. Verses 1-9: The disastrous reign of Jehoahaz in Israel.
 - b. Verses 10-13: The reign of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz, over Israel.
 - c. Verses 14-21: The closing acts of Elisha and his death.
 - d. Verses 22-25: Israel defeats Syria under the reign of Jehoash, son of Jehoahaz.
 14. Chapter 14.
 - a. Verses 1-7: Amaziah reigns in Jerusalem.
 - b. Verses 8-14: Jehoash defeats Amaziah.
 - c. Verses 15-20: The death of Jehoash and Amaziah reported.
 - d. Verses 21-22: Azariah reigns in Jerusalem.
 - e. Verses 23-29: Jeroboam II reigns in Israel.
 15. Chapter 15.
 - a. Verses 1-7: The reign of Azariah in Judah.
 - b. Verses 8-12: The reign of Zechariah in Israel.
 - c. Verses 13-15: The reign of Shallum in Israel.
 - d. Verses 16-22: The reign of Menahem in Israel.
 - e. Verses 23-26: The reign of Pekahiah in Israel.
 - f. Verses 27-31: The reign of Pekah in Israel.
 - g. Verses 32-38: The reign of Jotham in Judah.
 16. Chapter 16.
 - a. Verses 1-4: The evil reign of Ahaz in Judah.
 - b. Verses 5-9: Syria and Israel besiege Jerusalem
 - c. Verses 10-20: Ahaz constructs an altar.
 17. Chapter 17.
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- a. Verses 1-6: Samaria is conquered by Assyria.
 - b. Verses 7-23: The reasons for Israel's downfall.
 - c. Verses 24-41: The Assyrians settle foreigners in the land of Israel.
18. Chapter 18.
 - a. Verses 1-8: The reign of Hezekial appraised.
 - b. Verses 9-12: Notice of Israel's downfall is repeated.
 - c. Verses 13-16: Sennacherib invades Judah.
 - d. Verses 17-25: Important messengers from the Assyrians come to Jerusalem.
 - e. Verses 26-37: Rabshakeh addresses the people in their own language.
19. Chapter 19.
 - a. Verses 1-7: Hezekiah appeals to the Lord.
 - b. Verses 8-13: Rabshakeh sends a letter to Hezekiah.
 - c. Verses 14-19: Hezekiah prays unto God.
 - d. Verses 20-34: God addresses Hezekiah through Isaiah the prophet.
 - e. Verses 35-37: The Assyrian army is decimated by an angel.
20. Chapter 20.
 - a. Verses 1-7: Hezekiah's illness.
 - b. Verses 8-11: The shadow is turned backward ten degrees.
 - c. Verses 12-21: Hezekiah and the Babylonian king.
21. Chapter 21.
 - a. Verses 1-9: Manasseh's reign
 - b. Verses 10-18: The Lord vows to punish Judah.
 - c. Verses 19-26: The reign of Amon.
22. Chapter 22.
 - a. Verses 1-2: The reign of Josiah.
 - b. Verses 3-7: Josiah orders repairs to the temple.
 - c. Verses 8-14: The book of the law is found.
 - d. Verses 15-20: Huldah the Prophetess.
23. Chapter 23.
 - a. Verses 1-3: Josiah's commits the people to the restoration.
 - b. Verses 4-14: Josiah destroys the features of Judah's rebellion.
 - c. Verses 15-20: Josiah destroys the altar at Bethel.
 - d. Verses 21-23: Josiah orders the observance of the Passover.
 - e. Verses 24-25: Josiah puts away the sorcerers.
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- f. Verses 26-28: Judah's fate would be punishment despite Josiah's restoration.
 - g. Verses 29-30: The death of Josiah.
 - h. Verses 31-37: The reigns of Jehoahaz and Eliakim.
24. Chapter 24.
- a. Verses 1-7: The Chaldeans invade Judah.
 - b. Verses 8-9: The reign of Jehoiachin.
 - c. Verses 10-16: Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem.
 - d. Verses 17-20: Zedekiah is made king.
25. Chapter 25.
- a. Verses 1-3: Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem.
 - b. Verses 4-7: Jerusalem is captured.
 - c. Verses 8-17: Jerusalem is ravaged and spoiled.
 - d. Verses 18-26: The disposition of the people of Judah.
 - e. Verses 27-30: Jehoiachin in captivity.
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2 KINGS 1

A. 2 Kings 1:1-8: Ahaziah Seeks Medical Help from Baalzebub.

1. Verse 1: "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab."
 - a. 2 Samuel 8:2: "And he [David] smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts."
 - b. "Subdued by David (2 Sam. 8:2), they had, in the partition of Israel and Judah, fallen to the share of the former kingdom. But they took advantage of the death of Ahab to shake off the yoke....The casualty that befell Ahaziah prevented his taking active measures for suppressing this revolt, which was accomplished as a providential judgment on the house of Ahab for all their crimes" (JFB, p.370).
 2. Verse 2: "And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease."
 - a. "A wooden parapet or fence, breast-high, surrounds the flat roofs of houses; and sometimes, instead of a parapet, the terraces are guarded, like the galleries, with balustrades only, or lattices—*i.e.*, net or trellised work (Deut. 22:8). The name seems to import that the roof of the royal palace in Samaria was surmounted on the roof in this fashion, and that it was over this trellis the king was carelessly leaning when it gave way; or, if might be an opening, like a skylight, in the roof itself, done over the lattice-work, which, being slender or rotten, the king stepped on and slipped through. This latter sup-position is most probably the true one, as Ahaziah did not fall either into the street or the court, but 'his upper chamber'" (JFB, p.370).
 - b. So sick was Ahaziah from his injuries, that he dispatched messengers to Ekron to inquire of the leading idol there whether he would recover from his illness. Baalzebub was the name of the "fly-god" of the Philistines. "This consultation of a heathen deity by the king openly, affords a deplorable example of the extent to which the Israelites were infected with the baneful influence of Philistine idolatry, and it was a direct violation of the Mosaic law (Deut. 18:13,14)" (JFB, p.370). "Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so *to do*" (Deut. 18:13-14).
 - c. Baalzebub is rendered Beelzebub in the New Testament, and is used to identify Satan, the prince of demons. "But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. 12:24).
 3. Verses 3-4: "But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed."
 - a. The angel of the Lord spoke to Elijah the prophet, directing him to intercept Ahaziah's messengers as they traveled to Ekron. He was to ask them if it was due to the absence of God in Israel that they were going to inquire of an idol in Ekron. Generations earlier, the nation had departed from the ways of God and turned to idolatry, although they maintained a semblance of respect toward Jehovah. The king was acting as though the God of Israel was not accessible.
 - b. Elijah gave the king's servants an inspired message to deliver to Ahaziah: "The bed whither thou art gone up, thou shalt not come down from it" (margin). In plain words, the king would die.
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4. Verses 5-6: “And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?* therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”
 - a. The messengers did not recognize Elijah, but they knew the voice of authority when they heard it. They knew that the man who spoke to them must be a man of God, a prophet. He would have to have been such in order to know of their mission and be able to intercept them before they reached Ekron.
 - b. The king’s servants returned to Samaria. Ahaziah demanded to know why they had not completed their mission. They told him of the certain man who approached them, commanding them to return to the king who had sent them, and tell him that his secret mission was known to the God of heaven. They also reported to the king that this man had predicted that Ahaziah would die on his bed; he would not recover.
5. Verses 1:7-8 And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.”
 - a. “This was the description, not of his person, as in the case of Esau, but of his dress, which consisted either of unwrought sheep or goatskins (Heb. 11:37), or of camel’s hair-cloth—the coarser manufacture of this material—like the rough hair-cloth we use as coverings for goods. The dervishes and Bedouins are attired in this wild, uncouth manner; while their hair flows loose on the head, their shaggy cloak is thrown over their shoulders, and tied in front on the breast, naked, except at the waist, round which is a skin girdle—a broad, rough, leathern belt” (JFB, p.371).
 - b. “This does not mean a man with a luxuriant growth of hair, but refers to the hairy dress, *i.e.* the garment made of sheep-skin or goat-skin or coarse camel-hair...wrapped round his body...which was worn by the prophets, not as mere ascetics, but as preachers of repentance, the rough garment denoting the severity of the divine judgments upon the effeminate nation, which revelled in luxuriance and worldly lust” (Keil, p.286).
 - c. “That is, he wore a *rough garment*, either made of camels’ hair, as his successor John Baptist’s was; or he wore a skin *dressed with the hair on*. Some think that the meaning is, he had very *long hair* and a *long beard*. The ancient prophets all wore rough garments, or upper coats made of the skins of beasts; They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, says the apostle, Heb. 11:37” (Clarke, p.481).
 - d. “Either in allusion to his shaggy cloak of untanned skin; or, more probably, an expression descriptive of the prophet's person, of his long flowing locks, abundant beard, and general profusion of hair. His costume was that of a thorough ascetic. Generally the Jews wore girdles of linen or cotton stuff, soft and comfortable. Under the girdle they wore one or two long linen gowns or shirts, and over these they had sometimes a large shawl. Elijah had only his leather girdle and his sheepskin cape or ‘mantle’” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].

B. 2 Kings 1:9-16: Ahaziah Vainly Tries to Arrest Elijah.

1. Verses 9-10: “Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I *be* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.”
 - a. Ahaziah was incensed that this pronouncement was made against him. He sent a captain with fifty men

- to arrest Elijah and bring him to the king. His intentions were not kindly toward the prophet.
- b. Why did he send so many soldiers to apprehend one man? Why did the Jewish leaders send such a large number of men to arrest Jesus?
 - 1) Matthew 26:47: "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people."
 - 2) John 18:3: "Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons."
 - c. The captain found Elijah sitting on top of a hill. He ordered the prophet to come down. It is clear that an implied threat to come get him was involved in the order, if Elijah did not comply. Elijah stated that if he were a true prophet, a fire would come from heaven and consume the captain and his men. This miraculous event quickly came to pass.
 - d. The action taken was not done by Elijah's power; he had no more power to cause such an event than any other man. The fire was of divine origin; it was not sent on the whim of the prophet, but as a sober act of punishment on the culprits. God had used fire from heaven to punish other miscreants in the past.
 - 1) Genesis 19:24: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."
 - 2) Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."
 - 3) Numbers 16:35: "And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."
 - e. He will use fire in punishing our wicked world at the end of time.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:10-12: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"
 - 3) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - f. "Any appearance of cruelty that there is in the fate of the two captains and their men will be removed on a full consideration of the circumstances. God being the king of Israel, Ahaziah was bound to
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govern the kingdom according to the divine law: to apprehend the Lord's prophet for discharging a commanded duty, was the act of an impious and notorious rebel. The captains abetted the king in his rebellion; and they exceeded their military duty by contemptuous insults" (JFB, p.371).

- g. The captain addressed Elijah as "man of God," using the term in an apparent derisive manner. The prophet responded by making the statement that if he truly is a man of God, then fire would be sent to consume them.
2. Verses 11-12: "Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."
 - a. Ahaziah, obviously knowing of the failure of the first captain, send a second man with fifty soldiers. Their mission was identical to the first. Finding Elijah on the same hill, this captain ordered him, in the name of the king, to come down from the hill **quickly**. This man was more arrogant than the first, for he knew of the fate of his predecessor, and still persisted in prosecuting the king's wicked directive.
 - b. Fire consumed this man and his company just as in the former case. "God alone could send the fire; and as he is just and good, he would not have destroyed these men had there not been a sufficient cause to justify the act. It was not to please Elijah, or to gratify any vindictive humour in him, that God thus acted; but to show his own power and justice. No entreaty of Elijah could have induced God to have performed an act that was wrong in itself. Elijah, personally, had no concern in the business. God led him simply to announce on these occasions what he himself had determined to do....Elijah's words were only declarative, and not imprecatory" (Clarke, p.482).
 - c. The apostles James and John, known at the time as "the sons of thunder," once asked the Lord whether they should ask for fire from heaven to destroy a certain Samaritan village which had refused the Lord hospitality. "And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village" (Luke 9:54-56).
 3. Verses 13-14: "And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight."
 - a. Ahaziah was a stubborn man. Vindictiveness will make any man stubborn. He had set his heart to take Elijah into custody, and we may be sure it was not to bring him to a banquet in his honor! He sent yet another captain with fifty men to apprehend Elijah.
 - b. This captain, knowing the fate of his two predecessors, was humbled by their experiences. He did not want to be burned to death as they had been; he had enough respect for God's power to know he could not hope to successfully stand against him. Thus this humble soldier fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought the prophet to spare him and his company. He asked that their lives "be precious thy sight."
 4. Verses 15-16: "And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, *is it* not because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die."
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- a. The angel of the Lord directed Elijah to go down to the man, and accompany him to the king. Being assured by the angel, the prophet knew there was nothing to fear. He did as he was told.
- b. The New Testament report places the stamp of Christ's authority on this Old Testament episode. "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Luke 9:51-56).
- c. Coming before the king, Elijah told Ahaziah that because he had sent to make inquiry of a false god, as if the living God were not accessible, he would not recover from his afflictions; he would die.
- d. We wonder whether Elijah would have gone with either of the first two posses if they had humbly made the request.

C. 2 Kings 1:17-18: The Death of Ahaziah.

1. Verse 17: "So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son."
 - a. "There were two Jehorams who were contemporary: the first, the son of Ahab, brother to Ahaziah, and his successor in the kingdom of Israel; the second, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, who succeeded his father in Judah" (Clarke, p.482).
 - b. We are told that Ahaziah had no son to succeed him on the throne. It was natural that his brother should become king. However, being the son of Ahab, his character was spiritually flawed.
 - c. The text says that Jehoram mounted Israel's throne during the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. However, in 2 Kings 3:1, we are told his reign began during the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. The following explanations have been given, as quoted by Clarke:
 - 1) "Jehoram king of Israel began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, which was the second year after this same Jehoshaphat had given the viceroyalty to his son Jehoram; and afterwards Jehoshaphat communicated the royalty to Jehoram his successor, two years before his death, and the fifth year of Jehoram, king of Israel." [Calmet and others].
 - 2) "'Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years; and 2 Kings 1:17: 'And Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken, and Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah'; and 2 Kings 3:1: 'Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.' By these scriptures it is most plain, that both Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, and Ahaziah the son of Ahab, began to reign in the seventeenth of Jehoshaphat; for who sees not in these texts that Jehoshaphat's eighteenth, when Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign, is called the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat? Now Jehoshaphat's reign was not yet expired by eight or nine years, for this was in his seventeenth year, and he reigned twenty-five years, 1 Kings 22:42; nor was Ahab's reign expired by two or three years, for this was in his twentieth year, and he reigned twenty-two years. 1 Kings 16:29. But the reason why both their sons came thus into their thrones in their lifetime, and both in the same year, was because their fathers, Jehoshaphat and Ahab, were both engaged in the war against the Syrians about Ramoth-gilead: and while they were providing for it, and carrying it on, they made their sons viceroys, and set them to reign in their stead, while they were absent or employed upon that expedition.' This is very probable, and seems will

supported by the above texts, and would solve all the difficulties with which many have been puzzled and not a few stumbled, had we sufficient evidence for the vicereignty here mentioned” (Lightfoot: Clarke, pp.482f).

- d. “In 2 Kings 3:1 it is said that Jehoram, the son of Ahab and brother of Ahaziah, began to reign over Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat himself. The apparent discrepancy is reconciled by supposing that Jehoshaphat associated his son Jehoram in the kingdom in his seventeenth year, when he was about to enter upon the Syrian war, so that the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat was also the second year of Jehoram. It is certain that association was largely practiced in Egypt at a date long anterior to Jehoshaphat, and David's proclamation of Solomon as king was an association, so that the explanation is not untenable” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
2. Verse 18: “Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?”
 - a. The reference to the chronicles of the kings of Israel denotes a secular record of the affairs of the kings of Israel, detailing their activities, policies, and experiences.
 - b. Ahaziah made a poor king, primarily because he followed the practices of Ahab and his predecessors in idolatry and rebellion against God. His two years on the throne are marked by sin and tragedy.
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2 KINGS 2

A. 2 Kings 2:1-8: Elisha is Tested by Elijah.

1. Verses 1-3: “And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said *unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace.”
 - a. “When the time arrived that Jehovah was about to take up his servant Elijah in a tempest to heaven, Elijah went with his attendant Elisha from Gilgal down to Bethel....*Gilgal* and *Bethel*...were seats of schools of the prophets, which Elijah had founded in the kingdom of the ten tribes. It is not generally admitted that *Gilgal*, from which they went *down* to Bethel, cannot be the place of that name which was situated in the Jordan valley to the east of Jericho, but must be the Gilgal upon the mountains, the elevated *Jiljilia* to the south-west of Silo...” (Keil, p.290).
 - b. Elijah besought Elisha to remain at Gilgal. This was an evident test of Elisha’s fidelity; the young prophet insisted on accompanying Elijah.
 - c. God had revealed to Elijah that he was soon to be swept up from the earth in a whirlwind, a fact that was also known to Elisha. The occasion of this revelation is not described in the text. This was likewise known by the bands of prophets at Bethel and Jericho.
 - d. A band of prophets from Bethel met them, and asked Elisha whether he knew that God would take Elijah from him. Elisha said he was aware of that fact. They described the parting as the Lord taking away “thy master from thy head,” “an allusion to the custom of scholars sitting at the feet of their master, the latter being over their heads (Acts 22:3)” (JFB, p.372). "I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day" (Acts 22:3).
 2. Verses 4-6: “And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* So they came to Jericho. And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And they two went on.”
 - a. Elijah besought Elisha to abide at Bethel while he went on to Jericho, but again the young prophet insisted on accompanying Elijah.
 - b. At Jericho, a band of prophets approached Elisha, asking him if he knew Elijah would be taken from him that day. Elisha told them that he knew, and told them to hold their peace (to remain quiet about it).
 - c. At Jericho, Elijah again asked his young assistant to remain at that place, while he went on to the Jordan. But once more, Elisha would not stay behind.
 3. Verses 7-8: “And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.”
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- a. While Elijah and Elisha stood by the river, fifty prophets positioned themselves a good way off to watch what would happen. They were aware that Elijah was to depart from the earth under supernatural circumstances that day, and wanted to be witness of the event.
- b. “But as his ascension to heaven took place not so much for his own sake, as because of those associates in his office who were left behind, God had revealed it to so many, that they might be even more firmly established in their calling by the miraculous glorification of their master....But above all, Elisha, whom the Lord had appointed as his successor (1 Kings 19:16), was to be prepared for carrying on his work by the last journey of his master” (Keil, pp.291f).
- c. Elijah removed his mantle, the outer garment of his apparel, rolled it up, and smote the waters of the Jordan. Centuries earlier, Moses was involved in leading Israel through the Red Sea, when God parted the waters miraculously. Forty years later, God parted the flooded waters of Jordan to permit Israel to enter Canaan proper. Now Elijah, by the power of God, parted the Jordan again, allowing himself and Elisha to pass over to the other side on dry ground.

B. 2 Kings 2:9-15: Elijah’s Miraculous Departure from Earth.

1. Verses 9-10: “And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be *so*. ”
 - a. Having gained the far shore, Elijah asked Elisha what he wished to receive from him, prior to his departure. Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. This evidently was based on the pre-cept of the Mosaic Law giving a double portion of the father’s possessions to the eldest son. "But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his" (Deut. 21:17).
 - b. “This request was not, as is commonly supposed, for the power of working miracles exceeding the magnitude and number of his master’s nor does it mean a higher endowment of the prophetic spirit; for Elisha was neither superior to, nor perhaps equally great with, his predecessor. But the phrase, ‘a double portion,’ was applied to the first-born; and therefore Elisha’s request was simply to be heir to the prophetic office and gifts of his master” (JFB, p.373).
 - c. “Elisha, resting his foot upon this law [Deut. 21:17], requested of Elijah as a first-born son the double portion of his spirit for his inheritance. Elisha looked upon himself as the first-born son of Elijah in relation to the other ‘sons of the prophets,’ inasmuch as Elijah by the command of God had called him to be his successor and to carry on his work” (Keil, p.293).
 - d. In verse ten, Elijah noted the difficulty of the request. It was something that the prophet could not confer; only God could grant it. “He therefore made its fulfillment dependent upon a condition, which did not rest with himself, but was under the control of God....A dying man cannot leave to his heir more than he has himself” (Keil, p.293).
 - e. The condition, which doubtless originated with the Lord, was that Elisha must see Elijah depart from the earth in order to have his request granted.
 2. Verse 11: “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”
 - a. As the two prophets continued their journey, a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire parted the two men, and Elijah went up in a whirlwind into heaven. Neither Elisha nor the prophets had seen anything like this tremendous event. No one before Elijah, except Enoch, had been translated from earth to heaven, without experiencing death. No description is given in the Scriptures of Enoch’s translation.
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- 1) Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."
 - b. These fiery horses and chariot were not literal, but were a miraculous phenomenon. "The tempest was an earthly substratum for the theophany, the fiery chariot and fiery horses the symbolical form in which the translation of his master to heaven presented itself to the eye of Elisha, who was left behind" (Keil, p.294).
 - c. Elijah appears again in sacred history, when his presence is placed in the transfiguration of Christ. He was present with Moses, when the Lord was transfigured.
 - 1) Matthew 17:3-4: "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."
 - 2) Luke 9:30-31: "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."
 3. Verse 12: "And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces."
 - a. That Elisha was properly and profoundly impressed is apparent from the expression that burst forth from his lips. The precise point his statement expressed is difficult to grasp, but the utterance very clearly verbalizes the deep impression the event made on him.
 - b. Elijah had done more to help Israel than all of the horses and chariots that the nation might have acquired. "The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof; i.e. the best earthly defense of Israel. 'In losing thee,' he means, 'we lose our great protector—him that is more to us than chariots and horsemen—the strength of Israel, against both domestic and foreign foes.' The sight of the fiery chariot and horses may have determined the imagery, but they are not spoken of. Note the substitution of 'horsemen' for 'horses,' and comp. 2 Kings 13:10, where the same expression is used in reference to Elisha" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - c. Elijah appeared on the scene of Israelite history quite suddenly, like the arrival of a whirlwind; his work was like a raging fire, in that it could not be contained by his enemies; his departure from earth was accompanied by flaming horses and a fiery chariot.
 - d. Elisha rent his own clothes, in the customary fashion of those ancient times, thus expressing his great loss in the departure of Elijah. Selfish, ambitious princes might rejoice in the demise of their father, for this would leave a regal vacancy for them to fill. It is true that Elisha was to take the place of Elijah, but there was a genuine love that prevailed between these two great men of God; it was with grief that he replaced Elijah.
 4. Verses 13-14: "He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over."
 - a. Elisha understood that he was to be successor to Elijah, and so picked up Elijah's mantle and walked toward the Jordan River again.
 - b. Standing on the bank of the river, he said, "Where is the God of Elijah," and smote the waters with the mantle. As had happened shortly before, the waters parted, and he walked over to the other side.
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- c. His reference to the God of Elijah was not an indication of irreverence, but just the opposite. He made the statement and took the action to show the nearby prophets, who had witnessed the events of the day, that he was indeed God's appointed replacement for Elijah.
 - d. "This miracle was intended partly to confirm Elisha's conviction that his petition had been fulfilled, and partly to accredit him in the eyes of the disciples of the prophets and the people generally as the divinely appointed successor of Elijah. All the disciples of the prophets from Jericho saw also from this that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, and came to meet him to do homage to him as being now their spiritual father and lord" (Keil, p.297).
5. Verse 15: "And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him."
- a. "Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* from Jericho saw him, they said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him" (NKJ).
 - b. The sons of the prophets, the disciples of Elijah, were present at the site to view Elijah's departure from earth. When they saw what Elisha did in crossing Jordan, they knew full well that Elisha was now the man of God to whom they should look for leadership.
 - c. These young men went to meet Elisha, and bowed themselves before him, acknowledging their willingness to follow his directions.

C. 2 Kings 2:16-18: Fifty Prophets Seek for Elijah.

1. Verse 16: "And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send."
 - a. The sons of the prophets made a request of Elisha. They stated that there were fifty strong men among them, whom they recommended to be sent in search of Elijah. Evidently they had witnessed his departure.
 - b. The purpose of their request was based on the ill-conceived notion that the spirit of the Lord, who had taken the prophet into the sky, might have dropped him back to earth somewhere, and that a search should be made to find him (or his body).
 - c. Elisha dismissed their request by simply stating that they should not make the search. He knew that the prophet was gone safely into eternity.
2. Verses 17-18: "And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?"
 - a. When they continued to make their appeal, he finally relented. They dispatched fifty men to make the search, and though they searched the countryside thoroughly for three days, neither Elijah nor his remains could be found.
 - b. Meanwhile, Elisha had returned to Jericho. The searchers found him there, and reported that they had found nothing. The prophet reminded them that he had predicted the fruitlessness of their effort.
 - c. One good result of their search was to establish the fact that Elijah had not been merely caught up naturally into a great storm, for if that had been the case, his body or other evidence would most likely have been discovered. Since there was nothing that remained of him, it was clear to all that the great man had truly been translated into heaven.

D. 2 Kings 2:19-22: Elisha Restores the Water of Jericho.

1. Verse 19: “And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* nought, and the ground barren.”
 - a. The men of Jericho came to Elisha with a problem. Everything about the city was pleasant, they reported, except for a major problem with their water supply. The water from the spring caused the ground to be non-productive, and even was the source of death (vs. 21).
 - b. Jamieson says, “There is near some tumuli, marking the ancient site of Jericho, a fountain. The fountain of Elisha.’ Its waters are diffused over the plain” (JFB, p.374).
2. Verses 20-21: “And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren *land*.”
 - a. Elisha asked them to bring him a new container (a cruse), and that it should be filled with salt. His orders were followed without any hesitation.
 - b. The prophet went to the spring and cast the salt into the water. He affirmed to them that the Lord had healed these waters, and that no more death or barren land would be caused by the waters of the spring.
3. Verse 22: “So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.”
 - a. The inspired historian, writing at some time subsequent to the event, stated that in his day, the water of the spring was still good.
 - b. Salt does not improve the potability of water; rather it destroys it for that purpose. The cure for the problem was not in the salt, but in the power of God. Everyone knew that adding salt to the spring could produce no good results, and that the salt could not remain long in the boiling spring. The only other alternative was to acknowledge that the power of God produced the result.

E. 2 Kings 2:23-25: The Episode of the Two She Bears.

1. Verse 23: “And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.”
 - a. Leaving Jericho, Elisha returned to Bethel. As he made his journey, a group of “little children” came out of the city, mocking him.
 - b. Word of Elijah’s ascension to heaven had preceded his arrival. The “little children” taunted him with a reference to that miraculous event. They were calling on Elisha to “go up” as Elijah had done. Their mockery also paid particular attention to the baldness of the prophet’s head. Keil said the baldness must have been a physical defect, not natural baldness, since Elisha lived for many years after this event (pp.297f). However, his age is not given; anyhow, some very young men are bald.
 - c. Bethel was one site of the idolatrous calf-worship inaugurated by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12). It is a plausible assumption that the young people were participants in idolatry, and had an automatic hostility toward Elisha, a prophet of Jehovah.
 2. Verse 24: “And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.”
 - a. “The prophet then turned round and cursed the scoffers in the name of the Lord, and there came two bears out of the wood, and tore forty-two boys of them in pieces. The supposed ‘immorality of cursing,’ which Thenius still adduces as a disproof of the historical truth of this miracle, even if it were established, would not affect Elisha only, but would fall back upon the Lord God, who executed the curse of his servant in such a manner upon these worthless boys....All that is necessary is to admit that
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- the worthless spirit which prevailed in Bethel was openly manifested in the ridicule of the children, and that these boys knew Elisha, and in his person insulted the prophet of the Lord. If this was the case, then Elisha cursed the boys for the purpose of avenging the honour of the Lord, which had been injured in his person; and the Lord caused this curse to be fulfilled, to punish in the children the sins of the parents, and to inspire the whole city with a salutary dread of his holy majesty” (Keil, p.300).
- b. The purposeful blasphemy on the part of these offenders was properly punished. Elisha had no inherent power to command the two bears to attack the lads; only God could do that. The action was intended as punishment for their great offense done to the majesty of God.
 - c. Critics charge the Bible with advocating cruel treatment of innocent “little children” by this episode. But just how young were these “little children?” The word translated “little” can mean young as opposed to old. Also, the word translated “children” was used to describe Joseph when he was a grown man. "Now there *was* a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream" (Gen. 41:12).
 - d. “The Bible text calls them *little children* in the KJV while the ASV uses the phrase, *young lads*. However, one must keep in mind that in Hebrew terminology one was a lad until he was in his early twenties and a youth while even older than that. *Young lads* would simply indicate that they were perhaps in the late teens, certainly old enough to know better than to do what they were doing. The phrase, ‘go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head’ is not merely ridiculing a *supposedly* hairless head of Elisha. The phrase *go up* is indicative of more than *mere* ridicule of Elisha—it is ridicule of *Jehovah himself* and is, in all probability, a reference to the miracle of Elijah ascending to heaven. The *impiety* and *irreverence* of Bethel was manifested by these young lads as they ridiculed a *miracle of God*. It is significant that Elisha ‘cursed’ them in the *name* of Jehovah. It would be reflection upon Jehovah himself for one to cast aspersion upon this incident, for it was in fulfillment of Elisha’s curse that the bears came out and tore the young lads. It was not personal vengeance which Elisha sought but rather a vindication of the power and holiness of God, and it is to this end that one must view this story” (Pledge, Vol. II, pp.76).
3. Verse 25: “And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.”
 - a. Following this experience, Elisha continued his journey to mount Carmel, and from thence he went on to Samaria.
 - b. What he did at these two places is not stated.
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2 KINGS 3

A. 2 Kings 3:1-3: Jehoram Reigns in Israel.

1. Verse 1: "Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years."
 - a. Jehoram followed his brother Ahaziah to the throne in Israel. Their father and mother (Ahab and Jezebel) were very corrupt individuals. Ahab and Ahaziah died in rebellion against God, and the Lord had pronounced a prophetic sentence against Jezebel: "And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (1 Kings 21:23).
 - b. Jehoram reigned twelve years in Israel.
2. Verses 2-3: "And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom."
 - a. Jehoram (also spelled Joram) was a better man than his brother and his father. He perceived that the idolatry introduced into Israel by his parents had been the source of their problems. He ended Baal worship.
 - b. However, he retained the original idols Jeroboam had erected at Dan and Bethel. Jehoram did well in destroying Baal worship, but he did not go far enough. The people evidently thought they were worshiping God at Dan and Bethel, despite the fact that the worship was based on a violation of the Decalogue. God had forbidden images in worship, but they bowed before the two calves which Jeroboam had made.
 - c. He likely pleased many of his subjects by putting away Baal worship, and promoting the traditional system. But his efforts were too limited. He should have destroyed the calves and the entire system Jeroboam had developed around them. They were intended to keep the people from going back to the temple in Jerusalem, and thus in time perhaps reuniting with Judah. "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense" (1 Kings 12:25-33).
 - d. Luther and the others who led the Protestant Reformation movement made the same mistake. They did well in opposing Romanism, but they set their sights too low. Instead of trying to reform that which could not be reformed, they should have insisted on a complete return to the New Testament, entirely discarding all the corrupt beliefs and practices which had accumulated through the centuries.

B. 2 Kings 3:4-20: Jehoram and Jehoshaphat Invade Moab.

1. Verses 4-5: “And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.”
 - a. Returning to the thought with which this book began, the historian describes the rebellion of Moab which began following the death of Ahab. They had been conquered by David many years earlier. "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts" (2 Sam. 8:2).
 - b. The tribute which Moab had been obliged to pay Israel was a hundred thousand lambs and a similar number of rams, plus the wool. This very heavy burden they sought to end. Mesha, the vassal king of Moab, led his nation in rebelling against their overlords.
 - c. During a time when a nation is changing leaders, especially under emergency conditions, it is then vulnerable to their enemies. While the “Cold War” was in progress, the Russians often contrived to generate some difficulty for our nation, soon after a new president took office.
 2. Verses 6-8: “And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and* my horses as thy horses. And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.”
 - a. Jehoram realized he must put down this rebellion, and so traveled through his country, numbering the nation in preparation for war.
 - b. Evidently seeing that his army would not be strong enough to deal with the Moabites, Jehoram sent a message to Jehoshaphat requesting his assistance in the military operation. He remembered that the king of Judah had been willing to aid his father in another martial venture.
 - c. Jehoshaphat gave the same reply to Jehoram that he had given to Ahab (see 1 Kings 22:4). Possibly the king of Judah was aware of his counterpart’s efforts to destroy Baal worship, and thought he was worthy of help.
 - d. The direction by which they would invade Moab was via the wilderness of Edom. The king of Edom joined them in the invasion.
 - e. “This was a long and circuitous route, by the southern bend of the Dead Sea. Jehoshaphat, however, preferred it, partly because the part of the Moabite territory at which they would arrive was the most defenceless, and partly because he would thereby enlist in the expedition the forces of the king of Edom” (JFB, p.376).
 - f. “Jehoshaphat decided in favour of ‘the way through the desert of Edom.’ There were two ways by which it was possible to enter the land of the Moabites; namely, either by going above the Dead Sea, and crossing the Jordan and the boundary river Arnon, and so entering it from the north, or by going round the southern portion of the mountains of Edom, and thus entering it from the south. The latter way was the longer of the two, and the one attended with the greatest difficulties and dangers, because the army would have to cross mountains which were very difficult to ascend. Nevertheless Jehoshaphat decided in its favour, partly because, if they took the northern route, they would have the Syrians at Ramoth in Gilead to fear, partly also because the Moabites, from their very confidence in the inaccessibility of their southern boundary, would hardly expect any attack from that side...” (Keil, p.302).
 3. Verses 9-12: “So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed
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them. And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.”

- a. In making the circuitous journey around the southern end of the Dead Sea, a maneuver described in the language of the King James Version as “fetching a compass,” the combined armies met with severe distresses. They could not find sufficient water for the men and animals of the company.
 - b. Jehoram bemoaned the fact (as he stated it) that Jehovah had led the three kings (of Israel, Judah, and Edom) into the wilderness to be rendered defenseless before the Moabites. He resigned himself to perishing.
 - c. Jehoshaphat finally remembered the need for consulting a prophet, to enlist the aid of the Lord. He asked whether there was a prophet who could counsel them by the word of the Lord. One of the servants told him about Elisha, whose reliability was known to Jehoshaphat. The miraculous works of Elisha were widely known.
 - d. Elisha was described as one who formerly “poured water on the hands of Elijah,” a reference to the work of a servant. A servant would pour water over his master’s hands, while the master rubbed them together.
 - e. It is significant that the servants knew where Elisha was, but the kings did not. It is usually the case that the common man knows more of God’s way than the great. Jehoshaphat and Jehoram went to meet with Elisha.
4. Verses 13-15: “And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.”
- a. Elisha did not mince words when he met Jehoram. He asked a question, which stated effectively that he had nothing in common with the king of Israel. He told him that if he needed help, he ought to look to the prophets Ahab and Jezebel had appointed.
 - b. Jehoram stated that Jehovah had called the three-king confederacy to go out against the rebellious Moabites—to be delivered into the hands of Moab. He was speaking his own thoughts.
 - c. Elisha avowed that were it not for the presence of godly Jehoshaphat, he would not have agreed to meet with them. He then called for a minstrel so that he could play his instrument. Why was it necessary for the minstrel to play in order for Elisha to receive the word of the Lord? We are not told, but various outward circumstances attended the work of inspired men. Elisha put salt in the water supply at Jericho to purify it (2 Kings 2:19-22); Christ put clay on the eyes of a blind man to give him sight (John 9). The outward circumstance had nothing directly to do with the miracle. This is the likely purpose—that it was a mere outward circumstance. Some scholars have put forth the following suppositions:
 - 1) Jamieson opines that the music, probably of a harp, would have a soothing effect on the prophet, enabling him to obtain the message from the Lord.
 - 2) “The rabbins, and many Christians, suppose that Elisha’s mind was considerably irritated and grieved by the bad behaviour of the young men at Bethel, and their tragical end, and by the presence of the idolatrous king of Israel; and therefore called for Divine psalmody, that it might

calm his spirits, and render him more susceptible of the prophetic influence” (Clarke, p.488).

5. Verses 16-20: “And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.”
 - a. Elisha directed the kings to dig ditches in the valley. These ditches were to hold the water which the Lord would send. There would be neither wind nor rain, but God would fill the ditches with water. This was impossible with men, but it was a light thing for the Lord to do.
 - b. God would also deliver the Moabites into their hands. They were to smite every walled city and every choice city; they were to cut down the good trees (probably fruit trees); they were to litter the good fields with rocks. With such a great army that must have been present, these works could be easily done.
 - c. The next morning, at the time of the meat offering (about sunrise), water came by way of Edom, filling the ditches according to the word of the prophet. The only possible source of the water was by God’s supernatural power; there was no rainstorm; Edom was a very dry country.
 - d. Earlier, on Carmel, God wrought a great miracle at the time of the evening sacrifice. "And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that I have done* all these things at thy word" (1 Kings 18:36).

C. 2 Kings 3:21-27: The Moabites are Defeated.

1. Verses 21-23: “And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as* red as blood: And they said, This *is* blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.”
 - a. The Moabites knew of the approach of the invasion army, and prepared to defend themselves. All who were capable of bearing arms were called into service.
 - b. On the morning of the great miracle, the Moabites looked toward the site of the invasion forces, and seeing the water, perceived it to be blood. Perhaps the rising sun cast a red glow upon it. At any rate, they knew that water was not to be found in that place. The only explanation they could offer was to think that the three invading kings had had a falling out among themselves, and the red liquid they saw must be blood!
 - c. If this were the case, then the spoils from the slaughter were there for the taking. They all went forth expecting to collect many valuables; they did not expect to face significant opposition.
 2. Verses 24-25: “And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country. And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it.”
 - a. When the Moabites entered Israel’s camp, the Israelites rose up and smote them, causing them to flee. They pursued the Moabites, smiting them with a great slaughter.
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- b. The Israelites (both Judah and Israel, plus their Edomite allies) tore down the Moabite cities, cast stones on their fields, filled up their wells, and cut down the good trees.
 - c. They did not tear down the city of Kirharaseth, however the slingers smote it with their unique weapons.
3. Verses 26-27: “And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.”
- a. The king of Moab tried one last effort to avoid an utter destruction. He assembled seven hundred men and sought to break through the battle lines to the king of Edom, evidently perceiving this to be the weakest link in the invading army. He also would seek to avenge himself on the Edomites for their entering into the war against him. The counterattack failed.
 - b. The Moabite king then took his eldest son, who was to succeed him on the throne, and offered him as a burnt sacrifice on the wall of the city.
 - c. “The most natural way of understanding this act is, that it was done by Mesha, king of Moab, who immolated his own son to Chemosh, the tutelary deity of the kingdom” (JFB, p.378).
 - d. The actions of Mesha were so abominable to the Israelites that they gave up the attack, and returned home.
 - e. The term used [in reference to the great indignation against Israel] “is used of the divine wrath or judgment, which a man brings upon himself by sinning, in every other case in which the phrase occurs....The meaning is: this act of abomination, to which the king of the Moabites had been impelled by the extremity of his distress, brought a severe judgment from God upon Israel. The besiegers, that is to say, felt the wrath of God, which they had brought upon themselves by occasioning human sacrifice, which is strictly forbidden in the law (Lev. 18:21, 20:3), either inwardly in their conscience or in some outwardly visible signs, so that they gave up the further prosecution of the siege and the conquest of the city, without having attained the object of the expedition, namely, to renew the subjugation of Moab under the power of Israel” (Keil, p.307).
 - f. However, the Pulpit Commentary offers this differing view: “And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed. It seems necessary to connect these clauses, and to regard them as assigning cause and effect. The deed done aroused an indignation against Israel, which led to the siege being raised. But an indignation on whose part? Keil thinks, on God's. But could God be angry with Israel for an act of the King of Moab, which they had no ground for anticipating, and which they could not possibly have prevented? especially when the Israelites had done nothing to cause the act, except by carrying out God's own command to them through his prophet, to ‘smite every fenced city and every choice city’ (ver. 19). The indignation, therefore, must have been human. But who felt it? Probably the Moabites. The terrible act of their king, to which they considered that Israel had driven him, stirred up such a feeling of fury among the residue of the Moabite nation, that the confederates quailed before it, and came to the conclusion that they had best give up the siege and retire. They therefore departed from him—i.e. the King of Mesh—and returned to their own land; severally to Edom, Judea, and Samaria” [Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - g. “Either the Israelites were indignant with themselves, or the men of Judah and the Edomites were indignant at the Israelites for having caused the pollution of this sacrifice, and the siege was relinquished” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - h. Perhaps the indignation the Israelites received was on account of the fact that they gave up their attack
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too soon, and did not utterly crush the sinful Moabites.

2 KINGS 4

A. 2 Kings 4:1-7: The Miracle of the Oil.

1. Verse 1: "Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, say-ing, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen."
 - a. The Law of Moses provided the creditor the right to lay claim to the children of a debtor who was unable to make payment.
 - 1) Leviticus 25:39-40: "And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: *But* as an hired servant, *and* as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, *and* shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee."
 - 2) Matthew 18:25: "But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made."
 - b. The widow of a prophet came to Elisha, reporting that a creditor had come to claim her two sons for a debt. She reminded Elisha that her husband had feared the Lord. She was asking him if anything could be done to remedy the situation.
2. Verses 2-4: "And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full."
 - a. Elisha asked what she had in the house. She said the only thing of value was a container of oil. He told her to borrow all the empty vessels she could obtain from her neighbors.
 - b. Getting all the vessels possible, she was to bring them into her house and close the door. She was to begin to pour the pot of oil she had into the empty containers, setting them aside as she filled each one.
3. Verses 5-7: "So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."
 - a. She followed his directions completely. With the help of her sons, she began to fill each of the vessels borrowed from her neighbors. When all the vessels had been filled, the original pot of oil "stayed"—ceased to multiply.
 - b. This miracle was very similar to the one Elijah wrought in behalf of the widow of Zarephath. "For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth" (1 Kings 17:14).
 - c. Elisha told the woman to sell the oil procured by supernatural fiat, and with the money obtained, pay the debt. Thus did God show mercy to the widow and her sons.

B. 2 Kings 4:8-17: The Shunemmite Woman is Given a Son.

1. Verses 8-10: "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where *was* a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed,
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and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.”

- a. On another occasion, Elisha passed by the village of Shunem where an outstanding lady lived. She “constrained” him to eat. Whenever he passed that way, he made it a practice to eat with this good lady and her husband.
 - b. Showing her greatness, this lady asked her husband to build a room on the wall of their house, so that when the prophet came by, he would have a place to stay. She furnished the room with a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. “She meant a room in the *oleah*, the porch, or gateway (Judg. 2:20-25; 2 Sam. 18:33; 1 Ki. 17:19), attached to the front of the house, leading into the court and inner apartments. The front of the house, excepting the door, is a dead wall, and hence this room is called a chamber in the wall. It was usually appropriated to the use of strangers, or lodgers for a night, and from its seclusion, convenient for study and retirement” (JFB, p.379).
2. Verses 11-13: “And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunemmite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.”
- a. On a subsequent occasion, while Elisha was lying on the bed resting, he directed his servant Gehazi to call for the woman.
 - b. The prophet asked her what he could do for her on account of the good care she had shown to him. Was there something he could say to the king in her behalf? Or to the captain of the army?
 - c. She replied that she dwelt “among mine own people,” indicating that all was well with her, that she was in need of nothing. There was no need for anyone to plead a cause in her behalf before the king or other great leader.
3. Verses 14-17: “And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.”
- a. The prophet asked what could then be done for the woman; his servant stated that she had no child, and that her husband was old. Apparently, there seemed to be no natural way for her to have a son, a blessing for which all Israelite women longed.
 - b. When the woman was called back, Elisha told her that in keeping with the natural time factor, she would have the privilege of embracing a son.
 - c. This seemed to be too good to be possible. She asked the prophet not to deceive her. But the woman conceived and bore a son, just as Elisha had promised. There was an obvious miracle involved in the process, in a similar way to the conception and birth of Isaac had been.

C. 2 Kings 4:18-37: The Shunemmite’s Child Raised from the Dead.

1. Verses 18-20: “And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died.”
 - a. When the child had lived for a number of years, but was not yet a man, he went out into the field where his father was with the reapers.
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- b. He suddenly cried out to his father, “My head, my head.” The father directed one of the servants to take him to his mother. The mother held her son in her lap until noon, when he died.
 2. Verses 21-24: “And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* well. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.”
 - a. She then placed his body on the bed of the man of God, and asked her husband to send a worker and an ass to her so that she could go to the man of God. Her husband did not have the faith of this great woman, who knew that Elisha might be able to do something about her dead son.
 - b. The husband wanted to know why she wanted to see the prophet, since this was not the new moon or sabbath, when his services might be needed for religious purposes. She told him that all was well, that he need not be concerned with the mission. Did her husband know that his son was dead? Clarke suggested that he did not know. In either case, she intended to see Elisha and learn whether he could help her.
 - c. The good lady told the servant boy not to slack up on the speed on her account, unless she told him. She wanted to make all haste to get to the prophet.
 3. Verses 25-28: “So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunemmite: Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it* well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she answered, *It is* well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?”
 - a. She found the man of God at mount Carmel. Elisha saw her while she was a great way off; he knew who she was even at that distance.
 - b. He told Gehazi to run to meet her, and inquire what was the trouble. He could know that her visit was not a mere social call. Gehazi was to ask if all was well with her, with her husband, and with her son. She replied that all was well.
 - c. Her faith was so strong that even the death of her beloved son did not weaken it. If God could give her a son through his miraculous power he exercised by Elisha, she evidently thought that he could likewise raise her son up from the dead. It is certainly possible that she knew of the resurrection of the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24).
 - d. Reaching Elisha, she took hold of the prophet’s feet. Gehazi tried to push her away, but was told to leave her alone, since her soul was clearly vexed within her, and the Lord had not given him the reason for that turmoil.
 - e. The good lady reminded the prophet how she had asked him not to deceive her when he promised that she would have a son. “The Shunemmite had not sought a son from the prophet—her child was in every respect the free gift of God. Was she then allowed to rejoice in the possession for a little, only to be pierced with sorrow by seeing the corpse of the cherished boy?” (JFB, p.380). She had been given her heart’s desire in the birth of the son, but now her heart was crushed by the sudden death of that son. She chided the prophet for giving her this joy for a short time, but then destroy it by allowing the child to die.
 4. Verses 29-32: “Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon
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the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed.”

- a. Elisha ordered Gehazi to take his staff and hurry to the lady’s house, and lay the staff upon the face of the child. His mission was so important and haste was so necessary that he was not to salute any man or answer any man’s salute. The woman vowed not to leave the prophet, but she could not stay away from her dead son, especially if some miraculous power might raise him from the dead in her absence. She was accompanied by the prophet as she went back home.
 - b. “He wished to teach the Shunemmite, who obviously placed too great dependence upon him, a memorable lesson to look to God. By sending his servant forward to lay his staff on the child, he raised her expectation, but at the same time taught her that his own help was unavailing—‘there was neither voice nor hearing’” (JFB, p.380).
 - c. “It could not be that Elisha himself expected his staff to raise to life the widow’s child, for he must have known well that if he set about anything in his own strength, or expected anything from the means, without looking directly to God in and through the means, he would be rebuked, and left without success. But the act of Gehazi was allowed to fail, in order to free the Shunemmite, and the people of Israel at large, of the superstitious notion of supposing a miraculous virtue resided in any *person*, or in any *rod*, and that it was only through earnest prayer and faith in the power of God, and for his glory, that this and every miracle was to be performed” (JFB, p.381).
 - d. At the woman’s house, Gehazi reported that the child was dead, his body was on the prophet’s bed, and did not awaken when the staff was placed upon his face.
5. Verses 33-37: “He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunemmite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.”
- a. Entering into the room, Elisha closed the door; only the prophet and the dead lad were present. He prayed unto the Lord. Afterwards, he stretched himself upon the body of the boy. They child’s body grew warmer.
 - b. “He then turned around, *i.e.* turned away from the boy, went once up and down in the room, and bowed himself over him again; whereupon the boy sneezed seven times, and then opened his eyes. This raising of the dead boy to life does indeed resemble the raising of the dead by Elijah (1 Kings 17:20ff); but it differs so obviously in the manner in which it was effected that we may see at once from this that Elisha did not possess the double measure of the spirit of Elijah. It is true that Elijah stretched himself three times upon the dead child, but at his prayer the dead returned immediately to life, whereas in the case of Elisha the restoration to life was a gradual thing. And they both differ essentially from the raising of the dead by Christ, who recalled the dead to life by one word of his omnipotence (Mark 5:39-42; Luke 7:13-15; John 11:43,44), a sign that he was the only-begotten Son of God...” (Keil, pp.313f).
 - c. The prophet told Gehazi to call the Shunemmite. When she came, he told her to take up her son. She entered the room, fell before the prophet’s feet and took up her son and went out, undoubtedly filled
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with joy and amazement.

D. 2 Kings 4:38-41: Death in the Pot!

1. Verses 38-39: “And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not.”
 - a. On a trip to Gilgal, during a famine in the land, Elisha told his servant to set the great pot on the ground, and seethe pottage for the prophets. One of the prophets went into the field to gather some herbs for the pot. “The seethed pottage consisted of meat cut into small pieces, mixed with rice or meal, and vegetables” (JFB, p.381).
 - b. This unnamed person found a wild vine, from which he gathered a lap full of wild gourds. These he shredded into the pot. No one knew these were poisonous. Ignorance can mean death—to the body and to the soul! Cf. Romans 10:1-3.
2. Verses 40-41: “So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O *thou* man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.”
 - a. As the food was served, they quickly cried out a warning: “O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!” There was some kind of poison in the wild gourds which had been picked.
 - b. Elisha called for someone to bring meal, which he cast into the pot. There was nothing miraculous about the meal itself, but used by the prophet, empowered by the might of God, the meal removed the poisonous substance in the food.

E. 2 Kings 4:42-44: Miraculous Meal for a Hundred Men.

1. Verse 42: “And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.”
 - a. This was an event that occurred on yet another occasion, and reports on an additional miracle God wrought through Elisha. A certain man from Baalshalisha bought twenty loaves of barley bread and full ears of grain to the prophet.
 - b. The items brought represented the firstfruits of the new harvest. The previous passage reported that a famine was on the land; this passage indicates that the famine was about to end since the new crop was now being harvested.
 - c. “Elisha ordered this present to be given to the people, *i.e.* to the pupils of the prophets who dwelt in one common home, for them to eat; and when his servant made this objection: ‘How shall I set this (this little) before a hundred men?’ he repeated the command, ‘Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus hath the Lord spoken: They will and leave’” (Keil, p.316).
 2. Verses 43-44: “And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*. So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.”
 - a. The prophet knew some things ahead of time. He knew that God would multiply the loaves so as to feed all of those present, and there would still be food remaining.
 - b. This miracle was a forerunner of the greater miracles Christ wrought in which he fed thousands of
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people.

- 1) Matthew 14:15-21: "And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."
 - 2) Matthew 15:31-39: "Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala."
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2 KINGS 5

A. 2 Kings 5:1-7: Naaman the Syrian General.

1. Verse 1: "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper.*"
 - a. Naaman is depicted in the passage as being a great man in more than one way. He was regarded highly by the king of Syria, he was mighty in valor, and an honorable man.
 - b. Ancient Jewish commentators thought the Syrian king was Ben-hadad, who had defeated the forces of Ahab and Jehoshaphat when they tried to wrest Ramoth-gilead from the control of the Syrians. The deliverance (victory) which is attributed to Naaman here, may be the one described in 1 Kings 22.
 - c. The text says that God gave Naaman the victory. This fits with the supposition that the battle named is that of 1 Kings 22, for God enabled the Syrians to defeat Ahab. "Jehovah, the God of Israel, is here represented as guiding the destinies of a heathen kingdom—not a mere local deity, as idolaters placed some one or other of their numerous divinities over certain provinces; but the great Being whose superintending providence is over all the nations of the earth" (JFB, p.382).
 - 1) Daniel 4:32: "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."
 - 2) Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - d. Much is said about Naaman by way of honor and success, but the final thought all but nullifies the good things. He was a leper. His tremendous successes, fame, honor, and wealth could do nothing to remove this incurable scourge. Similarly, neither honor, honesty, wealth, popularity, morality, nor other such condition, can remove the guilt of sin.
2. Verses 2-3: "And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."
 - a. During the time frame involved in this section of Israel's history, the Syrians frequently invaded Palestine by sending relatively small bands of warriors, to attack and capture people and goods. In the present case, they had taken a captive from Israel a little girl, who became a servant to the wife of Naaman. Most likely a number of years had passed since she was taken from her native land.
 - b. Obviously, this Jewish maid was well-treated by Naaman's household; she spoke with genuine concern over her master's condition, expressing her desire that he could be with the prophet in Israel, being confident that the prophet could cleanse the dreaded disease.

3. Verses 4-5: “And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment.”
 - a. Naturally, word quickly came to Naaman regarding what the Israelite servant had said. The king of Syria also learned of the statement; perhaps Naaman reported it to him.
 - b. The king of Syria gladly volunteered to send his general to Israel, along with a letter addressed to the king of Israel. The letter would state the cause of the visit, and would request permission to see the prophet and directions as to how to find him.
 - c. Naaman took with him ten talents of silver, a sizeable amount of gold, and ten changes of clothing. Wealth was measured by these things, along with lands and houses. Ancient Biblical measurements are difficult to compare to modern measurements, but obviously, the amount of wealth represented by the items listed would be great.
4. Verses 6-7: “And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.”
 - a. The king of Syria instructed Naaman to take the letter to the king of Israel; the letter stated (as given in this passage) that the bearer of the communication was being sent to the king of Israel in order that “thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.” Evidently, the Syrians thought that the king of Israel would be in charge of the operation, even though he might use the prophet to do the miracle.
 - b. The king of Israel (possibly Jehoram) misunderstood the purpose of the mission. He rent his clothes in agitation, declaring that the king of Syria was only looking for some pretext to start a war. He desperately asked whether they thought he was God, and had the power to kill a man and then raise him from the dead. It seems that the king had learned of the resurrection of the Shunemmite’s son.

B. 2 Kings 5:8-14: Naaman Cleansed of Leprosy.

1. Verse 8: “And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.”
 - a. Somehow Elisha learned of the king’s dilemma. He sent word to the king, asking why he had rent his garment. In other words, there was no reason for such anxiety.
 - b. The message also asked the king to direct Naaman to the prophet, and it would be then known that there was indeed a prophet in Israel. This was no boast on Elisha’s part, for he knew quite well that God was able to do many wondrous things through his prophets.
 2. Verses 9-10: “So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.”
 - a. Naaman went as directed to the house where Elisha the prophet was abiding. He and his men came to the front entrance of the house.
 - b. The prophet did not even come out to the great man, but sent a message advising him to go to the Jordan River, and dip himself seven times in its waters; the result would be that his flesh would be restored, his leprosy would be removed.
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3. Verses 11-12: “But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.”
 - a. Naaman was enraged (1) because the prophet did not deign to come out to converse with him personally, and (2) because the method by which he was to be cleansed was not in keeping with his own thinking.
 - b. The great man thought that the prophet would come out to him, wave his hand over the afflicted flesh, and remove the disease. He was used to the exaggerated displays of his pagan religion, which placed emphasis on outward rites and exhibitions. The simplicity of God’s methodology was too unpretentious to suit him.
 - c. Another problem Naaman had with Elisha’s instructions involved the prophet’s choice of rivers. Conceding the proposition that washing in a river was necessary, he argued that the rivers Abana and Pharpar, at Damascus, were far superior to all the waters of Israel. He thought the prophet should have sent him home to dip in one of these greater rivers.
 - d. Rejecting the mandate of the prophet, which in reality was from God, Naaman went away in a rage. As long as he raged, he remained disobedient; as long as he remained disobedient, he retained his leprosy. It is not man’s prerogative to question God’s orders.
 - e. Abana:
 - 1) “River in Damascus in Syria. In his anger Naaman wanted to wash here rather than in the dirty Jordan (2 Kings 5:12). Many Hebrew manuscripts, the Septuagint and Targums call the river the Amana. See Song of Solomon 4:8. Its modern name is Barada, and it travels swiftly from snow-capped Mount Hermon through Damascus to end in a marsh” (Holman PC Bible Dictionary).
 - 2) “The Abanah is identified with the Chrysorroas (‘golden stream’) of the Greeks, the modern Nahr Barada (the ‘cold’), which rises in the Anti-Lebanon, one of its sources, the Ain Barada, being near the village of Zebedani, and flows in a southerly and then southeasterly direction toward Damascus. A few miles southeast of Suk Wady Barada (the ancient Abila; see ABILENE) the volume of the stream is more than doubled by a torrent of clear, cold water from the beautifully situated spring 'Ain Fijeh (Greek pege, ‘fountain’), after which it flows through a picturesque gorge till it reaches Damascus, whose many fountains and gardens it supplies liberally with water. In the neighborhood of Damascus a number of streams branch off from the parent river, and spread out like an opening fan on the surrounding plain. The Barada, along with the streams which it feeds, loses itself in the marshes of the Meadow Lakes about 18 miles East of the city. The water of the Barada, though not perfectly wholesome in the city itself, is for the most part clear and cool; its course is picturesque, and its value to Damascus, as the source alike of fertility and of charm, is inestimable” [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft].
 - 3) McGarvey gives this first-hand description of the Abana:
 - a) “We had not ridden far before the rippling rivulet crossed our road and emptied its waters into a swift-rolling river, and we found ourselves on the right bank of the famous Abana of Scripture, called the Barada by the Arabs. The valley through which it flows is as narrow as the one by which we had approached it, being often not more than 100 yards wide, while a naked mountain wall, several hundred feet high, rises above it on either hand. By this pass the Abana makes its way through the mountain. Its descent is very rapid and its current remarkably swift, but so few are the obstructions in its bed that it rolls on in silence, and one might ride along its bank in the night and hear scarcely a sound to indicate its presence. It passes from side to side

of the narrow valley, and we cross it frequently on well-constructed stone bridges. We noticed, too, that in many places the side of the road was guarded against it by walls of wood or stone, lest, in high water, it should wash the road away. The growth along its banks is made to grow tall and slim in order to furnish long poles rather than heavy timber. Occasionally, however, we saw groves of apricots and other fruit-trees” (*Lands of the Bible*, p.551).

- b) “Instead of following the turnpike to Beirut, we turned from it to the right in order to visit the ruins of Baalbec and the cedars of Lebanon, and on our way to the former place we called at the wonderful fountain which forms the principal source of the river Abana. It is found on the northern edge of the same narrow gorge in the mountain through which we followed the bank of the river in approaching Damascus, but it is some miles higher up than the point at which we struck the river-bank. We reached it about noon, and spent an hour or two in the dense and delightful shade which surrounds it. It is really a river bursting up in a perpendicular line from the deep bowels of the earth, and flowing off with a volume of water which would entitle it to the name of a river even in America. The current rushes up with such force and from such a depth that the fountain cannot be fathomed. I tried to sink heavy stones in it; but when I cast in one as large as my head, dashing it down with all my strength, it sank only a few feet ere it was drifted aside and lodged on the verge of the well-like opening. Whether the volume of water is greater or less than that of the spring at Dan we could not determine with accuracy; but the latter is the only other fountain seen in our travels at all comparable to it. The water is very cold, and is as clear as crystal” (ibid, p.560).

f. Pharpar:

- 1) “A river associated with Damascus (2 Kings 5:12). The river is perhaps the Nahr el 'A'waj which flows from Mount Hermon, passing about ten miles south of Damascus, or else the Nahr Taura” (Holman PC Bible Dictionary).
 - 2) “Pharpar (swift or else crooked). One of the chief rivers of Syria, eight miles from Damascus 2 Kings 5:12); the Awaj, as the Abana is the Baruda. The ridge jebel Aswad separates Pharpar from Damascus. Pharpar rising on the S.E. side of Hermon ends in the bahret Hijaneh, the most southern of the three lakes or swamps of Damascus, due E. 40 miles from its source. Smaller than the Barada, and sometimes dried up in its lower course, which the Barada never is” [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by Biblesoft].
4. Verse 13: “And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?”
- a. In lowly servants is often to be found great wisdom. Naaman’s servants told him that if the prophet had told him to do some great thing, perhaps requiring courage, some strenuous activity, or some highly significant operation, he would have done that gladly.
 - b. The wisdom is seen in the servant’s counsel was that he ought to happily do the thing required, for after all, it did not place any great demand on his time or energy; it only tested his trust in the word of the prophet.
5. Verse 14: “Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”
- a. Naaman quickly perceived that the servant spoke wisdom. He proceeded to the Jordan River; he entered its waters; he dipped himself seven times; and his flesh was so cleansed that it was as pure as that of a little child. A great miracle had occurred!
 - b. There was no supernatural powers in the waters of the river; there was nothing so special about the

waters of Jordan that it was the only river that could have been chosen. There was nothing about the character of Naaman that earned him the right to the cleansing. He was cleansed when his faith led him to fully obey the conditions stated by the prophet.

6. Naaman made several obvious mistakes, which many people of our age also make. If we can see those mistakes, and see their modern parallel, perhaps we can help people avoid the errors of Naaman.
 - a. Some think that one church is as good as another.
 - 1) But all the churches of men are wrong about various features of the Lord's pattern for the church: in organization, in names by which it is known, and the rules of faith it follows.
 - 2) None of the churches of men are known by the Bible.
 - a) Psalms 127:1: "A Song of degrees for Solomon. Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain."
 - b) Matthew 15:13: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."
 - c) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 3) One river was not as good as another in God's plan for Naaman; one church is not as good as another in God's plan for our age.
 - b. Some think that salvation is by faith only, without obedience.
 - 1) Faith only is a dead faith: "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"....Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only....For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:14, 24, 26).
 - 2) Naaman believed that the prophet could guide him into being cleansed from his leprosy, but as long as he did not act on that faith, he retained his leprosy.
 - 3) It was essential for Naaman to obey the Lord, which required that he dip seven times in Jordan. He was not cleansed until he obeyed the instructions. Compare 2 Kings 5:10-14 with:
 - a) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - c. Some think that they can pray for salvation, and God will grant their request directly from heaven, without any act of obedience. This could not be done in Naaman's case, and it will not be done in our case today.
 - d. Some think that sprinkling or pouring water over the subject is New Testament baptism.
 - 1) But baptism (by definition and description) is a burial in water.
 - a) Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."
 - b) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in

newness of life.”

- 2) Would Naaman have been cleansed if someone had brought a cup of water from Jordan and applied it to him? We know the answer to that! Does it matter how we are baptized as long as we receive what is called *baptism*? Ask Naaman! The only thing that constitutes New Testament baptism is what God says is New Testament baptism. He shows that it is only immersion.
 - e. Some think that instrumental music in worship is all right as Christian worship.
 - 1) But the only kind of music God authorizes as worship is singing. He did not authorize us to play an instrument, hum, or whistle; he authorized us to sing:
 - a) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - b) Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) We are not permitted to go beyond the teachings of God's word if we expect to receive the approval of God:
 - a) Mark 7:7: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
 - b) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - d) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
 - 3) Paul kept back nothing when he instructed people (Acts 20:20,27); but he said nothing about instrumental music in worshipping God.
 - f. Some think that taking the Lord's supper only once a year, once a quarter, or once a month is all that is necessary. But the New Testament teaches that it is to be eaten on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; cf. 11:20); every week has a first day, we are to eat it every first day.
 - g. Some think that a Christian cannot fall away and be lost.
 - 1) But some did fall away: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (1 Tim. 1:19-20; cf. 5:19-20; Acts 5:1-11).
 - 2) Warnings are given to us about falling, which would be useless if such were impossible:
 - a) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - b) Hebrews 4:11: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."
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- h. In each of the above situations, an appeal to Naaman's case is most instructive. His story teaches very plainly that unless we follow God's word precisely and fully, he will not bestow the promised blessings upon us. Obedience is essential! Matthew 7:21-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 22:14; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 10:16.

C. 2 Kings 5:15-19: Naaman Vows to Worship only God.

1. Verses 15-16: "And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now there-fore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused."
 - a. After obeying the voice of the prophet, and subsequently receiving the miracle of cleansing, the great man Naaman showed his real greatness. He returned to the prophet and confessed that the God of Israel was the only God! Here is the case of a real historical individual who believed in the living God. Later, in the days of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, a man known to history, acknowledged his faith in Jehovah.
 - b. Naaman felt a debt of gratitude to Elisha. He asked the prophet to receive a reward for what he had done. Though Naaman urged him to take the proffered reward, Elisha steadfastly refused to accept it. He had all he needed for his daily sustenance; he did not want to give the impression that he had acted in order to be rewarded by worldly treasures; he did not want anyone to think that God's bounties could be obtained by earthly wealth.
 - c. "But to show that he was not actuated by the mercenary motives of the heathen priests and prophets, Elisha, though he accepted presents on other occasions (ch. 4:42), respectfully but firmly declined them on this, being desirous that the Syrians should see the piety of God's servants, and their superiority to all worldly and selfish motives in promoting the honour of God and the interests of true religion" (JFB, p.383).
 - d. We are told that Catholic priests will "say a prayer" for some sick person, provided someone will pay their fee! How far removed from the spirit of godliness as revealed in the Bible this disposition is! When one deviates from God's standard in even one "small" matter, there is no logical stopping place.
 2. Verse 17: "And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD."
 - a. Naaman requested that he be permitted to take two mule-loads of earth from Israel, to carry with him back to Damascus. Back home, he vowed he would offer no sacrifice to any of the idols of heathenism, but only to the God of Israel.
 - b. Clarke suggests another possible meaning. He thought it possible that Naaman was asking that the servants of Elisha should take "two mule-loads of earth" (two loads of gold, silver and garments). This highly figurative use of the expression is neither required nor expected by the context. It is therefore clear that the obvious meaning of the statement is the one to be accepted.
 - c. "It is very evident from Naaman's explanation, 'for thy servant,' etc., that he wanted to take a load of earth with him out of the land of Israel, that he might be able to offer sacrifice upon it to the God of Israel, because he was still a slave to the polytheistic superstition, that no god could be worshipped in a proper and acceptable manner except in his own land, or upon an altar built of the earth of his own land. And because Naaman's knowledge of God was still adulterated with superstition, he was not yet prepared to make an unreserved confession before men of his faith in Jehovah as the only true God, but hoped that Jehovah would forgive him if he still continued to join outwardly in the worship of idols, so far as his official duty required" (Keil, p.320).
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3. Verses 18-19: “In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.”
- a. Naaman asks that the prophet be longsuffering with him when he gets back to Damascus, and is required to accompany his master (the king of Syria) into the temple of Rimmon. It was necessary that those who entered the temple to bow; he admitted that he would bow, but not from reverence to the idol (Rimmon).
 - b. He would be required to be with the king, that the king would “lean on my hand.” “The words ‘and he supports himself upon my hand’ are not to be understood literally, but are a general expression denoting the service which Naaman had to render as the aide-de-camp to his king (cf. ch. 7:2,17)” (Keil, p.321).
 - c. Elisha told him to go in peace, “wishing the departing Syrian the peace of God upon the road, without thereby either approving or disapproving the religious conviction which he had expressed. For as Naaman had not asked permission to go with his king into the temple of Rimmon, but had simply said, might Jehovah forgive him or be indulgent with him in this matter, Elisha could do nothing more, without a special command from God, than commend the heathen, who had been brought to belief in the God of Israel as the true God by the miraculous cure of his leprosy, to the further guidance of the Lord and of his grace” (Keil, p.321).
 - d. Rimmon:
 - 1) “Place and divine name meaning, ‘pomegranate.’ 1. Chief god of Syria, also called Hadad. Naaman worshiped Rimmon in Damascus (2 Kings 5:18). 2. Town allotted to tribe of Judah (Josh. 15:32) but then given to Simeon (19:7; compare 1 Chron. 4:32). Early translations and many modern interpreters read En-rimmon in all occurrences. It is modern Khirbet er-Ramamin two miles south of Lahav. Zechariah 14:10 described it as the southern boundary of God's new exalted kingdom. See En-rimmon. 3. A Levitical city in Zebulun (Josh. 19:13; 1 Chron. 6:77), probably the original reading for present Dimnah (Josh. 21:35). See Dimnah. It is present Rummaneh, six miles northeast of Nazareth. 4. A rock near Gibeah to where the people of Benjamin fled from vengeful Israelites (Judg. 20:45-47), modern Rammun four miles east of Bethel. 5. Father of Rechab and Baanah, who killed Saul's son Ish-Bosheth (2 Sam. 4:2,9)” (Hol-man PC Bible Dictionary).
 - 2) “An idol worshipped by the Syrians of Damascus (2 Kings 5:18). The name appears in Hadad Rimmon. From ruwm, ‘the most high’; as El-ion (Selden, Gesenius, etc.). Others from Hebrew rimmown, a ‘pomegranate,’ sacred to Venus; the fertilizing principle in nature; tree worship anciently having prevailed, a perverted relic of the tradition of Eden's tree of life. Hadadrimmon may be the full name, from Hadad the sun god and Rimmon the pomegranate ripened in the autumn” [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by Biblesoft].
 - 3) “A deity worshipped by the Syrians of Damascus, where there was a temple or house of Rimmon (2 Kings 5:18). Traces of the name of this god appear also in the proper names Hadadrimmon and Tabrimmon, but its signification is doubtful. Serarius, quoted by Selden (De Dis Syris, 2, 10), refers it to the Heb. rimmon, a pomegranate, a fruit sacred to Venus, who is thus the deity worshipped under this title (comp. Pomona, from pomum). Ursinus (Arboretum Bibl. cap. 32, 7) explains Rimmon as the pomegranate, the emblem of the fertilizing principle of nature, the personified natura naturans, a symbol of frequent occurrence in the old religions (Bahr, Symbolik, 2, 122). If this be the true origin of the name, it presents us with a relic of the ancient tree worship of the East, which we know prevailed in Palestine” [McClintock & Strong, electronic version].

D. 2 Kings 5:20-27: The Sin and Punishment of Gehazi.

1. Verse 20: “But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.”
 - a. Gehazi, demonstrating his love for worldly gain, reasoned within himself concerning the events just past. Elisha has turned down the reward Naaman offered him for cleansing his leprosy. He decided that he would overtake the departing company, and accept the reward for his own use.
 - b. Inspiration is clearly evident in the historian’s report. How else could one living perhaps several years later be able to know what occupied a man’s mind? Compare: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11).
 - c. Luke 12:15: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
 2. Verses 21-22: “So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is* all well? And he said, All *is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.”
 - a. When Naaman saw Gehazi running in pursuit, he stopped his chariot and dismounted to meet him. He recognized him as servant to Elisha. He perceived that something must be amiss, so that was his first question.
 - b. Gehazi replied that all was well, but that two young men from among the prophets had just arrived from mount Ephraim, and that asked that they be given a talent of silver and two sets of clothes. This was a devious falsehood; he was making the request for himself.
 - c. Mount Ephraim was likely the location where a band of the young prophets were situated. They have been named as being also at Bethel and Jericho (2 Kings 2:1-8).
 3. Verses 23-24: “And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him. And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.”
 - a. Naaman was a most generous man, who was motivated by genuine gratitude for what Elisha had done for him. Instead of one talent of silver, he urged two talents, along with the two changes of garments.
 - b. The Syrian placed the gifts in two bags and laid them upon two of his servants. These two servants carried the gifts, which had considerable weight, before Gehazi. When they came to a tower, he stored the two bags in the house, and dismissed the servants to return to Naaman.
 - c. “The respectful courtesy to Elisha, shown in the person of his servant, and the open-handed liberality of his gifts, attest the fulness of Naaman’s gratitude; while the lie, the artful management in dismissing the bearers of the treasure, and the deceitful appearance before his master, as if he had not left the house, give a most unfavourable impression of Gehazi’s character” (JFB, p.394).
 - d. The tower was some unidentified citadel (NKJ). Keil refers to it as a hill which stood before the city.
 4. Verse 25: “But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.”
 - a. Gehazi entered the house where Elisha was, and stood before his master as though he had not been out of the room.
 - b. Elisha knew what had transpired. He brought up the subject by asking him where he had been. The
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man replied that he had gone no where. One lie most often requires another to cover up the first.

5. Verses 26-26: "And he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow."
 - a. The prophet stated that his heart had been with Gehazi when Naaman dismounted from his chariot to meet him. Gehazi had seen enough of the miraculous activities of Elisha to know he could not deceive him in such a matter. Of course, the Lord revealed the information to the prophet and led him to announce the punishment to be applied.
 - b. Elisha stated by his rhetorical question that it was not the time for them to receive money, garments, oliveyards, vineyards, sheep, oxen, menservants, and maidservants. In a time when there were so many false prophets, seething with covetousness, the true prophets must make sure to give no one a reason to accuse them of such corrupt designs. In our day, when many are pretending to preach the gospel, we must make sure that we do not follow their evil ways, giving no just cause to the enemy to speak evil of our great work.
 - c. The penalty for his lying and covetousness was to become a leper throughout the rest of his earthly life. Not only that, but his descendants would also be plagued with this awful scourge. Gehazi left the presence of Elisha as a leper, as white as snow. Compare:
 - 1) Exodus 4:6: "And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as snow."
 - 2) Numbers 12:10: "And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, *she was* leprous."
 - d. "It was not too harsh a punishment that the leprosy taken from Naaman on account of his faith in the living God, should pass to Gehazi on account of his departure from the true God. For it was not his avarice only that was to be punished, but the abuse of the prophet's name for the purpose of carrying out his selfish purpose, and his misrepresentations of the prophet" (Keil, pp.322f).
 - e. Why were the descendants of Gehazi afflicted with leprosy? Does this mean that God punished the innocent? Since the Bible is God's word, and its depiction of its author as infinitely good, we may know that every action of God is just and good.
 - 1) First, the text does not say that every one of Gehazi's descendants was afflicted with leprosy. It does not say that those who had the disease were born with it. It does not say that God sent the disease upon them by supernatural act.
 - 2) The disease was sent upon Gehazi as punishment for his sins of lying and coveteousness. The guilt of the sins pertained only to Gehazi (Ezek. 18:20). His descendants suffered from the consequences of his evil deeds; they did not share his guilt.
 - 3) If a man is a criminal, the guilt of his crimes pertains only to him, but there are consequences his family must endure. If the head of the family is sent to prison, his wife and children will doubtless suffer certain privations because of his absence.
 - 4) Virtually every sin has an effect on others, even though they may be innocent victims. When the Israelites fell into idolatry, they faced God's wrath. The generation that was carried off into captivity in Babylon paid a heavy price for their rebellion, and their offspring for the next few generations suffered immensely, although they may have been totally innocent. Compare: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God,

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me" (Ex. 20:5).

- 5) The text does not state that Gehazi's afflicted descendants were given their leprosy by God's miraculous power; it merely says that they (some of them) would have leprosy. It is most likely that they contracted the disease by their association with Gehazi.
 - 6) In no case can God be charged with cruelty by the affliction of Gehazi's descendants.
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2 KINGS 6

A. 2 Kings 6:1-7: The Ax-Head that Floated.

1. Verses 1-2: “And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.”
 - a. The young prophets who sat at Elisha’s feet were now so numerous that their common residence had become too small for ordinary comfort. They requested permission to erect a dwelling place at Jordan. The prophet gave his consent..
 - b. Previous chapters in the book have indicated that there were bands of these young prophets located at various places in the land. These bands are usually referred to as “schools of prophets” by many today. Evidently, the inspired prophets taught their younger assistants the word of God, instructing them so that they could teach the people.
2. Verses 3-4: “And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.”
 - a. One of the young prophets asked Elisha to accompany them in the move. He agreed to go with them. The prophet traveled around the country, spending time with the young prophets at the other places they were located.
 - b. “As the common dwelling-place had become too small for them they resolved, with Elisha’s consent to build a new house, and went, accompanied by the prophet, to the woody bank of the Jordan to fell the wood that was required for the building. The place where the common abode had become too small is not given...” (Keil, p.323).
3. Verses 5-7: “But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.”
 - a. As one of the young men was cutting down a tree, the ax head fell into the Jordan. Since the tool had been borrowed [literally, “begged”], and was quite valuable, the young man was greatly troubled by the loss. He had no way of paying for it.
 - b. Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water where the ax head had disappeared. The iron head floated to the surface, where it was easily retrieved.
 - c. “Although this means was used, it had no natural adaptation to make the iron swim. Besides, the Jordan is at Jericho so deep and rapid that there were a thousand chances to one against the stick falling into the hole of the axe-head. All attempts to account for the recovery of the lost implement on such a theory must be rejected. ‘The iron did swim’—only by the miraculous exertion of Elisha’s power” (JFB, p.385).
 - d. This miracle reminds us of the occasion when the Lord obtained a coin from the mouth of a fish. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee" (Matt. 17:27).

B. 2 Kings 6:8-12: Elisha Reveals the King of Syria’s Secret Plans.

1. Verse 8: “Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp.”
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- a. A state of war existed between Israel and Syria. The Syrian king invaded Israel, following a plan by which he hoped to catch the king of Israel in a trap. The plans were made in secret.
 - b. “This seems to have been a sort of guerilla warfare, carried on by predatory inroads on different parts of the country. Elisha apprised king Jehoram of the secret purposes of the enemy so, by adopting precautionary measures, he was always enabled to anticipate and defeat their attacks. The frequency of his disappointments having led the Syrian king to suspect some of his servants of carrying on a treacherous correspondence with the enemy, he was informed about Elisha, whose apprehension he forthwith determined to effect” (JFB, p.385).
2. Verses 9-10: “And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.”
- a. Elisha was given knowledge of the secret plan, obviously by divine action; this information he gave to the king, who used it to avoid the trap.
 - b. The king was able to avoid ambush on several occasions. The text indicated that Jehoram sent men to investigate the place Elisha indicated. It may be that he took possession of the location before the Syrians arrived to lay their ambush. In any case, the secret plan of the Syrian king was defeated each time by the information Elisha provided his king.
3. Verses 11-12: “Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.”
- a. The king of Syria, probably Ben-hadad (verse 24), demanded to know of his advisors, which of them had betrayed him to the Israelites. His secret plans were thwarted by Israel, which seemed to mean that Jehoram knew about them beforehand.
 - b. The Syrian king’s advisors stated that Elisha the prophet had a means of learning his secret plans; even the words he spoke in his bedchamber could the prophet learn. They may have meant that Elisha had spies everywhere or that, being a prophet, he obtained his information from God.
 - c. Obviously, the reputation of Elisha had spread far and wide. Miraculous feats are hard to keep from the public eye. Christ had to leave Israel and go into the borders of Tyre and Sidon in an attempt to find solitude from the pressing multitudes (Matt. 15).

C. 2 Kings 6:13-18: The Syrians Surround Dothan to Capture Elisha.

1. Verse 13: “And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan.”
 - a. The king figured that if he could capture Elisha, his secret operations against Israel would be unhindered, so he ordered his men to locate the prophet.
 - b. They reported, probably after sending spies into Israel, that Elisha was at Dothan.
 - 1) Dothan: “Place name of uncertain meaning, also known as Dothaim. A city of the tribe of Manasseh, west of the Jordan, northeast of Samaria, southeast of Megiddo, and now identified as Tell Dotha. It was located in an area less productive for agriculture and was traversed by roads used for commerce. Dothan is the area to which Joseph traveled to find his brothers (Gen. 37:17). From there, Joseph was sold to a caravan of Ishmaelites and carried to Egypt, following an ancient trade route over the Plain of Dothan to Egypt. Dothan was the place Elisha stayed (2 Kings 6:13). The king of Syria sought to capture Elisha by laying siege to the city. Elisha then led the Syrian army away from Dothan to Samaria and defeat. Dothan is 5 miles southwest of Genin, 11 miles northeast

of Samaria, and 13 miles north of Shechem. In 1953, excavations were begun by Joseph E. Free under the sponsorship of Wheaton College. Excavations of tell Dotha, an isolated mound, determined that there was occupation of the site from the end of the Chalcolithic Age through the Hellenistic Roman Period (3200 B.C. through A.D. 300-400) with a break from 700 to 330. It became a walled city about 3000 B.C. The importance of Dothan was its placement upon the roads in the hill country of Ephraim and the resulting commercial trade. It controlled all traffic going between the hills and the Jezreel Valley” (Holman, David M. Fleming).

- 2) “About twelve miles by the road a little east of north from Samaria, and about four miles farther from Shechem, is Dothan, the place near which Joseph was sold by his brethren, and in which was the prophet Elisha when it was surrounded by Syrian soldiers for the purpose of capturing him. In riding to it from either place many villages are passed, and some beautiful valleys. It is still known under the name *Tell Dothan* (the *heap of Dothan*). The site of the town is a hill about 200 feet high, isolated on every side except the north, where a narrow saddle about 100 feet high connects it with a still higher hill in that direction. On the summit is a plateau of about 40 acres, which has been artificially leveled....The slope of the hill on every side except the north is too steep for ascent on horseback. To the south about a mile and to the west about five miles there stretches a rich and beautiful valley, from one to one and a half miles wide, all cultivated in grain, and bordered by hills of moderate height. The word Dothan means two wells, and there they are in the valley south of the village, one a little to the right and the other to the left....The principal thoroughfare from the north in the direction of the Plain of Sharon, the very road which the Ishmaelite caravan to which Joseph was sold was traveling, passes along the western foot of the hill, and Captain Wilson found in the plain a number of jug-shaped cisterns answering to the pit in which Joseph was placed. Everything corresponds precisely to the scene of Joseph’s sale, and not less so to that of the attempted arrest of Elisha. The mountain that was full of horses and chariots of fire to the opened eyes of Elisha’s servant stands around on every side, and is not far away except to the west” (McGarvey, *Lands of the Bible*, pp.296f).
2. Verses 14-15: “Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?”
 - a. During the night, the king sent a large army to surround Dothan. It seems strange that he did not think that “he who could penetrate his secrets with respect to the Israelitish army, could inform himself of all his machinations against his own life” (Clarke, p.501). The king may have decided that Elisha learned of his military plans through some deeply embedded spy among his advisors or among his servants; or that if through some other source, he could still overcome that possibility with a highly-secret, strong, military operation.
 - b. Early the next morning, when Elisha’s servant began his daily tasks, he saw the Syrian host around the city, who despaired of escape. “This was a new servant, who had only been with him since Gehazi’s dismissal, and, consequently, had little or no experience of his master’s powers. His faith was easily shaken by so unexpected an alarm” (JFB, p.385).
 - c. Fear takes up the slack weak faith permits. Faith and fear are like light and darkness: to the extent one is present, the other is lacking. Intimidation is a favorite tool of the devil’s henchmen. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9).
3. Verses 16-17: ”And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened

the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

- a. Patient Elisha reassured his servant by stating that those on their side outnumbered those on the other side. The prophet knew something the servant did not: that God was able and willing to take miraculous action in behalf of his prophet. Today, he answers prayers through providential means, which while not supernatural, are nevertheless powerful and effective.
 - b. The prophet prayed that God might open the eyes of his servant to see the mighty supernatural force which he had assembled in defense of his prophet.
 - c. God answered the prayer, and the servant saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots, which surrounded Elisha. “The opening of the eyes, which Elisha prayed for, referred to the spirit, not to the body. The eye of faith sees the reality of the Divine presence and protection where all is vacancy or darkness to the ordinary eye. The horses and chariots were symbols of the Divine power...and their fiery nature denoted their supernatural origin; for fire, the most ethereal of earthly elements, is the most appropriate symbol of the Godhead” (JFB, p.385; cf. Keil, pp.325f).
 - d. “The sight was based upon Jacob’s vision (Gen. 32:2), in which he saw a double army of angels encamped around him, at the time when he was threatened with danger from Esau” (Keil, p.326). Jacob’s experiences included encounters with angels on more than one occasion; the two following episodes describes a couple of these cases:
 - 1) Genesis 28:12-15: "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, *I am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, *I am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of."
 - 2) Genesis 32:1-2: "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."
4. Verse 18: “And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.”
- a. When the Syrians made their attack, Elisha prayed for the Lord to smite them with blindness; this request was quickly granted. He had asked the Lord to grant “sight” to his servant, but now asks for blindness for the enemy. They could have been slain by the Lord’s powerful hand, but their lives were spared. After being blinded, they could easily have been overcome by the men of Dothan, but harming them was not in the plan.
 - b. When Elymas withstood Paul when the apostle was attempting to teach the Roman official of Cyprus, that enemy of truth was smitten with temporary blindness. "Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (Acts 13:9-12).

D. 2 Kings 6:19-23: Elisha Treats the Captured Syrians with Kindness.

1. Verses 19-20: “And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I

will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.”

- a. “When the enemy came down to Elisha, he prayed to the Lord that he would smite them with blindness; and when this took place according to his word, he said to them, This is not the way and this is not the city; follow me, and I will lead you to the man whom ye are seeking; and led them to Samaria, which was about four hours’ distance from Dothan, where their eyes were opened at Elisha’s prayer, so that they saw where they had been led” (Keil, p.326).
 - b. “This is considered by some as a falsehood or equivocation, like the falsehood of Abraham to Abimelech and Pharaoh, of Isaac to Pharaoh, or Rebekah and Jacob to Isaac, and many of the patriarchs. But the statement is so far true, that, as he had now left the place of his residence, they would not have got him by that road. But the ambiguity of his language was purposely framed to deceive them; and yet the deception must be viewed in the light of a stratagem, which has always been deemed lawful in war” (JFB, p.386).
 - c. But the ultimate purpose of the Syrians was to find the king of Israel. He was not at Dothan; he was in Samaria. The statement of Elijah was accurate, for he led the invaders to Samaria and into the presence of the king. The prophet kept his word to take them to the one they were really wanting to find. On arrival in Samaria, Elisha prayed that the Lord might open their eyes. Imagine their consternation to see they were in the very capital city of the enemy, and at their mercy.
2. Verses 21-22: “And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite *them*? shall I smite *them*? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them*: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.”
- a. When the king of Israel saw the band of Syrians, he asked Elisha whether he should smite them. He repeated the question twice. Notice the deep respect the king used in addressing Elisha. The prophet occupied a position to the king that a father has in reference to his son: he is the one possessing the authority.
 - b. Elisha plainly stated that these men were not to be harmed. He asked the king whether he would kill prisoners of war. Among civilized nations, prisoners of war are not executed, but treated with some measure of kindness. It is in the mutual interest of all warring nations to treat prisoners well.
 - c. Instead of killing them, they were to be given food and drink, and then be released to return to their master, the king of Syria.
 - d. “This was a humane advice; it was contrary to the usage of war to put war-captives to death in cold blood, even when taken at the point of the sword, much more those whom the miraculous power and providence of God had unexpectedly placed at his disposal. In such circumstances, kind and hospitable treatment was every way more becoming in itself, and would be productive of the best effects. It would redound to the credit of the true religion, which inspired such an excellent spirit into its professors; and it would not only prevent the future opposition of the Syrians, but make them stand in awe of a people who, they had seen, were so remarkably protected by a prophet of the Lord. The latter clause of v. 23 shows that these salutary effects were fully realized. A moral conquest had been gained over the Syrians” (JFB, p.386).
3. Verse 23: “And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.”
- a. “The king of Israel did as commanded and the result was good! These Syrian bands apparently so respected both God and the Israelites that they ‘came no more into the land of Israel.’ God’s way of
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fighting enemies and subduing them on this occasion taught his people a great lesson. War between these nations ceased for a time” (Gary Colley, ADL, p.147).

- b. The number of the Syrians soldiers is not given, but they comprised a sufficient force to surround the city of Dothan. They were given plenty of food and drink, and dismissed to return home.
- c. “Jehoram did not merely follow the letter of the prophet's direction, but understood its spirit and acted accordingly. The plundering bands which had been in the habit of ravaging the territory (2 Kings 5:2) ceased their incursions in consequence either of the miracle, or of the kind treatment which Elisha had recommended” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].

E. 2 Kings 6:24-33: The King of Israel Seeks to Kill Elisha.

1. Verses 24-25: “And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver.”
 - a. Heretofore, the Syrian incursions into Israel had been made with relatively small bands, who used guerilla-type tactics to terrorize the Israelites. This type of military operation ceased after the events just detailed, and for a time, Israel enjoyed a period of peace.
 - b. But the time came when Benhadad, king of Syria, decided to invade Israel. It may be that he was not the king when the preceding events occurred. This attack led to Samaria being besieged until extravagant prices were demanded for the lowliest kinds of food. Eighty pieces of silver was the current price for a donkey's head; a small amount of dove's dung sold for five pieces of silver. A cab was their smallest dry measure (see JFB, p.386).
 - c. “The ass was an unclean animal, so that it was not lawful to eat its flesh. Moreover the head of an ass is the most inedible part of the animal....According to Thenius, a quarter of a cab is...not quite ten Parisian cubic inches....The expression may be taken literally, since dung has been known to be collected for eating in times of terrible famine...but it may also be figuratively employed to signify a very miserable kind of food...” (Keil, pp.327f). A figurative interpretation is not required.
2. Verses 26-29: “And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.”
 - a. As the king made a tour of the city, walking upon the wall, a woman called out to him for help. He supposed that she was asking him to provide food, and answered her on that basis. He wanted to know where she thought he could find food; there was no food to be found on the threshing-floor nor any drink to be had from the winepress. He stated that if the Lord could not give her food, he surely could not do so.
 - b. Perceiving that her request was of a different nature, he asked what it was she wanted. The woman replied by describing a situation that had arisen. She and another woman had agreed to kill and eat their sons; she had given her son first, but when time came for the second woman to provide her son, she refused, and had hidden him.
 - c. Prophetic statements given centuries earlier predicted these dire circumstances.
 - 1) Leviticus 26:29: "And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat."

- 2) Deuteronomy 28:53: "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 28:57: "And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all *things* secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates."
3. Verses 30-31: "And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh. Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day."
- a. On hearing this grievous tale, the king rent his garment. As he proceeded along the wall, the people saw that he was wearing sackcloth underneath his royal clothes, next to the skin.
 - b. "Mourners (2 Sam. 3:31) and the prophets (Matt. 3:24) wore sackcloth—a large square piece of course cloth, wrapped round the person and fastened at the waist by a girdle. The common practice was to wear the sackcloth over the underdress—the more closely fitting tunic; and accordingly the words signifying putting on or off the sackcloth are the same which are used to gird or to loosen any external article of dress. This rough material was sometimes worn next the skin, and seems to betoken the depth of his mental distress. It is more than doubtful, however, if he was truly humbled on account of his own and the nation's sins, otherwise he would not have vowed vengeance on the prophet's life. The true explanation seems to be, that Elisha having counselled him not to surrender, with the promise, on condition of deep humiliation, of being delivered, and he having assumed the signs of contrition without receiving the expected relief, regarded Elisha, who had proved false and faithless, as the cause of all the protracted distress" (JFB, p.387).
 - c. The king vowed that the head of Elisha would be removed from his body by the end of that very day! "Elijah had probably advised that on no condition should the city be given up, and promised that God would deliver it, if they humbled themselves before him in sincere humility and prayed for his assistance. The king thought that he had done his part by putting on the hairy garment; and as the anticipated help had nevertheless failed to come, he flew into a rage, for which the prophet was to pay the penalty. It is true that this rage only proceeded from a momentary ebullition of passion, and quickly gave place to a better movement of his conscience. The king hastened after the messenger whom he had sent to behead Elisha, for the purpose of preventing the execution of the murderous command which he had given in the hurry of his boiling wrath (ver. 32); but it proves, nevertheless, that the king was still wanting in that true repentance, which would have sprung from the recognition of the distress as a judgment inflicted by the Lord. The desperate deed, to which his violent wrath had impelled him, would have been accomplished, if the Lord had not protected his prophet and revealed to him the king's design, that he might adopt defensive measures" (Keil, p.329).
4. Verses 32-33: "But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him? And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?"
- a. Elisha was in his house, in company with certain elders of the people. He announced to those there that the king had sent a man to behead him; the king himself would be behind the executioner. When the messenger arrived, the prophet directed them to hold him fast and secure the door.
 - b. By the time he had made this statement to the elders, the messenger came. The words at the conclusion
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of verse 33 were spoken by Elisha to the king, stating that the present troubles were sent by the Lord. “That utterance is apparently a response to an exhortation of the prophet to wait the Lord’s way and time of deliverance; and the import of the king’s answer is, that while he could not but acknowledge this evil, so heavily scourging the land, was from the Lord, he thought the condition of the kingdom was beyond remedy desperate, since mothers were appeasing the pangs of hunger with the flesh of their own children” (JFB, p.387).

2 KINGS 7

A. 2 Kings 7:1-2: Elisha Promises a Quick End to the Famine.

1. Verse 1: “Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.”
 - a. The context for this chapter begins at verse 24 of the previous chapter. Benhadad, king of Syria, had besieged Samaria, which resulted in a severe shortage of food. The worst sort of food was selling for atrocious charges.
 - b. Elisha was inspired to predict on the present occasion that by the same time the next day, a measure of fine flour would be selling for a small price; and two measures of barley would be available for the same small amount of money. This would be taking place at Samaria.
2. Verse 2: “Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.”
 - a. The king’s right-hand supporter responded with a contemptuous reply, asserting that God would have to open the windows of heaven to make such a thing possible. “So unlikely was this prediction to be fulfilled, that he thought God must pour out wheat and barley from heaven before it could have a literal accomplishment” (Clarke, p.504).
 - b. “The scoffing infidelity of this remark, which was a sneer against, not the prophet only, but the God he served, was justly and signally punished” (JFB, p.387). Elisha told the man that the prophecy would be fulfilled, but that this unbeliever would not eat thereof. Verse twenty shows that this very official was trodden down by the mad rush of the people who were running out of the city to get to the food.

B. 2 Kings 7:3-11: Four Leprous Men Discover the Syrians Had Abandoned the Siege.

1. Verses 3-5: “And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was* no man there.”
 - a. Meanwhile, four leprous men were stationed at the entrance gate of the city. They reasoned that if they remained where they were, they would starve to death; if they deserted to the Syrians, it was possible that they might be fed. The worse that could happen to them was that the enemy would slay them, which was preferable to dying the slow death of starvation.
 - b. Agreed on the plan, in the evening twilight, they made their way out to the Syrian camp, only to find it utterly deserted. That this was in the evening is seen from the fact that information came to the king during the night (verse 12), and the prophecy was set to be fulfilled the day after the prediction was made (“tomorrow”).
 - c. Lepers were required to live separate from the general population.
 - 1) Leviticus 13:46: "All the days wherein the plague *shall be* in him he shall be defiled; he *is* unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp *shall* his habitation *be*."
 - 2) Numbers 5:3: "Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell."

2. Verses 6-7: “For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life.”
 - a. God had taken action to frighten off the Syrian army. He caused them to hear a sound that appeared to be the noise of a great army in movement, including the sound of horses and chariots. Believing their ears, the Syrians reasoned that the Israelites had hired the Hittites and Egyptians to attack their besieging army.
 - b. During the same evening twilight in which the lepers had made their decision to desert to the Syrian forces, Benhadad’s army fled in complete disarray, leaving behind their tents, their animals, and everything else in the camp, and fled for their lives. They sincerely believed they were about to be attacked by a superior force.
 - c. God used their own natural fears against them. This plan was much to be preferred, from a humanitarian viewpoint, to wholesale slaughter. But in either case, God would have acted justly. This army had brought an untold amount of suffering upon the Israelites in Samaria. When God saw that the punishment against his people had been sufficient, he took the present action to bring relief.
 - d. McGarvey offers the following insightful information about Samaria:
 - 1) “Samaria is eight miles from Shechem by the road (six in an air-line) and due northwest. Its situation attests the military skill of Omri, the King of Israel, who bought the hill and built the city for the capital of his kingdom [1 Kings 16:24]. It also accounts for the fact that though the city was three times besieged within the Bible period by an overpowering army, it was never taken but once, and then after a siege of three years [1 Kings 20:1; 2 Kings 6:24; 17:5-6]. It is to the confidence which its inhabitants reposed in its strength that Amos alluded when he said, ‘Woe to them who are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria’ [Amos 6:1].
 - 2) “It was built on an isolated hill about 400 feet high, completely surrounded by an almost circular valley, and this again by a circle of mountains nearly all higher than Samaria. Its site might be compared to that of a conical swell in the centre of a deep saucer. The hill is ascended from the northeast by a steep slope, and the modern village, with a large and well-preserved *church* of the crusading period, is on the northeastern brow of the hill. The summit is now set in olive-trees and cultivated in grain. Terraces run around the hill from top to bottom, and on the second terrace from the top stand the remaining pillars of a colonnade built by Herod the Great, which once extended around the hill for a distance of 1000 yards. The terrace is about 50 feet wide, and the columns, of which about 80 are still standing, and many others are lying prostrate and broken, are 16 feet high. They are made of hard limestone.
 - 3) “There are many other relics of ancient structures on the slopes of the hill, and among them one on the northern side, consisting of about a dozen columns, forming a quadrangle, the probable remains of a temple erected by Herod in honor of Augustus Caesar. He rebuilt the city, adorned it with magnificent works, and called it *Sebaste*, the Greek word for *Augustus*, and it has retained that name in a corrupted form to the present day, the Arabs calling it *Sebustiyeh*.
 - 4) “Its summit is 1542 feet above the sea, and the highest point is near the southern brow. Standing there, the entire wall of surrounding mountains and the basin of the surrounding valley can be distinctly seen, and over the lower hill to the southwest the view extends to the Plain of Sharon and the sea....At the southeast curve of this valley the Valley of Shechem enters it, and at the southwest curve there is a broad opening through the hills, by which that valley passes on westward toward the sea.

5) “The author’s party traveled down that valley on their way to Casearea, and they saw along its floor some of the best preserved pieces of ancient paved road in all Palestine. It was doubtless in the vally immediately south of Samaria that the Syrian were encamped when they thought they heard the Egyptians and the Hittites coming upon them, and it was up that gap opening toward the sea that the enemy appeared to come. The Syrian retreat was toward the Jordan, and it probably led them up the Valley of Shechem, east of their camp andpast the city of Shechem [2 Kings 7:6,7,15]” (*Lands of the Bible*, pp.294-296).

3. Verse 8: “And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it*; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*.”
 - a. Entering the abandoned camp, the lepers went into a tent where they found food and drink. When they had satisfied their hunger and thirst, they collected silver, gold, and clothing as spoils; they went to another tent, and likewise took what they wanted. They concealed their loot.
 - b. There was nothing morally wrong with their taking the food and valuables. This was all abandoned property.
4. Verses 9-11: “Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household. So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within.”
 - a. The conscience of these four lepers began to stir. They remembered their fellow-citizens back in Samaria, who were yet starving. They reasoned that if they remained in the camp, someone else was bound to discover it had been abandoned, or else the Syrians might return.
 - b. They decided to wait no longer, but to return to the city with the good news that the Syrians were gone and had left plenty of food behind.
 - c. Approaching the gate of Samaria, they hailed the porter (the guard in charge), reporting that the Syrians were gone. The guards quickly brought the report to the king. All of this had taken place beginning at twilight of the preceding evening, just a few hours earlier.

C. 2 Kings 7:12-16: The King Hesitates to Believe the Good News.

1. Verse 12: “And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that *we be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.”
 - a. The king was a skeptical fellow, as well he should be in this case. He figured that the Syrians had devised a plan whereby they could lure the Israelites out of the city, then suddenly spring upon them and catch them alive. Alive, they could be sold or used as slaves.
 - b. How else could he account for the abandoned camp? He had rejected Elisha’s various prophecies, and had even sought to kill him. He never considered the possibility that God had taken a direct hand in the proceedings to remove the Syrians.
2. Verse 13: “And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.”
 - a. One of the king’s servants recommended that the five horses which remained should be used to

determine if the report was true or false. Five men on horseback could quickly investigate.

- b. The wording of the verse is difficult to understand. The most likely meaning is that the few horses that still survived would not long live if they were not used. If the king's idea was true and the horses were lost, they would be lost anyway if they remained in the city much longer.
3. Verses 14-16: "They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD."
- a. The king decided to send two horsemen to scout the enemy. They followed the trail of the Syrians all the way to Jordan, finding all sorts of garments and vessels which the fleeing soldiers had cast away in their haste to escape.
- b. The messengers returned and gave their report to the king. The king sent men to the Syrian tents to despoil it of what could be found there.
- c. In keeping with Elisha's prediction, that very day merchants were selling a measure of fine flour for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel.

D. 2 Kings 7:17-20: The King's Assistant Trampled.

1. Verses 17-18: "And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him. And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria."
- a. The same official who had spoken against Elisha's prophecy (verses 1-2) was placed in command of the gate. The wild rush of Israelites to leave the city to take food from the Syrian camp was so great that the official was crushed to death by the mob. His death fulfilled the secondary prediction Elisha gave, which stated that, not only would there be a plenteous supply of food the next day, but that this unbeliever who scoffed at God's prophecy would not live to partake of the bounty.
- b. The man was trampled to death at about the same time that Elisha had made the prediction twenty-four hours earlier. The official lived to see the food provided, but not long enough to enjoy it.
2. Verses 19-20: "And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died."
- a. "The exact fulfilment of this prediction appeared so memorable to the historian, that he repeats this prophecy in vers. 18-20 along with the event which occasioned it, and refers again to its fulfilment" (Keil, p.332).
- b. God's word is not to be doubted. His written word is not one bit less powerful than his spoken word.
 - 1) Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it."
 - 2) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

2 KINGS 8

A. 2 Kings 8:1-6: Elisha Warns the Shunammite Woman of a Famine.

1. Verses 1-2: "Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years."
 - a. "By the advice of Elisha, the woman whose son the prophet had restored to life (ch. 4:33) had gone with her family into the land of the Philistines during a seven years' famine, and had remained there seven years. The two verses are rendered by most commentators in the pluperfect, and that with perfect correctness....The object is not to relate a prophecy of Elisha of the seven years' famine, but what afterwards occurred, namely, how king Joram was induced by the account of Elisha's miraculous works to have the property of the Shunammite restored to her upon her application" (Keil, p.333).
 - b. In the following narrative, Gehazi is called before the king to give information regarding Elisha's supernatural activities. This likely means that the Shunammite's departure into Philistia and the seven years of famine occurred prior to the episode of Naaman (ch. 5). We were told of a famine in progress in 4:38.
 - c. While the events of the past few chapters were transpiring, the Shunammite and her household were sojourning among the Philistines. At the end of the famine, they returned to the land of Israel.
 2. Verses 3-4: "And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done."
 - a. When the famine ended, the Shunammite returned home and presented herself before the king to ask that her land and property be restored to her. "In consequence of her long-continued absence from the country, her possessions were occupied by her kindred, or had been confiscated to the crown. No statute in the law of Moses ordained that alienation..." (JFB, p.389).
 - b. At the time she approached the king, he was talking with Gehazi, Elisha's servant. It is almost certain that Gehazi was not at that time a leper, for he would not have been granted an audience with the king in that condition. This event must have preceded the cleansing of Naaman and the subsequent affliction of Gehazi with that dreaded disease.
 - c. Gehazi had been called before the king to provide information concerning Elisha's miracles. His supernatural works were widely known.
 3. Verses 5-6: "And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now."
 - a. In reporting Elisha's miracles, the most impressive was the resurrection of the Shunammite's dead son. As he was telling this story, the very woman whose son Elisha had raised presented herself to the king. The providence of God, although non-miraculous, is very impressive!
 - b. Gehazi told the king, "This woman is the very person I have been discussing!" When she made her request, the king quickly and gladly complied. We wonder whether he would have been favorable to
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her if he had not just learned of the resurrection of her son.

- c. The king appointed an officer of the court to ensure that her property was restored, even to the produce of her fields that was harvested during her absence.

B. 2 Kings 8:7-15: Elisha Visits Damascus.

1. Verse 7: “And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.”
 - a. Elisha journeyed to Damascus, the capital city of Israel’s most prominent enemy at the time. The prophet went there under the direction of the Lord, for the Syrians wanted to capture Elisha to prevent his assisting the king of Israel (ch. 6).
 - b. His mission in Damascus grew out 1 Kings 19:15: "And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria." This job was given to Elijah, but that prophet never made that trip; however, he did what God ordered through Elisha.
 - c. Benhadad the Syrian king was sick, and when he heard about the prophet’s presence, he sent a present to him.
 2. Verses 8-9: “And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?”
 - a. Benhadad’s present was taken to Elisha by the hand of Hazael, an aide to the king. Hazael was to find out from the prophet whether he would recover from the disease with which he was afflicted. We are not told whether the prophet accepted the gift. He refused Naaman’s presents.
 - b. Following the cleansing of Naaman, the general of the Syrian army, Elisha’s fame would have been widely known. It was natural that he would have been well-received
 - c. The present was immense, amounting to forty camel-loads of goods and merchandise. “The affair must be judged according to the Oriental custom, of making a grand display with the sending of presents, and employing as many men or beasts of burden as possible to carry them, every one carrying only a single article” (Keil, p.334). We have been known to wrap presents in a box far bigger than necessary, often in humor.
 3. Verses 10-11: “And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath showed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.”
 - a. Elisha said that Benhadad could recover but that he would surely die. This is not a contradiction, but means that the affliction the king presently suffered was not to be fatal, but nevertheless he was destined to die. The context shows that Benhadad died by the hands of Hazael.
 - b. The prophet fixed his countenance on Hazael, looking at him until the Syrian grew ashamed. “The stedfast, penetrating look of the prophet seemed to have convinced Hazael that his secret designs were known; and the deep emotions of Elisha were justified by the horrible atrocities, too common in ancient warfare, which that successful usurper committed in Israel (ch. 10:32; 13:3,4,22). Elisha’s prophecy of Hazael’s wickedness was a striking instance of the final effort to prevent the perpetration of that wickedness” (JFB, p.36-90).
 - c. Elisha, given a supernatural perception of the future, wept. The reason for the tears is stated plainly
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in the next verse.

4. Verses 12-13: “And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath showed me that thou *shalt be* king over Syria.”
 - a. Hazael asked Elisha why he broke into tears. The prophet said it was on account of the evil which Hazael would bring upon the Israelites. He specified that he would burn down the strong holds of Israel, slay their young men, dash to death the children, and rip open their pregnant women.
 - b. Hazael denied that he would do that, claiming that he was no dog. Compare: "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea" (1 Sam. 24:14). This expression denoted one of the lowest moral order, a base person unworthy of respect.
 - c. Elisha then plainly stated that the Lord had revealed to him that Hazael would become king in Syria and as king he would do the base deeds mentioned, which in fact he did perpetrate upon Israel.
 - 1) 2 Kings 10:32: "In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel."
 - 2) 2 Kings 13:3-4: "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them."
 - 3) 2 Kings 13:22: "But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz."
5. Verses 14-15: “So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me *that* thou shouldest surely recover. And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.”
 - a. Hazael returned to Benhadad, and told the king the response to his inquiry; the prophet had said he would indeed recover from his illness. He conveniently left out the rest of the message which stated that Benhadad would certainly die, although not from the disease.
 - b. The next day, Hazael went into the king’s bedroom, and with a thick cloth soaked with water, he covered the king’s face and thus smothered him to death.
 - c. He had been virtually guaranteed by the prophet that he would become king, although it would be through evil means. Before we feel sorry for Benhadad, we must remember that he was also a very wicked man, and deserved the treatment he now received. Hazael killed his master, but he too would have to face his own evil deeds.

C. 2 Kings 8:16-24: The Reign of Jehoram In Judah.

1. Verse 16: “And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.”
 - a. “Joram became king in the fifth year of Joram of Israel, while Jehoshaphat his father was still king, the latter handing over the government to him two years before his death (see at ch. 1:17), and reigned eight years, namely, two years to the death of Jehoshaphat and six years afterwards” (Keil, p.336).
 - b. “Jehoram” and “Joram” are two forms of the same name. It is interesting that two different kings were wore this name, one in Israel and the other in Judah.
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2. Verses 17-18: "Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD."
 - a. Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to reign in Jerusalem; his reign extended over a period of eight years.
 - b. His reign was characterized by the kind of wickedness that was prevalent in Israel, his neighbor to the north. The reason for this evil is attributed by the historian to the influence of his wife, who was the daughter of Ahab. Athaliah betook of the nature of her ungodly parents. 2 Chronicles 21.
3. Verse 19: "Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, *and* to his children."
 - a. Although the evil in Judah reached a level that deserved destruction, yet the Lord did not destroy the nation because of the good influence David had held with God.
 - b. For David's sake, and for the sake of the promise God had made to David, the Lord chose not to bring destruction upon Judah.
 - c. "This apostasy would have led to the total extinction of the royal family in that kingdom, had it not been for the divine promise to David, (2 Sam. 7). A national chastisement, however, was inflicted on Judah by the revolt of Edom, which, being hitherto governed by a tributary ruler (ch. 3:9; 1 Ki. 22:47), erected the standard of independence..." (JFB, p.391).

D. 2 Kings 8:20-24: The Edomites Rebel Against Judah.

1. Verse 20: "In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over them-selves."
 - a. During the reign of Jehoram, the Edomites rebelled against their Israelite masters. Until then, they had been subservient to Judah.
 - b. God allowed Edom to make this move against Judah, as a means of punishing Jehoram for the evil he had introduced in the kingdom. We are not told exactly how God brought this about, but there are many tools at his disposal.
 - c. 2 Chronicles 21:8-15: "In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots. So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time *also* did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day."
 2. Verses 21-22: "So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time."
 - a. Joram took his army out against the Edomites, and met them in a battle at Zair. The parallel report is
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- also obscure. "Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots" (2 Chron. 21:9).
- b. "It appears that the Israelites were surrounded by the Idumeans; and that in the night Joram and his men cut their way through them, and so got every man to his tent, for they were not able to make any further head against these enemies; and therefore it is said, *that Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day*" (Clarke, p.508).
3. Verses 23-24: "And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead."
- a. 2 Chronicles 21:5-20: "Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD. Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever. In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots. So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time *also* did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day. Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians: And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings."
 - b. "And the rest of the sets of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Some of these acts are recorded in our present Second Book of Chronicles; e.g. his execution of his brothers and of many nobles (2 Chron 21:4); his erection of high places (2 Chron 21:11); his persecution of the followers of Jehovah (2 Chron 21:11); his reception of a writing from Elisha, which, however, had no effect upon his conduct (2 Chron 21:12-15); his war with the Philistines (2 Chron 21:16) and with the Arabs (2 Chron 21:16); his loss of all his sons but one during his lifetime; his long illness, and his painful death (2 Chron 21:18,19). But the 'Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah' was a work on a larger scale than the extant Book of Chronicles, and probably went into much greater detail" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - c. "According to 2 Chron 21:18 ff., Joram died of a terrible disease, in which his bowels fell out, and was
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buried in the city of David, though not in the family sepulchre of the kings. (Note: 'The building of Carthage, Dido, her husband Sichaeus, her brother Pygmalion king of Tyre...all coincide with the reign of Joram. This synchronism of the history of Tyre is not without significance here. The Tyrian, Israelitish, and Judaeon histories are closely connected at this time. Jezebel, a Tyrian princess, was Ahab's wife, and again her daughter Athaliah was the wife of Joram, and after his death the murderess of the heirs of the kingdom, and sole occupant of the throne. Tyre, through these marriages, introduced its own spirit and great calamity into both the Israelitish kingdoms'—J. D. Michaelis on v. 24" [Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].

E. 2 Kings 8:25-29: The Reign of Ahaziah in Jerusalem.

1. Verse 25: "In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign."
 - a. Joram died during the 12th year of the reign of Joram, king of Israel. He was succeeded by his son Ahaziah. His demise is described in some detail in 2 Chronicles 21:18-20: "And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings."
 - b. 2 Chronicles 22:1-6: "And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. Forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Athaliah the daughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly. Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction. He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead: and the Syrians smote Joram. And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick."
 - c. "In 2 Kings 9:29 the year of Ahaziah's accession is said to have been Joram's eleventh year. It is conjectured that he began to reign as viceroy to his father during his severe illness in Joram's eleventh year, and became sole king at his father's death in the year following" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].
2. Verse 26: "Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel."
 - a. Ahaziah's reign lasted but one brief year. He was slain by Jehu at Jezreel (2 Kings 9: 27). Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, was the daughter of Ahab (verse 18), but here she is called the daughter of Omri. The word for "daughter" served double duty, also meaning granddaughter.
 - b. Ahaziah's age is given as 22 at the time he ascended the throne in Judah. His father was 32 when he began his 8-year reign, which made him 40 when he died. 2 Chronicles 22:2 gives the age of Ahaziah as 42 at the time he replaced his 40-year-old father. Keil and others assert that this discrepancy is a copyist's error.
 - c. Clarke makes the following statement: "Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign. In 2 Chron 22:2, it is said, forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; this is a heavy difficulty, to remove which several expedients have been used. It is most evident that, if we

follow the reading in Chronicles, it makes the son two years older than his own father! for his father began to reign when he was thirty-two years old, and reigned eight years, and so died, being forty years old; see 2 Kings 8:17. Dr. Lightfoot says, ‘The original meaneth thus: Ahaziah was the son of two and forty years; namely, of the house of Omri, of whose seed he was by the mother's side; and he walked in the ways of that house, and came to ruin at the same time with it. This the text directs us to look after, when it calleth his mother the daughter of Omri, who was indeed the daughter of Ahab. Now, these forty-two years are easily reckoned by any that will count back in the Chronicle to the second of Omri. Such another reckoning there is about Jehoniah, or Jehoiachin, 2 Kings 24:8: Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign. But, 2 Chron 36:9, Jehoiachin was the son of the eight years; that is, the beginning of his reign fell in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar and of Judah's first captivity’—Works, Vol. i, p. 87" [Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by BibleSoft]. From the beginning of Omri's reign in the Northern Kingdom (886 B.C.) to the time when Ahaziah began his ill-fated reign [843 B.C.], is approximately forty-two years.

- d. “Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign. The writer of Chronicles says, ‘two and forty’ (2 Chron 22:2), which is absolutely impossible, since his father was but forty when he died (see ver. 17, and setup. 2 Chron 21:5,20). Even ‘two and twenty’ is a more advanced age than we should have expected, since Ahaziah was the youngest of Jehoram's sons (2 Chron 21:17); he must therefore have been born in his father's nineteenth year. Yet he had several elder brothers (2 Chron 21:17; 22:1)! To explain this, we have to remember (1) the early age at which marriage is contracted in the East (twelve years); and (2) the fact that each prince had, besides his wife, several concubines. That Joram had several appears from 2 Chron 21:17. And he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri King of Israel. There is something very remarkable in the dignity and precedence attached to Omri. He was, no doubt, regarded of a sort of second founder of the kingdom of Israel, having been the first monarch to establish anything like a stable dynasty. His ‘statutes’ were looked upon as the fundamental laws of the kingdom, and were ‘kept’ down to the time of its destruction (Mic 6:16). Foreigners knew Samaria as *Beth Khumri*, or ‘the house of Omri.’ He is the only Israelite king mentioned by name on the Moabite Stone (line 5), and the earliest mentioned in the inscriptions of Assyria. Even Jehu, who put an end to his dynasty, was regarded by the Assyrians as his descendant, and known under the designation of ‘Yahua, the son of Khnmri’ (Black Obelisk, epig. 2.). Athallah, the daughter of Ahab, is called ‘the daughter of Omri,’ not only in the present passage, but also in 2 Chron 22:2" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - e. With the above information in mind, we have no cause to confess “copyist error” on the two passages.
3. Verses 27-28: “And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the house of Ahab. And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram
 - a. Ahaziah followed the pattern of life that characterized his wicked in-laws, Ahab and Jezebel. He should have learned from the horrible end of Ahab and the predicted end of Jezebel, but somehow the young often ignore such lessons.
 - b. Ahab went to war against the Syrians at Ramothgilead, and lost his life; Ahaziah accompanied the king of Israel (Joram) to fight against the Syrians at Ramothgilead. Joram was wounded. Neither of these men learned from their predecessors.
 4. Verse 29: “And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick."
 - a. Joram went to Jezreel to recuperate from his wounds; Ahaziah went down to visit and comfort him

in his illness.

- b. “And there he continued till Jehu conspired against and slew him there. And thus the blood of the innocents, which had been shed by Ahab and his wife Jezebel, was visited on them in the total extinction of their family” (Clarke, p.509).
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2 KINGS 9

A. 2 Kings 9:1-10: Elisha Directs a Young Prophet to Anoint Jehu as King.

1. Verse 1: “And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramothgilead.”
 - a. “While the Israelitish army was at Ramoth, Elisha executed the last of the commissions which Elijah had received at Horeb (1 Kings 19:16), by sending a pupil of the prophets into the camp to anoint *Jehu* the commander-in-chief of the army as king, and to announce to him, in the name of Jehovah, that he would be king over Israel; and to charge him to exterminate the house of Ahab” (Keil, p.339).
 - b. Ramothgilead was “a city of great importance to the Hebrew people, east of Jordan, as a fortress of defence against the Syrians. Jehoram had regained it (ch. 8:29); but the Israelitish army was still encamped there, under the command of Jehu” (JFB, p.391).
 2. Verses 2-3: “And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; Then take the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.”
 - a. The younger prophet was to search out Jehu, separating him from his brothers, and take him into an inner room where the anointing could be done in secret. Only a part of the instructions are given here; in verses 7-10 the complete message is implemented.
 - b. As he poured the oil on his head, he was to pronounce the authority for the anointing: “Thus said the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.” A private ceremony was held when Samuel anointed David to be king over the entire nation (1 Sam. 16).
 - c. The prophet was to do this in secret, and then flee from that place lest the spies of the present king discover his mission and slay both him and Jehu. The fact that a prophet anointed Jehu was proof enough that God had selected him to replace Joram.
 3. Verses 4-6: “So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead. And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel.”
 - a. The young prophet made his way to Ramothgilead. He approached the captains of the army, who were seated at a certain place. The prophet announced that he had been sent on an errand to them. Jehu asked which one of the captains he wanted. The prophet said it was Jehu.
 - b. The young man stated his business, doubtless to Jehu’s great surprise and joy. He poured the oil as the official ceremony selecting the captain as king.
 4. Verses 7-8: “And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel.”
 - a. As king, Jehu was to carry out a war of extinction against the family of Ahab, killing all the men of that regal household.
 - b. “The act of anointing being done through a commissioned prophet was a divine intimation of his investiture with the sovereign power; but it was sometimes done long prior to the actual possession
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of the throne (1 Sam. 16:13); and in like manner the commission had in this instance been given also a long time before to Elijah, who, for good reasons, left it in charge to Elisha, and he waited God's time and command for executing it" (JFB, p.392).

5. Verses 9-10: "And 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: And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be none to bury her*. And he opened the door, and fled."
 - a. Because of the evil that Ahab and his family had done against Israel, in perpetuating the calf worship which had been introduced by Jeroboam, for promoting Baal worship, and for other evil matters, God determined that Ahab's family was to be eliminated, thus removing from Israel one of the causes of their rebellion against God.
 - b. 1 Kings 21:21-23: "Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked *me* to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel."
 - c. "God's law concerning murder (Gen. 9:6) certainly fell with heaviness upon Ahab and his house. Blood dripped from their hands because of their cold and cruel murders! There would be an especially gruesome punishment for Jezebel, as previously stated (1 Kin. 21:23); the dogs would eat her remains and 'there shall be none to bury her'" (Gary Colley, ADL, pp.151f).

B. 2 Kings 9:11-26: Jehu Slays Jehoram.

1. Verses 11-13: "Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is* all well? wherefore came this mad *fellow* to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication. And they said, *It is* false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king."
 - a. Jehu's compatriots inquired of Jehu when he came from the inner room, concerning the mission of the young prophet. They referred the prophet as "this mad fellow."
 - b. When Jehu told them they knew the man and that they could perceive the mission, they called him a liar. Jehu reported to them plainly that the prophet had anointed him king. It is likely that the residue of the oil could still be seen on his head.
 - c. "After hearing this, they took quickly every man his garment, laid it under him upon the steps, blew the trumpet, and proclaimed him king. The clothes, which consisted simply of a large piece of cloth for wrapping round the body (see at 1 Kings 21:29), they spread out in the place of carpets upon the steps, which served as a throne, to do homage to Jehu" (Keil, p.340).
 - d. "The soldiers not only questioned Jehu about the young prophet said, but threw slurs at the righteous! Jehu acknowledged the appointment of God and the men quickly accepted the fact. They honored him by laying their garments down in his walk-way to his humble throne on the stairs, and blowing the trumpet in recognition of their new king" (Gary Colley, ADL, p.152).
2. Verses 14-15: "So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramothgilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth *nor* escape out of the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel."
 - a. Immediate plans must be made and executed to make Jehu king over Israel in fact; it is one thing to

- be proclaimed king, and sometimes quite another to enforce the proclamation.
- b. Jehu told his followers that if it was their wish, then no one was to be permitted to leave the city to give Joram warning regarding Jehu's appointment as king.
 - c. The historian reminds us that the Israelite king had occupied and defended Ramothgilead against the attacks of Hazael, king of Syrian. During that operation, Joram (Jehoram) had been wounded, and had gone to Jezreel to recover.
 - d. "It is evident from this, that the Israelites were in possession of the city of Ramoth, and were defending it against the attacks of the Syrians..." (Keil, p.341).
3. Verses 16-20: "So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, *Is it peace?* So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously."
- a. Meanwhile, Joram was in Jezreel, recovering from his battle wounds. Ahaziah, king of Judah, was also there, visiting Jehoram.
 - b. As Jehu and his company of soldiers neared Jezreel, a watchman saw them and gave a report. The king directed that a horseman was to be sent out to meet the approaching band, to ask whether they were coming in peace.
 - c. When the messenger came to Jehu and asked the question, the new king ordered him to take a place in the rear of the advancing force, evidently under arrest. The guard reported that the messenger had reached the approaching force but had not re-appeared. A second messenger was sent—with the same result.
 - d. The sentinel perceived that the driver of the leading chariot was driving like Jehu, who was known for his furious driving. He drove like a "madman." "Jehu was a bold, daring, prompt, and precipitate general. In his various military operations he had established his character; and now it was almost proverbial" (Clarke, p.511).
4. Verses 21-22: "And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so many?*"
- a. "The alarmed monarch, now awakened to a sense of his impending danger, quickly summons his forces to meet the crisis, and accompanied by Ahaziah, king of Judah, who had come to enquire respecting his uncle Joram's wound, the two sovereigns ascend their chariots" (JFB, p.393).
 - b. Joram and Ahaziah and their supporters confronted Jehu and his men at the place formerly owned by Naboth. Joram called out to ask whether Jehu had come in peace.
 - c. Jehu responded that peace was impossible as long as the whoredoms of Jezebel and her witchcraft were still prevalent in Israel. The charges against Jezebel included the idolatry, fornication, and other wickedness this evil woman had promoted in the kingdom.
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5. Verses 23-24: “And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is* treachery, O Ahaziah. And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.”
 - a. Not knowing the reason for Jehu’s presence, Joram fled in his chariot, trying to escape the wrath of his general. As he turned to flee, Joram advised Ahaziah that treachery was afoot.
 - b. Jehu used his full strength to loose an arrow at the fleeing back of Joram. The missile struck the king between his arms, in the center of his back, and exited after piercing his heart. Joram sank down in the chariot.
 - c. “Many of the ancient chariots were open behind. The king was wounded in the heart, and expired immediately. All well-informed and observant travellers have been impressed with the manifest accuracy of the sacred historian; the localities and distances being such as seem naturally to be required by the incidents related, affording just time for the transactions to have occurred in the order in which they are recorded” (JFB, pp.393f).
 6. Verses 25-26: “Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to the word of the LORD.”
 - a. Jehu directed his aide to cast the body of Joram (Jehoram) into the field of Naboth. He reminded Bidkar (his aide) that they had followed Ahab, Joram’s father, and had known the pronouncement God had made against Ahab and his sons, that their blood would be required in penalty for the killing of Naboth and his sons.
 - b. In the original account of Naboth’s death, we were not told that that good man’s sons were also slain. The historian here reports that fact. In order for Ahab to take possession of Naboth’s field, the sons of Naboth must also be eliminated.
 - c. 1 Kings 21:11-13: "And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died."
 - d. Jehu knew the Lord’s will about the penalty, and executed it on the person of Jehoram, the son of Ahab. His body was cast into the same field where Ahab had died.
 - e. “It was not from any preconcerted design on the part of Jehu that the descendants of Ahab were killed in the very place where the blood of Naboth had been wickedly shed; for he unexpectedly met Joram in the portion of Naboth. Jehu put his captain in mind of the prophecy, and it seems from his mentioning it, to have remained, at the distance of twenty-five years, as vividly impressed on his own memory as on the day when the denunciation of the prophet was uttered” (JFB, p.394).
- C. 2 Kings 9:27-37: Jezebel Meets her Predicted End.
1. Verses 27-29: “But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David. And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.”
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- a. "Ahaziah, the king of Judah, fled for his life and tried to hide in Samaria (2 Chr. 22:9). He was found, smitten in his chariot, and fled to Megiddo where he died. He was buried in Jerusalem" (Gary Colley, ADL, p.153).
 - b. 2 Chronicles 22:8-9: "And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he *is* the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom."
 - c. "It is remarkable that the vengeance threatened was brought on the house of Ahab at the very time that the king of Judah was on a visit to Joram, that he might partake of the punishment, as being a descendant of the wicked Ahab. It was by an unexpected concurrence of circumstances that this took place, Joram having been wounded in fighting against the Syrians at Ramah, it was providentially ordered that he should go to Jezreel rather than to Samaria, to be healed of his wounds. Thither his relative Ahaziah had come to visit him, while lying disabled in that place. There is no evidence that Jehu fixed on this time from a wish to include the king of Judah in the punishment of Ahab's family. It does not even appear that Jehu was aware of Ahaziah's being then at Jezreel. All was the result of God's immutable purpose, and accomplished by a wonderful operation of his providence" (JFB, p.394).
2. Verse 30: "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window."
- a. Jehu proceeded into Jezreel, where Jezebel was staying. It was his intention to execute this wicked woman who had been the source of so much misery and trouble in Israel.
 - b. Jezebel learned of Jehu's actions and presence in the city. She dressed herself up to make the best presentation she could to the new king. She painted her face "according to a custom universal in the East, amongst women, of staining the eyelids with stibium, the sulphuret of antimony, a black power, mixed with oil...and applied with a small brush or blunt probe of wood, ivory, or silver, on the edge, the arch of the eyebrow is darkened and elongated, the largeness as well as the lustre of the eye itself was thought to be increased, and the natural beauty of the countenance supposed to be heightened by the effects of contrast" (JFB, p.394). We are not privy to her motive, whether it was to entice Jehu, or to overawe him (ibid.).
3. Verses 31-33: "And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three eunuchs. And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot."
- a. As Jehu entered the gate of her residence, she called down to him, "Did Zimri, who slew his master, have peace?
 - 1) Her point is obvious: you have slain Joram your master, just as did Zimri; as he had no peace from his act, neither will you have peace."
 - 2) 1 Kings 16:8-10: "In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. And his servant Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of *his* house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead."
 - b. Jehu looked up to where Jezebel was standing by an upstairs window. Two or three eunuchs were also
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- looking out of the window. Jehu asked who was on his side, to which the eunuchs indicated their allegiance.
- c. Jehu ordered the eunuchs to throw Jezebel from the window, which they did. When her body struck the ground violently, some of her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses that pulled Jehu's chariot. He drove his horses over her body, leaving it unburied.
4. Verses 34-35: "And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands."
- a. Jehu entered the palace, where he was served food and drink. His appetite was unaffected by the recent bloodshed. After the meal, he instructed his men to see to the burial of Jezebel's body, since she was daughter of a king.
 - b. They found only small parts of her body remaining: the skull, the feet and parts of her hands. What a dreadful disposition of this villain's body! "'The harder parts of the human frame' (Stanley); perhaps also the less palatable, since cannibals say that the palm of the human hand is excessively bitter. Dogs in Oriental countries are ever prowling about, especially in the vicinity of towns, on the lookout for food, and will eat flesh or offal of any kind. They have been called 'the scavengers of the East,' and the phrase well describes them. Dean Stanley saw 'the wild dogs of Jezreel prowling about the mounds where the offal is cast outside the gates of the town by the inhabitants'" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - c. "His first care was to refresh himself—to order a banquet to be served, and to satisfy his appetite with food and drink. Not till afterwards did he bethink himself of the bloody corpse of his late queen and mistress, lying on the cold ground uncared for and untended, exposed to scorn and ignominy. When the thought occurred to him, it brought about a certain amount of relenting. Go, see now this cursed woman. He calls Jezebel, 'a cursed woman,' not inappropriately. She had brought a curse on her husband, on her sons, and on her grandsons; she had been the evil genius of two countries, Israel and Judah; she had been the prime mover in a bloody persecution of the worshippers of Jehovah; and was the true original source of the present revolution, which was to result in the deaths of so many others. And bury her: for she is a king's daughter. As queen-mother, Jehu, it seems, would not have regarded Jezebel as entitled to burial; but as daughter of Eth-Baal, King of the Zidonians (1 Kings 16:31), and so a princess born, he allowed her claim. Perhaps he feared lest further insult to the corpse might provoke the resentment of the Phoenician monarch, and draw down upon him that prince's hostility" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
5. Verses 36-37: "Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel."
- a. When his men returned with this report, Jehu remembered the prophecy spoken by Elijah, which predicted that her body would be consumed by the dogs of Jezreel. The very place where this would be done was foretold, as well as the consumption of her body by canines: "And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (1 Kings 21:23). The remains of her body were so few and scattered, that there would not be enough to bury—the scattered pieces would be cast away. There would be no tomb for this wicked woman, to which men could point, saying, "This is the tomb of Jezebel."
 - b. "It is evident from the history that Jehu had no design to co-operate in the confirmation of prophecy. For till he received this information, he had no recollection of the sentence pronounced against her. Then, indeed, it occurred to his mind" (JFB, p.395).
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- c. “Jezebel ‘painted her eyes’ (9:30). An Expedition...found, in Samaria, in the ruins of Ahab’s ‘ivory house,’ saucers, small stone boxes, in which Jezebel mixed her cosmetics. They had a number of small holes to contain the various colors: kohl for black; turquoise for green; ochre for red; and a central depression for mixing. They still had traces of red” (Halley, p.206).
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2 KINGS 10

A. 2 Kings 10:1-7: Jehu's Letters Concerning the Descendants of Ahab.

1. Verses 1-3: "And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's *children*, saying, Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons *are* with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour; Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house."
 - a. In keeping with God's intentions to destroy the descendants of Ahab, Jehu sent letters to the rulers of Samaria, calling on them to appoint the best of Ahab's progeny to the throne (or at least at the head of the army), so that a battle could be fought between the northern army and the southern army led by Jehu.
 - b. God proposed to eradicate the seventy sons of Ahab, to remove from Israel the evil influences of a family who had brought their nation into disrepute with the Lord. These descendants of Ahab would include his grandchildren (verse 13) and potentially his great-grandchildren. These seventy apparently comprised his entire offspring.
 - c. The kings of the northern kingdom ruled from Samaria, but also maintained residences in Jezreel. JEZREEL: "meaning 'God sows,' refers to a major valley, a northern city, a southern city, and the son of Hosea. 1. The Old Testament uses the name to refer to the entire valley of Jezreel which separates Galilee from Samaria, including the valley of Esdraelon. The valley was important militarily as a battle site for Deborah (Judg. 4-5), Gideon (Judg. 6-7), Saul (2 Sam. 4), Jehu (2 Kings 9-10), and Josiah (2 Kings 22). The geography of Palestine made Jezreel a major route for travel from north to south and from east to west. 2. The northern city of Jezreel, which guarded the corridor to Beth-shan, was the site of the royal residence of Omri and Ahab where the incident of Naboth's vineyard occurred (1 Kings 21). 3. David's wife Ahinoam was from the southern city of Jezreel which is located in the vicinity of Ziph (1 Sam. 25:43-44). 4. The prophet Hosea named his son Jezreel as a symbol to indicate the evil nature of the dynasty of Jehu which began with much bloodshed in Jezreel. The name also symbolized that God will sow seeds of prosperity after the destruction (Hos. 1:4, 5; 1:10-2:1)" (Holman, Robert Street).
2. Verses 4-5: "But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? And he that *was* over the house, and he that *was* over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up *of the children*, sent to Jehu, saying, We *are* thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou *that which is* good in thine eyes."
 - a. The rulers to whom the letters were sent received the messages with trepidation. They reasoned that since Jehu easily destroyed two kings (Joram and Ahaziah), it would be foolhardy for them to try to oppose him.
 - b. These men decided on throwing themselves on the mercy of Jehu. They committed themselves to do whatever he decided. Some of these influential men had been charged with the responsibility of rearing the progeny of Ahab. They were about to be required to slay their charges, a repugnant act surpassed only by the alternative.
3. Verses 6-7: "Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye *be* mine, and *if* ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, *being* seventy persons, *were* with the great men of the city, which brought them up. And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel."

- a. Fearing for their own welfare, these men responded to the second letter by slaying the seventy sons (grandsons) of Ahab, cutting off the heads of these princes, and sending them to Jehu at Jezreel.
- b. The depiction is graphic. Seventy heads; seventy baskets; a most gruesome picture. It appears cruel to us, but God had decreed the destruction of Ahab's offspring, for the good of the nation.

B. 2 Kings 10:8-11: Jehu Slays the Rest of Ahab's House.

1. Verse 8: "And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning."
 - a. "The barbarous practice of a successful usurper slaughtering all who may have claim to the throne, has been frequently exemplified in the ancient and modern histories of the East....The exhibition of the heads of enemies in the East in ancient times always was considered a glorious trophy. Sometimes a pile of heads was erected at the gate of the palace, and a head of peculiarly striking appearance selected to grace the summit of the pyramid. On the sculptures at Khorsabad, Kouyunjik, and Nimroud, eunuchs are seen collecting the heads of the slain, and writing down the number ('Nineveh and its Remains,' ii, p.377). This mode of reckoning the loss of an enemy was long practice in the east; but the Egyptians generally counted by hands, and Saul, at least in one instance, fixed upon another part of the body as a trophy (1 Sam. 18:25,27). The heads of Ahaziah's brethren are described as piled up in two heaps at the entrance gate of Samaria....At the principal entrance to the Sultan's palace in Constantinople there are niches appropriated to this purpose..." (JFB, pp.395f).
 - b. Timur the Lame [*Timarlane*], the great Tatar conqueror, was master of this hideous practice.
 - 1) "When the city of Sabzawar surrendered after a costly siege, he took 2,000 captives, 'piled them alive one upon another, compacted them with bricks and clay, and erected them into a minaret, so that men, being appraised of the majesty of his wrath, might not be seduced by the demon of arrogance'....The town of Zirih missed the point and resisted; the heads of its citizens made more minarets....In 1387 Isfahan yielded, and accepted a Tatar garrison, but when Timur had gone the population rose and slew the garrison. He returned with his army, stormed the city, and ordered each of his troops to bring him the head of a Persian. Seventy thousand Isfahan heads, we are told, were set on the walls, or were made into towers to adorn the streets" (Will Durant, *The Reformation*, p.672).
 - 2) "After reducing Aleppo, Hims, Baalbek, and Damascus, the Tatar moved on to Baghdad, which had expelled his appointees. He took it at great cost, and ordered each of his 2,000 soldiers to bring him a head. It was done—or so we are told: rich and poor, male and female, old and young, paid this head tax, and their skulls were piled in ghastly pyramids before the city's gates (1401). Moslem mosques, monasteries, and nunneries were spared; everything else was sacked and destroyed, so thoroughly that the once brilliant capital recovered only in our time, by the grace of oil" (Durant, *ibid*, pp.373f).
 - c. Two piles of heads were erected at the gate of the city; these were to be left there until the next morning, giving sufficient time for the inhabitants of the city to be made well-aware of the demise of Ahab's house.
 2. Verses 9-10: "And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye *be* righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these? Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant Elijah."
 - a. When the next morning came, Jehu placed himself at the entrance of the city, near the two mounds of heads, and addressed the people of Jezreel.
 - b. "A great concourse was assembled to gaze on this novel and ghastly spectacle. The speech which Jehu
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addressed to the spectators was artfully framed to impress their minds with the idea that so wholesale a massacre, done without his order or connivance, was the secret result of the Divine judgment denounced on the house of Ahab; and the effect of it was to prepare the public mind for hearing, without horror, of a similar revolting tragedy which was soon after perpetrated—viz., the extinction of all the influential friends and supporters of the dynasty of Ahab, including those of the royal house of Judah” (JFB, p.396).

- c. He asserts to the people that they are righteous, although some of them had been involved in the slaying of Ahab’s descendants. He declares that he had rebelled against his master (Joram), but neither his action against the house of Ahab, nor their complicity in the death of Ahab’s offspring, was wrong; this was so in view of the fact that God had decreed their demise.
 - d. “Jehu did not tell the people that the king’s sons had been slain by his command, but spake as if this had been done without his interfering by a higher decree, that he might thereby justify his conspiracy in the eyes of the people, and make them believe what he says further in ver. 10: ‘See then that of the word of the Lord nothing falls to the ground (*i.e.* remains unfulfilled) which Jehovah has spoken concerning the house of Ahab; and Jehovah has done what he spake through his servant Elijah” (Keil, p.347).
3. Verse 11: “So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.”
- a. “The effect of these words was, that the people looked quietly on when he proceeded to slay all the rest of the house of Ahab, *i.e.* all the more distant relatives in Jezreel, and ‘all of his great men,’ *i.e.* the superior officers of the fallen dynasty, and ‘all his acquaintances,’ *i.e.* friends and adherents, and ‘all his priests,’ probably court priests, such as the heathen kings had; not secular counsellors or nearest servants...” (Keil, pp.342f).
 - b. However, in view of the statement of verse 30, Jehu’s actions were not wrong: "And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel."

C. 2 Kings 10:12-17: Others Who Followed Ahab are Slain by Jehu.

1. Verses 12-14: “And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. *And* as he *was* at the shearing house in the way, Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen. And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left he any of them.”
 - a. On his way to Samaria, Jehu encountered the brethren of Ahaziah at a certain place where shepherds sheared their sheep. Instead of the descriptive identification of the location, the term could be rendered as a proper name [*Beth-heked-rohim*] (JFB, p.396).
 - b. Jamison says these men were Ahaziah’s half-brothers, having the same father but different mothers. “Ignorant of the revolution that had taken place, they were travelling to Samaria on a visit to their royal relatives of Israel, when they were seized and put to death from the apprehension that they might probably stimulate and strengthen the party that still remained faithful in their allegiance to Ahab’s dynasty” (JFB, p.396).
 - c. These 42 men were slain at the pit located at the shearing house. “Probably the place where they washed the sheep previously to shearing, or the fleeces after they were shorn off” (Clarke, p.515).
 - d. McGarvey records the following information about Samaria:

- 1) "Samaria is eight miles from Shechem by the road (six in an air-line) and due northwest. Its situation attests the military skill of Omri, the King of Israel, who bought the hill and built the city for the capital of his kingdom [1 Kings 16:24]. It also accounts for the fact that though the city was three times besieged within the Bible period by an overpowering army, it was never taken but once, and then after a siege of three years [1 Kings 20:1; 2 Kings 6:24; 17:5-6]. It is to the confidence which its inhabitants reposed in its strength that Amos alluded when he said, 'Woe to them who are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria' [Amos 6:1].
 - 2) "It was built on an isolated hill about 400 feet high, completely surrounded by an almost circular valley, and this again by a circle of mountains nearly all higher than Samaria. Its site might be compared to that of a conical swell in the centre of a deep saucer. The hill is ascended from the northeast by a steep slope, and the modern village, with a large and well-preserved *church* of the crusading period, is on the northeastern brow of the hill. The summit is now set in olive-trees and cultivated in grain. Terraces run around the hill from top to bottom, and on the second terrace from the top stand the remaining pillars of a colonnade built by Herod the Great, which once extended around the hill for a distance of 1000 yards. The terrace is about 50 feet wide, and the columns, of which about 80 are still standing, and many others are lying prostrate and broken, are 16 feet high. They are made of hard limestone.
 - 3) "There are many other relics of ancient structures on the slopes of the hill, and among them one on the northern side, consisting of about a dozen columns, forming a quadrangle, the probable remains of a temple erected by Herod in honor of Augustus Caesar. He rebuilt the city, adorned it with magnificent works, and called it *Sebaste*, the Greek word for *Augustus*, and it has retained that name in a corrupted form to the present day, the Arabs calling it *Sebustiyeh*.
 - 4) "Its summit is 1542 feet above the sea, and the highest point is near the southern brow. Standing there, the entire wall of surrounding mountains and the basin of the surrounding valley can be distinctly seen, and over the lower hill to the southwest the view extends to the Plain of Sharon and the sea....At the southeast curve of this valley the Valley of Shechem enters it, and at the southwest curve there is a broad opening through the hills, by which that valley passes on westward toward the sea.
 - 5) "The author's party traveled down that valley on their way to Caserea, and they saw along its floor some of the best preserved pieces of ancient paved road in all Palestine. It was doubtless in the valley immediately south of Samaria that the Syrian were encamped when they thought they heard the Egyptians and the Hittites coming upon them, and it was up that gap opening toward the sea that the enemy appeared to come. The Syrian retreat was toward the Jordan, and it probably led them up the Valley of Shechem, east of their camp and past the city of Shechem [2 Kings 7:6,7,15]" (*Lands of the Bible*, pp.294-296).
- e. Samaria: "Place name of mountain, city, and region meaning, 'mountain of watching,' and the residents thereof. Forty-two miles north of Jerusalem and nine miles northwest of Nablus, a hill protrudes from the broad valley which cuts across the central highlands of Israel. There lie ruins of ancient Samaria near a small village called Sebastiya. Samaria was the capital, residence, and burial place of the kings of Israel (1 Kings 16:23-28; 22:37; 2 Kings 6:24-30). Following the Northern Kingdom's fall to Assyria (721 B.C.), exiles from many nations settled Samaria (Ezra 4:9-10).
- 1) "Later, the Greeks conquered the region (331 B.C.) and hellenized the area with Greek inhabitants and culture. Then the Hasmoneans, under John Hyrcanus, destroyed the city (119 B.C.). After a long period without inhabitants, Samaria lived again under Pompey and the Romans (63 B.C.). Finally, Herod the Great obtained control of Samaria in 30 B.C. and made it one of the chief cities of his territory. Again, the city was resettled with people from distant places, this time mercenaries from Europe. Herod renamed the city *Sebaste*, using the Greek word for Augustus, the emperor.
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- 2) "When the Jews revolted in 66 A.D., the Romans reconquered the city and destroyed it. The Romans later rebuilt Samaria, but the city never regained the prestige it once had. Samaria is the only major city founded by Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Omri, the sixth king of Israel (885-874 B.C.), purchased the hill of Samaria for his royal residence. Shechem had been the capital of the Northern Kingdom until Jeroboam relocated it at Tirzah. When Ahab, Omri's son, became king of Israel, he built an ivory palace at Samaria. Amos denounced him for doing this (Amos 6:1,4; 1 Kings 22:39). Jezebel influenced Ahab, her husband, to make the city the center for Baal worship (1 Kings 16:29-33). Jezebel also had many prophets of Yahweh killed in Samaria (1 Kings 18:2-4). On two occasions, Benhadad, the king of Syria, besieged the city of Samaria; but both times he was unsuccessful (1 Kings 20; 2 Kings 6). Naaman, a Syrian leper, had come to Samaria to be healed by Elisha a short time prior to Ben-hadad's attack (2 Kings 5). Here Elijah destroyed the messengers of King Ahaziah, who were seeking the consultation of Baalzebub. He, likewise, prophesied of King Ahaziah's death (2 Kings 1). Later, Jehu killed Ahab's seventy sons in Samaria (2 Kings 10).
 - 3) "Finally, Samaria fell to Assyria in 721 B.C. after a three years' siege (2 Kings 17:5, 18:9-12). See Assyria. This destruction came after many prophecies concerning its sins and many warnings about its doom (Isa. 8:4; 9:8-14; 10:9; 28:1-13; 36:19; Jer. 23:13; Ezek. 23:1-4; Hos. 7; 13:16; Amos 3:12; Mic. 1:6). While the term Samaria was first identified with the city founded by Omri, it soon became associated with the entire region surrounding the city, the tribal territory of Manasseh and Ephraim. Finally, the name Samaria became synonymous with the entire Northern Kingdom (1 Kings 13:32; Jer. 31:5). After the Assyrian conquest, Samaria began to shrink in size. By New Testament times, it became identified with the central region of Palestine, with Galilee to the north and Judea to the south.
 - 4) "The name Samaritans originally was identified with the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:29). When the Assyrians conquered Israel and exiled 27,290 Israelites, a 'remnant of Israel' remained in the land. Assyrian captives from distant places also settled there (2 Kings 17:24). This led to the intermarriage of some, though not all, Jews with Gentiles and to widespread worship of foreign gods. By the time the Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem, Ezra and Nehemiah refused to let the Samaritans share in the experience (Ezra 4:1-3; Neh. 4:7). The old antagonism between Israel to the north and Judah to the south intensified the quarrel.
 - 5) "The Jewish inhabitants of Samaria identified Mount Gerizim as the chosen place of God and the only center of worship, calling it the 'navel of the earth' because of a tradition that Adam sacrificed there. Their scriptures were limited to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Moses was regarded as the only prophet and intercessor in the final judgment. They also believed that 6,000 years after creation, a Restorer would arise and would live on earth for 110 years. On the Judgment Day, the righteous would be resurrected in paradise and the wicked roasted in eternal fire.
 - 6) "In the days of Christ, the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans was greatly strained (Luke 9:52-54; 10:25-37; 17:11-19; John 8:48). The animosity was so great that the Jews bypassed Samaria as they traveled between Galilee and Judea. They went an extra distance through the barren land of Perea on the eastern side of the Jordan to avoid going through Samaria. Yet Jesus rebuked His disciples for their hostility to the Samaritans (Luke 9:55-56), healed a Samaritan leper (Luke 17:16), honored a Samaritan for his neighborliness (Luke 10:30-37), praised a Samaritan for his gratitude (Luke 17:11-18), asked a drink of a Samaritan woman (John 4:7), and preached to the Samaritans (John 4:40-42). Then in Acts 1:8, Jesus challenged His disciples to witness in Samaria. Philip, a deacon, opened a mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5).
 - 7) "A small Samaritan community continues to this day to follow the traditional worship near Shechem. See Israel; Sanballat" (Holman, Donald R. Potts).
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2. Verses 15-16: “And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.”
 - a. Continuing his journey to Samaria, Jehu met Jehonadab the son of Rechab. After saluting him, he asked if his heart was as true to Jehu as Jehu’s was toward him. He answered in the affirmative.
 - b. The new king invited Jehonadab to ride with him in the chariot, and “see my zeal for the Lord.” His friend was to see Jehu eliminate others who were opposed to the Lord’s way. By giving his hand to Jehu, Jehonadab was not merely assisted in entering the chariot, but confirming his loyal support to the king.
 - c. “Jehonadab the son of Rechab was the tribe-father of the Rechabites (Jer. 35:6). The rule which the latter laid down for his sons and descendants for all time, was to lead a simple nomad life, namely, to dwell in tents, follow no agricultural pursuits, and abstain from wine; the rule they observed so sacredly, that the prophet Jeremiah held them up as models before his own contemporaries, who broke the law of God in the most shameless manner, and was able to announce to the Rechabites that they would be exempted from the Chaldaean judgment for their faithful observance of their father’s precept (Jer. 35). Rechab, from whom the descendants of Jehonadab derived their tribe-name, was the son of Hammath, and belonged to the tribe of the Kenites (1 Chron. 2:55), to which Hobab the father-in-law of Moses also belonged (Num. 10:29); so that the Rechabites were probably descendants of Hobab, since the Kenites the sons of Hobab had gone with the Israelites from the Arabian desert to Canaan....This Jehonadab was therefore a man distinguished for the strictness of his life, and Jehu appears to have received him in this friendly manner on account of the great distinction in which he was held, not only in his own tribe, but also in Israel generally, that he might exalt himself in the eyes of the people through his friendship...” (Keil, pp.349f).
3. Verse 17: “And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.”
 - a. Arriving at Samaria, the inspired historian reports that Jehu slew the rest of Ahab’s offspring, in keeping with the general purpose God had stated in that regards.
 - b. 1 Kings 21:20-22: "So Ahab said to Elijah, ‘Have you found me, O my enemy?’ And he answered, ‘I have found *you*, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. ‘I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel sin'" (NKJ).

D. 2 Kings 10:18-28: Jehu Slays the Worshipers of Baal.

1. Verses 18-19: “And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did *it* in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.”
 - a. In Samaria, Jehu called the people together to make a great proclamation. He stated that Ahab had served Baal a little, but that he would serve Baal much. He called for all the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal to assemble for a great sacrifice to the idol.
 - b. The historian quickly adds that Jehu was using a subtle plan by which he hoped to identify and destroy the worshippers of Baal.
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2. Verses 20-21: “And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed *it*. And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.”
 - a. He asked Baal’s adherents to proclaim a solemn assembly, a request they happily did. In their simplicity, they figured that the new king was one of their own, and that their religion would flourish.
 - b. Jehu sent word throughout Israel for all the worshipers of Baal to appear at the temple of Baal on the prescribed day. All of those who followed Baal presented themselves at the temple, filling the house to capacity.
 - c. “They might be easily convened into one spacious temple, as their number had been greatly diminished both by the influential ministrations of Elijah and Elisha, and also from the late king Joram’s neglect and discontinuance of the worship. Jehu’s appointment of a solemn sacrifice in honour of Baal, and a summons to all his worshippers to join in its celebration, was a deep-laid plot, which he had resolved upon for their extinction. It was done, however, not from religious, but purely political motives, because he believed that the existence and interests of the Baalites were inseparably bound up with the dynasty of Ahab, and because he hoped that by their extermination he would secure the attachment of the far larger and more influential party who worshipped God in Israel. Jehonadab’s concurrence must have been given in the belief of his being actuated solely by the highest principles of piety and zeal” (JFB, p.397).
 3. Verses 22-23: “And he said unto him that *was* over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only.”
 - a. “The reference is not to the wardrobe of the king’s palace, out of which Jehu had every one who took part in the feast supplied with a festal dress...but the wardrobe of the temple of Baal, since the priests of Baal had their own sacred dresses like the priests of almost all religions” (Keil, p.351).
 - b. Accompanied by Jehonadab, Jehu went to the temple and asked the worshipers to make sure that none of the worshipers of Jehovah was present, but that only Baal worshipers were present. The king did not want to slay any of servants of the Lord.
 4. Verses 24-25: “And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If* any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, *he that letteth him go*, his life *shall be* for the life of him. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.”
 - a. As the Baalite priests entered to offer their sacrifices, Jehu stationed 80 soldiers around the temple, ordering them on the penalty of death to allow none of the idolaters within to escape.
 - b. When he (the sacrificing priest) completed the sacrifice, Jehu gave the order to his men to enter the temple and slaughter everyone within. As the Baalites were slain, their bodies were cast outside.
 5. Verses 26-28: “And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.”
 - a. When the worshipers had all been slain, the soldiers began bringing out the statues and burned them; they destroyed the image of Baal, and demolished the temple itself. The *images* of verse 26 are called *statues* by the marginal rendering; these are identified as *columns* by Keil. The image of Baal of verse 27 was the main idol of the temple, toward which the worship was offered.
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- b. After destroying the temple building, the site was turned into a “draught-house.” This is equivalent to the “out-house” familiar to farm families of America. “Lastly, they destroyed the temple itself and made it...privies, for which the Masoretes have substituted the euphemistic...sinks, as a mark of the greatest insult, many examples of which are to be met with among Oriental tribes...” (Keil, p.352).

E. 2 Kings 10:29-31: Jehu’s Sin.

1. Verse 29: “Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that *were* in Bethel, and that *were* in Dan.”
 - a. Although Jehu boasted of his zeal for the Lord in ridding the nation of the pollutions of Baal, he did not also destroy the perverted worship of the calves at Dan and Bethel. His work was good but it did not go far enough.
 - b. The original departure of the ten northern tribes from Jehovah was in the idolatry Jeroboam set up at Dan and Bethel. God denounced that practice at its inception; it remained sinful through the many years since; and it was still sinful at the time of Jehu. "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Peniel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense" (1 Kings 12:25-33).
 - c. From Jeroboam’s time, the wickedness of subsequent kings in Israel was measured in reference to Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. Compare: “Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom” (2 Kings 3:1-3).
 - d. Jehu doubtless left the idol worship at Dan and Bethel alone because that worship was too ingrained in their history to be eradicated without a political upheaval. Also, he no doubt could see the perverted wisdom Jeroboam used in instituting the system: If he allowed the people to worship God at Jerusalem, before long they would likely attach themselves to the king of Judah, and leave the northern king without a people. Jehu’s lack of action against the calf worship was a political move.
 2. Verse 30: “And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.”
 - a. God did not approve of the calf worship at Dan and Bethel; he did approve of the work Jehu had done in ridding the nation of the evil influences of the house of Ahab.
 - b. In consequence of his actions against Ahab’s house, God told Jehu that he would permit his sons to retain the throne to the fourth generation.
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- c. "In the 161 years which this epoch embraces, from B.C. 883 to 722, the fate of the kingdom of Israel was accomplished. The first hundred years, which comprised the reigns of Jehu and his descendants, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Jeroboam II, were the last day of grace for the rebellious ten tribes, at the expiration of which the judgment began to burst upon them. As the anointing of Jehu by Elisha was performed by the command of God, so also was the religious reform, which Jehu vigorously commenced with the extermination of the Baal-worship, a fruit of the labours of the prophets Eliljah and Elisha within the sinful kingdom; but this reform stood half-way, since Jehu merely restored the idolatrous Jehovah-worship introduced by Jeroboam, and neither he himself nor his successors desisted from that sin. In order, therefore, if possible, to complete the work begun by his prophets of converting Israel to its God, the Lord now began to visit the rebellious tribes with severe chastisements, giving them up into the power of the Syrians, who under Hazael not only conquered the whole of the land to the east of the Jordan, but almost annihilated the military force of the Israelites (ch. 10:32,33; 12:3,7)" (Keil, p.352).
- 1) 2 Kings 10:32-33: "In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan."
 - 2) 2 Kings 12:3, 7: "But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.... Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house."
- d. "Jehoahaz prayed to the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon the oppressed for the sake of his covenant with the patriarchs, and sent them deliverers in Joash, who recovered the conquered land from the Syrians after the death of Hazael, and in Jeroboam, who even restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom (ch. 13:4,5, and 23ff; 14:25,26). But with this renewal of external strength, luxuriance and debauchery, partiality in judgment and oppression of the poor began to prevail, as we may see from the prophecies of Hosea and Amos (Amos 5:10ff; 6:1-6; Hos. 6:7ff); and in addition to the Jehovah-worship, which was performed in an idolatrous manner (Hos. 8:13; 9:4,5), the worship of Baal was carried on most vigorously (Hos. 2:13,15; 10:1,2), so that the people made pilgrimages to Bethel, Gilgal, and even to Beersheba in the south of the kingdom of Judah (Hos. 4:15; Amos 4:4; 5:5; 8:14), and on account of the worship thus zealously performed, relied in carnal security upon the protection of God, and scoffed at the judgments of the Lord which were threatened by the prophets (Amos 5:14,18). This internal corruption increased with the death of Jeroboam, till all civil order was dissolved. Anarchy, conflicts for the possession of the throne, and repeated regicides, broke up the kingdom and made it ripe for the judgment of destruction, which was gradually accomplished by the Assyrians, whom one party in the reign of Menahem had called to their help, under Pul, Tiglath-pileser, and Shalmanasar" (Keil, pp.352f).
3. Verse 31: "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin."
 - a. Partial obedience is of little good but promotes much evil. It is sufficient to give the individual a sense of rightness, but it is not enough to bring him into the right relationship with the Lord.
 - 1) James 2:10: "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - 2) James 4:17: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin."
 - 3) James 1:25-26: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man
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among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain."

- b. "Jehu had no intention of carrying his zeal for the Lord beyond a certain point, and as he considered it impolitic to encourage his subjects to travel to Jerusalem, he re-established the symbolic worship of the calves. Had Jehu resolved on putting the law into execution against idolaters (Deut. 17:2-5), instead of adopting the deceptive, cruel part he did, he would have acted the part of a constitutional king; and had he, in the integrity of his heart, prosecuted the work of religious reformation thus begun by demolishing images, and restoring the pure worship of Jehovah, it is probable that the national degeneracy might have been arrested, or at least retarded; but he deemed it expedient to follow the policy of Jeroboam in reviving the calf-symbols at Beth-el and Dan, and in so doing, he showed himself unequal to the demands of the time; he failed to realize the ends for which he had been anointed king" (JFB, pp.397f).

F. 2 Kings 10:32-36: God Punishes Israel by the Hand of Hazael.

1. Verses 32-33: "In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan."
 - a. During the time-frame indicated above, God began to permit the Syrians to have success against the territories of Israel. They gained control of the land to the east of Jordan, including the areas known as Gilead, and the territory granted to the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh.
 - b. Elisha was given the sorrowful view of the evil Hazael would do against Israel, and wept over it. "And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child" (2 Kings 8:12).
2. Verses 34-36: "Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria *was* twenty and eight years."
 - a. Jehu enjoyed a long rule, one that extended over 28 years. There were undoubtedly many troubles that came upon him, for during that period, Hazael wrought his evil influence on the eastern part of Jehu's kingdom.
 - b. "If we wonder at God's use of an agent like Jehu, let us remember that Baalism was unspeakably vile. God sometimes uses men and nations who are far from what they ought to be to execute his judgments on the wicked. While Jehu was occupied with his bloody revolution within Israel, Hazael king of Syria took away Gilead and Bashan, Israel's realm east of the Jordan (10:32-33). Jehu also had troubles with Assyria, whose power was rising with ominous rapidity" (Halley, p.205).
 - c. "At Calah, near Nineveh, Layard (1845-49) found, in ruins of the palace of Shalmaneser, a block of black stone, 7 feet high, covered with reliefs and inscriptions, depicting his exploits. It is called the 'Black Obelisk.' Now in British Museum. In second line from top is a figure with marked Jewish features kneeling at the feet of the king, and above it this inscription: 'The tribute of Jehu, son (successor) of Omri, silver, gold, bowls of gold, chalices of gold, cups of gold, vases of gold, lead, sceptre for the king, and spear-shafts, I have received'" (Halley, p.206).
 - d. Additional archaeological note: "Jezebel 'painted her eyes' (9:30). An Expedition...found, in Samaria, in the ruins of Ahab's 'ivory house,' saucers, small stone boxes, in which Jezebel mixed her cosmetics. They had a number of small holes to contain the various colors: kohl for black; turquoise for green; ochre for red; and a central depression for mixing. They still had traces of red" (Halley,

p.206).

- e. “In Megiddo, in the stratum of Ahab and Jezebel’s time, jars were found containing remains of children that had been sacrificed to Baal...illustrating the horrible nature of Baal worship” (Halley, p.206).
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2 KINGS 11

A. 2 Kings 11:1-3: Athaliah Usurps the Throne of Judah.

1. Verse 1: "And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal."
 - a. The parallel account is given in 2 Chronicles 22:10-12: "But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah. But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land."
 - b. Athaliah was the wife of Jehoram, who was the son of Jehoshaphat. To Athaliah and Jehoram was born Ahaziah. At the death of Jehoram, Ahaziah became king; upon this young man, the wicked queen-mother had a powerful influence, manipulating and intimidating him to accomplish her evil designs, just as she had influenced her husband.
 - 1) 2 Kings 8:18: "And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD."
 - 2) 2 Kings 8:27: "And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the house of Ahab."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 21:5,11: "Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem....Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*."
 - 4) 2 Chronicles 22:3: "He [Ahaziah] also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly."
 - c. Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (see 2 Kings 8:18,26). She partook of their sinful proclivities. Learning that her son Ahaziah was dead, she slew all of those sons who were in line to become king. "She had possessed great influence over her son, who, by her counsels, had ruled in the spirit of the house of Ahab" (JFB, p.398).
 - d. "This massacre she was incited to perpetrate, partly from a determination not to let David's family outlive her's—partly as a measure of self-defence, to secure herself against the violence of Jehu, who was bent on destroying the whole of Ahab's posterity, to which she belonged (ch. 8:18-26); but chiefly from personal ambition to rule, and a desire to establish the worship of Baal. Such was the sad fruit of the unequal alliance between the son of the pious Jehoshaphat and a daughter of the idolatrous and wicked house of Ahab" (JFB, p.398).
2. Verse 2: "But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons *which were* slain; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain."
 - a. A daughter of Joram (Jehoram), hid her young brother (Joash) and kept him from being killed. This sister's name was Jehosheba (or Jehoshabeath—2 Chron. 22:10-12). She was the daughter of Joram, but not by Athaliah.
 - b. She hid him and his nurse, first in the bedchamber, and then in a room of the temple. We are told in 2 Chronicles 22:11 that she was the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest, thus had ready access to the temple.

- c. The wicked designs of evil political figures often endeavored to murder certain ones who figured highly in God's plans. Pharaoh tried to kill Moses; Saul sought to slay David; Herod did his best to destroy Jesus when he was a baby. God's providence was able to deliver them.
3. Verse 3: "And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land."
- a. From verse four, in the light of verse three, we learn that Joash was only a year old when Athaliah slew the royal seed.
 - b. Thinking that all the royal seed was destroyed, Athaliah set herself up as the supreme ruler in Judah. When the rulers of Judah began to fraternize with the evil rulers of the northern kingdom, the natural effect was detrimental to Judah's spiritual welfare. God's people are never spiritually uplifted when they commune with the wicked of this world. Fellowship with the sectarian world can produce no good, but much evil.

B. 2 Kings 11:4-12: Jehoiada the Priest Anoints Joash as King.

1. Verse 4: "And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son."
- a. Jehoiada, the high priest, perceived that something must be done to rectify the horrible situation that had developed, with a heathen woman on Judah's throne, and Judah's rightful king kept hidden to spare his life from her.
 - b. The high priest called a meeting of the captains over hundreds and worked out an agreement. After telling them of the rescue of Joash, Ahaziah's son and heir to the throne, he brought the lad before them.
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 23:1-3: "And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him. And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David."
 - 2) "In 2 Chron. 23:1-3 the chronicler not only gives the names of these captains, but relates still more minutely that they went about in the land and summoned the Levites and heads of families in Israel to Jerusalem, probably under the pretext of a festal celebration; whereupon Jehoiada concluded a covenant with the persons assembled, to ensure their assistance in the execution of the plan" (Keil, p.357).
 - c. "He could scarcely have obtained such a general convocation except at the time, or on pretext, of a public and solemn festival. Having revealed to them the secret of the young king's preservation, and entered into a covenant with them for the overthrow of the tyrant, he then arranged with them the plan and time of carrying their plot into execution....The Conduct of Jehoiada, who acted the leading and chief part in his conspiracy, admits of an easy and full justification; for, while Athaliah was a usurper, and belonged to a race devoted by Divine denunciation to destruction, even his own wife had a better and stronger claim to the throne; the sovereignty of Judah had been divinely appropriated to the family of David, and therefore the young prince on whom it was proposed to confer the crown possessed an inherent right to it, of which a usurper could not deprive him. Moreover, Jehoiada was most probably the high priest, whose official duty it was to watch over the due execution of God's laws, and who, in his present movement, was encouraged and aided by the countenance and support of the chief

authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, in the country.” (JFB, pp.398f).

- d. Although no specific statement is made in the text, it was most likely the case that Jehoiada was moved by Divine guidance to execute the plan. God had promised David generations earlier that his seed would occupy the throne of Judah. "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Samuel 7:12-13).
- e. Several times in history, Satan seemed on the verge of nullifying God’s eternal plan by destroying the people through whom the divine plan was to be fulfilled.
 - 1) All of the descendants of Abraham through Jacob were enslaved by the world’s most powerful nation (Egypt), with no human power available to deliver them. God brought about Israel’s deliverance.
 - 2) Israel would have utterly perished in the wilderness, after their rebellion against God, if God had not taken action to preserve them by providing clothing, water, food, and protection. During their wilderness experiences, the Amalekites launched a full-scale assault on Israel. Without God’s help, the nation would have perished at the hands of those pagans.
 - 3) All of the Jews would have been slain as a result of Haman’s wicked scheme, if God had not taken Israel’s part (see Esther). "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).
 - 4) Again, Satan, operating through Herod the Great, sought to destroy baby Jesus. God took action to preserve the Redeemer’s life (Matt. 2).
2. Verses 5-8: “And he commanded them, saying, This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; And a third part *shall be* at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down. And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king. And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.”
 - a. Jehoiada issued the plan of action by which the young boy would be anointed king. A third part of those involved with him in the conspiracy were to serve as guard on the Sabbath day, the day of the coronation. The other warriors involved were to take up positions at key places in the city: at the gate of Sur (foundations, 2 Chron. 23:5) and at the gate behind the guard. The two gates these men were to guard were entrance-ways into the palace. The queen would not be kept from leaving the palace, but no one would be allowed to enter the palace to protect her.
 - b. “From the more detailed account of the revolution in 2 Chronicles we are forced to conclude that a considerable amount of time passed between the events of verse 4 and those of verse 5. Proper preparation of the appropriate people was absolutely necessary if the overthrow of Athaliah was to be successful. The soldiers having been assembled, Jehoiada called the army to meet him in the temple. From them he obtained a similar oath of loyalty as had been secured from the officers. After these events more time was needed to complete the arrangements. During this time Jehoiada armed the men. He gave orders to the ‘centurions’ (vv. 5-8), as well as the army collected from all of Judah (2 Chr. 23:4-7)” (David P. Brown, ADL, p.158). "This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* porters of the doors; And a third part *shall be* at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people *shall be*

- in the courts of the house of the LORD. But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they *are* holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out" (2 Chron. 23:4-7).
- c. Two other companies of soldiers were assigned to protect Joash at the temple. These men may have been those coming off duty at the beginning of the day. "Second Chronicles 23:7 informs us that the Levites that were assembled from all over Judah also were to help protect the king. We would conclude that the soldiers were immediately surrounding the king and the Levites posted beyond the soldiers to guard the temple proper. Thus, the Levites were to kill those who attempted to penetrate the precincts of the temple and the soldiers were to kill those who might get past the Levites (2 Kin. 11:8; 2 Chr. 23:7). The companies of soldiers were distributed in such a way as to place part of the men in front of the king and part of them in back of him. Verse 11 tells us that the men were extended completely across the temple court" (David P. Brown, ADL, p.159).
3. Verses 9-11: "And the captains over the hundreds did according to all *things* that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD. And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple."
 - a. The soldiers followed the plan carefully. They took up their positions on the appointed Sabbath. Jehoiada armed the men with the weapons which David had provided. They placed themselves from the right corner of the temple to the left corner, including the altar of burnt offerings within the protected area. The guard had their weapons in their hands, ready to take action against anyone who interfered.
 - b. Only the qualified priests were authorized to enter into the holy place, where the table of showbread, the candlestick, and the censer were located; and only the high priest was permitted to enter the most holy place, where the ark of the covenant and mercy seat were situated.
 - c. Solomon's temple had other rooms attached to it, which were not part of the temple proper. It was in these rooms that the young king would have been concealed.
 4. Verse 12: "And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king."
 - a. When everything was ready, they brought Joash forth out of the temple, and placed the crown upon his head. The proper ceremonies were followed, including the anointing. "The diadem, the testimony, and anointing oil, were essential to his consecration" (Clarke, p.518).
 - b. "After the approaches to the temple had all been occupied in this manner, Jehoiada brought out the king's son from his home in the temple; or, he brought him forth, set the crown upon him, and handed him the testimony, *i.e.* the book of the law, as the rule of his life and action as king, according to the precept in Deut. 17:18,19" (Keil, pp.361f). "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deut. 17:18-19).
 - c. When the young king had been coronated and anointed, the happiness in the hearts of the people burst forth in an outpouring of rejoicing. They clapped their hands and shouted. By this time, there was no danger posed by Athaliah.
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C. 2 Kings 11:13-16: Athaliah Slain.

1. Verses 13-14: “And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD. And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.”
 - a. “The demonstration was loud enough to be heard in the palace by Athaliah. Having heard the sound of rejoicing, Athaliah made her way to the temple. Upon entering the temple she saw the young king standing in the appropriate place for one in his station....Athaliah’s response was to tear her clothes and cry ‘treason, treason.’ By the direction of Jehoiada, she was immediately arrested, taken outside the temple and executed ‘beside the king’s house’ (v. 21)” (Brown, p.160).
 - b. Athaliah had seized the throne by bloodshed and treason; she tried to destroy all the royal seed, and succeeded except for Joash. Her actions were an attempt to destroy the lineage of David, bringing God’s purposes to a halt. She was bound to fail!
2. Verses 15-16: “But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king’s house: and there was she slain.”
 - a. Jehoiada had given order that Athaliah should not be slain within the temple. Anyone who took her part was to be slain.
 - b. “They probably brought her out near the king’s stables. It has been supposed, from Ezek. 46:1,2, that the *east gate* of the inner court was that by which the king entered on the *Sabbath day*, whereas on all other days he entered by the *south gate*. And there was another gate, called the *horse gate*, in the wall of the city, (Jer. 31:40), for the king’s horses to go out at from the stables at Millo, which is therefore called, 2 Chron. 23:15, *the horse gate toward the king’s house*” (Clarke, p.519).
 - c. Athaliah, the wicked daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, the murderer of the royal seed of David, was executed. She who had been responsible for contaminating many in Judah with Baal worship, now met her ignominious end. "For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim" (2 Chron. 24:7).
 - d. Josephus gives the following report of the proceedings: “When Athaliah unexpectedly heard the tumult and the acclamations, she was greatly disturbed in her mind, and suddenly issued out of the royal palace with her own army: and when she was come to the temple, the priests received her; but as for those that stood round about the temple, as they were ordered by the high priest to do, they hindered the armed men that followed her from going in. But when Athaliah saw the child standing upon a pillar with the royal crown upon his head, she rent her clothes, and cried out vehemently, and commanded [her guards] to kill him that had laid snares for her, and endeavoured to deprive her of the government; but Jehoiada called for the captains of hundreds, and commanded them to bring Athaliah to the valley of Cedron, and slay her there, for he would not have the temple defiled with the punishments of this pernicious woman; and he gave order, that if any one came near to help her, he should be slain also; wherefore those that had the charge of her slaughter took hold of her, and led her to the gate of the king’s mules, and slew her there” (*Antiquities*, Book IX, Chapter VII, Section 3, page 204).

D. 2 Kings 11:17-21: Jehoiada Overthrows Baal.

1. Verse 17: “And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD’S people; between the king also and the people.”
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- a. Jehoiada the high priest made a covenant between the Lord and king and the people; and a covenant between the king and the people. In this agreement, each party was pledged to aid each other.
 - b. “The king and the people bound themselves by a renewed allegiance to God and the king vowed to rule the people according to the will of God (Deu. 17:18-20).
 - c. Deuteronomy 17:18-20: "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left: to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."
2. Verse 18: “And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.”
- a. In their renewed religious zeal, the people entered Baal’s temple, destroyed the altars and images, tore down the building, and slew Mattan, the priest of Baal.
 - b. Jehoiada the priest appointed officials to oversee the house of God. “The immediate fruit of this renewal of the covenant was the destruction of the temple, and the slaughter of the priests of Baal..., the restoration of the pure worship of God in all its ancient integrity, and the establishment of the young king on the hereditary throne of Judah” (JFB, p.400).
 - c. 2 Chronicles 23:18-19: "Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was ordained* by David. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none *which was* unclean in any thing should enter in."
3. Verse 19-20: “And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house.”
- a. Athaliah having been deposed, Jehoiada entrusted the care of the young king to the hands of the men who had secured his reign; they conducted him to the king’s house, where he took the throne.
 - b. The nation rejoiced over the return of David’s seed to the throne of Judah. There was no one in the city or nation who was willing to question the right of Joash to reign.
 - c. We have the added information that Athaliah was executed with the sword. She was probably beheaded.
4. Verse 21: “Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he began to reign."
- a. At the tender age of seven, Jehoash (Joash) began his reign. “The first instance on record of making a child seven years old the king of any nation, and especially of such a nation as the Jews, who were at all times very difficult to be governed” (Clarke, p.520).
 - b. The reign of Joash began with great expectations; it was characterized at the first by righteous conduct and rule; it ended forty years later under less than favorable conditions.
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2 KINGS 12

A. 2 Kings 12:1-3: Jehoash's Reign.

1. Verse 1: "In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba."
 - a. The figures given in the context regarding Jehoash (Joash) shows that his birth was about the time that Jehu slew the kings of Israel and Judah (2 Kings 9:22-29). It was then that Athaliah seized the throne of Judah, and reigned six years (2 Kings 11:1-3). We are told that Jehoash was seven years old when he became king of Judah. This was the seventh year of Jehu's reign in Israel.
 - b. "Joash" is the short name for Jehoash. The long version is the name used in 2 Kings, but the short version is found in 2 Chronicles.
2. Verse 2: "And Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him."
 - a. The historian reports that the reign of Jehoash was pleasing to the Lord, but a qualification is given. During the time that Jehoiada served as high priest, and guided the young king in his duties, he was pleasing to God. Once he lost that righteous source of instruction, he went astray. "Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon *it*, and require *it*" (2 Chron. 24:17-22).
 - b. His reign began and continued for a while with God's will being followed. "But it is evident from the sequel of his history, that the rectitude of his administration was owing more to the salutary influence of his preserver and tutor, Jehoiada, than to the honest and sincere dictates of his own mind" (JFB, p.400). As reported in 2 Chronicles, during the latter stages of his 40-year reign, he turned away from God's law.
3. Verse 3: "But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places."
 - a. This verse "makes it clear that Joash did not follow through with a complete restoration of Scriptural worship as prescribed under the law of Moses. No idol was worshiped in 'the high places.' It was Jehovah who was wrongly worshiped thereon. Asa, Jehoshaphat, and the rest of the 'good' kings had failed in this regard also (1 Kin. 15:14; 22:43; 14:4; 2 Kin. 15:4,35). It remained for King Hezekiah to accomplish this task (18:4)" (David P. Brown, ADL, p.161).
 - b. "The popular fondness for the private and disorderly rites performed in the groves and recesses of hills was so inveterate, that even the most powerful monarchs had been unable to accomplish their suppression; no wonder that, in the early reign of a young king, and after the gross irregularities that had been allowed during the mal-administration of Athaliah, the difficulty of putting an end to the superstitions associated with 'the high places' was greatly increased" (JFB, p.400).
 - c. Whether God or an idol was worshiped in the high places, the practice was equally wrong in either

case. The proper place and activities of acceptable worship to God was at the temple; to worship an idol is sinful in all places and situations. Even worship offered at the right time, place, and form was wrong if a foreign element was introduced. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev. 10:1-2).

B. 2 Kings 12:4-16: Jehoash Endeavors to Make Repairs to the Temple.

1. Verses 4-5: "And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, *even* the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD, Let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found."
 - a. 2 Chronicles 24:7: "For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim."
 - b. The restoration of the temple was the most notable act of Joash's reign. According to the Divine record it was by the king's own personal initiative that this effort was begun and brought to fruition. The building was not in need of repair due to its age (it was approximately 130 years old). As we have seen, it was Athaliah who caused it to be in such a damaged state (2 Chr. 24:7).
 - c. "There is here given an account of the measures which the young king took for repairing the temple by the levying of taxes. There are three sorts of money reckoned:—1. 'The money of every one that passeth *the account*' (our translators have supplement this word)—viz., half a shekel, as an offering to the Lord (Exod. 30:13). This money was destined for the temple, as it had been originally for the tabernacle. 2. 'The money that every man (Hebrew, the souls, or persons) is set at'—*i.e.*, the redemption-price of every one who had devoted himself or anything belonging to him to the Lord, and the amount of which was estimated according to certain rules (Lev. 27:1-8).—3. Freewill or voluntary offerings made to the sanctuary. The first two were paid annually (see on 2 Chr. 24:5)" (JFB, p.400).
 - d. "The finances to accomplish this task were to come from the 'dedicated' or 'consecrated' money. There were three sources of this money: (1) The money that the men above twenty years contributed at the time of the census ('the money of every one that passeth the account,' Exo. 30:12-16). (2) Money that came from the payments made for the redemption of the firstborn, that is, money that the priests took from those who were under a vow and those who belonged to God ('the money that every man is set at,' Num. 18:15-16; Lev. 27:2-8). (3) The free-will offerings of the people ('money that cometh into any man's heart')" (Brown, ADL, p.161).
 - e. Numbers 18:15-16: "Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, *whether it be* of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs." Cf. Leviticus 27:1-8.
2. Verses 6-8: "But it was *so, that* in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. And the priests con-sented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house."
 - a. 2 Kings 12:6-8: "Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, *that* the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the *other* priests, and said to them, 'Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take

- more* money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple.’ And the priests agreed that they would neither receive *more* money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple" (NKJ).
- b. By the twenty-third year of Jehoash’s reign, although sufficient money had been collected to effect the repairs, no action had been taken to do the work. Jehoash being about thirty at the time, took direct action to find out why Jehoiada and his assistants had not begun the repair. He called the high priest before him to make inquiry.
 - c. 2 Chronicles 24:5: "And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened *it* not." We are not told specifically why the work had not been started.
 - d. “The object of this chest was to make a separation between the money to be raised for the building from the other moneys destined for the general use of the priests, in the hope that the people would be more liberal in their contributions when it was known that their offerings would be devoted to the special purpose of making the necessary repairs, and that the duty of attending to this work was no longer to devolve on the priests, but to be undertaken by the king” (JFB, p.401).
3. Verses 9-10: “But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD. And it was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.”
- a. The king took away from Jehoiada and the priests the responsibility of collecting the money and for the repairs. “Finding the first arrangement for raising the necessary funds not advantageous, the king gave new orders to Jehoiada regarding the collection of the money (2 Kin. 12:9; 2 Chr. 24:8). Jehoiada bored a hole in the lid of a chest. He placed it beside the altar of burnt offerings on the right side of the entrance. Thus, as the money was given by the people to the priests as they entered the temple it was put into the chest. As the chest was filled it was emptied and its contents put into bags, which bags were weighed to determine the amount of money contained therein. This money was then given to the persons doing the work on the temple” (Brown, ADL, p.162).
 - b. It may be that the people did not have the greatest trust in the priests. Perhaps the priests were using the money being collected as part of their general fund, and not for repairs on the temple. Whichever the case, when arrangements were made for the collection that would preclude any mistaken use of the funds, the contributions quickly mounted.
4. Verses 11-12: “And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD, And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair *it*.”
- a. “The king sent his secretary, along with an agent of the high priest (2 Chr. 24:11), to count the money in the chest from time to time, and deliver the amount to the overseers of the building, who paid the workmen and purchased all necessary materials. The custom of putting sums of certain amount in bags, which are labelled and sealed by a proper officer, is a common way of using the currency in Turkey and other Eastern countries” (JFB, p.401).
 - b. 2 Chronicles 24:11: "Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance."
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- c. "It is quite clear from this, that the assertion...that the priests had embezzled the money collected, is perfectly imaginary. For if the king had cherished any such suspicion against the priests, he would not have asked for their consent to an alteration of the first arrangement or to the new measure; and still less would he have commanded that the priests who kept the door should put the money into the chest, for this would have been no safeguard against embezzlement. For if the door-keepers wished to embezzle, all that they would need to do would be to put only a part of the money into the chest. The simple reason and occasion for giving up the first arrangement and introducing the new arrangement with the chest, was that the first measure had proved to be insufficient for the accomplishment of the purpose expected by the king....the reason why the chest was provided for the money to be collected was, first of all, that the money to be collected for the building might be separated from the money that came in and was intended for the priests; and secondly, that the contributions to be gathered for the building might be increased, since it might be expected that the people would give more if the collections were made for the express purpose of restoring the temple, than if only the legal and free-will offerings were simply given to the priests, without any one knowing how much would be applied to the building" (Keil, pp.368f).
5. Verses 13-16: "Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD: But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD. Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully. The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'."
- a. 2 Chronicles 24:14: "And when they had finished *it*, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, *even* vessels to minister, and to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada."
- b. "An explanation needs to be given concerning the difference between 2 Kings 12:13-15 and 2 Chronicles 24:14. The former passage states that no vessels were made for use in the temple with the money brought in. However, the latter passage states that vessels were made for the temple. Please note that the words of 2 Kings simply declare that while the temple was under construction the money was not used to make the vessels for temple use. The record of 2 Chronicles regarding the making of these vessels states what transpired after the temple was finished" (Brown, p.162).
- c. "When the repairs of the temple had been completed, the surplus was appropriated to the purchase of the temple furniture. The integrity of the overseers of the work being undoubted, no account was exacted of the way in which they applied the money given to them, while other moneys levied at the temple were left to the disposal of the priests, as the law directed (Lev. 5:15,16; Num. 5:8)" (JFB, p.401).
- d. "Howbeit there was not made for the house of the Lord bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the Lord; i.e. while the repairs were incomplete, while the work was still going on, no portion of the money taken from the chest was expended in the purchase of new sacred vessels, whether of gold or silver, whether howls, or snuffers, or basins, or trumpets the whole was rigidly applied to the renovation of the temple building. There is no contradiction between this statement and that of the writer of Chronicles (2 Chron 24:14), who tells us that, after the entire repairs were completed, the surplus money was expended in this way, on the purchase of 'vessels to minister and to offer, spoons, and vessels of gold and silver.' We can well understand that, after the spoiling of the temple by successive kings to buy off enemies—by Rehoboam to content Shishak (1 Kings 14:26), by Asa to gratify Benhadad (1 Kings 15:18), and by Joash himself (ver. 18) to procure the retreat of Hazael from the siege of Jerusalem, the vessels of the temple must have required renovating almost as much as the fabric itself; and when it

was found that there remained a surplus over and above all that was needed for building purposes, we cannot wonder that it was applied to the renewal of the vessels, absolutely essential as they were for the service of the sanctuary” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].

C. 2 Kings 12:17-18: Jehoash Gives the Temple Treasures to Hazael.

1. Verse 17: “Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.”
 - a. 2 Chronicles 24:23-24: "And it came to pass at the end of the year, *that* the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash."
 - b. “These verses relate Hazael’s campaign against Jerusalem. Second Chronicles 24:23-24 completes the material of these verses. After his defeat of Israel Hazael had traveled down the Mediterranean coast to attack Judah (2 King. 13:3). He took the city of Gath and advanced on Jerusalem. Chronicles informs us that Hazael dispatched an army against Judah. In the battle that followed, the smaller army of the Syrians defeated the larger army of Judah. The recording of this fact was for the purpose of pointing out that this was part of God’s punishment of Joash for the murders of the prophet Zechariah and the son of Jehoiada, as well as Joash’s idolatry (2 Chr. 24:17-27). It was after this defeat and to protect Jerusalem that Joash sent all of the temple treasures to Hazael. After receiving the tribute from Joash, Hazael departed” (Brown, ADL, p.162).
2. Verse 18: “And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold *that was* found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.”
 - a. “He dearly bought a peace which was of short duration, for the next year Hazael returned, and Jehoash, having no more treasures, was obliged to hazard a battle, which he lost, with the principal part of his nobility, so that Judah was totally ruined, and Jehoash shortly after slain in his bed by his own servants; 2 Chron. 24:23)” (Clarke, p.522).
 - b. By this time in his reign, Jehoiada had died, and Jehoash had been directing his own affairs, with disastrous effect. If he had followed the good counsel of Jehoiada and continued to follow the way of the Lord, his story could have had a decidedly different and better ending.

D. 2 Kings 12:19-21: Joash is Slain.

1. Verse 19: “And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?”
 - a. This verse gives the common and terse summary of the life and acts of Joash. The inspired history contains only a brief report of his reign, with the final chapter being one of sorrow.
 - b. Undoubtedly, the day-to-day activities of Joash were recorded in the chronicles kept by the nation’s scribes. Those records have long since vanished.
 2. Verses 20-21: “And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla. For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.”
 - a. 2 Chronicles 24:25 "And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) his
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own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings."

- b. "The complete judgment of God on Joash for his sins is now revealed. The war with Syria had left Joash wounded and in bed recovering (2 Chr. 24:25). Those conspiring against Joash are named in 2 Kin. 12:21 and 2 Chr. 24:26. Second Kings 12:20-21 tells the place where he was actually slain. Second Chronicles 24:25 tells us that he was slain because he killed the son of Jehoiada. The fact that the Chronicles has the plural, 'sons,' could be due to a scribal error. 'Sons' is probably a rhetorical plural used here to show that Joash had brought blood-guiltiness upon himself. The usage of the rhetorical plural is found in 2 Chronicles 28:3 and 33:6. Joash was then buried in Jerusalem, but not in the sepulcher of the kings" (Brown, ADL, p.163).
 - c. "Not long after the departure of the Syrians, who had left Joash, according to 2 Chron. 24:25, with many wounds, his servants formed a conspiracy against him and slew him upon his bed in the house Millo, which goeth down to Silla....Joash was buried with his fathers in the city of David; but according to the Chronicles he was not buried in the graves of the kings. The two statements are not irreconcilable..." (Keil, pp.372f).
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2 KINGS 13

A. 2 Kings 13:1-9: The Disastrous Reign of Jehoahaz in Israel.

1. Verses 1-2: "In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom."
 - a. During the twenty-third year of Joash's reign in Jerusalem, Jehoahaz the son of Ahaziah began his seventeen-year reign in Israel. His reign was characterized by the same idolatrous worship which had been present in Israel since the days of Jeroboam. The reign of Jehoahaz came to an end about the same time as did the reign of Joash.
 - b. "The chronology here is thus accounted for; Jehoahaz began his reign at the commencement of the twenty-third year of Joash, and reigned seventeen years, fourteen alone, and three years with his son Joash; the fourteenth year was but just begun" (Clarke, p.53).
 - c. Regarding Jehoahaz, Jamieson said: "Under his government, which pursued the policy of his predecessors regarding the support of the calf-worship, Israel's apostasy from the true god became greater and more confirmed than in the time of his father Jehu. The national chastisement, when it came, was consequently the more severe; and the instruments employed by the Lord in scourging the revolted nation were Hazael, and his son and general, Ben-hadad, in resisting whose successive invasions the Israelitish army was sadly reduced and weakened" (pp.401f).
2. Verses 3-4: "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them."
 - a. "As Jehoahaz trod in the footsteps of his forefathers and continued in the sin of Jeroboam (the worship of the calves), the Lord punished Israel during his reign even more than in that of his predecessor. The longer and the more obstinately the sin was continued, the more severe did the punishment become" (Keil, p.375).
 - b. Elisha wept when he foresaw the evil Hazael would bring upon Israel. This passage gives a general report of that evil, without describing the details the prophet predicted: "And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath showed me that thou *shalt be* king over Syria" (2 Kings 8:12-13).
 - c. The grave danger posed by the Syrian invasion, and the grievous hardship imposed by defeat, drove Jehoahaz to humble himself before the Lord. God was willing to heed his pleas, as verse twenty-three shows, on account of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - d. "We know so much less of the nature of the calf-worship and of the rites which accompanied it, that we cannot to the same extent justify the Divine severity in connection with it as in connection with the Baal and Astarte cult. Still, we must remember the coarse, lewd dancing which accompanied the first calf-worship (Ex 32:19), for which death was not thought too heavy a penalty (Ex 32:27), and the almost universal combination of unchastity with idolatrous ceremonies, which raises a suspicion that those who frequented the shrines at Dan and Bethel were not wholly innocent of impurity. And he delivered them into the hand of Hazel King of Syria. The national sins of Israel were mostly

punished in this way, by the sword of some foreign foe. Hazael had been already made an instrument for the chastisement of Jehu (2 Kings 10:32,33). Now he was to chastise Jehoahaz still more severely. And into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days; literally, all the days. Not certainly all the days of the two kings Hazael and Benhadad, for Benhadad was entirely worsted in his war with Joash (vers. 24, 25), but either all the days of Jehoahaz, or all the days that God had appointed for the duration of the calamity. It is perhaps against the former interpretation that Hazael appears to have outlived Jehoahaz (vers. 22-24); but Ben-hadad may have warred against him as his father's general (ver. 25) during his father's lifetime....Jehoahaz, as Josephus says, 'betook himself to prayer and supplication of God, entreating that he would deliver him out of the hands of Hazael, and not suffer him to continue subject' ('Ant. Jud.,' 9:8. § 5). He did not turn from his sin of idolatry, perhaps did not suspect that it was this sin which had provoked God's anger; but in a general way he repented, humbled himself, and besought God's mercy and assistance. And the Lord hearkened unto him. God accepted his repentance, all imperfect as it was, so far as to save the people from the entire destruction with which it was threatened by the severe measures of Hazael (ver. 7), to continue the national existence (ver. 23), and ultimately to restore the national prosperity (ver. 25 and 2 Kings 14:25-27). But he did not remove the oppression, as Josephus imagines, in Jehoahaz's time. Ver. 22 makes this fact absolutely certain. For he saw the oppression of Israel, because the King of Syria oppressed them. Oppression is always hateful to God, even when he is using it as his instrument for chastising or punishing a guilty people. He 'sees' it, notes it, lays it up in his remembrance for future retribution (camp. Ex 3:7; Isa 10:5-12, etc.)" [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by Biblesoft].

3. Verses 5-6: "And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria."
 - a. This passage is parenthetical. Some have suggested that the flow of thought goes from verse four to verse seven, with this passage to be read after verse seven. In either case, the record is the same.
 - b. We are not here told who this savior was. Clarke says: "This was undoubtedly Joash, whose successful wars against the Syrians are mentioned at the conclusion of the chapter" (p.523). The savior's work resulted in Israel being able to resume a more normal life.
 - c. "A saviour. This refers neither to some patriotic defender nor some signal victory, but to the deliverance obtained for Israel by the two successors of Jehoahaz—namely, Joash, who regained all the cities which the Syrians had taken from his father (2 Kings 13:25); and Jeroboam II., who restored the former boundaries of Israel (2 Kings 14:25)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - d. It was not out of respect for Jehoahaz that Jehovah responded to the king's cries, but on account of the ancient covenant made with the founding fathers of the nation (ver. 23). On other occasions, God blessed Israel because of the influence of David.
 - e. Despite the aid God gave them, Israel did not turn from the sin of calf-worship which Jeroboam had established at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:25-33). Also, the grove ["Asherah"] remained at Samaria. Jamieson described this as: "Asherah, the idol, set up by Ahab (1 Ki. 16:33), and which ought to have been demolished (Deut. 7:5)" (p.402).
4. Verse 7: "Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing."
 - a. The army of Jehoahaz was reduced by defeat to only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand

footmen. Evidently this was only a small fraction of its original strength.

- b. The lesson taught is that military strength could not protect Israel. Faithful obedience to God's law would have made it impossible for any enemy to overcome them. God could have delivered them by few or by many. Compare: "And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few*" (1 Sam. 14:6).
5. Verses 8-9: "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead."
 - a. The historian indicates that Jehoahaz possessed a degree of *might*. Obviously he must have been a good fighting man. "This is particularly noticed, in order to show that the grievous oppression from foreign enemies by which the Israelites were ground down, was not owing to the cowardice or imbecility of their king, but solely to the righteous and terrible judgment of God for their foul apostasy" (JFB, p.402).
 - b. Jehoahaz died. We are not told the circumstances of his death. We are not given his age at death. The usual reference is made to the fact that his deeds were recorded in the records of the kingdom.

B. 2 Kings 13:10-13: The Reign of Jehoash, Son of Jehoahaz, over Israel.

1. Verse 10: "In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years."
 - a. "Jehoash was associated with his father in the government three years, otherwise his reign must have been described as commencing in the fortieth year of Joash, king of Judah" (JFB, p.402). The margin concurs.
 - b. Jehoash reigned over Israel for sixteen years. This period would include the years he and his father shared the reign.
 2. Verse 11: "And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he walked therein."
 - a. Jehoash walked in the sins of his predecessors, but despite this, God was willing to give Israel some relief from the Syrians. Their punishment has been sufficient for the purposes intended. It was not enough to effect a lasting national repentance.
 - b. The full effect of a man's life cannot be known at the time of his death; his influence lives on, even to the end of time in the case of the most influential. Abel's influence remains (Heb. 11:4). Paul's life changed the course of world history, and will continue to have an impact on the world until the end of time. The influence of Christ is beyond any human comparison. Jeroboam could not know the awful effect his evil practice would have on his nation for many generations.
 3. Verses 12-13: "And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel."
 - a. "The war with Amaziah referred to in ver. 12 is related in the history of this king in ch. 14:8-14; and the close of the reign of Joash is also recorded there (vers. 15 and 16) with the standing formula" (Keil, p.376).
 - b. "This war with Amaziah may be seen in ample detail 2 Chron. 25; it ended in the total defeat of Amaziah, who was taken prisoner by Joash, and afterwards slain in a conspiracy at Lachish. Joash
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took Jerusalem, broke down four hundred cubits of the wall, and took all the royal treasures, and the treasures of the house of God. See Chron. 25:29-37" (Clarke, p.523).

- c. At the death of Joash, his son Jeroboam ascended Israel's throne. This man is known among Bible scholars as Jeroboam II, to distinguish him from the first king of Israel who bore that name.

C. 2 Kings 13:14-21: The Closing Acts of Elisha and His Death.

1. Verse 14: "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."
 - a. Elijah did not die in the usual sense of that word, but was translated directly from earth into eternity by miraculous power (2 Kings 2:11). Enoch had a similar experience (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5).
 - b. Elisha, the successor to Elijah in the prophetic office, contracted some unspecified disease which led to his death. Prior to his death, the king of Israel (Joash) came to him, and weeping before him, exclaimed, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." This statement had also been made by Elisha at the departure of Elijah.
 - c. "These words seem to have been a complimentary phrase, applied to one who was thought an eminent guardian and deliverer of his country; and the particular application of them to Elisha, who by his counsels and prayers had obtained many glorious victories for Israel, shows that the king possessed some measure of faith and trust...and called forth the prophet's dying benediction" (JFB, p.403).
 2. Verses 15-17: "And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed *them*."
 - a. Elisha directed Joash to take a bow and arrow and to shoot an arrow through the open east window. This was intended to symbolize the promise that he would be empowered by the Lord to overcome the Syrians.
 - b. "Hostilities were usually proclaimed by a herald, sometimes by a king or general making a public and formal discharge of an arrow into the enemy's country. Elisha directed Joash to do this, as a symbolical act designed to intimate more fully and significantly the victories promised to the king of Israel over the Syrians. His laying his hands on the king's hands was to represent the power imparted to the bow-shot as coming from the Lord through the medium of the prophet. His shooting the first arrow eastward—to that part of his kingdom which the Syrians had taken, and which was east of Samaria—was a declaration of war against them for the invasion. His shooting the other arrows into the ground was in token of the number of victories he was to gain; but his stopping at the third betrayed the weakness of his faith; for as the discharged arrow signified a victory over the Syrians, it is evident that the more arrows he shot, the more victories he would gain; and as he stopped so soon, his conquests would be incomplete" (JFB, p.403).
 3. Verses 18-19: "And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice."
 - a. The second part of the demonstration called on the king to smite the ground with the arrows, *i.e.*, to shoot arrows into the ground. He shot three arrows into the ground, which as it turns out, was too few to suit the prophet.
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- b. Elisha was angry with the king because he only shot three arrows. This meant that his victories over Syria would not be enough to remove this enemy from being a threat. His defeat of Syria would be limited to three victories.
4. Verses 20-21: “And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band *of men*; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.”
 - a. Elisha died, and his body was buried. This point is significant in view of the following miraculous case. Another item furnishing the background to the event was the invasion of the Moabites.
 - b. In the course of the fighting that resulted from the Moabite invasion, some men were in the act of burying one of the fallen soldiers, when a band of Moabites approached. In their hurry to bury the body, they quickly cast it into the tomb in which the body of Elisha had been buried. “The earlier Israelites did not bury their dead in coffins, but wrapped them in linen cloths and laid them in tombs hewn out of the rock. The tomb was then covered with a stone, which could easily be removed” (Keil, p.378).
 - c. When the body of the dead soldier touched the bones of the prophet, the dead soldier revived and stood on his feet, resurrected to life again by God’s power. “The design of this miracle of the restoration of the dead man to life was not to show how even in the grave Elisha surpassed his master Elijah in miraculous power...but to impress the seal of divine attestation upon the prophecy of the dying prophet concerning the victory of Joash over the Syrians...” (Keil, p.378).
 - d. The age of Elisha at his death is not given, but since he survived until the reign of Joash, having begun his career as a prophet during the reign of Ahab, his age must have been great. “As he had been called by Elijah to be a prophet in the reign of Ahab and did not die till that of Joash, and forty-one years elapsed between the year that Ahab died and the commencement of the reign of Joash, he must have held the prophetic office for at least fifty years, and have attained the age of eighty” (Keil, p.378).
- D. 2 Kings 13:22-25: Israel Defeats Syria under the Reign of Jehoash, Son of Jehoahaz.
1. Verses 22-23: “But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.”
 - a. God allowed Hazael to oppress Israel during the reign of Jehoahaz, but did not allow him to destroy them. The inspired historian states the reason: because of the covenant which he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob many generations in the past. God is true to his word; he can be safely trusted.
 - b. Hebrews 6:9-10: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - c. 2 Peter 3:8-9: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 2. Verses 24-25: “So Hazael king of Syria died; and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel."
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- a. When Hazael died, his son Benhadad took his place as king of Syria. Jehoash [Joash] was now king of Israel, and with the help of God, was able to begin liberating the cities Hazael had taken from Israel by force. In three battles, Joash defeated Benhadad, just as Elisha had indicated to him (see verses 14-21).
 - b. “His death is a new fact, not involved in anything that has been previously stated. It appears by ver. 22 that he outlived Jehoahaz. And Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. Hazael, the usurper, gave his eldest son the name of the monarch whom he had murdered. It was an old royal name in Syria (1 Kings 15:18), having been borne by at least two of Hazael's predecessors....And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. The capture of these cities by Ben-hadad had not been previously mentioned. It appears by the present passage, compared with ver. 22, that, during the lifetime of his father, Benhadad had led expeditions into the land of Israel, acting as his father's representative and general, and had made himself master of several Israelite towns. These were now recovered by Jehoash....Three times did Joash beat him; and recovered the cities of Israel (comp. ver. 19). Thrice defeated, Hazael was forced to abandon his conquests in Western Samaria. He retained, however, the trans-Jordanic territory, which was not recovered by the Israelites till the reign of Jeroboam II. (see 2 Kings 14:25)” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2001 by BibleSoft].
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2 KINGS 14

A. 2 Kings 14:1-7: Amaziah Reigns in Jerusalem.

1. Verses 1-2: "In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did. Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places."
 - a. Amaziah took the throne of Judah following the death of Joash, his father. His father was a mere boy of seven when he became king, but Amaziah was twenty-five years old at his coronation.
 - b. "Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years in the same theocratic spirit as his father Joash, only not like his ancestor David, *i.e.* according to the correct explanation in 2 Chron. 25:2...since Amaziah, like his father Joash (see at ch. 12:3), fell into idolatry in the closing of his reign (cf. 2 Chron. 25:14ff). Only the high places were not taken away..." (Keil, pp.379f). "And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart" (2 Chron. 25:2).
 - c. "The beginning of his reign was excellent, for he acted the part of a constitutional king, according to the law of God, yet not with perfect sincerity of heart (cf. 2 Chr. 25:2); for, as in the case of his father, Joash, the early promise was belied by the devious course he personally followed in later life (see on 2 Chr. 20:14), as well by the public irregularities he tolerated in the kingdom" (JFB, p.404).
 - d. None of the kings of Israel was able and willing to remove the calf-worship Jeroboam had set up at Dan and Bethel. Although righteous kings who followed Solomon sought to promote the pure worship of God in Judah, it was not until Hezekiah that the high places referred to in verse four were taken away. "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan" (2 Kings 18:4).
 2. Verses 5-6: "And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father. But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin."
 - a. When Amaziah had established his rule, he slew those men who had slain his father, but he spared the children of the assassins in keeping with the Mosaic Law: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16).
 - b. His sparing the offspring of the murderers "displays the good character of this prince, for the course thus pursued towards the families of the regicides was directly contrary to the prevailing customs of antiquity, according to which all connected with the criminals were doomed to unsparing de-struction" (JFB, p.404).
 - c. Compare: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
 3. Verse 7: "He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day."
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- a. The full account of this battle is given in 2 Chronicles 25:5-16: "Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield. He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for an hundred talents of silver. But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the LORD *is* not with Israel, *to wit, with* all the children of Ephraim. But if thou wilt go, do *it*, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down. And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this. Then Amaziah separated them, *to wit,* the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger. And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand. And *other* ten thousand *left* alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces. But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Bethhoron, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil. Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them. Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that *the king* said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel."
- b. The children of Seir were the Edomites. Amaziah slew ten thousand of them in battle, and captured ten thousand others, who were cast down from a high rock.
- 1) The definite article before *rock* in the original text points to the capital city of the Edomites; the name of this city was *Petra*. This was the name given the city by the Greeks because of its physical "situation and the mode in which it was built, since it was erected in a valley surrounded by rocks, and that in such a manner that the houses were partly hewn in the natural rock. Of this commercial city, which was still flourishing in the first centuries of the Christian era, splendid ruins have been preserved in a valley on the eastern side of the ghor which runs down to the Elantic Gulf..." (Keil, p.380).
 - 2) Petra: "Capital city of the Nabatean Arabs located about 60 miles north of the Gulf of Aqabah. Petra is sometimes identified with Sela (Judg. 1:36; 2 Kings 14:7; Isa. 16:1; 42:11), because both names mean, 'rock.' Lack of archaeological evidence of Edomite settlement in the basin suggests that Sela is better identified with Um el Bayyarah on the mountain plateau overlooking Petra. The Nabatean king Aretas IV (2 Cor. 11:32-33) reigned from Petra" (Holman).
 - 3) As usual, McGarvey has some most interesting material:
 - a) "A few miles from Mount Hor, in the midst of the mountains eastward of it, is the celebrated city called Petra—the rock. It is one of the most curious cities in the world, yet of its early history very little is known, and its very existence was lost sight of for many centuries until its ruins were discovered by Burckhardt in 1812. It was built in a deep basin in the mountains, surrounded on every side by precipitous cliffs, and approached by only one narrow pass between perpendicular ledges of rock. This pass, for nearly a mile as it descends toward the city, is in many places not more than 12 feet wide, and a small stream flows along its bed. It
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finally opens out into a wider valley called Wady Musa, and this into the area which was occupied by the city.

- b) “Over this area are scattered the fragments of ancient dwellings, palaces, and temples, while the perpendicular walls of variegated sandstone all around are excavated for tombs and small temples. But the most remarkable structure is a temple of large dimensions and elaborate workmanship carved entirely out of natural rock in the face of a perpendicular cliff. It is called by the Arabs El Kusneh....
- c) Its height is about 150 feet, and...its columns are of the Corinthian order. ‘The perfection of its presevervation,’ says Dr. Ridgaway, ‘is marvelous, the finest carving looking as though but a day from the touch of the chisel, and only here and there a column or a figure has perished.’ It has a single interior chamber, which is without ornamentation, and the design of the structure is an enigma. It was certainly not carved out by the ancient sons of Esau, who held this country during the period of Bible history, yet the existence of such a work and of such a city as that of which it is a representative shows that the land of Edom was once capable of supporting a rich and powerful people. Its valleys and elevated plains are still exceedingly productive, and should the tide of intelligt emigration once set in upon it, it may yet be made to bloom again as a garden” (*Lands of the Bible*, pp.486f).
- c. God would not allow him to take the warriors hired from among the Israelites, because they were not faithful. The mercenary army from Israel sacked several cities of Judah, slew three thousand people, and took a great amount of spoil.
- d. Amaziah made a very serious blunder in the operation against Edom when he brought their images back to Jerusalem with him, and began to worship them.

B. 2 Kings 14:8-14: Jehoash Defeats Amaziah.

1. Verse 8: “Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.”
 - a. “This bold and haughty challenge, which was most probably stimulated by a desire of satisfaction for the outrages perpetrated by the discharged auxiliaries of Israel (2 Chr. 25:13) on the towns that lay on their way home, as well as by revenge for the massacre of his ancestors by Jehu (ch. 9), sprang, there is little doubt, from pride and self-confidence, inspired by his victory over the Edomites” (JFB, p.404).
 - b. “Amaziah then sent a challenge to the Israelitish king Joash to go to war with him. The outward reason for this was no doubt the hostile acts that had been performed by the Israelitish troops, which had been hired for the war with Edom and then sent back again (2 Chron. 25:13). But the inward ground was the pride which had crept upon Amaziah in consequence of his victory over the Edomites, and had so far carried him away, that he not only forgot the Lord his God, to whom he was indebted for this victory, and brought to Jerusalem the gods of the Edomites which he had taken in the war and worshipped them, and silenced with threats the prophet who condemned this idolatry (2 Chron. 25:14ff), but in his proud reliance upon his own power challenged the Israelitish king to war” (Keil, p.381).
2. Verses 9-10: “And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory *of this*, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee?”
 - a. Jehoash responded to this challenge by uttering a fable. In this parabolic statement, the king stated that a thistle asked a cedar of Lebanon to give his daughter to his son for a wife. But a wild beast that

passed by stepped on and crushed the thistle.

- b. The meaning of the statement is obvious. Amaziah had truly smitten the nation of Edom, which had given him an exalted view of himself; but Jehoash advised him not to think too highly of himself, but to stay at home, for if he met Israel on the battlefield, Amaziah would be destroyed and his nation with him.
 - c. That the Israelite mercenaries had done evil in attacking the cities of Judah is clear; that Amaziah had sinned by taking the Edomite idols and worshiping them is equally clear. Amaziah took full credit for the defeat of Edom, when in fact it was God who gave him the victory. Wisdom dictated that he overlook the damage the Israelite mercenaries caused, leaving their punishment to God (cf. Rom. 12:17-21). Judah could not expect God to protect them in a battle with Israel, since Amaziah had corrupted himself by worshiping the Edomite gods. The natural superiority of Israel's army would defeat Judah's without God's help.
3. Verses 11-12: "But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Bethshemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents."
 - a. Amaziah would not listen to the wise advice of Jehoash, but let his exalted view of his own greatness lead him and his nation into disaster.
 - b. Jehoash led his army to Bethshemesh, a city belonging to Judah. Amaziah brought his army out to meet the Israelites. In the resulting battle, the men of Judah were routed.
 4. Verses 13-14: "And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Bethshemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria."
 - a. Jehoash captured Amaziah. Bringing the captive king with him, he made his way to Jerusalem, where he proceeded to break down four hundred cubits of the city's wall, from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate.
 - b. The Israelite king also took all the gold and silver, the vessels found in the temple, and the treasure stored in the king's palace. He also took hostages from Judah back with him to Samaria.

C. 2 Kings 14:15-20: The Death of Jehoash and Amaziah Reported.

1. Verses 15-16: "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead."
 - a. Jehoash died soon after the events just described. "As Amaziah ascended the throne in the second year of the sixteen years' reign of Jehoash, and before his war with Israel made war upon the Edomites and overcame them, the war with Israel can only fall in the closing years of Jehoash, and this king cannot very long have survived his triumph over the king of Judah" (Keil, p.383).
 - b. The next verse will tell us that Amaziah outlived Jehoash by fifteen years. Jehoash reigned for six-teen years (806-790 B.C.); Amaziah ruled in Judah for twenty-nine years (803-775). The battle of the preceding passage would have taken place during the last couple of years of Jehoash's reign.
2. Verses 17-20: "And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he

fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.”

- a. “Amaziah, like his father Joash, did not die a natural death. They made a conspiracy against him at Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish, whither murderers were sent after him, who slew him there” (Keil, p.383).
- b. Amaziah fell into disfavor with his people from the time he returned from his victory over Edom, at which time he turned away from God and began to worship the gods of the Edomites. “Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there” (2 Chron. 25:27). He was able to avoid assassination for more than fifteen years.
- c. Those who opposed Amaziah were able to slay him at Lachish. They brought his body back to Jerusalem on horses, and buried it in the city of David.

D. 2 Kings 14:21-22: Azariah Reigns in Jerusalem.

1. Verse 21: “And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.”
 - a. “With the death of Amaziah the people made his sixteen-year-old son Azariah (Uzziah) king. Azariah means ‘Jehovah helps.’ Uzziah means ‘My strength is Jehovah.’ He was referred to by both names with equal frequency. We do not know why he bore two names” (David Brown, ADL, p.166). It is not uncommon for Bible characters to have two different names.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 26:1: "Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah."
2. Verse 22: “He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.”
 - a. Elath or Eloth: “Place name meaning, ‘ram,’ ‘mighty trees,’ or ‘terebinth.’ See Terebinth. Port city on northern end of Red Sea. Israel passed through it on way through Edom in wilderness (Deut. 2:8). It was significant enough to serve as a point of reference to identify Ezion-geber, where King Solomon made his naval vessels (1 Kings 9:26; compare 2 Chron. 8:17-18). Later King Uzziah (792-740) rebuilt the seaport and controlled it for Judah (2 Kings 14:22). Archaeologists have usually identified Elath as another name for Ezion-geber and located it at *tell el-Kheleifeh*. More recent archaeological work has attempted to show that Ezion-geber was the port city on the island of Jezirat Faraun. Elath would then be the mainland base to which goods were transferred for loading onto pack animals for the long caravan travels northward to Judah, Israel, Syria, or Phoenicia or for travels eastward to Assyria or Babylonia or westward to Egypt” (Holman).
 - b. Elath pertained to Edom, and had rebelled against Judah with the rest of the nation. Uzziah set about to rebuild and fortify the seaport city, restoring it to Judah’s control. Compare: "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which *is* beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom" (1 Kings 9:26).
 - c. The present report gives only this very brief reference to Uzziah’s reign. He occupied the throne of Judah for fifty-two years (2 Kings 15:2). We will later be given more information about his rule, but in the meantime, the historian returns to the history of Israel.

E. 2 Kings 14:23-29: Jeroboam II Reigns in Israel.

1. Verse 23: “ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years.”
 - a. “The statement that Jeroboam the son of Joash (Jehoash) ascended the throne in the fifteenth year of
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Amaziah, agrees with ver. 17, according to which Amaziah outlived Jehoash fifteen years, since Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years. On the other hand, the forty-one years' duration of his reign does not agree with the statement in ch. 15:8, that his son Zachariah did not become king till the thirty-eighth year of Azariah (Uzziah); and therefore Thenius proposes to alter the number 41 into 51, Ewald into 53" (Keil, p.385).

- b. Jamieson, however, states that Jeroboam "had been previously associated with his father for several years in the government....Ewald, Thenius, and others, maintain that an error in the Hebrew numeral letters has occurred here—the duration of Jeroboam's reign having been originally stated at fifty-two or fifty-three instead of forty-one years. But such a supposition is exceedingly improbable, as it implies the mistake to be considered as not limited to one, but to have extended to several letters..." (pp.405f).
2. Verses 24-25: "And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of Gathhepher."
 - a. This Jeroboam partook of the nature of the first Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-33). Jeroboam I initiated the sinful practice of calf-worship at Dan and Bethel, with the purpose in mind to keep the people from going to Jerusalem to worship God after the true order, which he thought would have led to his own downfall as king.
 - b. All the kings of Israel followed the practice Jeroboam I had started; Jeroboam II is no exception to this rule. The major difference between the monarchs of the Northern Kingdom is the degree of their rebellion against Jehovah. Religiously and spiritually, Jeroboam II was a failure.
 - c. But in discharging his regal and civil obligations, Jeroboam II excelled. He was able to restore the borders of Israel to Hamath and the sea of the plain. "Recovering the territory lost by the successful border incursions of Hazael (see on ch. 10:32), he re-established the ancient boundaries of the ten tribes. This result had been predicted by Jonah, of whom the only account transmitted to us is contained in this passage, and in the book called by his name. The prophecies by which he animated the patriotism of Jeroboam II in his long and severe struggles against the kings of Syria have not been recorded; for, although there was an unbroken series of prophets in Israel, none of them committed their predictions to writing; and Hosea, who lived after Jonah, in the latter end of the reign of this Jeroboam, was the first whose prophecies, receiving a permanent form, were afterwards admitted into the sacred canon" (JFB, p.406).
 - d. Compare: "And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, *and* brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went" (2 Sam. 8:5-6).
 - e. "From ancient monuments of Assyria we are able to understand how Jeroboam accomplished his conquest. Syria was defeated by Assyria and Israel was in a tributary alliance with Assyria. This does not mean that God had no hand in the matter. God routinely utilized political situations to punish and bless different nations. To get a fuller understanding of the moral and spiritual state in Israel at this time one should study the prophets, Hosea and Amos" (Brown, ADL, p.166).
 3. Verses 26-27: "For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash."
 - a. Sometimes in God's dealings with Israel, the greater good of the nation, with respect to the great end toward which God used them in working out his eternal plan, was exalted above the immediate need

- to punish some wicked individuals. In other words, although Jeroboam II was an evil man who perpetuated the sinful worship at Dan and Bethel, God used this man in preserving Israel.
- b. It was never God's intention for Israel to be utterly destroyed. In fact, he promised that they would be preserved to the end of time. "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid. For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jer. 30:10-11).
4. Verses 28-29: "Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead."
- a. Those who lived at the time of Jeroboam II, could see his wickedness and yet he seemed to prosper. Only the perceptive ones would see how God was using this evil man to support his ultimate goal. Our view of God's ultimate purpose is often obscured by the sinful confusion of the present. Wicked men seem to prosper and good people seem to be cursed. But one rainy day does not destroy the entire summer, nor one cold, blustery day the springtime!
 - b. Psalm 37:1-28: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteous-ness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous. The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth. For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off. The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand. I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."
 - c. Following a reign that spanned forty-one years, Jeroboam II died. His son Zachariah was exalted to the throne of Israel.
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2 KINGS 15

A. 2 Kings 15:1-7: The Reign of Azariah in Judah.

1. Verses 1-2: "In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem."
 - a. More details are provided by 2 Chronicles 26. "The seven verses covering Uzziah's fifty-two year reign cite no specific acts. Second Chronicles 26 tells us that he developed the kingdom into a great earthly power. The Scripture tells us that Uzziah did what was right before God. However, he followed in his father's footsteps. While the prophet Zechariah was alive he served God, but when he died Uzziah departed from doing God's will" (David Brown, ADL, p.167).
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 26:4-5: "And he did *that which* was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper."
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 26:6-7: "And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 26:8-10: "And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly. Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall*, and fortified them. Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry."
 - 4) 2 Chronicles 26:11-15: "Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred. And under their hand *was* an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings *to cast* stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong."
 - b. "As Amaziah, the father of Azariah, lived only till the fifteenth year of Jeroboam II (cf. Ch. 14:17,23), there is a difficulty in reconciling that fact with the chronological statement in the first verse of this chapter. It may be removed, however, and a satisfactory explanation given, by assuming, what seems exceedingly probable, that Jeroboam had reigned in conjunction with his father for eleven or twelve years, and on the demise of his father, reigned alone. Thus his reign would have a double commencement. According to the former view, this would be his twenty-seventh year; according to the latter, his fifteenth year. Or, it is thought that the throne of Judah continued vacant eleven or twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of his son Azariah, who, being a boy four years old when his father was murdered, a regency was, by the popular will, appointed during his minority, for he was not formally inaugurated into the kingdom till he was sixteen" (JFB, p.407).
 - c. The reign of Amaziah (Uzziah) was the longest in the history of Judah, with the exception of Manasseh's fifty-five year reign.

2. Verses 3-4: “And he did *that which* was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.”
 - a. Once an evil practice has been allowed to become entrenched and popular, it is extremely difficult to remove it. A revolution of sorts is necessary. In the modern religious scene in America, the use of instrumental music in worship has been accepted by virtually everyone. So entrenched has it become, that those who reject it are viewed as peculiar.
 - b. In the northern kingdom, calf-worship at Dan and Bethel had become part of the national fabric, and even if a king wanted to abolish it, he would have had a major revolution on his hands if he had attempted its removal. Similarly, in Judah, the people had become involved in worship at the high places. It would not be until Hezekiah’s reign that these would be removed (2 Kings 18:4).
 3. Verses 5-7: “And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the land. And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.”
 - a. This passage only gives the main thought of the king’s leprosy; the other account provides details. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land" (2 Chron. 26:16-21).
 - b. “Elated by the possessions of great power, and presumptuously arrogating to himself, as the heathen kings, the functions both of the regal and sacerdotal offices, he was punished with leprosy, which, as the offence was capital (Num. 8:7), was equivalent to death; for this disease excluded him from all society (Lev. 13:46); and while Jotham, his son, as his viceroy, administered the affairs of the kingdom, devoting fixed portions of his time (like Solomon, 1 Ki. 7:7) to the judicial duties—being about fifteen years of age (cf. v.33)—he had to dwell in a place apart by himself...” (JFB, p.407).
 - c. Jotham bore authority over the kingdom of Judah, in the name of Uzziah. “For approximately ten years Jotham remained in this position. After his father died of the leprosy, Jotham became king. Since Jotham was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, he must have been about fifteen years old when Uzziah appointed him to be the chief administrator over the kingdom” (Brown, ADL, p.168).
 - d. “The time when this event occurred is not stated either in our account or in the Chronicles. But this punishment from God cannot have fallen upon him before the last ten years of his fifty-two years’ reign, because his son, who was only twenty-five years old when his father died (ver. 33, and 2 Chron. 26:1), undertook the administration of the affairs of the kingdom at once, and therefore must have been at least fifteen years old” (Keil, p.388).
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B. 2 Kings 15:8-12: The Reign of Zechariah in Israel.

1. Verses 8-9: "In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."
 - a. "Hosea had prophesied for God concerning Israel: 'And I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel' (Hos. 1:4). Because Israel would not repent at the preaching of the prophets during the prosperous reigns of Joash and Jeroboam the judgment of God fell upon Israel" (Brown, ADL, p.168).
 - b. "In the...years between the death of Jeroboam and the conquest of Samaria by Shalmaneser anarchy prevailed twice, in all for the space of twenty years, and six kings followed one another, only one of whom, viz. Menahem, died a natural death, so as to be succeeded by his son upon the throne" (Keil, p.389).
 - c. Zachariah reigned only six months. Only Shallum, who followed him to the throne, ruled for a shorter period of time (one month) in Israel. In reality, the monarchy in the northern kingdom ended with the death of Zechariah, for the rest were usurpers who murdered the predecessors in order to seize the throne.
2. Verses 10-12: "And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. This *was* the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass."
 - a. "The sacred books are exceedingly short as regards the history of the last times of the kingdom of Israel. Sacred historiography has no interest in the details of this process of decay, which began with the death of Jeroboam, and which is represented by Amos as it were the day of Israel's death (Amos 7:11), although a bare existence is still for sometime spared" (JFB, p.407).
 - b. Amos 7:11: "For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land."
 - c. Shallum conspired against Zachariah, and slew him before the people, evidently during some public assembly. He seized the throne by killing the current occupant. To take such a bold action, Shallum evidently perceived a general disaffection on the part of the people with Zechariah.
 - d. "God had promised to Jehu that his sons should sit on the throne of Israel *to the fourth generation*; and so it came to pass, for *Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zechariah* succeeded Jehu, to whom this promise was made" (Clarke, p.530). Jehu carried out God's purpose (perhaps with excessive harshness and cruelty), but was not obedient to God's law, thus his dynasty was short-lived. "And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin" (2 Kings 10:30-31).

C. 2 Kings 15:13-15: The Reign of Shallum in Israel.

1. Verse 13: "Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria."
 - a. Shallum is next to occupy the throne in Israel. His reign lasted only one full month, before he was slain in battle with his successor. He had gained the crown by the sword, and by the sword he lost it. God's eternal principle prevails:
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- 1) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- 2) Matthew 26:52: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

b. His reign took place during the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah's reign in Jerusalem.

2. Verses 14-15: "For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel."

- a. Menahem gathered an army about him, and proceeding from Tirzah, came to Samaria. In the battle that developed, Shallum was slain, and Menahem mounted the throne. In such tumultuous times, when kings were being slain regularly, it is difficult to understand why anyone would want the job!
- b. Tirzah: "Originally a Canaanite city noted for its beauty (Song of Sol. 6:4) but captured in the conquest of the Promised Land (Josh. 12:24). It became one of the early capitals of Israel when Jeroboam I established his residence there (1 Kings 14:17) and continued as the capital until Omri built Samaria (1 Kings 16:23-24). Archaeological discoveries, coupled with biblical references, suggest that Tirzah is to be identified with modern tell el-Fara, a tell of extraordinary size about seven miles northeast of Shechem. The area evidently was first occupied before 3000 B.C. and flourished, off and on, as a Canaanite city until its capture by Joshua between 1550 and 1200 B.C. It remained an Israelite city until the Assyrian conquest of 722 B.C. By 600 B.C., Tirzah was completely abandoned" (Holman, Hugh Tobias).
- c. The inspired historian notes that further details regarding the conspiracy of Shallum and his other acts were inscribed in the national records of Israel.

D. 2 Kings 15:16-22: The Reign of Menahem in Israel.

1. Verse 16: "Then Menahem smote Tiphseh, and all that *were* therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not *to him*, therefore he smote *it*; *and* all the women therein that were with child he ripped up."
- a. "As soon as he became king he smote *Tiphseh*,—*i.e.* Thapsacus on the Euphrates...the north-eastern border city of the Israelitish kingdom in the time of Solomon (1 Kings 5:4), which came into the possession of the kingdom of Israel again when the ancient boundaries were restored by Jeroboam II (ch. 14:24 and 25), but which had probably revolted again during the anarchy which arose after the death of Jeroboam..." (Keil, p.390).
- b. Tiphseh: "Place name meaning, 'passage, ford.' City on the west bank of the Euphrates about 75 miles south of Carchemish, representing the northeastern limit of Solomon's kingdom (1 Kings 4:24)" (Holman).
- c. The report indicates that Menahem captured Tirzah and proceeded to ravage Tiphseh. "Thapsacus, on the western bank of the Euphrates, formed the border city of Solomon's kingdom (1 Kings 4:24), and having been taken by Hazael, it was regained by the arms of Jeroboam, who justly ranked this important city amongst his most valuable conquests. The inhabitants refusing to open their gates to him, Menahem took it by storm, and having spoiled it, committed the most barbarous excesses, without regard either to age or sex—excesses, the report of which is supposed to have attracted the notice of the Assyrian monarch, and led to that invasion of Israel which terminated in its destruction" (JFB, p.408).

- d. “There is no foundation for the view propounded by Ewald...and many others, that *Tiphсах* was a city between Tirzah and Samaria, which Menahem laid waste on his march from Tirzah to Samaria to dethrone Shallum... (Keil, p.391, note).
2. Verses 17-18: “In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.”
 - a. The reign of Menahem began during the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah’s reign in Jerusalem; it lasted ten years.
 - b. The nature of his reign corresponded with that of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who initiated the calf-worship at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:25-33).
 3. Verses 19-22: “*And* Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land. And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.”
 - a. Pul: “ Alternate name of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kings 15:19; 1 Chron. 5:26). The name is perhaps a contraction of Pileser” (Holman).
 - b. The Assyrian army invaded the land during Menahem’s reign. Menahem was able to assemble a tribute of a thousand talents of silver which Pul was willing to accept in lieu of fighting. Menahem was able to raise the amount by assessing each wealthy man a tax of fifty shekels of silver.
 - c. Hosea 5:13: "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah *saw* his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound." “Pul, of his own motion, resolved to chastise Menahem, induced, perhaps, by the double motive of crushing a bold rebel, whose ambition had led him to usurp the throne of a kingdom which from the time of Jehu had been an Assyrian dependency, and of avenging the expedition of Menahem against Thapsacus. Then Menahem, on his part, sent Pul 1,000 talents, in order not only to divert him from his hostile purpose, but at the same time to purchase his friendship and aid for the establishment of his own precarious sovereignty (‘to confirm the kingdom in his hand’—14:5). According to this view, which seems the proper order of events, Menahem did not make the first overture to Assyria, but on ‘Pul the king of Assyria coming against the land,’ he took measures to change the enemy when marching against the country, by the offer of a bribe, into a patron or protector for the security of his usurped dominion, which the prophet Hosea, less concerned about the historical fact than the disposition betrayed therein, might very well censure as a going of Ephraim to the Assyrian (Hos. 5:13; 7:11; 8:9)” (JFB, p.408).
 - d. “Only two events of Menahem’s reign are recorded: (1) his severe treatment of the citizens of Tiphсах after he captured the place and (2) the invasion of the land by the Assyrian king, Pul, and the resulting submission of Menahem to him. Menahem was able to get Pul to withdraw from his land by raising money from the people and giving it to Pul” (Brown, ADL, p.168).
 - e. Menahem’s death is mentioned without detail, indicating that it was of natural causes; nothing is said about any violence associated with his passing.
- E. 2 Kings 15:23-26: The Reign of Pekahiah in Israel.
1. Verses 23-24: “In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* two years. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.”
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- a. The son of Menahem occupied the throne left vacant by the death of his father. Pekahiah came to Israel's throne during the fiftieth year of Uzziah's (Azariah) reign in Jerusalem. His reign extended over a period of two years.
 - b. Like all of his predecessors on the throne in Israel, Pekahiah walked in the spiritual steps of Jeroboam the son of Nebat (1 Kings 12:25-33).
2. Verses 25-26: "But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel."
- a. Pekahiah's wicked rule resulted in his own assassination by the hand of his captain, Pekah, who slew the king in the palace at Samaria. The identity of Argob and Arieah is unknown. "Many commentators view these as the captain's accomplices. But it is more probable that they were influential friends of the king's, who were murdered along with him" (JFB, p.409).
 - b. Apparently, Pekah had fifty cohorts who aided him in the assassinations. The purpose of the attack was to remove Pekahiah from the throne, giving Pekah the opportunity to advance himself to that high office.
 - c. Pekah is identified as a "captain." "A mere 'captain,' a person, therefore, of very moderate rank. The low birth of Pekah is probably glanced at in Isaiah's favorite designation of him as 'Remaliah's son' (Isa 7:4-5,9; 8:6). From the fact that Pekah employed Gileadites to carry out his designs, it has been conjectured that he himself belonged to the trans-Jordanic region" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft].

F. 2 Kings 15:27-31: The Reign of Pekah in Israel.

1. Verses 27-28: "In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."
- a. Pekah came to the throne in Samaria during the final year of Uzziah's reign in Jerusalem. Pekah was in power for twenty years. His rule was in the mold established by Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
- b. "In contradistinction to his predecessor, Pekah's reign was remarkable. However, the record is exceedingly brief. With Rezin of Damascus, Syria, Pekah invaded Judah. According to 2 Chronicles 28:6 Ahaz was severely defeated. This defeat of Ahaz allowed for the siege of Jerusalem by Pekah and Rezin (Isa. 7:1). It was during this siege that the prophet Isaiah gave the great virgin birth prophecy of Isaiah 7:14" (Brown, ADL, p.169). "For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers" (2 Chron. 28:6).
- c. Isaiah 7:1-7: "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal: Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to

pass."

- d. Isaiah 7:10-14: "Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
2. Verses 29-31: "In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel."
 - a. Tiglath-Pileser: "Personal name meaning, 'My trust is the son of Esarra (the temple of Asshur).' King of Assyria from 745 to 727 B.C. (2 Kings 16:7), also known as Tilgath-Pilneser (1 Chron. 5:6; 2 Chron. 28:20) and Pul (2 Kings 15:19; 1 Chron. 5:26)" (Holman).
 - b. Regarding Tiglath-Pileser, McClintock states: "From his own inscriptions we learn that his reign lasted *at least* seventeen years; that, besides warring in Syria and Samaria, he attacked Babylonia, Media, Armenia, and the independent tribes in the upper regions of Mesopotamia, thus, like the other great Assyrian monarchs, warring along the whole frontier of the empire; and, finally, that he was (probably) not a legitimate prince, but a usurper and the founder of a dynasty. This last fact is gathered from the circumstance that, whereas the Assyrian kings generally glory in their ancestry, Tiglath-pileser omits all mention of his, not even recording his father's name upon his monuments" [Electronic Version].
 - c. "Ahaz sought aid from Assyria and Tiglath-pileser twice sent expeditions to Palestine. The first one is noted in 2 Kings 15:29. This invasion resulted in Tiglath-pileser's deporting many from Israel to Assyria. Evidently Hoshea's conspiracy that resulted in the death of Pekah was during the second invasion" (Brown, ADL, p.169).
 - d. "His expedition against Israel falls, according to ver. 29 and ch. 16:9, in the closing years of Pekah, when Ahaz had come to the throne in Judah. The enumeration of his conquests in the kingdom of Israel commences with the most important cities, probably the leading fortifications. Then follow the districts of which he took possession, and the inhabitants of which he led into captivity" (Keil, pp.394f).
 - e. Hoshea made a conspiracy against Pekah, and slew him. This was during the twentieth year of the reign of Jotham, the son of Uzziah.

G. 2 Kings 15:32-38: The Reign of Jotham in Judah.

1. Verses 32-34: "In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done."
 - a. Following the usual pattern, the historian gives a report on events in one kingdom, and then turns to events in the other kingdom. He now switches to Judah, showing the current monarch's identity and background.
 - b. Uzziah has died, after holding the reins of government for fifty-two years. At his death, his son Jotham is exalted to the throne. It will be remembered that Uzziah (also known as Azariah) had contracted leprosy because of his religious deviations (2 Chron. 26).

- c. Jotham was twenty-five when he began his sixteen-year reign in Jerusalem. As noted earlier, he held the authority of the kingdom for perhaps the last ten years of his father's tenure. Because of leprosy, Uzziah was required to live alone during his last years, so Jotham exercised civil authority. "And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land" (2 Chron. 26:21).
 - d. For most of his reign, Uzziah was a good king; Jotham followed in his father's steps in this regard. Uzziah had failed to remove the high places and had presumptuously assumed the role of priest, going into the temple to burn incense. This violation had brought God's punishment (leprosy) upon him. Jotham did not make such a foolish blunder.
2. Verses 35-38: "Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead."
- a. Jotham joined most of his predecessors in failing to remove the high places, where the citizens burned incense. Even though they may not have been worshiping idols, this practice was wrong; it was not authorized by the Mosaic Law.
 - b. "All that is mentioned of his enterprises in the account before us is that he built the upper gate of the house of Jehovah, that is to say, that he restored it, or perhaps added to its beauty. The upper gate, according to Ezek. 9:2 compared with ch. 8:3,5,14, and 16, is the gate at the north side of the inner or upper court, where all the sacrifices were slaughtered, according to Ezek. 40:38-43. We also find from 2 Chron. 27:3ff, that he built against the wall of *Ophel*, and several cities in the mountains of Judah, and castles and towers in the forests, and subdued the Ammonites, so that they paid him tribute for three years. Jotham carried on with great vigour, therefore, the work which his father had began, to increase the material prosperity of his subjects" (Keil, p.397).
 - c. During his reign, Jehovah commenced to send against Judah, Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah (verse 37). "It is evident from the position of this verse at the close of the account of Jotham, that the incursions of the allied Syrians and Israelites into Judah under the command of *Rezin* and *Pekah* commenced in the closing years of Jotham, so that these foes appeared before Jerusalem at the very beginning of the reign of Ahaz. It is true that the Syrians had been subjugated by Jeroboam II (ch. 14:28); but in the anarchial condition of the Israelitish kingdom after his death, they had no doubt recovered their independence" (Keil, p.397).
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2 KINGS 16

A. 2 Kings 16:1-4: The Evil Reign of Ahaz in Judah.

1. Verses 1-2: "In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father."
 - a. "With the reign of Ahaz a most eventful change took place in the development of the kingdom of Judah. Under the vigorous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, by whom the earthly prosperity of the kingdom had been studiously advanced, there had been, as we may see from the prophecies of Isaiah, chs. 2-6, which date from this time, a prevalence of luxury and self-security, of unrighteousness and forgetfulness of God, among the upper classes, in consequence of the increase of their wealth. Under Ahaz these sins grew into open apostasy from the Lord; for this weak and unprincipled ruler trod in the steps of the kings of Israel, and introduced image-worship and idolatrous practices of every kind, and at length went so far in his ungodliness as to shut up the doors of the porch of the temple and suspend the temple-worship prescribed by the law altogether. The punishment followed this apostasy without delay" (Keil, pp.397f).
 - b. Ahaz was only twenty years of age when he ascended Judah's throne, hardly old enough to have acquired the wisdom that comes from study and experience. Without the guiding, restraining hand of a wise and devout counselor, Ahaz was doomed by his own folly. His sixteen-year reign was unlike that of David. The inspired historian reports that he did not do "that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father."
 - c. "As Ahaz reigned only sixteen years, and at his death his son Hezekiah became king at the age of twenty-five years (ch. 18:2), Ahaz must have begotten him in the eleventh year of his age" (Keil, p.398). Keil and others doubt that the text is accurate, but there is no reason to suspect this ancient reading. There have been many reports of young girls, even ten-year old girls, having children. Some boys reach puberty at an early age also.
2. Verses 3-4: "But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree."
 - a. Ahaz was more like the evil kings of Israel than his own righteous predecessors on Judah's throne. "The character of this king's reign, the voluptuousness and religious degeneracy of all classes of the people, are graphically portrayed in the writings of Isaiah, who prophesied at that period. The great increase of worldly wealth and luxury in the reigns of Azariah and Jotham had introduced a host of corruptions, which, during the reign and by the influence of Ahaz, bore fruit in the idolatrous practices of every kind which prevailed in all parts of the kingdom..." (JFB, p.411). "And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem" (2 Chr. 28:24).
 - b. The idolatry of Ahaz was extensive; it involved sacrificing and burning incense in high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. It reached its height of degradation when he offered his own son as a sacrifice to an idol.
 - c. Human Sacrifice: "The ritual slaying of one or more human beings to please a god. This was widely practiced by many cultures in antiquity. Although the frequency of the practice is difficult to determine, the fact is that such rituals were performed for various reasons. For example, both Egyptians and Sumerians before 2000 B.C. killed servants and possibly family members to bury them

with deceased kings to allow those who had served or been near the official in life to accompany him to the realm of the dead. In Mesopotamia, and perhaps elsewhere, the remains of animals and humans offered as sacrifice were deposited within foundations to protect the building from evil powers, a practice possibly reflected in 1 Kings 16:34. Holman Bible Dictionary offers the following:

- 1) "...In the ninth century Mesha, king of Moab, offered his own son as a burnt offering presumably to Chemosh, national god of Moab, upon the walls of his capital while under siege by Israel and Judah (2 Kings 3:27). The event was so shocking that the siege was terminated. However, although Israelite law specifically forbade human sacrifice (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5), persistent references to the practice occur, especially between 800 and 500 B.C. Both Ahaz and Manasseh burned their sons as an offering in times of national peril (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6).
 - 2) "The sacrifices were made in the valley of Hinnom which protected Jerusalem from the west and south. A portion of the valley bore the name Topheth, a name derived from the word for fireplace or hearth. Apparently Topheth was an open air cultic area where Molech sacrifices were offered.
 - 3) "The term Molech occurs frequently in connection with human sacrifice. In the Bible and elsewhere Molech apparently was used in two ways: 1) as the name or a title of a god to whom sacrifice was made (see 1 Kings 11:7) and 2) as a specific type of sacrifice which involved the total consummation of a person, usually a child, by fire. Both usages of the term may be reflected in the Old Testament. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel condemn such offerings as an abomination to God (Jer. 7:31-32; 19:5-6; Ezek. 16:20-21; 20:31). Josiah defiled Topheth as a part of his reformation so that 'no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech' (2 Kings 23:10 RSV).
 - 4) "These practices, foreign to the worship of Yahweh, must have been adopted by Israel from the surrounding peoples. Direct evidence for human sacrifice during the first millennium B.C. comes from two cultures with which Israel had contact: the Phoenician colony of Carthage and the Arameans. The Carthaginians sacrificed children to Kronos during periods of calamity caused by war, famine, or disease. Pits filled with bones of animals and children have been excavated at Carthage with inscribed stones indicating these were Molech sacrifices. The Arameans of Gozan in northwest Mesopotamia sacrificed humans to the god Hadad.
 - 5) "Interestingly, the Sepharvites, a people from an area dominated by Arameans deported to Palestine in 721 B.C. by Sargon II, burned their children as offerings to Adrammelech and Anammelech (2 Kings 17:31). Yet the abomination of human sacrifice, stated Jeremiah, never entered the mind of Yahweh (Jer. 19:5)" (Holman, Tommy Brisco).
- d. To make "his son to pass through the fire" is a reference to human sacrifice. "Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land" (2 Kings 3:27).
- 1) The apparent purpose was to induce some "god" to reward the sacrificer. But no human sacrifice could bring atonement for sin. "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:7).
 - 2) "The Oriental Institute, excavating at Megiddo...which is near Samaria, found, in the stratum of Ahab's time, the ruins of a temple of Ashtoreth, goddess wife of Baal. Just a few steps from this temple was a cemetery, where many jars were found, containing remains of infants who had been sacrificed in this temple....Prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth were official murderers of little children. This is a sidelight on Elijah's execution of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40), and helps us to understand why Jehu was so ruthless in his extermination of Baalism" (Halley, p.198).
- e. "The hands of the idol Moloch, or Baal, being red-hot, the children were passed through between

them, which was considered a form of lustration; but there is reason to believe that in certain circumstances the children were burnt to death (Deut. 12:31; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 7:31; Ezek. 16:20,21; 23:37-39)" (JFB, p.411).

- 1) Deuteronomy 12:31: "Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."
 - 2) Psalms 106:37: "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,"
 - 3) Jeremiah 7:31: "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded *them* not, neither came it into my heart."
 - 4) Ezekiel 16:20-21: "Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. *Is this* of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through *the fire* for them?"
 - 5) Ezekiel 23:37-39: "That they have committed adultery, and blood *is* in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through *the fire*, to devour *them*. Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house."
- f. Molech: "(Mole; *king*): Transliteration of Hebrew word related to word for 'king' but describing a foreign god or a practice related to foreign worship. The meaning of 'Molech' is debated. Two views generally are proposed. One suggestion is that 'Molech' denotes a particular type of offering—a votive sacrifice made to confirm or fulfill a vow. This viewpoint is supported by the fact that some Carthaginian-Phoenician (Punic) inscriptions from the period 400-150 B.C. imply that the word *mlk* is a general form for 'sacrifice' or 'offering. Such a meaning is possible in some passages (Lev. 18:21; 20:3-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35).
- 1) "A second suggestion is that 'Molech' is the name of a pagan deity to whom human sacrifices were made. This deity often is associated with Ammon (compare 1 Kings 11:7) 'the abomination of the children of Ammon.' Leviticus 20:5 condemns those who 'commit whoredom with Molech' (see also Lev. 18:21; 20:3-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35). Some recent archaeological evidence points to child sacrifice in ancient Ammon. Many scholars contend that all the biblical texts referring to Molech can be understood by interpreting it as a divine name.
 - 2) "The etymology of the term 'Molech' is interesting. Scholars suggest that it is a deliberate misvocalization of the Hebrew word for king or for the related participle (*molek*), 'ruler.' They propose that the consonants for the Hebrew word for king (*mlk*) were combined with the vowels from the word for shame (*boshet*). Thus, this title was a divine epithet expressing contempt for the pagan god.
 - 3) "In times of apostasy some Israelites, apparently in desperation, made their children 'go through the fire to Molech' (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; compare 2 Kings 17:31; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35). It generally is assumed that references like these are to the sacrifices of children in the Valley of Hinnom at a site known as Topheth ('Topheth' probably means 'firepit' in Syriac)Precisely how this was done is unknown. Some contend that the children were thrown into a raging fire. Certain rabbinic writers describe a hollow bronze statute in the form of a human but with the head of an ox. According to the rabbis, children were placed in the structure which was then heated from below. Drums were pounded to drown out the cries of the children.
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- 4) "An alternate view contends that the expression 'passed through Molech' refers not to human sacrifices but that parents gave up their children to grow up as temple prostitutes. Such a view appeals to Leviticus 18 where throughout the chapter the writer is concerned with sexual intercourse (especially vv. 19-23). Another view sees an original fire ceremony dedicating, but not harming children, that later was transformed into a burnt-offering ceremony.
- 5) "The practice of offering children as human sacrifice was condemned in ancient Israel, but the implication is clear in the Old Testament that child-sacrifice was practiced by some in Israel (2 Kings 21:6; 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; Ps. 106:38; Jer. 7:31; 19:4-5; Ezek. 16:21; 23:37, 39). The Exile seems to have put an end to this type of worship in Israel. However, it lingered on in North Africa and among the Carthaginian Phoenicians into the Christian era" (Holman, Paul E. Robertson).
- g. We are told in 2 Chronicles 28:3 that Ahaz offered more than one of his children: "Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel."

B. 2 Kings 16:5-9: Syria and Israel Besiege Jerusalem.

1. Verse 5: "Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him."
 - a. The king of Syria (Rezin) and the king of Israel (Pekah) joined together in an attempt to conquer Jerusalem. Their venture failed. The historian here provides no details of the operation, but from Isaiah 7:1-9, further information is given which shows that God defeated their siege and promised the overthrow of these invaders: "Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (Isa. 7:7-9).
 - b. "It appears from Isa. 7:6 that the invasion of Judah by the confederate kings (confederate in one sense; but Rezin was the superior, and Pekah a tributary vassal, bound to follow his master) was not a mere predatory expedition, but that it was the permanent reduction of the country, the destruction of the whole family of David, and the establishment of another tributary prince, that they had in view. A close examination of the seventh and eighth chapters in the book of that prophet will furnish clear proof that there was in Jerusalem itself a powerful faction who were actively favouring the designs of the northern allies" (JFB, p.411). "Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal." (Isa. 7:6).
 - c. Although the invasion failed to produce its primary objective, it nevertheless brought severe losses to Ahaz. "Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was* next to the king. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria. But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage *that reacheth* up unto heaven. And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: *but are there* not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God? Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive

of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war, And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to add *more* to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation. And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria" (2 Chron. 28:5-15).

2. Verse 6: "At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day."
 - a. During the campaign, the Syrian army recaptured Elath, driving the Jews from the city. At the time the present record was written, the Syrians remained in possession of Elath.
 - b. "This is the first passage in which the name [Jews] has occurred. It was only in an advanced period of their history that the Hebrews were called 'Jews,' from the tribe of Judah, which was honored to furnish the name, both because it returned in great prosperity from Babylon, while the other tribes were hopelessly dispersed, and because from it was to spring the king Messiah" (JFB, p.411).
 - c. Elath (Eloth): "Place name meaning, 'ram,' 'mighty trees,' or 'terebinth.' Port city on northern end of Red Sea. Israel passed through it on way through Edom in wilderness (Deut. 2:8). It was significant enough to serve as a point of reference to identify Ezion-geber, where King Solomon made his naval vessels (1 Kings 9:26; compare 2 Chron. 8:17-18). Later King Uzziah (792-740) rebuilt the seaport and controlled it for Judah (2 Kings 14:22). Archaeologists have usually identified Elath as another name for Ezion-geber and located it at *tell el-Kheleifeh*. More recent archaeological work has attempted to show that Ezion-geber was the port city on the island of Jezirat Faraun. Elath would then be the mainland base to which goods were transferred for loading onto pack animals for the long caravan travels northward to Judah, Israel, Syria, or Phoenicia or for travels eastward to Assyria or Babylonia or westward to Egypt" (Holman).
 3. Verses 7-8: "So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, *I am* thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of Assyria."
 - a. Ahaz was greatly impressed with the danger posed by the Syrian-Israelite confederation. He sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, asking for help. His request was accompanied with a gift of gold and silver, taken from the temple and the king's house.
 - b. Ahaz apparently did not consult Isaiah before making this foolish move. "In spite of the assurance given him by Isaiah by two signs—the one immediate, the other remote (Isa. 7:14; 8:4)—that the confederate kings would not prevail against him, Ahaz sought aid from the Assyrian monarch" (JFB, pp.411f).
 - c. The words Ahaz used to address Tiglath-pileser "was a plain acknowledgment of his dependent position upon the Assyrian king (cf. Ch. 17:4). The same may be inferred from various passages, both in Kings and Chronicles; and it can now be proved from the Assyrian monuments, which record the payment of tribute by the tribes of Israel at a much earlier period than any passage of Scripture intimates" (JFB, p.412).
 4. Verse 9: "And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus,
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and took it, and carried *the people of it* captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.”

- a. Tiglath-pileser accepted the gift, marched against Damascus, the capital of Syria, took it, slew Rezin, and carried the captives to Kir. This was in fulfillment of a prophecy given through Amos: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: But I will send a fire into the house of Hazeal, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD" (Amos 1:3-5).
- b. "Thus Ahaz and his people were delivered from impending danger; but it was at an immense sacrifice, as they found afterwards" (JFB, p.412). "And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not" (2 Chr. 28:20). "Though he came against the Syrians and took Damascus, and slew Rezin, yet he did not help Ahaz against the Philistines, nor did he lend him any forces to assist against Israel; and he distressed him by taking the royal treasures, and the treasures of the temple, and did him little service for so great a sacrifice. He helped him a little, but distressed him on the whole" (Clarke, p.533).

C. 2 Kings 16:10-20: Ahaz Constructs an Altar.

1. Verses 10-11: "And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus."
 - a. "It was the first time, in all probability, that Ahaz and his courtiers had come into contact with the mighty lord-paramount, and yet, although many scenes must have been witnessed in the Assyrian camp, betokening the pomp and circumstances of the great conqueror, one incident only has been put on record, evidently from its being regarded by the sacred historian as being of an idolatrous character. This is expressly stated in the parallel passage (2 Chr. 28:3). Besides, the Assyrian con-querors required all their tributaries to set up in their capitals altars to the great gods, as a token of gratitude, on the part of the victor, to the deities by whose favour he had triumphed, and a badge of subjection to their suzerain on the part of the dependents. During his stay in that heathen city, Ahaz saw an altar with which he was greatly captivated. Forthwith a sketch of it was transmitted to Jerusalem, with orders to Urijah the priest to get one constructed according to the Damascus model, and to let this new altar supersede the old one in the temple" (JFB, p.412).
 - b. The lack of faith on the part of Ahaz resulted in these ruinous activities. Despite all the evidence that the Living God was the God of Israel, and had led them through countless wars and tribulations in the past, the king turned his back on God as if it were a matter of no consequence.
 - c. His attitude toward the gods of the heathen depict his lack of faith in the God of heaven. "For Ahaz took away a portion *out* of the house of the LORD, and *out* of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave *it* unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not. And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this *is that* king Ahaz. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers" (2 Chron. 28:21-25).
2. Verses 12-13: "And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king
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approached to the altar, and offered thereon. And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.”

- a. On his return from the trip to Damascus, Ahaz quickly made use of the new altar. He offered upon it certain burnt offerings and sacrifices, and poured upon it the drink offering and sprinkled upon it the blood of his peace offerings.
 - b. The altar constructed after the fashion of the pagan altar had replaced the altar which Solomon had made as part of the erection of the temple (1 Kings 5-8). Ahaz acted without authority in replacing this altar. Urijah ought to have resisted the king’s orders to build this new altar.
3. Verses 14-16: “And he brought also the brazen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king’s burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brazen altar shall be for me to inquire *by*. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.”
- a. “Soon after this Ahaz went still further, and had ‘the copper altar before Jehovah.’ (*i.e.* the temple-house), and placed at the north side of the altar’...He also commanded that the daily morning and evening sacrifice, and the special offerings of the king and the people, should be presented upon the new altar, and thereby put a stop to the use of the Solomonian altar...” (Keil, pp.405f).
 - b. “Urijah, with culpable complaisance, acted according to his instructions (v.16). The sin of this altar consisted in meddling with, and improving, according to human taste of which had been furnished by Divine authority (Exod. 25:40; 26:30; 27:1; 1 Chr. 28:19). Urijah was one of the witnesses taken by Isaiah to bear his prediction against Syria and Israel (Isa. 8:2). But neither the king nor Urijah would have dared to commit such gross sacrilege had not a fondness for idolatry prevailed to a wide extent in Jerusalem at the time when those incidents occurred (cf. Isa chs. 1 and 2)” (JFB, p.412).
 - c. The “change agents” in the Lord’s church today are trying to make comparable alterations to God’s established order, thus violating the prohibitions of God as did Ahaz. We can all see the folly of the errors of Ahaz, but we cannot always see our own.
 - 1) Exodus 25:40: "And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount."
 - 2) Exodus 26:30: "And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount."
 - 3) Exodus 27:1: "And thou shalt make an altar *of* shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof *shall be* three cubits."
 - 4) 1 Chronicles 28:19: "All *this, said David*, the LORD made me understand in writing by *his* hand upon me, *even* all the works of this pattern."
 - 5) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
4. Verses 17-18: “And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king’s entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.”
- a. “It is thought that he did this to employ the elaborate sculpture in adorning his palace. Many writers

have supposed that the design of Ahaz in ‘cutting off the borders of the bases,’ and removing the laver from off them, ‘was to melt them down, and apply them to some idolatrous uses; and as the temple was closed, it is highly probable that he did pervert them to such purposes, as we know that he did with the bronze altar (v. 15) and many of the vessels abstracted from the Lord’s house....But that the brasen oxen were excepted from this process of fusion and transmutation, appears from the record of Jeremiah, who describes them as preserved in their entireness, and enumerates them amongst other articles removed to Babylon (Jer. 52:17-20)" (JFB, pp.412f).

- b. “There are a great number of conjectures concerning this covert [for the sabbath]....As the word, and others derived from the same root, signify *covering* or *booths*, it is very likely that this means either a sort of canopy which was erected on the Sabbath days for the accommodation of the people who came to worship, and which Ahaz took away to discourage them from that worship; or a canopy under which the king and his family reposed themselves, and which he transported to some other place to accommodate the king of Assyria when he visited him. Jarchi supposes that it was a sort of covert way that the kings of Judah had to the temple, and Ahaz had it removed lest the king of Assyria, going by that way, and seeing the sacred vessels, should covet them. If that way had been open, he might have gone by it into the temple, and have seen the sacred vessels, and so have asked them from a man who was in no condition to refuse them, however unwilling he might be to give them up. The removing of this, whatever it was, whether throne or canopy, or covered way, cut off the communication between the king’s house and the temple; and the king of Assyria would not attempt to go into that sacred place by that other passage to which the priests alone had access” (Clarke, p.534).
 - c. Compare: "And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 28:24).
 - d. “Whether these artistic works were restored or not at the time of Hezekiah’s reformation or in that of Josiah, we have no accounts to show. All that can be gathered from ch. 25:13,14, Jer. 52:17, and 27:19, is, that the stands and the brazen sea were still in existence in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and that on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans they were broken in pieces and carried away to Babylonia as brass. The brazen oxen are also specifically mentioned in Jer. 52:20, which is not the case in the parallel passage 2 Kings 25:13; though this does not warrant the conclusion that they were no longer in existence at that time” (Keil, pp.408f).
5. Verses 19-20: “Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.”
- a. Ahaz had opportunity to perform notable feats for his country, since he had Isaiah as an avenue of heavenly communication. However, his reign went down in history as one of utter failure insofar as spiritual standards are concerned.
 - b. The usual statement is here given to put the finishing touches on the career of Ahaz. He lived; he died; he was buried; his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.
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2 KINGS 17

A. 2 Kings 17:1-6: Samaria is Conquered by Assyria.

1. Verses 1-2: "In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him."
 - a. Meanwhile, in the Northern Kingdom, Hoshea came to power. This was during the twelfth year of Ahaz's reign. Hoshea reigned over Israel for nine years.
 - 1) We were told in 2 Kings 15:30 that Hoshea had slain Pekah, thus violently placing himself upon the throne of Israel: "And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah."
 - 2) At the time, the Assyrians were conducting an invasion of Palestine (2 Kings 15:29). Tiglath-pileser left an inscription regarding this change of kings: "Pekah their king they had overthrown. I placed Hoshea over them. From him I received 10 talents of gold and 1000 talents of silver" (Halley, p.208).
 - b. As was true sooner or later with all the kings of Israel, Hoshea did evil in the sight of God. However, the sacred historian states that he was not as wicked as his predecessors. It was Hoshea's ill-fortune to be king at the time the Assyrians destroyed his nation. One of the saddest parts of Bible history is about to be related.
 - c. Hoshea was not as bad as the other kings of Israel, but we are not given the details. II Chronicles 30 speaks of Hezekiah inviting people from Israel to come to Jerusalem for the Passover; it may be that Hoshea permitted his people to attend, for we are told that some of the Israelites from the north accepted the invitation.
 2. Verses 3-4: "Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison."
 - a. Shalmaneser: "Personal name meaning, 'Shalmanu (the god) is the highest ranking one.' 1. An Assyrian king who ruled 1274-1245 B.C. The records of his military exploits set a precedent which succeeding kings followed. 2. Shalmaneser III ruled Assyria 858-824 B.C. He fought a group of small kingdoms, including Israel, in the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. Despite claiming victory, Shalmaneser proceeded no farther. 3. Shalmaneser V ruled Assyria 726-722 B.C. He completed the attack on Samaria begun by his predecessor, Tiglath-pileser III. In 722 Israel fell to Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17:6), thus ending the Northern Kingdom forever" (Holman).
 - b. Shalmaneser became king of Assyria following the reign of Tiglath-pileser; he wore a name that others had worn before him. "The name of this Assyrian king has been traced on the Ninevite monuments as concerned in an expedition against a king of Samaria, whose name, though mutilated Sir H. Rawlinson reads as Hoshea. It seems to have been soon after he ascended the throne, that, suspecting the fidelity of his Samaritan vassal, he 'came up' against Hoshea, king of Israel, and so terrified him with menaces of summary vengeance that he succumbed, and promised the payment of his customary tribute. Satisfied with the submission and promises of Hoshea, the Assyrian withdrew, in order to chastise the cities of Phoenicia, who had joined in the revolt of Israel, and overrunning the country, he succeeded in reducing them all to a state of dependence, except the island of Tyre" (JFB, p.413).
 - c. During the course of time, Shalmaneser invaded Israel, forcing Hoshea to become his vassal. But
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Hoshea later conspired against Assyria by enlisting the aid of the king of Egypt. Hoshea incurred the wrath of Shalmaneser by withholding the annual tribute usually paid to the Assyrians, and by entering into the conspiracy with So.

- d. Verse three describes an incursion against Israel by Shalmaneser, and verses four and five give a report of a full-scale invasion which was occasioned by a general rebellion against Assyrian rule. Israel had thought that, with the aid of Egypt, she would be able to withstand the might of Shalmaneser. This was not to be. Hoshea was arrested and imprisoned. Manifestly, it was after the three-year siege of Samaria that Hoshea was imprisoned.
 - e. King So of Egypt is the “Sabaco of the classic historians, the Shebek of the monuments, of the twenty-fifth dynasty, and the Sevechus of Manetho....The figure and name of this monarch, Sebek I...have been discovered on the ancient monuments....This famous Ethiopian, having conquered or slain Bocchoris, king of Egypt, of the twenty-fourth dynasty, who was blind, added Upper Egypt to his kingdom of Ethiopia....Being a person distinguished for wisdom as well as energy, he for fifty years occupied the Egyptian throne in Memphis; and regarding him as the natural rival and opponent of Assyria, Hoshea cherished the hope that through his aid he might succeed in resisting the threatened attempts of the Assyrian conqueror” (JFB, pp.413f).
3. Verses 5-6: “Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”
- a. This full-blown invasion was designed to overthrow the rebels, destroying their government and transplanting the survivors into other provinces under the dominion of Assyria. The siege of Samaria began during the sixth year of Hoshea’s reign, and ended when the city was captured during his ninth year.
 - b. Samaria: “Place name of mountain, city, and region meaning, ‘mountain of watching,’ and the residents thereof. Forty-two miles north of Jerusalem and nine miles northwest of Nablus, a hill protrudes from the broad valley which cuts across the central highlands of Israel. There lie ruins of ancient Samaria near a small village called Sebastiya. Samaria was the capital, residence, and burial place of the kings of Israel (1 Kings 16:23-28; 22:37; 2 Kings 6:24-30). Following the Northern Kingdom’s fall to Assyria (721 B.C.), exiles from many nations settled Samaria (Ezra 4:9-10). Later, the Greeks conquered the region (331 B.C.) and hellenized the area with Greek inhabitants and culture. Then the Hasmoneans, under John Hyrcanus, destroyed the city (119 B.C.). After a long period without inhabitants, Samaria lived again under Pompey and the Romans (63 B.C.). Finally, Herod the Great obtained control of Samaria in 30 B.C. and made it one of the chief cities of his territory. Again, the city was resettled with people from distant places, this time mercenaries from Europe. Herod renamed the city Sebaste, using the Greek word for Augustus, the emperor. When the Jews revolted in 66 A.D., the Romans reconquered the city and destroyed it. The Romans later rebuilt Samaria, but the city never regained the prestige it once had.
- 1) “Samaria is the only major city founded by Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Omri, the sixth king of Israel (885-874 B.C.), purchased the hill of Samaria for his royal residence. Shechem had been the capital of the Northern Kingdom until Jeroboam relocated it at Tirzah.
 - 2) “When Ahab, Omri’s son, became king of Israel, he built an ivory palace at Samaria. Amos denounced him for doing this (Amos 6:1, 4; 1 Kings 22:39). Jezebel influenced Ahab, her husband, to make the city the center for Baal worship (1 Kings 16:29-33). Jezebel also had many prophets of Yahweh killed in Samaria (1 Kings 18:2-4).
 - 3) “On two occasions, Benhadad, the king of Syria, besieged the city of Samaria; but both times he
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- was unsuccessful (1 Kings 20; 2 Kings 6). Naaman, a Syrian leper, had come to Samaria to be healed by Elisha a short time prior to Ben hadad's attack (2 Kings 5).
- 4) "Here Elijah destroyed the messengers of King Ahaziah, who were seeking the consultation of Baalzebul. He, likewise, prophesied of King Ahaziah's death (2 Kings 1). Later, Jehu killed Ahab's seventy sons in Samaria (2 Kings 10). Finally, Samaria fell to Assyria in 721 B.C. after a three years' siege (2 Kings 17:5, 18:9-12). See Assyria. This destruction came after many prophecies concerning its sins and many warnings about its doom (Isa. 8:4; 9:8-14; 10:9; 28:1-13; 36:19; Jer. 23:13; Ezek. 23:1-4; Hos. 7; 13:16; Amos 3:12; Mic. 1:6).
 - 5) "While the term *Samaria* was first identified with the city founded by Omri, it soon became associated with the entire region surrounding the city, the tribal territory of Manasseh and Ephraim. Finally, the name *Samaria* became synonymous with the entire Northern Kingdom (1 Kings 13:32; Jer. 31:5). After the Assyrian conquest, Samaria began to shrink in size. By New Testament times, it became identified with the central region of Palestine, with Galilee to the north and Judea to the south.
 - 6) "The name *Samaritans* originally was identified with the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kings 17:29). When the Assyrians conquered Israel and exiled 27,290 Israelites, a "remnant of Israel" remained in the land. Assyrian captives from distant places also settled there (2 Kings 17:24). This led to the intermarriage of some, though not all, Jews with Gentiles and to widespread worship of foreign gods. By the time the Jews returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem, Ezra and Nehemiah refused to let the Samaritans share in the experience (Ezra 4:1-3; Neh. 4:7). The old antagonism between Israel to the north and Judah to the south intensified the quarrel.
 - 7) "The Jewish inhabitants of Samaria identified Mount Gerizim as the chosen place of God and the only center of worship, calling it the "navel of the earth" because of a tradition that Adam sacrificed there. Their scriptures were limited to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Moses was regarded as the only prophet and intercessor in the final judgment. They also believed that 6,000 years after creation, a Restorer would arise and would live on earth for 110 years. On the Judgment Day, the righteous would be resurrected in paradise and the wicked roasted in eternal fire.
 - 8) "In the days of Christ, the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans was greatly strained (Luke 9:52-54; 10:25-37; 17:11-19; John 8:48). The animosity was so great that the Jews bypassed Samaria as they traveled between Galilee and Judea. They went an extra distance through the barren land of Perea on the eastern side of the Jordan to avoid going through Samaria. Yet Jesus rebuked His disciples for their hostility to the Samaritans (Luke 9:55-56), healed a Samaritan leper (Luke 17:16), honored a Samaritan for his neighborliness (Luke 10:30-37), praised a Samaritan for his gratitude (Luke 17:11-18), asked a drink of a Samaritan woman (John 4:7), and preached to the Samaritans (John 4:40-42). Then in Acts 1:8, Jesus challenged His disciples to witness in Samaria. Philip, a deacon, opened a mission in Samaria (Acts 8:5). A small Samaritan community continues to this day to follow the traditional worship near Shechem. See Israel" (Holman, Donald R. Potts).
- c. The Assyrians took Samaria after the long siege; her king was imprisoned; its citizens were taken into foreign lands. An Assyrian inscription says: "In my first year I captured Samaria. I took captive 27,290 people. People of other lands, who never paid tribute, I settled in Samaria" (Halley, pp.208f). This statement was written by Sargon, who replaced Shalmaneser, who died at the time Samaria was being attacked.
 - d. "In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria. Shalmaneser is not named as the conqueror (cf. ch. 18:10), for he had been compelled to hasten to Assyria on the account of a
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formidable rebellion at home; but he left a portion of his army before the walls of Samaria, intending, as soon as he had suppressed the revolt, to return and prosecute the war in Israel. But these hopes were disappointed by the success of the usurper, who, having by his audacity, vigour, or popular influence, established himself on the Assyrian throne, determined, amongst other military expeditions he planned, to employ his turbulent subjects to march into Syria, and complete the siege of Samaria, which Shalmaneser had not been able to accomplish. The event fulfilled the prophecy of Hosea (13:16), and terminated the actual existence of Israel as a kingdom” (JFB, p.414). “Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up” (Hosea 13:16).

- e. Concerning Sargon, it is noteworthy that his name was unknown through the centuries, except by the brief notice appearing in Isaiah 20:1. Naturally, unbelievers accused the Bible of giving faulty information, until Sargon’s palace was discovered 1842, in Khorsabad (Halley, p.287).
 - 1) "And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, *that is* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 18:9-11). Neither this passage nor our text states that Shalmaneser was the one who conquered Samaria; in fact, as the following quotation will show, Sargon replaced Shalmaneser, and thus it was Sargon’s record that contained the boast of having captured Samaria.
 - 2) “Israel’s capital-fortress held out stubbornly for three years under the relentless pressure of Assyrian arms. Before the overthrow was actually accomplished, Shalmaneser V had been succeeded on the throne of Assyria by Sharrukin II (721-705 B.C.), a usurper and a general in the army, who assumed the ancient and venerable name of Sargon. Mention of him in Isaiah 20:1 in connection with his capture of Ashdod, an event recorded in his annals, was, until the advent of modern archeology, the only place in extant literature where his name was known” (Unger, p.258).
- f. The captured Israelites were re-located in the cities of the Medes, and in the city of Halah, and by Halah, the river of Gozan. "Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17:5-6, NKJ).
 - 1) Halah: “City-state or region in northern Mesopotamia to which Assyrians exiled some leaders of the Northern Kingdom after capturing Samaria in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6). Some Bible students think the original text of Obadiah 20 contained a promise for the captives in Halah. They read the Hebrew word for ‘host’ as *Halah*. Halah may have been Hallahhu, northeast of Nineveh” (Holman).
 - 2) Habor: “Akkadian river name. A major tributary of the Euphrates River. The Assyrians resettled many exiles from Israel there near Gozan when they captured the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. (2 Kings 17:6)” (Holman).
- g. “The exhumation of the Ninevite relics, followed by the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions, has put us in full possession of the annals of ancient Assyria; and in the minute legends on the walls of the palaces we find details, registered by the authority and under the direction of the conquerors themselves, of the quantity and quality of the spoil—of the amount of oxen and sheep—of the number, rank, and treatment of the captives—with the horrid tortures inflicted upon the fallen chiefs. But few traces have been found, though there are some in the times of the old Assyrian empire, of the removal of an entire nation. Tiglath-pileser appears to have been the introducer of this novel experiment for ensuring the submission of a vanquished people (*Josephus* ‘Antiquities,’ b.ix, ch. xii); and as it proved

successful, it was followed on a large scale by Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon in Assyria, as well as by the great despots of the succeeding old world empires—Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (cf. Jer. 39:8,9; Daniel), Darius, Artaxerxes in Persia (Esther), &c” (JFB, p.415).

- h. The inspired historian quietly reports these events; few details are given; the facts are stated without any fanfare. This is a mark of inspiration, for what ordinary historian could have limited himself to such a brief report of such an important event? To withstand an extended siege is beyond our comprehension; the extremities to which the victims were subjected were too awful to detail. To be captured by the Assyrians was another extremity in cruelty.
 - 1) “Over and above the glory and might of the Assyrian kings, a brutality possessed them which has seldom been duplicated in the course of history. Victors in battle, accountable for those they slew, would cut off the hands of the slain and give them to scribes to count....Ashurbanipal, probably the ‘great and noble Asnapper’ of Ezra 4:10...,boasted that he flayed all those who rebelled against him, taking their skins and covering the pillars of his temple. One king boasted that he burned three thousand captives with fire. Another king recorded: ‘Monuments I erected I used human bodies after I severed their heads and limbs.’ Another brutal punishment, mainly for treason, was putting out the eyes of traitors....Hooks and rings were placed in jaws and tongues and feet were bound, forcing prisoners to take short steps. If some could not keep ‘pace’ while being marched, the conqueror would give a yank of the leash and ‘from their hostile mouths tongues were torn out by their roots.’ Torture such as this also helped to break their resistance. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ‘put out the eyes of Zedekiah’ (II Kings 25:7), using the same method of Sargon...King Manasseh was taken with hooks (II Chron. 33:11 R.V.). These cruel and brutal acts were done in accordance with the martial laws of Assyria and Babylon. It is said of Sargon that his acts of brutality were for ‘propaganda purposes,’ and brought Assyria to a pinnacle of savage grandeur. Is it any wonder that God’s prophets warned Israel to repent and return to the Lord, lest they be defeated and taken into captivity” (Boyd, pp.143f).
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 33:11: "Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon."
- i. The prophecies, God had given them through his prophets over a period of many years, came to pass. Compare: "Though he be fruitful among *his* brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up" (Hosea 13:15-16).

B. 2 Kings 17:7-23: The Reasons for Israel’s Downfall.

1. Verses 7-8: “For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.”
 - a. The inspired historian gives the background causes for Israel’s present predicament. They had committed sin against God. This they did despite his gracious treatment of their forebears; specifically, he had brought them out of Egypt, delivering from the cruel slavery in which they were held by Egyptian Pharaohs.
 - b. “To show the magnitude of the sin, the writer recalls to mind the great benefit conferred in the redemption from Egypt, whereby the Lord had laid his people under strong obligation to adhere faithfully to him....The apostasy of Israel manifested itself in two direction: 1. in their walking in the

statutes of the nations who were cut off from before them, instead of in the statutes of Jehovah.... and 2. In their walking in the statutes which the kings of Israel had made, *i.e.* the worship of the calves” (Keil, pp.414f).

- c. Rather than remaining loyal to Jehovah, they had adopted the idolatry of their Canaanite neighbors, ignoring the many warnings he had given them, and forgetting that God had cast out of Canaan those nations which served idols. The book of Joshua reports the sad news that Israel failed to exterminate the Canaanites, which the Lord required them to do. This omission of duty ultimately led their descendants to adopt the religious systems of the heathen in the land.
 - d. They had been clearly and repeatedly warned against these sins:
 - 1) Leviticus 18:3: "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 12:31: "Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 18:9: "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations."
 - 4) Leviticus 18:25: "And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants."
 - 5) Leviticus 20:23: "And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them."
 - 6) Deuteronomy 6:3: "Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey."
 - 7) Deuteronomy 6:10-12: "And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."
 - 8) Deuteronomy 9:4: "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee."
 - e. Verse eight ends with a reference to their insistence on having a king. They rejected God as their King when they demanded to be given a human king. God warned them of the disasters that would follow such a course (cf. Deut. 17:17-20). God allowed them to have their wish (1 Samuel 8).
 - 1) “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel” (Deut. 17:17-20).
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- 2) 1 Samuel 8:9-18: “Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.”
2. Verses 9-12: “And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.”
- a. Verse nine seems to indicate that the Israelites first began their idolatrous practices in private, and later built high places at which they openly practiced their evil religion. Some scholars take this verse to mean that they claimed to be worshipping Jehovah when they directed their sacrifices and other services to the idols.
- b. In our present time “change agents” are pressing their efforts to corrupt the church. For a good number of years, they worked covertly, preparing people for the changes that are now being overtly affirmed. A generation of young people and new converts have been brought up with very little Bible training; they have been fed a steady diet of spiritual “cotton candy” so that they reject plain teaching from the Scriptures. We are now seeing the sorrowful harvest of the earlier work of false teachers.
- c. Although God had expressly forbidden his people to do these things, they set up high places, erected images and groves on every high hill and under every green tree; they burnt incense in all the high places, just as did the heathen before them had done. God had cast out the heathen for doing these things, and had now done the same to Israel. Despite the warnings and the fate of the Canaanites, Israel refused to learn—and they paid the awful price! We have reason to shudder at the future of our nation in general, and members the church in particular, when the present apostasy reaps its bitter fruit.
3. Verses 13-14: “Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.”
- a. The Lord continually warned Israel (and Judah) of the awful consequences of their rebellion. He told them to turn from their evil ways and be obedient to his will. Through the years, God sent many prophets to them with this basic message.
- 1) Nehemiah 9:20,30: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst....Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear:
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- therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
- 2) Compare: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*" (Acts 7:51-53).
 - b. They refused to listen, and so they now paid the price. "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*" (Jer. 6:16).
4. Verses 15-16: "And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal."
- a. God does not force anyone to obey his will. He created us with intelligence and the ability to both learn and discern. He gave us the power of choice; he appeals to our good sense and loyalty to obey his word; he warns us of the consequences of our actions if we choose to rebel. In Israel's case, they committed themselves to rebellion; they refused to obey the will of God.
 - b. The journey into destruction was begun by Israel when they allowed Jeroboam to dictate to them how and where they were to worship (1 Kings 12:25-33).
5. Verse 17: "And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."
- a. The first step away from God may have seemed to them to be insignificant, but the worship of the calves at Dan and Bethel was a huge departure from the will of God. The northern kingdom never recovered their spiritual equilibrium.
 - b. Once the first step had been taken, the second and third and fourth steps were easy. What started out as a seemingly small matter, ended up with them being involved in every kind of vile and awful religious activity. They offered their children up as human sacrifices to the false gods they served.
 - c. They used divinations and enchantments, common features of heathen religions. Compare: "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one" (Acts 8:9).
6. Verses 18-19: "Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made."
- a. The judicial wrath of Jehovah was visited upon the Northern Kingdom (the ten tribes); they were carried away into Assyrian captivity; their nation was destroyed.
 - b. Of God's people, only the nation of Judah remained in the land. This nation was comprised of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. The text states that Judah was not what she ought to have been. In time to come (606-586), Judah was also taken into captivity, where they would remain for seventy years (536 B.C.).
7. Verses 20-23: "And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did;
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they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.”

- a. The Lord was forced to reject Israel on account of their rebellion. He delivered them into the hands of men who were fully able to spoil them and remove them from their land. They did not understand that the blessings of God were conditioned on their obedience. They had things going their way for so long that they evidently thought they had an unbreakable lease on good fortune.
 - 1) We in America have been well-blessed; we have begun to take our good fortune for granted, as though it depended entirely on our prowess and strength. We had better learn soon that God cannot be flaunted with impunity.
 - 2) We who comprise the church of Christ have been blessed; all of heaven’s spiritual blessings have resided upon us for a long time. But many in our midst have decided to shun God’s word, and are trying to force upon the rest of us their human philosophy. God’s blessings are just as conditional for us as they were for ancient Israel.
- b. When haughtiness on the part of Rehoboam resulted in the division of the kingdom, the northern ten tribes exalted Jeroboam as their king. This new king introduced calf-worship at Dan and Bethel, which was sinful to its core (1 Kings 12:25-33). They degenerated rapidly through the years, until the time came when God was obligated to turn them over to the Assyrians for punishment.
- c. Verses 1-6 of this chapter gave us a brief report of the destruction of Israel; verses 7-23 gave us a discussion which reveals the causes of their downfall. God was fully justified in his punishment. He had been very longsuffering with them, but there is a point beyond which God’s grace will not be extended.

C. 2 Kings 17:24-41: The Assyrians Settle Foreigners in the Land of Israel.

1. Verse 24: “And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.”
 - a. Following a plan that had begun earlier, Sargon sent people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim into the cities of Samaria, to populate the land.
 - b. “It must not be supposed that the Israelites were universally removed to a man. A remnant was left, chiefly, however, of the poor and lower classes, with whom these foreign colonists mingled, so that the prevailing character of society about Samaria was heathen, not Israelite; for the Assyrian colonists became masters of the land, and forming partial intermarriages with the remnant Jews, the inhabitants became a mongrel race, no longer a people of Ephraim (Isa. 7:6), who, imperfectly instructed in the creed of the Jews, acquired also a mongrel doctrine” (JFB, p.416).
2. Verses 25-28: “And *so* it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. Verses 27-28: “Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.”
 - a. “Being too few to replenish the land, lions, by which the land had been infested (Judg. 19:5; 1 Sam. 17:34; 1 Ki. 13:24; 20:36; Song 4:8), multiplied, and committed frequent ravages upon them. Recognizing in these attacks a judgment from the God of the land, whom they had not worshipped,

- they petitioned the Assyrian court to send them some Jewish priests, who might instruct them in the right way of serving him. The king...sent them one of the exiled priests of Israel, who established his headquarters at Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. It is not said that he took a copy of the Pentateuch with him, out of which he might teach them. *Oral teaching* was much better fitted for the superstitious people than instruction out of a written book” (JFB, pp.416f).
- b. “The priest sent by the Assyrian king was of course an Israelitish priest of the calves, for he was one of those who had been carried away and settled in Bethel, the chief seat of Jeroboam’s image-worship, and he also taught the colonists to fear or worship Jehovah after the manner of the land. This explains the state of divine worship in the land as described in vers. 29ff” (Keil, pp.423f).
3. Verses 29-31: “Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.”
 - a. The people inhabiting the land now were from heathen lands; each had its own national gods; each installed the god of its choice in the high places erected by the people of Israel.
 - b. “These Assyrian colonists, however, though instructed in the worship and acknowledging the being of the God of Israel, did not suppose him to be the only God. Like other heathens, they combined his worship with that of their own gods; and as they formed a promiscuous society from different nations or provinces, a variety of idols were acknowledged by them” (JFB, p.417),
 4. Verses 32-33: “So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.”
 - a. These people worshipped Jehovah, according to the perversions of the Israelites, but they continued to worship their former gods.
 - b. “One priest was not enough for this motley population; and, as the priesthood was probably neither respectable nor lucrative, it was only the lowest of the people who would enter into the employment” (Clarke, p.539). The Italians had a saying, that if a man could not do a regular kind of work, he could always be a priest. Apparently, sincere respect for the “priesthood” was not common!
 - c. “They did not relinquish their own idolatry but incorporated the worship of the true God with that of their idols. They were afraid of Jehovah, who had sent lions among them; and therefore they offered him a sort of worship that he might not thus afflict them: but they served other gods, devoted themselves affectionately to them, because their worship was such as gratified their grossest passions, and most sinful propensities” (Clarke, p.539).
 5. Verses 34-35: “Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them. “
 - a. “Their religion was a strange medley or compound of the service of God and the service of idols. Such was the first settlement of the people, afterwards called Samaritans, who were sent from Assyria to colonize the land, when the kingdom of Israel, after having continued 256 years, was over thrown” (JFB, p.418).
 - b. The previous passage states that they feared the Lord, but this passage says they did not fear him. In the first instance, they feared him in that they were terrified of the lions he sent; they were willing to
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pay some small degree of homage to him to avoid the ferocious lions he sent against them. But they did not fear him to the extent that they revered his will, to obey him explicitly.

6. Verses 36-41: "But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner. So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."
 - a. The inspired historian advises the Jews who were to read his words to reverence and worship the God of heaven; it was he who brought their forebears up from Egypt, gave them his Law to keep, and forbade them to serve other gods.
 - b. God required reverent obedience of the Israelites; he requires no less from those who would have his favor today.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 2) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - c. Verse thirty-nine speaks of the Israelites. They had been told from the beginning that if they feared the Lord, he would protect them from the evil intentions of their enemies, a lesson they failed to learn entirely.
 - 1) Exodus 34:24: "For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 13:5: "And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee."
 - d. Verse forty: "They did not hearken, however (the subject is, of course, the ten tribes), but they (the descendants of the Israelites who remained in the land) do after their former manner....which was a mixture of idolatry and of the image-worship of Jehovah, as in ver. 34....In ver. 41 this is repeated once more, and the whole of these reflections are brought to a close with the additional statement, that their children and grandchildren do the same to this day" (Keil, p.427).
 - e. In the period following the Babylonian captivity the Samaritans relinquished actual idolatry, and by the adoption of the Mosaic book of the law were converted to monotheism" (Keil, p.427). A small number of Samaritians still carry on their ancient traditions.

2 KINGS 18

A. 2 Kings 18:1-8: The Reign of Hezekiah Appraised.

1. Verses 1-3: "Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did."
 - a. Hezekiah came to the throne in Judah during the third year of the reign of Hoshea in Israel, which was about six years before the fall of Samaria. "And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken" (2 Kings 18:9-10).
 - b. In 2 Kings 16:2, we were told that Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, was twenty years old when he began his reign, and that his rule lasted sixteen years. Since he was only about thirty-six years old when he died, and Hezekiah was twenty-five when he came to the throne, Ahaz was only about eleven or twelve when Hezekiah was born. As stated in the comments on that passage, this is within the child producing age of some young people. We are not told how old Hezekiah's mother was.
 - c. "It was customary for the later kings of Israel to assume their son and heir into partnership in the government during their lives; and as Hezekiah began to reign in the third year of Hoshea (v.1), and Hoshea in the twelfth year of Ahaz (ch. 17:1), it is evident that Hezekiah began to reign in the fourteenth year of Ahaz his father, and so reigned two or three years before his father's death. So that at the beginning of his reign in conjunction with his father, he might be only twenty-two or twenty-three, and Ahaz a few years older than the common calculation makes him. Or the case may be solved thus,—As the ancient writers in the computation of time take notice of the year they mention, whether finished or newly begun, so Ahaz might be near twenty-one years old at the beginning of his reign, and near seventeen years older at his death; while, on the other hand, Hezekiah, when he began to reign might be just entering into his twenty-fifth year, and so Ahaz would be nearly fourteen years old when his son Hezekiah was born—no uncommon age for a young man to become a father in southern latitudes" (JFB, p.418).
 - d. The historian reports that Hezekiah did that which was right in God's sight; he was more after the pattern than most of David's regal descendants. Only two others (Asa and Josiah) had this said specifically about them:
 - 1) 1 Kings 15:11: "And **Asa** did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father."
 - 2) 2 Kings 22:1-2: "**Josiah** *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."
2. Verse 4: "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan."
 - a. Hezekiah was able and willing to do what his predecessors did not do: he removed the high places, cut down the groves, and destroyed the images which the people of Judah were worshipping. They

may have started out using these images and locations to worship God, but full-blown idolatry was bound to develop. In either case, it was clearly wrong to use the high places and images. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex. 20:3-6).

- b. They had degenerated to the point that they had begun to worship the brazen serpent which Moses had made in the wilderness.
 - 1) "The preservation of the remarkable relic of antiquity (Num. 21:5-9) might, like the pot of manna and Aaron's rod, have remained an interesting and instructive monument of the Divine goodness and mercy to the Israelites in the wilderness; and it must have required the exercise of no small courage and resolution to destroy it. But in the progress of degeneracy it had become an object of idolatrous worship; and as the interests of true religion rendered its demolition necessary. Hezekiah, by taking this bold step, consulted both the glory of God and the good of his country" (JFB, pp.418f).
 - 2) We are not told just when this idolatrous practice first began, but we may be sure it was at some time after Joshua. Compare: "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:7-10).
 - c. The people referred to the brazen serpent, not as a serpent, but by the name *Nehushtan*, which means "brazen thing." The tendency of humans is to focus on material articles and objects of devotion. If the remains of Noah's ark were to be found, it would become the focal point of worship for a great many people. This tendency reveals a strong lack of faith. We are to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7); faith comes by learning God's word (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7). God is to be the only proper object of our devotion (John 4:24). It appears that some people look at a copy of the Bible, not as a copy of God's word, but as an object to be worshiped. It is not the physical item that is holy, but the truth it contains.
 - d. The report of the brazen serpent is given in Numbers 21:5-9: "And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for *there is* no bread, neither *is there any* water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."
3. Verses 5-6: "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses."
 - a. "The verdict, 'after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah,' refers to Hezekiah's
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confidence in God...in which he had no equal, whereas in the case of Josiah his conscientious adherence to the Mosaic law is extolled in the same words (ch. 23:25); so that there is no ground for saying there is a contradiction between our verse and ch. 23:25 (Thenius)” (Keil, p.432).

- b. David and Solomon may be exceptions to the pronouncement, however we cannot know this for sure. Solomon went into idolatry later in his life, and David committed sin with Bathsheba and in the incident of numbering Israel (2 Sam. 11; 2 Sam. 24). Keil’s statement above seems to be the best view, that in trust he surpassed all others. His trust was unblemished by unbelief. When the army of Assyria besieged Jerusalem, Hezekiah did not falter in his trust in God.
 - c. Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
4. Verses 7-8: “And the LORD was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.”
- a. “Since the inglorious reign of Ahaz, Judah had continued to groan under the Assyrian yoke, when, consequent upon the religious reformation Hezekiah inaugurated, the physical as well as the moral energies of the people were roused, and in particular the agricultural prosperity of the country returned...which was interrupted for a brief space in the fourteenth year of his reign” (JFB, p.419). During Hezekiah’s fourteenth year, the Assyrians invaded the land, obviously disrupting normal activities, such as commerce and agriculture.
 - b. Despite the overwhelming might of the Assyrians, Hezekiah entered into a rebellion against them, and refused to be subservient to him any longer. He trusted the Lord to defend Judah.
 - c. “Shalmaneser had withdrawn from Palestine, being engaged in a war with Tyre, or probably was dead; and assuming, consequently, that full independent sovereignty which God had settled on the house of David, he both shook off the Assyrians yoke, and, by an energetic movement against the Philistines, recovered from that people the territory which they had taken from his father Ahaz (2 Chr. 28:18)” (JFB, p.419).
 - d. "The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shochu with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there" (2 Chr. 28:18).

B. 2 Kings 18:9-12: Notice of Israel’s Downfall is Repeated.

1. Verses 9-10: “And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.”
 - a. Shalmaneser laid siege to Samaria during Hezekiah’s fourth year. Following a three-year operation, the city fell to the Assyrian army.
 - b. 2 Kings 17:5-6: "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."
2. Verses 11-12: “And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*, nor do them.”

- a. The Assyrian king carried Israel away into captivity, from which they as a nation never returned. This disaster was punishment from God for the rebellion of Israel. They had been warned many times to amend their ways, lest this destruction be sent upon them. They refused the message, and now they paid the penalty.
- b. The Assyrian king was Sargon, who replaced Shalmaneser during the time the siege of Samaria was in effect. In the only biblical reference to him by name, Sargon is named in Isaiah 20:1: "In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him,) and fought against Ashdod, and took it."

C. 2 Kings 18:13-16: Sennacherib Invades Judah.

1. Verse 13: "Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them."
 - a. Sennacherib, another Assyrian king, invaded Palestine, capturing the walled cities of Judah. On the surface, it appeared that Jerusalem's fate was certain destruction. One thing stood between them and this devastation was the faith of Hezekiah; another was the promises of God to preserve part of the nation (a remnant). "For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jer. 30:11).
 - b. Sennacherib—"the son and successor of Shalmaneser. This warlike prince, among the many expeditions in which he engaged, invaded Syria with an immense army, directing his attack in the first instance upon Phoenicia, many of the petty sovereigns of which had revolted at the time of his accession. Having reduced them all in succession, and received tribute from their cities, he pressed southward against Egypt; and the first place at which he stopped in this southern route was the Philistine city of Ekron, the inhabitants of which, having allied themselves with Shebek of Egypt, had expelled their king, Padi, who was rather inclined to lean upon Assyria. The Ekronites invoked the aid of Hezekiah, who, acceding to their request, involved himself in the responsibilities of the revolt, and took Padi a prisoner to Jerusalem. Sennacherib determined to support his faithful dependent; and it was partly to liberate and restore Padi to his royal position in Ekron, partly to punish Hezekiah, that, after having reduced the Ekronite rebels, the Assyrian king prepared to invade Judaea" (JFB, pp.420f).
 - c. The following information about Assyria is taken from Halley's Handbook, pp.209f:
 - 1) "It was by the Assyrian Empire that the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed. In recent years annals of Assyrian kings have been found in which they themselves had their own exploits recorded. In these annals names of ten Hebrew kings occur: Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah, Hoshea, Uzziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh. Many statements are found which confirm Biblical statements....
 - 2) "Assyrian policy was to deport conquered peoples to other lands, to destroy their sense of nationalism and make them more easily subject. Assyrians were great warriors. Most nations then were robber nations. Assyrians seem to have been about the worst of them all. They builded their state on the loot of other peoples. They practiced cruelty. They skinned their prisoners alive, or cut off their hands, feet, noses, ears, or put out their eyes, or pulled out their tongues, and made mounds of human skulls, all to inspire terror.
 - 3) "Assyria was founded, previous to 2000 B.C., by colonists from Babylon, and for many centuries was subject to, or in conflict with, Babylon. About 1300 B.C. Shalmaneser I, threw off the yoke of Babylon, and ruled the whole Euphrates Valley. Then Assyria declined. Tiglath-pileser I (1120-1100), made Assyria again a great kingdom. Then another period of decline. Then followed the brilliant epoch of 300 years in which Assyria was a World-Empire, under the following kings:

- a) “Assur-nasipal II (886-860 B.C.). Warlike and cruel. Welded Assyria into the best fighting machine of the ancient world.
 - b) “Shalmaneser II (860-825 B.C.). First Assyrian king to come in conflict with Israel. Ahab fought him. Jehu paid him tribute.
 - c) “Shansi-adad (825-808). Adad-nirari (808-783). Shalmaneser III (783-771). Assur-dayan (771-753). Assur-lush (753-747). Decline.
 - d) “Tiglath-pileser III (747-727). ‘Pul’ was his personal name. He carried North Israel into Captivity (734 B.C. See under Isaiah 7).
 - e) “Shalmaneser IV (727-722). He besieged Samaria; died in the siege.
 - f) “Sargon II (722-705). Completed destruction of Samaria and Israel’s captivity. Sargon I was a Babylonian king of 2000 years earlier.
 - g) “Sennacherib (705-681). Most famous of Assyrian kings. Defeated by an angel before Jerusalem. Burned Babylon. (See under II Chronicles 32).
 - h) “Esar-haddon (681-668). Rebuilt Babylon. Conquered Egypt. Was one of the greatest Assyrian kings.
 - i) “Assur-banipal (668-626). (Sardanopalus, Osnapper). Destroyed Thebes. Collected a great library. Powerful, cruel, literary.
 - j) “Assur-etil-ilani, Sin-sar-iskun (Saracos) (626-607). Beset by Scythians, Medes and Babylonians, the brutal Empire fell.”
2. Verse 14: “And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.”
- a. “On the report of Sennacherib’s approach, Hezekiah made provision at once for the safety of Jerusalem. He had the city fortified more strongly, and the fountain of the upper Gihon and the brook near the city stopped up...to cut off the supply of water from the besiegers, as is stated in 2 Chron. 32:2-8, and confirmed by Isa. 22:8-11. In the meantime Sennacherib had pressed forward to *La-chish*...so that Hezekiah, having doubts as to the possibility of a successful resistance, sent ambassadors to negotiate with him, and promised to pay him as much tribute as he might demand if he would withdraw” (Keil, pp.433f).
 - b. “Disappointed in his expectations of aid from Egypt, and feeling himself unable to resist so mighty a conqueror, who was menacing Jerusalem itself, Hezekiah made his submission. The payment of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold (£351,000), brought a temporary respite; but in raising the imposed tribute, which he appears to have been under great pressure to pay at once, he was obliged not only to drain all the treasures of the palace and temple, but even to strip the doors and pillars of the sacred edifice of the gold that adorned. A most important inscription, being the annals of Sennacherib (San-ki-rib), was discovered by Mr. Layard upon a bull at the grand entrance of the palace of Kouyunjik. Amongst other expeditions he undertook, he describes minutely his invasion of Syria, mentioning the towns of Phoenicia and Judah he reduced and made tributary. Then follows an account of his attack on Hezekiah, which is recorded in the following terms: ‘Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his

capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape. Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty....All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, as a token of submission to my power” (JFB, pp.421f).

- c. Isaiah 10:28-32: "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand *against* the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem."
 - d. Isaiah 24:1-2: "Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him."
3. Verses 15-16: “And Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.”
- a. Under the threat of a massive assault against Jerusalem, which seemed to human eyes to have no resolution, Hezekiah went to extreme measures to raise the demanded tribute. He removed the gold from the doors of the temple and the pillars, with which Hezekiah has previously adorned them.
 - b. The biblical account states that Sennacherib demanded 300 talents of silver, in addition to the 30 talents of gold, but Sennacherib’s account says the amount silver he obtained was 800 talents. The difference may be accounted for by applying the 300 talents of silver to silver coins, while assuming Sennacherib’s 800 talents included the coins and other forms of silver. Boyd (p.149) says that another discovery shows that 300 Hebrew talents of silver equalled 800 Assyrian talents of silver.

D. 2 Kings 18: 17-25: Important Messengers from the Assyrians Come to Jerusalem.

1. Verses 17-18: “And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the highway of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.”
 - a. There is a difference of opinion regarding the present information. Some scholars (Jamieson) think that the Assyrians returned to Nineveh after Hezekiah capitulated; Sennacherib wrote that the tribute he demanded from Hezekiah was sent to him at Nineveh. Other scholars (Keil) state that Sennacherib did not live up to his end of the bargain, but that he set about to reduce Jerusalem after the tribute had been dispatched from the city. The difference, in practical terms, is not significant. In the first view, there was a period of time between the first confrontation and the second; in the second view, the confrontation was just one continuous episode. The report of the sacred text certainly indicates that the second view is the correct one; the men sent to Hezekiah started to Jerusalem from Lachish, where the main Assyrian force had been situated (verse 14).
 - b. Sennacherib sent some of his aides to king Hezekiah. Tartan, Rabsaris and Rabshakeh had with them a great army. They positioned themselves at the conduit of the upper pool. “This conduit which led

from the upper Gihon into the lower, and which is called in 2 Chron. 32:30 ‘the outflow of the upper Gihon,’ Hezekiah stopped up, and conducted the water downwards, *i.e.* underground, towards the west into the city of David; that is to say, he conducted the water of the upper Gihon, which had previously flowed along the western side of the city outside the wall into the lower Gihon and so away down the valley of Ben-hinnom, into the city itself by means of a subterranean channel, that he might retain this water for the use of the city in the event of a siege of Jerusalem, and keep it from the besiegers” (Keil, p.435).

- c. Sennacherib’s representatives called to Hezekiah; the king sent out Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah to talk with the Assyrians.
2. Verses 19-21: “And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain words), *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, *even* upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.”
 - a. The Assyrian spokesman was Rabshakeh; he evidently was able to speak Hebrew (verses 25-26). He wanted to know where Hezekiah had obtained the false confidence upon which he leaned. “The insolent tone he assumed appears surprising. But this boasting, both as to matter and manner, his highly coloured picture of his master’s powers, and the impossibility of Hezekiah making any effective resistance, heightened by all the arguments and figures which an Oriental imagination could suggest, has been paralleled in all, except the blasphemy, by other messages of defiance sent on similar occasions in the history of the East” (JFB, p.423).
 - b. Rabshakeh ridiculed the confidence Hezekiah held. He sneered at the king’s “empty words” which declared that he had sufficient counsel and strength to resist the Assyrian armed might. What gave him the foolish notion that he could oppose the great king of Assyria?
 - c. He spoke of the alliance that Hezekiah had made with the Egyptians. Egypt, Rabshakeh asserted, was nothing but a bruised reed; if a man leaned on this injured staff, it would be unable to hold him up; in fact, it would surely pierce his hand. He maintained that the Egyptians would be able to offer no help to Hezekiah.
 3. Verse 22: “But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?”
 - a. Rabshakeh further argued that Hezekiah could not expect any help from the Lord, for the king had torn down the high places and altars, then demanding that his people must worship God only at the altar in Jerusalem (at the temple). Therefore, his own people would not support him, since he had deprived them of their favorite places of worship.
 - b. The argument asserts that Hezekiah had forfeited any potential help from Jehovah after destroying the altars and high places where the people had formerly worshiped. How could he expect help from God whose altars he had desecrated?
 - c. Rabshakeh misunderstood the purpose of Hezekiah’s reforms. They had not been designed to stamp out worship of Jehovah, but to bring the people back to the proper worship of the Lord. His aim was not to eradicate the worship of God, but to purify the worship so that God would be pleased.
 4. Verses 23-25: “Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said
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to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.”

- a. Rabshakeh next challenged Hezekiah, that if he could find sufficient horse soldiers, he would give him two thousand horses. Since Hezekiah was a God-fearing king, he doubtless had honored the Mosaic decree that forbade Israelite kings the right to “multiply horses” (Deut. 17:16). The purpose of this prohibition was to cause Israel to depend on the Lord for protection, and not lean on force of arms for defense.
- b. Hezekiah likely did not have trained men to use two thousand horses. Even if he did, Rabshakeh opined, they would not be able to overcome one Assyrian warrior. That being so, Hezekiah has put his trust in the Egyptians to send chariots and horsemen to his defense.
- c. “After Rabshakeh had thus, as he imagined, taken away every ground of confidence from Hezekiah, he added still further, that the Assyrian king himself had also not come without Jehovah, but had been summoned by him to effect the destruction of Judah. It is possible that some report may have reached his ears of the predictions of the prophets, who had represented the Assyrian invasion as a judgment from the Lord, and these he used for his own purpose” (Keil, p.439). It will be recalled that Rabshakeh’s speech is set forth as the words of Sennacherib. The statement in verse 25 is an assertion that God had directed the Assyrian king to come up against Jerusalem.

E. 2 Kings 18:26-37: Rabshakeh Addresses the People in Their Own Language.

1. Verses 26-27: “Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand *it*: and talk not with us in the Jews’ language in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall. But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?”
 - a. Hezekiah’s representatives asked Rabshakeh to speak in the Syrian tongue, which they understood, and not to use the Hebrew. They did not want the Israelites to hear the disturbing information the Assyrians proclaimed.
 - b. “But Rabshakeh rejected this proposal with the scornful remark, that his commission was not to speak to Hezekiah and his ambassadors only, but rather to the people upon the wall” (Keil, p.439).
 - c. “His object was to stir and terrify the populace into immediate submission, and with that view, turning to the crowd which was congregated on the walls, he represented to them, by coarse, but graphic terms, in their own Hebrew tongue, the extreme privations to which, in spite of the delusive assurances of Hezekiah, they would inevitably be reduced by Sennacherib during a protracted siege (2 Chr. 3:2:11). The result is mentioned as if it had been the purpose and design of the siege” (JFB, p.425).
2. Verses 28-30: “Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews’ language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.”
 - a. Rabshakeh addressed these remarks to the Israelites, speaking loudly in the Hebrew tongue. He told them to listen to the words of the great king of Assyria: do not let Hezekiah deceive you; he has no way to deliver you from Sennacherib’s powerful hand; do not let Hezekiah convince you that the Lord will save you.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 32:11-12: "Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The LORD our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem,

saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?"

3. Verses 31-32: "Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me by a present, and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us."
 - a. Rabshakeh called for the Israelites to make an agreement with him, and come out from Jerusalem and turn the city over to the Assyrians. "Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern" (2 Kings 18:31, ASV).
 - b. If they heeded the demand, then they each would have free access to their own vine and tree, and could drink from his own water supply. They could do so until such time that the Assyrians came to transport them to another land, one like their own; this new country would be one of grain and wine, of bread and vineyards, of olive oil and of honey.
 - c. Having painted a pretty picture of the new homeland he promised as a positive motivation, he next turns to the negative reason for accepting his proposal. Accept this offer and you will live; you will not be made to suffer and die. Therefore, he urged, do not listen to Hezekiah when he tries to persuade you that the Lord will deliver them.
 4. Verses 33-35: "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where *are* the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who *are* they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?"
 - a. Rabshakeh has yet another argument. Referring to the other conquered cities and kingdoms, he asked whether their gods had been able to deliver them from the might of the Assyrians.
 - b. He asked in particular where were the gods of Hamath, of Arpad, of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and of Ivah? And more to the point, he wanted to know where was the God of Samaria when the might of Assyria was brought against it? Since none of these gods had been able to withstand the power of the Assyrians, they could expect no more help from Jehovah than the others had gotten from their gods.
 - c. This argument was one which would appeal to those lacking in faith. What Rabshakeh did not know was that the God of Israel was the true and living God. This heathen invader was soon to see the awesome power Jehovah could unleash upon them.
 5. Verses 36-37: "But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh."
 - a. The people did not respond to Rabshakeh; they heeded the instructions that came from Hezekiah that they give no answer.
 - b. Hezekiah's representatives came to the king; they had rent their clothes, indicating the dreadful nature of the message they brought. This was a day of sorrow for Israel. If they surrendered to the Assyrians, they would be dispersed as a people and destroyed as a nation; if they fought, they could see nothing but defeat in the offing. In either case, the purposes and promises of God would come to nought. This is one of many occasions when the future of God's plans seemed doomed! But the power of the Almighty was not yet brought into the picture. Through these trying circumstances, the faith and
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mettle of Hezekiah and Judah were being tested.

2 KINGS 19

A. 2 Kings 19: 1-7: Hezekiah Appeals to the Lord.

1. Verses 1-2: "And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz."
 - a. Learning from his representatives who had been sent to speak with the representatives of Sen-nacherib that the Assyrians demanded complete surrender, and knowing that a refusal would bring the full force of the heathen army upon Jerusalem, King Hezekiah rent his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and entered the temple to pray.
 - b. Rending the garments to the ancient Israelites was an expression of great distress or agitation; wearing sackcloth was an expression of deep sorrow or penitence. The reason for his entering the temple was to pray. Since only certain priests were permitted to enter the holy place, and only the high priest could enter the most holy place, Hezekiah would have been in one of the outer courts. This episode of Hezekiah's life shows his true greatness. In the face of this awesome danger, he knew the only source of deliverance was Jehovah.
 - c. Hezekiah dispatched Eliakim (who was over his house), and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests to Isaiah to obtain guidance from that great prophet of God. These men wore sackcloth. Isaiah was one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament era, whose standing with the Lord is unquestioned. Through him the Lord would doubtless reveal information for Israel's salvation.
 2. Verses 3-5: "And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that are left. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah."
 - a. The king's delegates delivered his message to Isaiah. The message contained an interesting figure of speech. "The image is that of a parturient woman, whose strength is exhausted, whose powers are paralyzed, at the moment when she required to put forth a vigorous effort. The expression conveyed to the prophet described, by a strong figure, the desperate condition of the kingdom, together with their own inability to help themselves; and it intimated also a hope that the blasphemous defiance of Jehovah's power by the impious Assyrian might lead to some direct interposition for the vindication of his honour and supremacy to all heathen gods" (JFB, pp.426f).
 - b. Not only was the nation's situation desperate, something had to be done immediately. In the case of the woman who loses her strength in childbirth, if something is not done, both mother and baby will die.
 - c. Hezekiah knew the nature of the Almighty. He knew the power he possessed. The king also realized that the Lord might take the initiative to dispose of the Assyrian threat by punishing the gross arrogance of the Assyrians. The message Rabshakeh had delivered was one that equated the living God with the manmade gods of the ignorant heathen nations who knew not the God of heaven.
 3. Verses 6-7: "And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."
 - a. Isaiah had a message from God for them to take to Hezekiah. The first statement was that the king was
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not to be fearful of the frightening words of the Assyrians. This very thought was sufficient to evaporate the fears of the trusting king.

- b. God further described the Assyrian message to have been one of blasphemy, of which he had taken proper notice. This would further assure Hezekiah of God's entrance into the matter. There is a limit to the amount of blasphemy he will endure.
 - 1) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
- c. The Lord promised to send a "blast" upon Sennacherib, which would cause him to return to his own land, and there he would be slain with the sword. The "blast" would be a report; the report was that Tirhakah the king of Ethiopia had invaded and was approaching for a battle with Sennacherib. He would have to turn his attention from Jerusalem to deal with the hostile army.
- d. The second part of the blast would be the destruction of 185,000 of his own men. The loss of so many of his soldiers, although a severe blow, would not break the back of Assyrian power. These men could be replaced in a relatively short time. But when coupled with the report that a powerful army under the Ethiopian king was approaching, Sennacherib would be compelled to return to Nineveh to rebuild his army.
- e. Without the presence of the Ethiopian army, the Assyrians could have pressed the attack against Jerusalem and taken it. Even with the invading Ethiopians in the area, he might have been able to attack and subdue the city before turning to meet the invaders. However, with the destruction of so many in his army, he was obliged to return to Nineveh, both to escape the Ethiopians and to rebuild his forces. We are not told how many soldiers comprised his army when he invaded Palestine.

B. 2 Kings 19:8-13: Rabshakeh Sends a Letter to Hezekiah.

1. Verses 8-10: "So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria."
 - a. In the mean time, Rabshakeh and his company returned to the Assyrian camp. They had learned that Sennacherib had moved from Lachish to Libnah, where he had begun an operation against that stronghold. "Whether Lachish had fallen or not, is not said. But Sennacherib had transferred his battering-rams against the apparently neighbouring fortress of Libna (Josh. 10:29; cf. v.31; 15:42), where the chief cup-bearer reported the execution of his mission" (JFB, p.427).
 - 1) Lachish: "Place name meaning 'obstinate.' An important Old Testament city located in the Shephelah (lowlands) southwest of Jerusalem. It has usually been identified in modern times with the archaeological site called tell ed-Duweir. The same site has more recently come to be called tel Lachish. Lachish is also mentioned in ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian records. The earliest reference to Lachish is in the Amarna letters (about 1400 B.C). It was evidently one of the important Canaanite cities of the time. The Hebrew army under Joshua's command defeated the king of Lachish, killed him and conquered his city (Josh. 10:5, 23, 32-33). Later, Lachish was apportioned to the Tribe of Judah (Josh. 15:39). The next Biblical reference to Lachish comes in 2 Chronicles 11:9, from the reign of Rehoboam who 'fortified the city.' Lachish was also the city

of refuge for Amaziah who fled there from Jerusalem to escape a conspiracy against him (2 Kings 14:19; 2 Chron. 25:27). Lachish is perhaps most well known for the story of its siege and conquest in 701 B.C. at the hands of the Assyrian King Sennacherib (2 Kings 18; 2 Chron. 32; Isa. 36). Two later brief references appear (Jer. 34:7; Neh. 11:30). The archaeological excavations at Lachish have been extensive and rewarding. They have shown occupation at Lachish from about 4000 B.C. to the time of its conquest by the Persian Empire (539-333 B.C.). The rich and varied finds represent almost all of the periods, but the chief interest for the student of the Bible centers on the periods beginning with the time of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan. Impressive archaeological evidence shows the city was destroyed during the period of the conquest related in the Book of Joshua, but the archaeological evidence does not indicate who the destroyers were. Some scholars date the Lachish destruction layer as late as 1150 B.C. on the basis of a cartouche of Rameses III of Egypt. The biblical account of Sennacherib's conquest of Lachish in 701 B.C. is supported and amplified by Assyrian records of King Sennacherib's campaign (2 Kings 18; 2 Chron. 32; Isa. 36). This was graphically recorded in a large and elaborate bas relief on the walls of the royal palace in Nineveh. Presently housed in the British museum in London, these carvings show Assyrian soldiers attacking the walled city, the city inhabitants defending their city, soldiers killing some of the defenders, families with possessions being led away captive, and the king on his throne reviewing the spoils taken from the city. A replica of this relief may be found in the library of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. The 'Lachish Letters'—a group of messages in ancient Hebrew inscribed with ink on pottery sherds dating to around 590 B.C.—are among the most significant finds from Lachish. They provide important linguistic and historical information about this period" (Holman, Bruce C. Cresson).

- 2) Libnah: "Place name meaning 'white' or 'storax tree.' 1. Wilderness station east of the Jordan (Num. 33:20). Its location is not known; Umm Leben 66 miles south of Haradah has been suggested. See Haradah. 2. Town in the Shephelah of Judah that Joshua defeated (Josh. 10:29-30). Joshua allotted it to the tribe of Judah (Josh. 15:42) and separated it as a city for the Levites (Josh. 21:13). It illustrated western border rebellion against King Joram of Judah (853-841 B.C.) just as Edom represented rebellion in the east (2 Kings 8:22). It lay on the invasion route to Jerusalem followed by Sennacherib about 701 B.C. (2 Kings 19:8). The mother of Kings Jehoahaz (609 B.C.) and Zedekiah (597-586 B.C.) came from Libnah (2 Kings 23:31; 24:18). Debate rages concerning Libnah's location: tell es-Safi at the head of the Elah Valley appears too far north; tell Bornat just west of Lachish; tell el-Judeideh, usually identified as Moresheth-gath. Tell Bornat is the most popular candidate but far from certain" (Holman).
 - b. The report arrived in the Assyrian camp telling of the approach of Tirhakah. Sennacherib sent a message to Hezekiah, warning him again that he could not trust in God to deliver him. This was intended to keep the Israelites from getting the idea that they were spared by the withdrawal of the Assyrians. The implication in the message was that as soon as Sennacherib had dealt with the army from Ethiopia, he would return to finish off Jerusalem.
 - c. "Tirhakah reigned in Upper Egypt, while So, or Sabaco, ruled in Lower Egypt. He was a powerful monarch—another Sesostris; and both he and Sabaco have left many monuments of their greatness. The name and figure of Tirhakah receiving war-captives are still seen in the Egyptian temple of Medinet 'Abou. This was the expected succour which was sneered at (ch. 18:21) by Rabshakeh as a 'bruised reed.' Rage against Hezekiah for allying himself with Egypt, or the hope of being better able to meet this attack from the south, induced him, after hearing the rumour of Tirhakah's advance, to send a menacing letter to Hezekiah, in order that he might force the king of Judah to an immediate surrender of his capital" (JFB, p.427).
2. Verses 11-13: "Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers
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have destroyed; *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which *were* in Thelasar? Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?"

- a. Once more, Sennacherib reminded Hezekiah that the Assyrian army had met only with success in their military operations. None of the gods of the conquered nations had been able to affect the out-come of any of the battles.
- b. Those who had been captivated by his father were still in captivity. He asked Hezekiah about the whereabouts of the kings of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah. The so-called gods had been unable to gain the release of any of these people.
- c. Sennacherib's mistake was in thinking that Jehovah was only the name of some image, that he was nothing but an idol, such as other nations worshiped. He was soon to learn that the God of Israel is the God of Heaven; and that his power is unlimited and awesome indeed.

C. 2 Kings 19:14-19: Hezekiah Prays unto God.

1. Verse 14: "And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD."
 - a. Once again the righteous king entered God's house, the temple. He brought with him the letter of blasphemous words, written by Sennacherib, and presented it unto the Lord. Of course, God knew every word in the letter before it was even written, so Hezekiah was not revealing new information to the Lord.
 - b. "Hezekiah, after reading it, hastened into the temple, spread it, in the child-like confidence of faith, before the Lord, as containing taunts deeply affecting the Divine honour, and implored deliverance from this proud defier of God and man. The devout spirit of this prayer, the recognition of the Divine Being in the plenitude of His Majesty—so strikingly contrasted with the fancy of the Assyrians as to his merely local power; his acknowledgment of the conquests obtained over other lands, and of the destruction of their wooden idols, which, according to the Assyrian practice, were committed to the flames, because their tutelary deities were no gods; and the object for which he supplicated the Divine interposition, that all the kingdoms of the earth might know that the Lord was the only God,—this was an attitude worthy to be assumed by a pious theocratic king of the chosen people" (JFB, p.428).
 2. Verses 15-16: "And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God."
 - a. Hezekiah prayed reverently, addressing his heart's desires to him who dwelled between the cherubims. In the Most Holy Place in the temple, God's presence was represented in the mercy seat, the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. On each end of the mercy seat, the figure of an angel was attached; their outstretched wings met at the middle. This is evidently the meaning of this reference.
 - b. In other passages, God is pictured as being surrounded in heaven by the angelic bands. Compare: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he
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laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me" (Isaiah 6: 1-8).

- c. In our text the ASV depicts God as being *above* the cherubims. God is greater than the angels, just as Christ also is affirmed to be vastly superior to them (Heb. 1).
 - d. Hezekiah acknowledges the truth that the God of Israel is the only God, the one who made heaven and earth, and who is over all the nations of men in all the earth. He understood the true greatness and nature of Jehovah: God is not the weak, limited, powerless “deity” of a second-rate nation.
 - e. He asked the Lord to listen to the petition and to behold the problem, to take note of the reproach the Assyrians were directing toward the living God. David also was greatly upset when Goliath gave his taunting challenge to God’s people (1 Sam. 17). Defending the honor and dignity of God is a matter of paramount importance to one who fears and loves the Almighty.
3. Verses 17-19: “Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.”
- a. Hezekiah next describes the destructive work and power of the Assyrians, stating that they had done to the other nations just what they had boasted of doing. They had conquered these other kingdoms and had burned their “gods.” The king knew, however, that those gods were merely the product of the hands of men. One of the most foolish things men can do is to fashion an idol out of stone, wood, etc., and then bow before it, beseeching this inanimate object to take action in their behalf!
 - b. The king besought God to deliver his people from this present danger, and thus demonstrate to all nations that the God of Israel is the only true and living God. "Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Isa. 43:10).

D. 2 Kings 19:20-34: God Addresses Hezekiah Through Isaiah the Prophet.

1. Verses 20-21: “Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.”
 - a. “When Hezekiah had prayed, the prophet Isaiah received a divine revelation with regard to the hearing of this prayer, which he sent, *i.e.* caused to be handed over, to the king....The word of the Lord announced to the king, (1) the shameful retreat of Sennacherib as a just retribution for his mockery of the living God (vers. 21-28; Isa. 37:22-29); (2) the confirmation of this assurance through the indication of a sign by which Hezekiah was to recognise the deliverance of Jerusalem (vers. 29-31; Isa. 37:33-35). In the first part the words are addressed with poetic vivacity directly to Sennacherib, and scourge his haughty boastings by pointing to the ridicule and scorn which would follow him on his departure from the land” (Keil, pp.448f).
 - b. The virgin the daughter of Zion (Jerusalem) would shake her head in contempt at the Assyrians. The point in his highly figurative illustration is that Israel would no longer have any fear or respect for these heathen invaders. When the Lord got through with them, they would be objects of utter contempt. The figure of speech is used also in these passages in reference to the contempt which the enemies would show Christ:
 - 1) Psalms 22:7-8: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he

delighted in him."

- 2) Matthew 27:39: "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads."
2. Verses 22-24: "Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy *One* of Israel. By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, *and into* the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places."
- The inspired revelation Isaiah delivered continues here. Sennacherib is asked to take note of the one he had blasphemed: the Holy One of Israel. This pagan unbeliever had raised his voice and lifted up his eyes against the God of Israel.
 - Through the messengers he sent to Hezekiah, he had reproached God. He had boasted of all that he had done with his chariots and soldiers. In a manner of speaking, Sennacherib claimed to have dispatched his chariot to the height of the mountains of Lebanon; he bragged of having cut down the great trees of Lebanon. This is not saying that an actual ascent to the mountain was really made, but the figure is used to depict the impressive accomplishments Sennacherib claims to have done.
 - Sennacherib had said (in the words of the revelation) that he would enter into the domain of God, and intrude into the forest of his Carmel (or as the margin renders this thought, "the forest and his fruitful field"). Compare: "And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth" (Isa. 10:18).
 - He claimed to have dug and drunk strange waters. "When he has ascended the heights of Lebanon, he devastates the glorious trees of the mountain. Consequently in ver. 24 the drying up of the Nile of Egypt is to be taken as the result of the digging of wells in the parched desert; in other words, it is to be interpreted as descriptive of the devastation of Egypt, whose whole fertility depended upon its being watered by the Nile and its canals" (Keil, p.450).
 - The point in the passage is to show Sennacherib's idea of his own invincibility, that nothing could stand in his way. He crossed the mountains of Lebanon; he overran the cities of Palestine; he dried up the waters of the desert. This last "metaphor was probably derived from the familiar fact of a gardener opening rills of water by his foot. Assuming that there is some reality, or basis of fact, under this grandiloquent figure, it may be supposed to mean that the strongest fortresses had been taken by his forces, and that cities defended by the encircling course of broad rivers were successfully stormed, by diverting the currents, so that the assailants, crossing dry-shod the old channels of those streams, had, contrary to human anticipations, effected an easy entrance into the 'besieged places'" (JFB, p.429).
3. Verses 25-26: "Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up."
- "Here comes the prophet's response to the Assyrian's boasting. The purport of it is, that Sennacherib was merely an instrument in the hands of Yahweh, to accomplish His purposes of providential judgment. Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.... This divine description of Sennacherib's career receives a striking illustration from that king's own monumental account of his rapid course of conquest, which has rarely been paralleled in history except by Napoleon the Great. 'In my third (i.e., regnal) year, I went up to the country of the Khetta, or Hittites (a name denoting Phoenicia, Palestine, etc.) Euliya, king of Sidon (the Eluloeus of
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Menander), had thrown off the yoke of allegiance. On my approach from Abiri, he fled to Yetnana which is on the seacoast (the Rhinocolura of the Greeks). I reduced his entire country. The places which submitted to me were Sidon the greater and Sidon the less, Beth-zitta (the city of Olives)—unknown; Saripat (Sarepta), Mahallat (an ascent), Husuva (Tyre), Akzib (Ecdippa), and Akka (Accho, Acre). I placed a new prince on the throne instead of Euliya, and imposed on him the regulated amount of tribute. The kings of the seacoast all repaired to my presence in the neighbourhood of Husuva (Tyre), and brought me their accustomed tribute.' The names of these kings—all maritime princes—are only found upon Colonel Taylor's cylinder, and some of them are unfortunately illegible. 'Sika of Ascalon, who did not come to pay me homage, the gods of his house and his treasures, his sons and his daughters, and his brothers of the house of his father, I seized, and sent off to Nineveh. I placed another chief on the throne of Ascalon, and I imposed on him the regulated amount of tribute.' All these achievements were performed during the spring and summer. 'In the autumn of that year' he continues, 'certain other cities, among which was Ekron the inhabitants of which were attached to Hezekiah, and which had refused to submit to my authority, I took and plundered.' Then he describes his progress southward, until he reached Al...ku, or Allkahis (Lachish) (Rawlinson's 'Outlines of Assyrian History,' p. xxxv)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft].

- b. In the response, the Lord states that (in comparison to power which God was about to bring to bear upon the Assyrians), the opposition of the places Sennacherib had captured were of small strength; they were frightened and confused; they were able to offer no more opposition to the Assyrians than the grass or green herbs; the power to resist was no greater than that which the grass on the housetops or stalks of grain that were dried up by the hot sun (or hot, dry wind). Some houses have layers of grass on the top to serve as a roof.
4. Verses 27-28: "But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."
 - a. In verse 27, God tells Sennacherib that he knows where to find him; he has seen him at home, and has witnessed his activities; he has taken particular note of his raging words against Jehovah. "All the movements of Sennacherib were well known to Jehovah. His residence in Assyria, his expedition against Judah and Egypt, his return home for a time, his second expedition, his menaces against Judah, and blasphemous defiance of Judah's God—all these were well known and permitted in the course of Divine Providence" (JFB, p.430).
 - b. Because of his arrogant words and actions against Jehovah, the Lord vows to take proper actions against this egotistical tyrant. He would put his hook in Sennacherib's nose, put his bridle in his lips, and would lead him back to where he came from. "People of the East lead their large and turbulent beasts by a bridle fastened to a ring, which is put through the cartilage of the animal's nose (Job 41:1,2). The Assyrians often strung a number of war-captives in that way, with their hands bound behind them, and rings fastened in their nostrils (cf. Ezek. 19:4,9; 29:3,4)" (JFB, p.430).
 5. Verse 29: "And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof."
 - a. The devastations of the Assyrians would leave the people in reduced circumstances. A large army will leave little behind for the populace. When the Northern Army marched through the South, they sent foragers out far and wide, confiscating all they could find to feed the soldiers. Local stories still exist in the devastated areas, handed down through the generations, giving details of specific cases. Farmers would hide their livestock deep in the woods and mountains; they would bury their cured meat and canned goods. Sherman's march through Georgia was designed to confiscate or destroy all that could
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be used by the people and Southern army. The Assyrians did the same.

- b. These words were addressed to Hezekiah and his people; this we know by virtue of what is said. They would find their sustenance from the items that grew up voluntarily the first year after the departure of the Assyrians; the second year, they would eat of the same; but the third year, they would sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat therefrom.
6. Verses 30-31: “And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.”
- a. Here is a promise that the people of Judah would survive. The northern ten tribes had been taken away; many of the people of Judah had perished in the struggles with the Assyrians. But a remnant would remain to “take root downward and bear fruit upward.” This figurative description of the flourishing future Judah would have also depicts the process by which spiritual growth is obtained. There must be a strong foundation laid before the growth can result.
 - b. Jerusalem and Zion (the mountain upon which the city was built) would be the source of future generations of Jews. Many of those who remained from the Assyrians had taken refuge in the fortified city. When the time came, they would emerge to continue the nation’s future. The Lord would see to this.
7. Verses 32-34: “Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.”
- a. God specifically gives Hezekiah some promises about the city’s preservation. Sennacherib would not be able to mount an assault against Jerusalem; he would not shoot an arrow into it; he would not be able to cast a bank against it.
 - b. God would cause him to return home via the same route he took in invading the land. He would not be permitted to enter Jerusalem, for God would defend it for his own sake and for the sake of David his servant.
 - c. With such a promise as this, Hezekiah and his people could rest with assurance; there was nothing for them to fear from the Assyrians. Although there would be some hard economic times ahead of them, they would be preserved. Their food might be sparse, but they were still alive!

E. 2 Kings 19:35-37: The Assyrian Army is Decimated by an Angel.

1. Verse 35: “And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.”
 - a. “Where the Assyrian army was posted at the time when this terrible stroke fell upon them is not stated, since the account is restricted to the principal fact. One portion of it was probably still before Jerusalem; the remainder were either in front of Libnah (ver. 8), or marching against Jerusalem. From the fact that Sennacherib’s second embassy (vers. 9ff) was not accompanied by a body of troops, it by no means follows that the large army which had come with the first embassy (ch. 18:17) had withdrawn again, or had even removed to Libnah on the return of Rabshakeh to his king (ch. 19:8). The very opposite may be inferred with much greater justice from ch. 19:32. And the smiting of 185,000 men by an angel of the Lord by no means presupposes that the whole of Sennacherib’s army was concentrated at one spot. The blow could certainly fall upon the Assyrians wherever they were standing or were encamped” (Keil, p.357).

- b. The facts of the case are very simple: an angel of God went out and smote 185,000 Assyrian soldiers that night; when the rest of the army arose the next morning, they discovered the disaster. We are not told the exact means employed by the angel in slaying all these men. We have no cause to think that he engaged each in turn in combat, for there would have been sounds caused by such a struggle. The method was simply miraculous. They simply were smitten by some supernatural stroke and expired. Ananias and Sapphira died in turn, instantly and miraculously (Acts 5).
 - c. Since one angel of God possesses such tremendous power, think what might have been the awesome power that six legions of angels could command! "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:53). A Roman legion was comprised of about six thousand men; twelve legions of angels would be seventy-two thousand; and the Lord said that more than six legions of angels were ready at his call.
 - d. Josephus gives us the following account of these events: "Now when Sennacherib was returning from his Egyptian war to Jerusalem, he found his army under Rabshakeh his general in danger [by a plague,] for God had sent a pestilential distemper upon his army; and on the very first night of the siege, a hundred fourscore and five thousand, with their captains and generals, were destroyed. So the king was in a great dread, and in a terrible agony at this calamity; and being in great fear for his whole army, he fled with the rest of his forces to his own kingdom, and to his city Nineveh; and when he had abode there a little while, he was treacherously assaulted, and died by the hands of his elder sons, Adrammelech and Seraser, and was slain in his own temple, which was called Araske. Now these sons of his were driven away, on account of the murder of their father, by the citizens, and went into Armenia, while Assarachoddas took the kingdom of Sennacherib" (p.212, *Antiquities*, Book X, Chapter 1, Section 5).
2. Verse 36-37: "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."
- a. "No notice, as might be expected, is found in the Ninevite inscriptions of this terrible catastrophe. The Assyrian monarchs were accustomed to record in minute detail the successes of the national arms, but they carefully abstained from the smallest allusion to any reverses. But the omission of a full record of this second expedition, so contrary to the invariable practice, the established usage, of those sovereigns to narrate the transactions of their own reigns, is very significant; and although Sennacherib has not registered the miraculous destruction of his vast army, the abandonment of all further attempts to prosecute his enterprise against Jerusalem is in itself a most intelligible indication that he felt himself no longer in a condition to make an attack on that city. 'The events of the following year of Sennacherib present a marked contrast to the detailed and magniloquent descriptions of the preceding periods. They are confined to a few meagre lines, and refer exclusively to an expedition against the Chaldees, which Sennacherib does not seem even to have conducted in person' (*Rawlinson's 'Outlines,'* p.37)" (JFB, p.432).
 - b. Sennacherib survived the night of destruction; he returned to Nineveh with the remainder of his army. After a period of time, he was worshipping in the temple of his god when his two eldest sons slew him with the sword. This was in exact keeping with the promise God earlier made that this evil man would be slain with the sword (verse 7). His two assailants were able to escape the wrath of the authorities. Esarhaddon his son then mounted the throne.
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2 KINGS 20

A. 2 Kings 20:1-7: Hezekiah's Illness.

1. Verse 1: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live."
 - a. The sickness of Hezekiah took place before the destruction of the Assyrian army (19:35-37). God promised him in verse six of this chapter that he would deliver Israel from the clutches of the Assyrians. It was during the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign that the Assyrians invaded Israel (18:13); as a result of the king's prayer, God added 15 years to his life (20:6), enabling Hezekiah to reign for a total of 29 years (18:2).
 - b. The serious illness that befell Hezekiah came upon him during the very year in which the pagan army invaded the land. The likely reason for the ailment was to test the faith of the king, enabling him to reach new heights of spiritual strength. There is no indication in the text that the sickness was sent in punishment of some sin he had done; it must be the case that it was intended to create greater strength in the king to prepare him for the greater struggle against the Assyrians.
 - 1) Job 23:10: "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:11-13: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."
 - c. Speaking through Isaiah, God told Hezekiah to set his house in order for he was to die. We are not told what disease afflicted the king; it was a fatal malady. God gave him advance warning that he must ready himself for death.
 - 1) Some, who reject the Biblical affirmation that an angel smote the Assyrians miraculously, allege that a raging plague swept through their camp, killing the 185,000 soldiers; they opine that Hezekiah contracted the same ailment. However, the sickness of Hezekiah was over prior to the coming of the Assyrians (verse 6).
 - 2) While we do not know the ailment the king had, we do know that it was sent on him by the Lord and that it would have been fatal if he had not prayed for the restoration of his health.
 - 3) "Isaiah, being of the blood-royal, might have access to the king's private house. But since the prophet was commissioned to make this announcement, the message must be considered as referring to matters of higher importance than the settlement of the king's domestic and private affairs. It must have related chiefly to the state of his kingdom, he having not as yet any son (*cf.* v. 6 with ch. 21:1)" (JFB, pp.434f).
 - d. There is the need for each individual to set his house in order. We must be prepared for death, for the Judgment, and for eternity.
2. Verses 2-3: "Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore."
 - a. Being sick in the bed, Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall when he heard the distressing news from Isaiah, saying that he was to die. He was only thirty-nine years old at the time (*cf.* 18:2; 18:13). It was only natural that he expected to have many years left to live.

- b. The king prayed fervently to the Lord. "What man *is he that* desireth life, *and* loveth *many* days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry. The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Ps. 34:12-17).
 - c. At the time, he did not have a son to replace him on the throne. If he died, the house of David would end, making the promises of the Messiah void. This was one of the many times when the lineage of the Messiah was endangered.
 - d. Hezekiah prayed, stating that he had always walked before the Lord in truth, having a perfect heart, and had ever done that which was good in the sight of God. He believed that he had kept his end of the covenant with Jehovah. It was natural for him to wonder what he had done to incur the Lord's disfavor.
 - 1) He was like other faithful followers of God who meet with adversity; we often assume that we have either done something wrong and the problem is seen as punishment; or, in extreme cases, we might even question the goodness of God or blame others for the hardship.
 - 2) As noted above, adversity is essential to spiritual maturity; without resistance, our spiritual strength would be shallow, just as physical inactivity will keep us weak and even rob us of the vitality we already possess.
 - 3) God knew that Hezekiah needed great strength to be able to deal with the greatest challenge he was to face as king: the coming of the Assyrian invaders. Clearly, the monarch gained strength sufficient to meet this major problem, and consequently to be equal to all other future difficulties.
 - e. Hezekiah shed many tears [*with a great weeping*—margin]. There were several causes of his tears.
 - 1) The most immediate was the cutting off of his earthly life; life is sweet to us all, and we want to live as long as possible.
 - 2) Also, he had begun a major restoration of the kingdom, seeking to rid it of all religious and moral taints; if he should die, the improvements he had made might end.
 - 3) And there was the greatest problem: he would die without leaving an heir to David's throne, meaning that God's promises regarding the Messiah would be voided.
 - f. A practical lesson we can learn from Hezekiah's experiences is that we are not likely to have any advance warning of an untimely death. From our earliest years, we have known that we must die; we only know the fact of death; we do not usually know how, when, and where we shall die. By knowing we shall all eventually die, we are thereby motivated to learn how to live so as to please God, and become prepared for meeting him in eternity.
3. Verses 4-5: "And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD."
- a. Before Isaiah left the court, the word of the Lord came to him, telling the prophet to return to the king. God revealed to Isaiah that Hezekiah had prayed, and that he had heard that prayer. He was instructed, therefore, to return to the king with the heavenly response.
 - b. Isaiah was to tell Hezekiah that God had heard his prayer, and had seen his tears; he said he would heal the king, and on the third day he would be able to enter the temple.
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- 1) “The perfect recovery from a dangerous sickness, within so short a time, shows the miraculous character of the cure (see his thanksgiving song, Isa. 38:9). The disease cannot be ascertained; but the text gives no hint that the plague was raging then in Jerusalem; and although Arabian as well as Persian (*Morier*) physicians apply a cataplasm of figs to plague-boils, they also do so in other cases, as figs are considered useful in ripening and soothing inflammatory ulcers” (JFB, p.435).
- 2) However, the fact that the healing was not instantly done may mean that no miracle was involved. This seems to be the most likely case.
- c. In his statement, God showed that he was fully aware of the need to continue the lineage of David. No earthly power could forestall God’s plan. Even though the Israelites apostatized, God was able to bring out his purposes (cf. Eph. 3:1-11).
4. Verse 6: “And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake.”
 - a. God told Hezekiah that he would add 15 years to his life, and would deliver the king and his people from the evil scheme of the Assyrians. When the Assyrians invaded Palestine, there was nothing that could withstand their mighty power—except the might of the Almighty!
 - b. The Assyrians had been able to subdue all opposition; military experts (and novices) could readily see that Judah’s destruction was a foregone conclusion, unless God aided them. The Lord stated that he would defend Jerusalem; he would do so for his own sake and for the sake of David.
 - c. “This is the first and only man who was ever informed of the term of his life. And was this a privilege? Surely no. If Hezekiah was attached to life, as he appears to have been, how must his mind be affected to mark the sinking years! He knew he was to die at the end of fifteen years; and how must he feel at the end of every year, when he saw that so much was cut off from life? He must necessarily feel a thousand deaths in fearing one. I believe there would be nothing wanting to complete the misery of men, except the place of torment, were they informed of the precise time in which their lives must terminate. God, in his abundant mercy, has hidden this from their eyes” (Clarke, p.549).
5. Verse 7: “And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.”
 - a. Isaiah 38:21: "For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay *it* for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover."
 - b. Although the lump of figs were used as a plaster upon the boil, the power that gave the healing was God’s. Christ anointed a blind man’s eyes with clay, and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9). The power that gave his sight was miraculous; but the conditions were the blind man’s obligations before the healing took place. The placing of the fig-plaster on the boil was the condition before Hezekiah was healed of his disease.
 - c. “But we cannot pronounce on the propriety of the application, unless we were certain of the nature of the malady. This, however, was the natural means which God chose to bless to the recovery of Hezekiah’s health; and without this interposition he must have died” (Clarke, p.549).

B. 2 Kings 20:8-11: The Shadow is Turned Backward Ten Degrees.

1. Verse 8: “And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?”
 - a. Isaiah 38:22: "Hezekiah also had said, What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?" “He wished to be fully convinced that his cure was to be entirely supernatural; and, in order to this, he seeks one miracle to prove the truth of the other, that nothing might remain equivocal” (Clarke, p.549).

- b. At the time the promise was given, Hezekiah saw no natural way in which the recovery could be possible. If God healed him so that he could go up to the temple on the third day, that fact would be evidence that he would have fifteen years more to live. A miraculous sign to prove the certainty of his recovery would also prove his life would be extended fifteen years. There is still some question whether Hezekiah's healing was miraculous. A miracle does not require three days to be done. There is such a thing as divine healing without supernatural power being involved; this is the kind of healing we request when we pray for someone's recovery. Miraculous divine healing was entirely supernatural, and was limited to special cases in Bible times.
 - c. In this case, the requested sign was to be given. In Matthew 12, the Lord's enemies demanded that he give them a miraculous sign; he refused to do so, because they had already been witnesses to at least one sign (Matt. 12:10-13), and could have observed many others (Matt. 12:14-15). Thus Christ refused to give them the special, additional sign they demanded (Matt. 12:38-40).
 - 1) Matthew 12:10-13: "And, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."
 - 2) Matthew 12:14-15: "Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all."
 - 3) Matthew 12:38-40: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."
 2. Verses 9-10: "And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees."
 - a. Isaiah, knowing the will of God in this matter already, asked the king what manner of sign would he want to see: the shadow to go forward or backward ten degrees on the sun dial.
 - b. The king requested that the shadow be moved backward (on the sun dial) ten degrees, reasoning that it was entirely natural for the shadow to advance with the passing of time, but that only divine intervention could cause it to move backward; this would be equal to backing up time. Depending on the time involved, God could have caused the shadow to advance at a miraculous rate.
 3. Verse 11: "And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz."
 - a. God could miraculously cause the shadow to back up ten degrees without having to cause the earth to rotate backward on its axis ten degrees. He was able to miraculously prolong a day until Israel was able to complete a victory (Josh. 10:12-14). In either case, God's almighty power could have paused the movement of the sun, moon, and earth; but the exact manner he did it we are not told; it is important that we believe the fact; it is not important to know just how the miracle was performed.
 - b. "The only right conclusion appears to be, that the retrogression of the sun's shadow on the dial was miraculous, accomplished by the omnipotent power of God; but the phenomenon was temporary,
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local, confined to the notice, and intended for the satisfaction, only of Hezekiah and his court” (JFB, p.436).

C. 2 Kings 20:12-21: Hezekiah and the Babylonian King.

1. Verses 12-13: “At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *all* the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.”
 - a. The king of Babylon learned of Hezekiah’s illness and sent his best regards along with a present to the king. “At that time” is the general time-frame of the present events of the chapter. When the Babylonian representatives arrived, Hezekiah had recovered from his illness, for he took them on a tour of the palace and showed them the treasures he had amassed.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 32:21-23: "And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword. Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side. And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."
 - c. After his recovery and the overthrow of the Assyrians, Hezekiah’s heart was lifted up in pride. This evil attitude caused him to show his Babylonian visitors the great wealth he had accumulated, which God enabled him to acquire by delivering him from death and the Assyrians.
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 32:24-26: "In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, *both* he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 32:27-29: "And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks. Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much." The overthrow of the Assyrian army excited the gratitude of those nations who had been subdued by the cruel Assyrians. These important people sent presents to Hezekiah for his part in the great defeat visited upon these Assyrians.
 - d. “It is highly probable that the message of congratulation to Hezekiah on his recovery, was only a polite pretext for the embassy; and that in the circumstances, common to these kings of Babylon and of Judah, of opposition to the Assyrian power, Merodach was desirous of forming a defensive league with Hezekiah against their great foe. The presents were, according to Eastern usage, civil or social communications of any kind, and might be more or less valuable according to the ability or the purposes of the donor. But it appears further (2 Chr. 32:31), that one important object of this mission to Hezekiah was, in accordance with the favourite tastes and pursuits of the chief men in Chaldea, to enquire respecting the ‘wonder’ which had occurred in the country of Judah. That ‘wonder’ was in all probability, not the miraculous overthrow of the Assyrians, but the recession of the sun’s shadow; for that phenomenon was directly connected with the convalescence of Hezekiah, and, doubtless, excited

great interest among the astronomers of Babylon” (JFB, pp.436f).

- e. 2 Chronicles 32:31: "Howbeit in *the business* of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was *done* in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart." The most impressive miracle of the three reported in chapters 19-20 [i.e., the instant slaying of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, the movement of the shadow backward ten degrees, and Hezekiah's recovery] is clearly the angel's slaughter of the Assyrian warriors. This appears to be the "wonder" about which the Babylonians came to inquire.
2. Verses 14-15: "Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All *the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them."
 - a. Isaiah the prophet came to the king and inquired of the identity of the foreign visitors and what they had wanted. It is likely that the prophet already knew who they were and what they wanted. King Hezekiah did not equivocate; he plainly identified his visitors as being from Babylon.
 - b. Isaiah then asked, "What have they seen in thine house?" Again Hezekiah was open in his answer; he admitted that the Babylonian visitors had seen everything of importance to be seen; he had kept back nothing from their sight.
 - c. "The vain display, however, was offensive to his Divine liege-lord, who sent Isaiah to reprove him. The answer he gave the prophet (v.14) shows how he was elated by the compliment of their visit; but the display was wrong, as making a vain exhibition, for his own aggrandizement, of what had been offered him from reverence and respect to his God, and at the same time presenting a bait for the cupidity of these rapacious foreigners, who, at no distant period, would return from the same city of Babylon, and pillage his country, and transfer all the possessions he ostentatiously displayed to Babylon, as well as his posterity, to be court attendants in that country....Besides, it was wrong in a higher point of view still, as were at variance with the fundamental principle of the theocratic kingdom of Judah" (JFB, p.437).
 3. Verses 16-18: "And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."
 - a. Isaiah had received a message from heaven, which he now delivered to the king. The days will come, said the prophet, when the treasures which had been amassed at Jerusalem would be taken to Babylon. We were told earlier that the treasures at the temple and in the king's palace had been stripped and given as tribute to the Assyrians. However, with the destruction of the Assyrian army, that tribute money may have been recovered. The things which the fathers had laid up in store (vs. 17) may not have been used in reference to treasures, but to other items.
 - b. Isaiah further prophesied that the sons of the royal lineage would be made eunuchs, and would serve in the palace of the king of Babylon. "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine
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which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego" (Dan. 1:1-7).

4. Verse 19: "Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, *Is it not good*, if peace and truth be in my days?"
 - a. The king's response to Isaiah's prophecy expresses submission to God's will; if this is what God says, then this is the right thing. Compare: "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, *It is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good" (1 Sam. 3:18).
 - b. "The concluding part of his reply was uttered after a pause, and was probably an ejaculation to himself, expressing his thankfulness that, though great afflictions should befall his descendants, the execution of the Divine judgment was to be suspended during his own lifetime" (JFB, pp.637f).
 - c. 2 Kings 20:19: "So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!' For he said, 'Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?'" (NKJ).
 - d. 2 Kings 20:19: "Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, *Is it not so*, if peace and truth shall be in my days?" (ASV).
5. Verses 20-21: "And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead."
 - a. One of the most notable accomplishments of Hezekiah as king was the construction of a conduit which brought water into Jerusalem, to keep the citizens supplied with water in case of a siege.
 - 1) "And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; and they helped him. So there was gathered much people together, and they stopped all the fountains, and the brook that flowed through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?...This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper spring of the waters of Gihon, and brought them straight down on the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works" (2 Chr. 32:2-4, 30, ASV).
 - 2) "This undoubtedly is an 1800 foot tunnel cut through the solid rock of Mt. Zion which to this day bring the waters of Gihon to the pool of Siloam on the southwest side of the hill. Just inside the central valley opening was found in 1880 an inscription in the Hebrew of Isaiah's time recording the excavating of the tunnel by two teams which started at either end and met in the middle of the hill 'one hundred cubits' under the surface overhead" (Pfeiffer, *The Biblical World*, p.317).
 - 3) "The inscription is one of the oldest in the Hebrew language and reads as follows: 'This is the history of the excavation. While workmen still lifting up their axe [pick], each toward his neighbors, and while three cubits remain [to cut through], each heard voices calling one to another. On the day the workmen struck, an axe against axe, to meet his neighbors, waters flowed from the [Gihon] Spring to [Siloam] Pool a thousand and two hundred cubits; and a hundred cubits the height over the heads of the workmen'" (Boyd, *Tells, Tombs and Treasure*, p.215).
 - b. We are told that Hezekiah went the way of all men, and that his son Manasseh reigned in his place. The next chapter reports that Manasseh was only twelve years old when he ascended the throne.

2 KINGS 21

A. 2 Kings 21:1-9: Manasseh's Reign.

1. Verses 1-2: "Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hephzibah. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel."
 - a. One of the most godly kings in Judah produced one of the vilest. Manasseh was only twelve years of age when Hezekiah his father died; he reigned in Judah for fifty-five years, the longest reign of any other of Israel's kings.
 - b. A long reign did not mean it was a godly reign; in fact, just the opposite was true. This chapter will state that the wickedness Manasseh incited in Judah exceeded that of the Amorites: (21:11). "Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols..."
 - c. Additional information is given in the parallel account of 2 Chronicles 33:1-20: "Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: But did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, *and* to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken. Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he *was* God. Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast *them* out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the LORD their God only. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they *are written* in the book of the kings of Israel. His prayer also, and *how God* was entreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they *are written* among the sayings of the seers. So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own

house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead."

- d. The inspired historian frequently draws a comparison between the evils of the Canaanites, who were driven out of Palestine to make room for Israel, and the evils which the Israelites themselves practiced at times. The plain implication is that God would likewise punish his people for their evil.
 - e. "He must have been born three years after his father's recovery; and his minority, spent under the influence of guardians who were hostile to the religious principles and reforming policy of his father, may account in part for the anti-theocratic principles of his reign. The work of religious reformation which Hezekiah had zealously carried on was but partially accomplished. There was little appearance of its influence on the heart and manners of the people at large. On the contrary, the true fear of God had vanished from the mass of the people; corruption and vice increased, and were openly practised (Isa. 28:7, etc.) by the degenerate leaders, who, having got the young prince Manasseh into their power, directed his education, trained him up in their views, and seduced him into the open patronage of idolatry" (JFB, p.438).
 - f. Isaiah 28:7: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment."
2. Verses 3-5: "For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. "
- a. Manasseh rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah had been able to destroy. Other kings had tried to overthrow those places of idolatry, but had failed; the man who succeeded in destroying them, had his work undone by his own son.
 - b. Manasseh also erected altars dedicated to Baal worship, and set up a grove. Following the wicked practices of Ahab, king of the northern kingdom years earlier, he worshipped the host of heaven (the stars).
 - c. He erected altars at the temple, in the two courts of the temple. These were the court of the priests and the court of the people (Jamieson). The temple was the location where God had said he put his name.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:13: "He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."
 - 2) 1 Kings 8:29: "That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place."
 - 3) 1 Kings 9:3: "And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."
3. Verse 6: "And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger."
- a. By causing his son to pass through the fire, he committed sin, whether it was consecrating him to Molech or actually offered him as a sacrifice. Second Chronicles 33:6 says that he did this to his children. What he did for one, he did for all; but one of his sons replaced him on the throne, which suggests that what he did was to consecrate them to Molech; at least, not all of them were offered as
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human sacrifices.

- b. He observed times: “divination by the clouds; by observing their course at particular times, their different kinds...” (Clarke, p.556).
 - c. He used enchantments: “incantations, spells, and charms” (ibid.).
 - d. He dealt with familiar spirits: used people who claimed to be able to communicate with the dead. The witch of Endor was such a person (1 Samuel 28).
 - e. Wizards [”knowing ones”—Clarke] were those who claimed to have special knowledge about finding things that had been lost, hidden treasures, and interpreting dreams.
 - f. “A great influx of these impostors had, at various times, poured from Chaldea into the land of Israel to pursue their gainful occupations, especially during the reigns of the latter kings; and Manasseh was not only their liberal patron, but zealous to appear himself an adept in the arts. He raised them to an influential class at his court, as they were in that of Assyria and Babylon, where nothing was done till they had ascertained the lucky hour and promised a happy issue” (JFB, p.438).
 - g. The Law of Moses forbade such activities.
 - 1) Leviticus 19:26-31: "Ye shall not eat *any thing* with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD. Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD. Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God."
 - 2) Leviticus 20:27: "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood *shall be* upon them."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 18:9-12: "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things *are* an abomin-ation unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."
4. Verses 7-8: “And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.”
- a. “The placing of the Asherah within the precincts of the temple, which was dedicated to the worship of the true God, is dwelt upon as the most aggravated outrage of the royal idolater” (JFB, p.438).
 - b. It seems that Manasseh progressed from one spiritual crime to greater crimes. The apostasy of an individual, congregation, or the entire church usually is a progressive departure; it takes place by a process of steps.
 - 1) Liberals like to describe themselves as “progressives”—implying they are making progress; their progress is away from the truth, not toward it. What they call “church renewal” in our day, is actually an effort to restructure the Lord’s church, transforming it into just another human denomination.
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- 2) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." This depicts the real situation of the liberal agenda: It transgresses [goes onward—ASV] the gospel of Christ.
- c. God declared that in the temple at Jerusalem he had put his name forever; this was the one place at which he agreed to meet with his people; the meeting took place in the various rites and services which he had ordained in the worship prescribed by the Law of Moses.
- d. This statement does not mean that Jerusalem was intended to be the primary location of his dealings with all men for all time; it does not suggest that Israel would be his chosen people for all time. There is nothing in the statement that supports the millennial theories. In the first place, *forever* as used in the Scriptures does not always mean everlasting; it means that the time factor in the context will be fulfilled. In some cases, that time factor is eternal; in other cases, the time factor is limited to a specific span of time.
 - 1) Jonah 2:6: "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me **for ever**: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God." "For ever" is used in the Scriptures in the sense of enduring for the fullness of the time intended. Sometimes that time is eternal in scope; in other cases, such as Jonah 2:6, only for a relatively short period of time. If Jonah was in the sea (or in the fish) for eternity, he would still be there.
 - 2) For the full period of time during which the Old Testament system was in effect, it was God's will that the temple in Jerusalem was to be the place where his name was recorded, and where he would meet with his people. There was a built-in limitation to this system. "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19; cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:1-13).
- e. Verse eight speaks of God's intention that Israel remain always in the land. This does not, however, say that the land would always be theirs; and there is nothing in the statement to support the views which premillennialists force upon it.
 - 1) There is a built-in condition to God's intention: **if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them**. What he commanded is included in the Law which he gave them through Moses.
 - 2) When they rebelled against God's law, God was no longer obligated to keep them safe from their enemies; consequently, the Babylonians came and took them away.
5. Verse 9: "But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel."
 - a. We are told by the inspired historian that the people would not take heed to God's law; they let the king seduce them to plunge deeper into sin, until they exceeded the depraved state the Canaanites had reached.
 - b. Since God would not allow the Canaanites to remain in control of Palestine because of their wicked conduct, his people did not have any greater lease on the land than did they. God is no respecter persons; anyone who sins is held accountable and must face the consequences.
 - 1) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth

to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

- 3) Colossians 1:22-23: "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
- c. "This condition was expressed from the first plantation of Israel in Canaan. But that people not only did not keep it, but through the pernicious influence of Manasseh were seduced into greater excesses of idolatrous corruption than even the original Canaanites. There was a gradation in the apostasy of Judah similar to that of Israel. Ahaz abandoned the worship of Jehovah, but he did not seduce the generality of his subjects; whereas the height and front of Manasseh's offending was that his pernicious influence carried the whole nation along with him into idolatry (cf. 2 Chr. 33:9,10)" (JFB, pp.438f).
- d. 2 Chronicles 33:9-10: "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, *and* to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken."

B. 2 Kings 21:10-18: The Lord Vows to Punish Judah.

1. Verses 10-11: "And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols."
 - a. God took note of Manasseh's sinful conduct and evil influence. Although he gave the king the right to make choices, just as he does every other person, he would have to face the consequences of his choices. We each have free moral agency, but we do not always make the right choices.
 - b. Here God promises to bring punishment upon Judah because of their spiritual crimes. Manasseh would be punished for his part in this rebellion; the nation would pay an extremely heavy penalty for their departures.
2. Verses 12-13: "Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down."
 - a. After the punishment God envisioned had been brought to bear upon Judah, those who heard of it would be astonished. Their ears would tingle ("a strong metaphorical form of announcing an extraordinary and appalling event..." (JFB, p.439).
 - 1) 1 Samuel 3:11: "And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle."
 - 2) Jeremiah 19:3: "And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle."
 - b. "Captives doomed to destruction were sometimes grouped together, and marked off by means of a measuring line and plummet (2 Sam. 8:2; Isa. 34:11; Amos 7:7); so that 'the line of Samaria' means the line drawn for the destruction of Samaria; 'the plummet of the house of Ahab,' for exterminating his apostate family and the import of the threatening declaration here is, that Judah would be overthrown, as Samaria and the dynasty of Ahab had been" (JFB, p.439).
 - 1) 2 Samuel 8:2: "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And

so the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts."

- 2) Isaiah 34:11: "But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."
 - 3) Amos 7:7: "Thus he showed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand."
- c. He described the destruction of Jerusalem under the figure of a man wiping a dish and turning it upside down. "This doom of utter and universal extermination, which was threatened against Judah was averted by repentance, at least to a certain extent, inasmuch as a large portion of Judah was restored from the Babylonish captivity. But it was executed on the kingdom of Israel, which, as the sin of its people had been over a longer duration and of a more aggravated character, was more severely punished. The turning of a dish upside down implies the complete emptying of all its contents..." (JFB, p.439).
3. Verses 14-15: "And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they have done *that which was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day."
 - a. God would be forced to turn his back upon his people, to deliver them into the hands of their foes; they would become a prey and spoil for all their enemies. The reason was their evil ways. They no doubt thought that what they were doing was all right, that God would accept them as before. They were in for a very harsh taste of reality!
 - b. When their nation was conquered, countless numbers slain, their cities destroyed, the temple demolished and its treasures stolen, and the remainder of the people taken into slavery, then they perceived that God means what he says!
 - c. The only hope they had of avoiding this catastrophe was to turn back to God's word. The only hope anyone has today is to heed what God says. And the only way we can know the will of God is to learn it from the Bible!
 - d. Matthew 4:4: "...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Compare: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:14-17).
 4. Verse 16: "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD."
 - a. "Not content with the patronage and the practice of idolatrous abominations, he was a cruel persecutor of all who did not conform. The land was deluged with the blood of good men, amongst whom, it is traditionally said, Isaiah suffered a horrid death, by being sawn asunder" (JFB, p.439). Compare: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (Heb. 11:37).
 - b. Manasseh "...departed from the conduct of his father, and fell into a course of life quite contrary thereto, and showed himself in his manners most wicked in all respects, and omitted no sort of impiety, but imitated those transgressions of the Israelites, by the commission of which against God, they had been destroyed; for he was so hardy as to defile the temple of God, and the city, and the
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whole country; for by setting out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with blood. So God was angry at these proceedings, and sent prophets to the king, and to the multitude, by whom he threatened the very same calamities to them which their brethren the Israelites upon the like affronts offered to God, were now under. But these men would not believe their words, by which belief they might have reaped the advantage of escaping all those miseries; yet did they in earnest learn that what the prophets had told them was true” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book X, Chapter III, 1, pp.214f).

5. Verses 17-18: “Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.”
 - a. Our historian closes this account of the life of Manasseh by reporting his death, that he was buried in the garden of his own house, and that Amon his son reigned in his place.
 - b. However, in the parallel account, we are told of a certain grievous punishment God sent upon Manasseh, which humbled him and caused him to repent. "Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he *was* God" (2 Chron. 33:11-13).
 - c. We are told in the parallel account that Manasseh took certain actions which repealed some of his earlier misdeeds. "Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast *them* out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel" (2 Chron. 33:14-16).

C. 2 Kings 21:19-26: The Reign of Amon.

1. Verses 19-20: “Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.”
 - a. In this section is found a general statement about Amon; he followed his father’s evil practices, but never repented. “From this point to the end of the kings of Judah (a bit over fifty-five years, not counting the governorship of Gedaliah) the various sovereigns would be guilty of doing the same evils as ‘the fathers had done’” (Robin W. Haley, ADL, p.185).
 - b. The only bright light between Manasseh and the final destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., was the reign of Josiah.
2. Verses 21-22: “And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.”
 - a. Amon operated after the wicked pattern of his father; he served idols; he forsook God; he did not walk in the way of the Lord.
 - b. The parallel account also states that he multiplied guilt. "And humbled not himself before the LORD,

- as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more" (2 Chron. 33:23).
3. Verses 23-24: "And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead."
 - a. "What caused his servants to kill him we are not told, but we do know that the people did not agree. Although Amon was wicked, he was still their king. Thus, justice had to be served and, as God had prophesied many years earlier, a good and godly king was crowned in his stead" (Haley, ADL, pp.185f).
 - b. Perhaps the reason for the people killing the conspirators who assassinated Amon was less righteous than the preceding statement indicates. It may have been the case that they liked the direction Amon was leading them, and that those who slew him wanted to direct the nation back toward God. Whatever the case, the son of Amon turned out to be the only bright light before the darkness of captivity.
 4. Verses 25-26: "Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead."
 - a. Josiah, the son of Amon, was given the throne of Judah. Little did anyone then know that this young man would become one of their best kings.
 - b. Amon was twenty-two when he became king and was twenty-four when he was slain; Josiah was eight when he mounted the throne. Simple arithmetic shows that Amon was about sixteen when his son was born.
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2 KINGS 22

A. 2 Kings 22:1-2: The Reign of Josiah.

1. Verse 1: "Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath."
 - a. "Happier than his grandfather Manasseh, he seems to have fallen, during his minority, under the care of better guardians, who trained him in the principles and practice of piety; and so strongly had his young affections been enlisted on the side of true and undefiled religion, that he continued to adhere all his life, with undeviating perseverance, to the cause of God, and righteousness" (JFB, p.440).
 - b. "It was the year 640 B.C. Jeremiah had begun to prophesy in the city, and Nahum and Zephaniah were about to do their work. Things were 'looking up.' Perhaps this boy-king would bring the people back to where they needed to be. However, we learn that this would be but a temporary 'stay of execution' of God's judgment upon Judah. Her sin was so full that it could not be overlooked nor undone. She must be punished" (Robin Haley, ADL, p.186).
2. Verse 2: "And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."
 - a. This verse gives a summary statement of the reign of Josiah. This is God's assessment of his life. It does not say that he was sinlessly perfect, for only of Christ could this be said of any accountable person. His reign was godly; he sought to do God's will to the best of his knowledge and power. He was teachable.
 - b. Several years into his reign, the book of God's law was found in the temple. When the young king found that his nation was not following God's will, he began a restoration that figured to bring the people back into compliance.

B. 2 Kings 22:3-7: Josiah Orders Repairs to the Temple.

1. Verses 3-4: "And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people."
 - a. During his 18th year on the throne, Josiah sent Shaphan to Hilkiyah the high priest to get an accounting of the financial status of the temple. That this was his 18th year of reign (and not his 18th year of age) is made clear in the parallel passage. "Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God" (2 Chron. 34:8).
 - b. Earlier, Josiah had applied himself to serve the Lord and to destroy idolatry. "For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them" (2 Chron. 34:3-4).
 2. Verses 5-6: "And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn
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stone to repair the house.”

- a. Having spent considerable time and effort on the destruction of idolatry, Josiah set in motion a plan to restore the temple. Hilkiah was to pay out the necessary funds for the repair work that needed to be done.
 - b. “Previous to this period he had commenced the work of national reformation. The preliminary steps had been already taken—not only the builders were employed, but money had been brought by all the people, and received by the Levites at the door, and various other preparations had been made. But the course of this narrative turns on one interesting incident, which happened in the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign, and hence that date is specified. In fact, the whole land was thoroughly purified from every object and all traces of idolatry. The king now addressed himself to the repair and embellishment of the temple, and gave directions to Hilkiah, the high priest, to take a general survey, in order to ascertain what was necessary to be done...” (JFB, p.440).
 - c. 2 Chronicles 34:8-15: "Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem. And they put *it* in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house: Even to the artificers and builders gave they *it*, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them *were* Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set *it* forward; and *other of* the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music. Also *they were* over the bearers of burdens, and *were* overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites *there were* scribes, and officers, and porters. And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan."
3. Verse 7: “Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.”
- a. The king did not need to audit the financial arrangements of the restoration project, since there was no doubt about the honesty of those involved.
 - b. The names of those in charge of the project are given in 2 Chronicles 34:12: "And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them *were* Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set *it* forward; and *other of* the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music."

C. 2 Kings 22:8-14: The Book of the Law is Found.

1. Verse 8: “And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.”
 - a. In the process of restoring the temple, a great discovery was made: they found the book of the Law of Moses. "That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. 31:25-26). In the tabernacle arrangement, this book of the law was placed in the Most Holy Place, with the ark of the covenant.

- b. “It was the temple copy, which, having been laid (Deut. 31:25,26) beside the ark in the most holy place, and during the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon—perhaps under Ahaz, when the temple itself had been profaned by idols, and the ark also (2 Chr. 34:3) removed from its site—was somehow lost, and was found again...” (JFB, pp.440f).
 - c. This does not necessarily mean that there were no other extant copies of the law. Manasseh tried to restore the ancient order of things, after his repentance (2 Chr. 33:11-16). Current knowledge of the divine pattern would have to be in hand, which possibly was derived from existing copies.
 - d. We are not told exactly where in the temple the book was found. Some scholars have supposed that a copy was placed in the foundation of the temple itself, but that view is not required by the text.
 - e. Hilkiyah delivered the book into the hand of Shaphan, who read it. It will be remembered from verse three that Shaphan was the scribe, well-schooled in reading and writing.
 - f. It seems strange to us how the book of God could be lost in the house of God. But in our modern setting, God’s word is rapidly becoming lost within the church of God.
2. Verses 9-10: “And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.”
 - a. Returning to the king from the mission regarding the money (verse three), Shaphan reported that the funds had been gathered and distributed properly.
 - b. Having finished with that report, the scribe then turned to a matter of great importance—the finding of the book of God. He read the book to the king.
 3. Verse 11: “And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.”
 - a. Josiah quickly perceived that he and his people were still far removed from the standard of holiness prescribed by God’s law. The effect on the king was great—he rent his clothes.
 - b. The power of God’s word is in the message, not in the physical book in which the message is inscribed. Some people have great respect (superstition) regarding the book, but have little regard for the truth it contains.
 - c. When one learns God’s will, there are two reactions: he either rejoices over it or rejects it. No one can remain truly indifferent toward the Bible, for indifference itself is a form of rejection. Josiah rent his clothes when he heard the book read. Later, his son Eliakim (also known as Jehoakim) cut up the book of Jeremiah.
 - 1) 2 Kings 23:34: "And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there."
 - 2) Jeremiah 36:21-24: "So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, *neither* the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words."
 4. Verses 12-13: “And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor
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the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us."

- a. Josiah directed Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asahiah to inquire of the Lord in behalf of himself, the people, and all of Judah. He understood that they all had been in violation of the Law of God.
 - b. Their ancestors had departed from the truth; they had influenced their offspring to likewise live in defiance to God; so the current spiritual status was one of defiant rebellion.
 - c. Josiah would not have reacted to the reading of the law if he had not made a commitment to serve the living God. If he was minded to serve idols and live in sin, he would have rejected the book. He was ignorant of the truth, but he wanted to know and follow the truth, therefore he accepted what he heard. Many today reject the truth out-of-hand because they have no love for truth.
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - e. Could it be that the part of the law that had the greatest effect on Josiah was Deuteronomy 28? That passage depicts the conditions in Judah at the time of Josiah.
5. Verse 14: "So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her."
- a. The selected men approached Huldah, the prophetess, with the king's request. "Nothing further is known of the prophetess *Huldah* than what is mentioned here. All that we can infer from the fact that the king sent to her is, that she was highly distinguished on account of her prophetic gifts, and that none of the prophets of renown, such as Jeremiah and Zephaniah, were at that time in Jerusalem" (Keil, p.480).
 - b. Huldah's husband was the keeper of the garments (the wardrobe). This would be either the clothing of the priests or of the king.
 - c. Huldah lived in "the college" (KJV), "the Second Part" (NKJ), "in the lower city, upon the hill" (Keil), in "the second part" (Jamieson). "It was not a school or college, but a particular suburb of Jerusalem" (JFB, p.441). The Septuagint [the Old Testament in Greek] used the original word here as the proper name of that part of Jerusalem where Huldah lived. "Not a school of learning in 2 Kings 22:14, but the second part or suburb or lower part of the city. Zeph 1:10, answering to Akra N. of Zion; the Bezetha or Newtown, Hebrew ha-mishneh; called by Josephus 'the other city,' i.e. the lower city (Ant. 15:11, section 5). 'Outside the wall, between the two walls, which was a second part of the city' (Rashi)" [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by BibleSoft].

D. 2 Kings 22:15-20: Huldah the Prophetess.

1. Verses 15-16: "And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read."
 - a. Huldah provided an inspired response from Jehovah to the king's messengers. She prefaced it with "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel."
 - b. The message was addressed to "the man that sent you to me." Josiah is not identified either by name

or title, but his identity is obviously known.

- c. In the message itself, God mentioned the fact that Josiah had learned some disturbing facts by reading the book of the Law. The Lord affirmed that he would indeed bring the evil upon Judah for their sinful conduct, just as the king had read.
2. Verse 17: "Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched."
 - a. God stated his full intention of bringing destruction upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants because of the sins of the people. They had burned incense to various idols, objects which they themselves had fashioned. His anger would not be quenched; he would send punishment upon them. He did not say when he would do this.
 - b. Their idolatry had provoked the Lord to anger. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex. 20:4-6).
 - c. The worship of an idol is a case of paramount foolishness. "They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that is* profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish *it*. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:9-20).
 3. Verses 18-20: "But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again."

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- a. Referring more specifically to the one who had made the inquiry of the Lord, God described him as having a tender heart. Josiah was teachable; he wanted to do right; he was open to the truth. This is a complimentary depiction.
 - 1) Psalms 34:18: "The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."
 - 2) Psalms 51:17: "The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."
 - 3) Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."
 - 4) Isaiah 66:2: "For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."
 - b. Josiah had been humbled when he learned of the sinful condition of his people, and that they were under the threat of divine judgment. This led the king to rend his clothes and to weep. God said he had heard his cries.
 - c. The Lord promised Josiah that he would be "gathered to thy fathers" in peace, that he would not live to see the destruction of Jerusalem. However, this did not preclude his dying a violent death. We will learn (2 Kings 23:29-30) that Josiah would die in a battle with the Egyptians.
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2 KINGS 23

A. 2 Kings 23:1-3: Josiah's Commits the People to the Restoration.

1. Verses 1-2: "And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD."
 - a. After finding the book of the Law in the temple, and following the revelation God made to Josiah through Huldah, the prophetess, the king called for an assembly of the elders of the land, along with the people of Jerusalem, and the priests and prophets. He had been promised that he would not have to see the destruction which God would bring upon Judah and Jerusalem, but that he would be gathered unto his fathers in peace (22:20).
 - b. Josiah was greatly interested in the welfare of his people. Consequently, he called for the assembly in order to read to them the law of God, hoping for a general repentance on the part of the entire nation. The text indicates that the king personally read the law to them, but the statement would still be accurate if he directed someone else to actually do the reading.
2. Verse 3: "And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."
 - a. "Knowing the richness of the Divine clemency and grace to the penitent, he convened the elders of the people, and placing himself at their head, accompanied by the collective body of the inhabitants, went in solemn procession to the temple, where he ordered the book of the law to be read to the assembled audience, and covenanted, with the unanimous concurrence of his subjects, to adhere steadfastly to all the commandments of the Lord. It was an occasion of solemn interest, closely connected with a great national crisis, and the beautiful example of piety in the highest quarter would exert a salutary influence over all classes of the people, in animating their devotions and encouraging their return to the faith of their fathers" (JFB, p.442).
 - b. "He himself read the Law to the people from 'the pillar,' a brass stairway and platform with a pulpit-type stand built by Solomon for the king to address the people" (Haley, ADL, p.191).
 - 1) 2 Kings 11:14: "And when she looked, behold, **the king stood by a pillar**, as the manner *was*, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason."
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 6:13: "For **Solomon had made a brazen scaffold**, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 34:31: "And **the king stood in his place**, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book."
 - c. The people joined with the king, binding themselves to a covenant to walk after the Lord, to keep his commandments, his testimonies and statutes with all their heart and soul, and to obey the word of the Lord. They "stood to the covenant" (i.e., they committed themselves to the agreement). "And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem

did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers" (2 Chron. 34:32).

B. 2 Kings 23:4-14: Josiah Destroys the Features of Judah's Rebellion.

1. Verses 4-6: "And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people."
 - a. The king directed Hilkiah, the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door to remove from the temple all the vessels which were used in the worship of Baal and other idols (Asherah, a Canaanite goddess). These items were taken from the temple and burned outside Jerusalem, in the fields of Kidron. The ashes from these burned vessels were taken to Bethel, "*i.e.* the ashes of the wooden objects which were burned, and the dust of those of stone and metal which were ground to powder, to defile the idolatrous place of worship at Bethel as the chief seat of idolatry and false worship" (Keil, p.483).
 - b. Josiah also "put down" the idolatrous priests who had been appointed by his father (Amon) and grandfather (Manasseh) to burn incense in various cities of Judah and in places around Jerusalem. The Israelites had imitated the pagans around them, and burned incense to Baal, the sun, planets and the starry host in the sky.
 - c. The reformer also removed the "grove" (wooden image; Asherah) from the temple, and burned it near the brook Kidron, ground the residue into powder, and threw the powder on the grave sites.
 - 1) "Josiah had it taken to Kidron, burnt the wood, ground the metal about it to powder, and strewed the ashes on 'the graves of the children of the people.' It appears, from this verse recording the action of Josiah, and that of Moses under similar circumstances (Exod. 32:20), that, ordinarily speaking, the Kidron was not a running stream of water; for, lacking water, Josiah cast the powder upon the graves, then, as now, plentiful in that valley. The poor were buried in a common on part of the valley of Kidron. But reference is here made to the graves 'of those that had sacrificed' (2 Chr. 34:4)" (JFB, p.443).
 - 2) "And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them" (2 Chr. 34:4).
 - 3) Compare: "And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strowed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*" (Ex. 32:20).
2. Verse 7: "And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove."
 - a. The sodomites were male prostitutes; they obtained their name, which is still applicable today, from the wicked men of Sodom (Gen. 19). These contaminated individuals lived in houses (tents), which were located near the temple.
 - b. Certain women made hangings. The houses were "...not solid houses, but tents, or small tent-like temples, which were regarded as holy, and worshipped along with the deities which they contained (Amos 5:26); called elsewhere Succoth-benoth, the booths of the young women who were devoted

to the service of Ahserah, for which they made embroidered hangings, and in which they gave themselves to unbridled revelry and lust. Or, the hangings might be for Asherah itself, as it is a popular superstition in the East to hang pieces of cloth on trees (Ezek. 16:16)” (JFB, p.443).

- 1) Ezekiel 16:16: "And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: *the like things* shall not come, neither shall it be *so*."
 - 2) Amos 5:26: "But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves."
 - c. 1 Kings 14:24: "And therewere also sodomites in the land: *and* they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel."
3. Verses 8-9: “And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were* in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.”
- a. “Numbers of the Levitical order, finding in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon the temple worship abolished, and the tithes and other offerings alienated, had been betrayed into the folly of officiating on high places, and presenting such sacrifices as were brought to them. These irregularities, even though the object of that worship was the true God, were prohibited in the law (Deut. 12:11). Those who had been guilty of this sin Josiah brought to Jerusalem, and regarding them as defiled, debarred them from the service of the temple, but gave them an allowance out of the temple revenues, like the lame and disabled members of the priesthood (Lev. 21:21,22)” (JFB, p.443).
 - b. Leviticus 21:16-23: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever *he be* of thy seed in their generations that hath *any* blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man *he be* that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, Or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, *both* of the most holy, and of the holy. Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them."
 - c. The high places where the priests had made their illicit offerings were destroyed, and the priests (who were Levites) were treated as though they were physically marred.
4. Verse 10: “And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.”
- a. “Topheth” means *a drum*, “...the prevailing opinion among Jewish writers being that the cries of the terrified children made to pass through the fire in that place of idolatrous horror were drowned by the sound of that instrument. At the north-east angle of the city...this part of the valley was called Hinnom. In it many cruel and idolatrous ceremonies were performed, and children passed through the fire to Moloch by their unnatural parents. The filth of the city was here collected and consumed; and from the fires that were continually kept burning for this purpose, its name was chosen as typical of hell, where ‘the fire is not quenched.’ It was defiled by Josiah, that no more human sacrifices might be presented in it to the bloody demon” (JFB, p.443).
 - b. Topheth [Topheth]: “Name for a place in the Hinnom Valley outside Jerusalem derived from Aramaic or Hebrew meaning, fireplace, but altered by Hebrew scribes to mean ‘shameful thing’ because of the

illicit worship carried on there (Jer. 7:31-32; KJV, 'Tophet'). Child sacrifice was practiced at Tophet, leading the prophet to declare a slaughter of people there when God would come in vengeance (Jer. 19:6-11)" (Holman).

- c. Jeremiah 7:31-32: "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded *them* not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place."
5. Verses 11: "And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire."
 - a. "Among the people who anciently worshipped the sun, horses were usually dedicated to that divinity, from the supposed idea that the sun himself was drawn in a chariot by horses. In some cases these horses were sacrificed; but more commonly they were employed either in the sacred processions to carry the images of the sun, or for the worshippers to ride in every morning to welcome his rise" (JFB, p.443).
 - b. These horses, having been kept in a chamber adjacent to the temple, Josiah took away; he burned the chariots. In the days of Moses, God had forbidden future Israelite kings from multiplying horses, since this military force would supplant God for defense (Deut. 17:14-20).
 - c. 2 Kings 23:11: "Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who *was* in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire" (NKJ).
 6. Verses 12-14: "And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men."
 - a. Altars had been erected on the flat roofs of certain houses; these altars Josiah destroyed, and threw the debris into the brook Kidron. Ahaz, Manasseh, and other kings of Judah had built these altars.
 - b. Solomon had constructed high places near the temple, devoted to Ashtoreth (the idol of Zidon), Chemosh (the idol of Moab), and Milcom (the idol of Ammon); these were also destroyed by the king.
 - c. Josiah also destroyed the images and cut down the groves, polluting the ground with bones of dead men. "Every monument of idolatry in his dominions he in like manner destroyed and the places where they stood he defiled by strewing them with dead men's bones. The presence of a dead carcass rendered both persons and places unclean in the eyes both of Jews and heathens" (JFB, p.444).
- C. 2 Kings 23:15-20: Josiah Destroys the Altar at Bethel.
1. Verse 15: "Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the grove."
 - a. Josiah did not limit his restoration to the land of Judah; he proceeded to destroy the altar, the high place, and the grove at Bethel. Jeroboam I had introduced this false system when the kingdom was
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divided following the death of Solomon. This paved the way for the apostasy of countless numbers in the northern kingdom, and also promoted its imitation in Judah.

- b. 1 Kings 12:26-33: "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."
 - c. The Assyrians had populated the territory of the extinct Northern Kingdom, but this did not deter Josiah in destroying the idol worship at Bethel. It had been a thorn in the side of the Israelites for many generations.
2. Verse 16: "And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words."
 - a. Josiah saw some nearby sepulchres. He had them opened and the bones interred there were burned upon the altar. This was the ultimate defilement, and forevermore that altar, even it had remained intact, would have been deemed unfit for any religious activities by everyone.
 - b. The king's actions in this were in fulfillment of the prophecy of the "young prophet" who cried out against the altar a few hundred years earlier. "And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee" (1 Kings 13:2).
 3. Verses 17-18: "Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria."
 - a. "The king's attention, it is probable, had been arrested by a tombstone more conspicuous than the rest around it, bearing on an inscription the name of him that lay beneath; and this prompted his curiosity to make the enquiry. It seems probable from this instance epitaphs were inscribed on the tombs of the ancient Jews, especially those which were placed in proper cemeteries. The title or inscription which caught the eye of the king was, there is reason to believe, on an excavated sepulchre; but from the way in which the circumstance is recorded, it may be inferred that the practice of surmounting a tomb with an epitaph was common and familiar" (JFB, p.445).
 - b. Josiah may have known the story of the younger prophet (1 Kings 13); his story was probably well-known by many even after several generations had come and gone. The people of Bethel were fully aware of the young man's story, and quickly told Josiah that he had predicted the very things which the king had done on the present occasion.
 - c. Josiah told his men to leave the grave alone, wherein the remains of the older prophet of Samaria and
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the young prophet from Judah were buried. "And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones: For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass" (1 Kings 13:29-32).

4. Verses 19-20: "And all the houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *the LORD* to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. And he slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem."
 - a. "All the houses of the high places that were in the (other) cities of Samaria Josiah also destroyed in the same way as that at Bethel, and offered up the priests of the high places upon the altars, *i.e.* slew them upon the altars on which they had offered sacrifice, and burned men's bones upon them (the altars) to defile them. The severity of the procedure towards these priests of the high places, as contrasted with the manner in which the priests of the high places in Judah were treated (vers. 8 and 9), may be explained partly from the fact that the Israelitish priests of the high places were not Levitical priests, but chiefly from the fact that they were really idolatrous priests" (Keil, p.490).
 - b. "God chooses his own time, as well as his own instrument, for the accomplishment of his providential purposes; and although no king of Judah before Manasseh had an opportunity of passing the confines of his kingdom; although Manasseh, with Amon, had not probably the slightest knowledge of the prophecy, and was influenced solely by motives of humble penitence and devout gratitude for his own temporal and spiritual deliverance in bestowing the name of *Josiah* upon his grandson; he was unconsciously, but by an unseen, overruling power, led to do what verified the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed to Jeroboam, regarding the overthrow of the altar at Beth-el" (JFB, p.445).

D. 2 Kings 23:21-23: Josiah Orders the Observance of the Passover.

1. Verse 21: "And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant."
 - a. We are given a fuller account in 2 Chronicles 35:1-9: "Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD, And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; *it shall* not *be* a burden upon *your* shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel, And prepare *yourselves* by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and *after* the division of the families of the Levites. So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these *were* of the king's substance. And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred *small cattle*, and three hundred oxen. Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand *small cattle*, and five hundred oxen."

- b. Having read the book of the law, Josiah knew the requirements of God regarding the Passover. He knew also that the people had not observed it properly for many years. The religious occasion was one of tremendous importance and undoubtedly had a great impact on the hearts of many people.
 - c. The law of the Passover is given in Exodus 12:3-10: "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast *with* fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire."
2. Verses 22-23: "Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem."
- a. 2 Chronicles 35:18: "And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."
 - b. From the time of the Judges to the time then present, the Passover had not been eaten in such a way as on this occasion. "What distinguished this passover above every other was, (1) that 'all the nation,' not merely Judah and Benjamin, but also the remnant of the ten tribes, took part in it, or, as it is expressed in 2 Chron. 35:18, 'all Judah and Israel,' (2) that it was kept in strict accordance with the precepts of the Mosaic book of the law, whereas in the passover instituted by Hezekiah there were necessarily many points of deviation from the precepts of the law, more especially in the fact that the feast had to be transferred from the first month, which was the legal time, to the second month, because the priests had not yet purified themselves in sufficient numbers and the people had not yet gathered together at Jerusalem, and also that even then a number of the people had inevitably been allowed to eat the passover without the previous purification required by the law (2 Chron. 30:2,3,17-20)" (Keil, pp.490f).
 - c. The reason this Passover is exalted over those preceding it is to be found in the fact that it was now strictly observed, in keeping with the particulars demanded by the law. "Before this, even under the pious kings, they seem to have followed custom rather than the very words of the law; and since this was the case, many things were necessarily changed and neglected.' Instead of 'since the days of the judges who judged Israel,' we find in 2 Chron. 35:18, 'since the days of Samuel the prophet,' who is well known to have closed the period of the judges" (Keil, p.491).
 - d. This was during the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign; he was twenty-six years old that year. "Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God" (2 Chron. 34:8).

E. 2 Kings 23:24-25: Josiah Puts Away the Sorcerers.

1. Verse 24: "Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he
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might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.”

- a. Before the Passover could be kept with the approval of God, it was necessary that the idolatrous and other wicked practices be put away. Paul made a similar point in writing to the Corinthians; they were instructed to put away the wickedness from among them. "Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
 - b. Josiah had put away those who practice necromancy, sorcery, and idolatry; he thus paved the way for the Passover to be eaten properly. He would not have known about what was required except for the book of the law that Hilkiah had discovered in the temple. There is no way anyone can know his responsibilities before God except by God’s word. Yet, in our day, the great majority are turning their collective back upon his truth. Even in the Lord’s church, the majority do not want to hear the Bible preached or taught; they had rather have ear-tickling, emotion-stirring messages based on human reason, than to hear the eternal truths of God’s word! "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).
2. Verse 25: “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him.”
- a. The inspired historian pays a great tribute to Josiah in this verse. His conscientious determination to follow the Law of God was equalled by no preceding king. A similar compliment was paid to Hezekiah, in his case the point of emphasis was the trust that great man had in the Almighty. "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him" (2 Kings 18:5).
 - b. We are made to wonder if David was the possible exception to these two statements. In his case, God complimented him as being after his own heart. "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:2). Notice that this reference to David was made prior to his being exalted to the throne, and thus before his affair with Bathsheba.
 - c. The historian also notes that there was no king after Josiah that measured up to his dedication to doing the will of God minutely.

F. 2 Kings 23:26-28: Judah’s Fate Would be Punishment Despite Josiah’s Restoration.

1. Verse 26: “Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.”
 - a. The evil influences of Manasseh were so extensive and profound that punishment could not be overlooked. While a good many in Judah straightened-up their lives in the restoration Josiah promoted, there were doubtless many others who did not do so; and many turned back to their evil ways after the work of Josiah had run its course. The book of Jeremiah provides a careful analysis of their spiritual decline.

- b. "The national reformation which Josiah carried on was acquiesced in by the people from submission to the royal will; but they entertained a secret and strong hankering after the suppressed idolatries. Though outwardly purified, their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from many passages of the prophetic writings: their thorough reform was hopeless; and God, who saw no sign of genuine repentance, allowed his decree (ch. 21:12-15) for the subversion of the kingdom to take fatal effect" (JFB, p.446).
- c. 2 Kings 21:12-15: "Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they have done *that which was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day."
2. Verse 27: "And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."
- a. "It is true that Josiah had exterminated outward and gross idolatry throughout the land by his sincere conversion to the Lord, and by his zeal for the restoration of the lawful worship of Jehovah, and had persuaded the people to enter into covenant with its God once more; but a thorough conversion of the people to the Lord he had not been able to effect. For, as Clericus has correctly observed, 'although the king was most religious, and the people obeyed him through fear, yet for all that the mind of the people was not changed, as is evident enough from the reproaches of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and other prophets, who prophesied about that time and a little after.' With regard to this point compare especially the first ten chapters of Jeremiah, which contain a *resume* of his labours in the reign of Josiah, and bear witness to the deep inward apostasy of the people from the Lord, not only before and during Josiah's reform of worship, but also afterwards" (Keil, p.492).
- b. Jeremiah 7:23-28: "But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. But thou shalt say unto them, This *is* a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth."
3. Verse 28: "Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"
- a. The usual statement is given about Josiah as has been the case with those who preceded him as king in Israel. Reference is made to the "chronicles of the kings of Judah," a book in which the events and acts of those kings were recorded.
- b. Although an account of these various kings is given in the book we call "Chronicles," that is not the book indicated, but rather was a log kept by the government of the activities of the kingdom.
- c. This statement, however, does not carry a report of Josiah's death; that report is given in the next two verses, including the reason he died at a relatively young age.

G. 2 Kings 23:29-30: The Death of Josiah.

1. Verse 29: "In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him."
 - a. The parallel account is in 2 Chronicles 35:20-25: "After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations."*
 - b. Pharaoh Necho passed through Palestine enroute to do battle with the king of Assyria, at Charchemish, in the area of the Euphrates River.
 - c. Carchemish: "(fort of Chemosh) (modern Jerablus) was an important city on the great bend of the Euphrates River. It was on the west bank of the river, at an important river crossing point on the international trade route. Carchemish lies mostly on the Turkish side of the modern Turkish-Syrian border. Carchemish is mentioned about 1800 B.C. as the capital of a kingdom in alliance with the Assyrian king Shamshi-adad I against Yahdun-lim, king of Mari. After the Mari period, there is a short break in the known history of the city. When sources again become available, Carchemish was first under Hurrian influence, then was included within the Hittite sphere. Carchemish was a vassal and ally of the Hittite King Muwatallis against the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II at the important battle of Kadesh in 1286 B.C. Following the destruction of the New Hittite Kingdom at the hands of the Sea Peoples shortly after 1200 B.C., Carchemish became the most important heir of the Hittite culture. The land of Hatti and the Hittites mentioned in the Bible are probably these successors to the Anatolian Hittites centered on Carchemish. Carchemish again became the head of an independent kingdom and successfully resisted capture by the Assyrian Empire during the whole of its first period of expansion. Only under Sargon II were the Assyrians able to capture and destroy Carchemish in 717 B.C. Sargon helped to rebuild the city, and it became the capital of a western Assyrian province. Assyria's ultimate capture of the city was noteworthy enough that Isaiah used it as a rhetorical example in one of his oracles (Isa. 10:9). The most important battle at Carchemish, however, was not fought over possession of the city. At the very end of the Assyrian period, when Nebuchadrezzar was incorporating all former Assyrian territory within the new Babylonian Empire, Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt came to Carchemish to try to save the remnants of the Assyrian army. He hoped to preserve a weak Assyria as a buffer between him and a strong and aggressive Babylon. He arrived too late to save the Assyrians, perhaps held up by Josiah's unsuccessful challenge at Megiddo (2 Chron. 35:20-24). Nebuchadrezzar defeated Neco at Carchemish. This victory gave Babylon authority over all of western Asia within the next few years; for this reason it ranks as one of the most decisive battles of all time. Jeremiah and the Chronicler both took note of it; Jeremiah composed a poetic dirge commemorating the Egyptian defeat (Jer. 46:2-12). The city of Carchemish appears to have declined after the Babylonian period of power, for references to it cease. Carchemish and its ruins were visited by western travelers repeatedly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Excavations were carried out on the site from 1878-1881, and again from 1911-1914 and in 1920. A cuneiform inscription found during the excavations confirms the site as Carchemish" (Holman, Joseph Coleson).
 - d. "Archaeology has facilitated a correct translation of the passage dealing with Josiah's death and

revealed the reason for Pharaoh-necho's advance toward the Euphrates....Heretofore, in the absence of an archaeological clue the phrase 'Pharaoh-Necho went up *to* the king of Assyria' has been wrongly translated 'went up *against* the king of Assyria' (A.V. and A.R.V.). While it is true the Hebrew preposition '*al*' here employed may mean 'against,' the historical context shows that in this passage it has one of its more specialized meanings.

- 1) "Historians used to be perplexed why Josiah advanced 'against' Necho when the Pharaoh was on his way to fight Assyria, the ancient enemy of the Hebrews. The Babylonian Chronicle published by C.J. Gadd in 1923 has put the whole matter in a new light and shows that Pharaoh-necho did not advance against the Assyrian at all, but went to his aid.
- 2) "Upon Ashurbanipal's death in 633 C.C., the Assyrian Empire declined rapidly. In 612 B.C. Nineveh fell under attack 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, Pharaoh-necho, accordingly, came to help the Assyrian remnant and their King Ashurballit, who stood at bay for several years at Carchemish under the combined attacks of the Medes and the Babylonians.
- 3) "Josiah, no lover of Assyria, and not wishing any aid to reach the hard-pressed Assyrians, went to Megiddo to stop Necho, but was killed by the Egyptian. Necho, in turn, was overwhelmingly defeated when he eventually clashed with Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish on the Euphrates in 605 B.C.
- 4) "With the battle of Carchemish two ancient empires fell. Assyria passed away forever, and Egypt never again became a first-rate power. The magnificent city of Carchemish, with a long and brilliant career behind it, was utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and lay buried under desert dust until modern excavations brought its interesting monuments to the light of day" (Unger, pp.282f).
- e. In the battle at Megiddo between the Israelites and the Egyptians, Josiah was slain. The parallel account reports that Josiah and Necho talked briefly before the hostilities began. The Egyptian told Josiah that he had no quarrel with Israel, and that God had given him the job of going to fight against Carchemish; he also stated that he was in a hurry. Josiah disguised himself, to avoid being sought out by the Egyptians in the ensuing battle. We are told that Egyptian archers fired on Josiah, inflicting a mortal injury to him. His servants removed him from the chariot in which he was riding, and placed him in a second chariot. His life could not be saved.
2. Verse 30: "And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead."
 - a. The body of the dead king was carried to Jerusalem, where great lamentation was made over him. The parallel account tells us that Jeremiah lamented for him. Josiah was buried in his own tomb.
 - b. The son of Josiah, Jehoahaz, was elevated to the throne to reign in the place of his dead father. His reign was doomed to be very short.

H. 2 Kings 23:31-37: The Reigns of Jehoahaz and Eliakim.

1. Verses 31-32: "Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done."
 - a. Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he ascended the throne. He enjoyed that position for only three months.
 - b. The reason for his short reign is indicated to be the wickedness with which he ruled; he followed the

pattern set by his grandfather (Amon) and great-grandfather (Mansseh).

2. Verses 33-34: “And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.”
 - a. Pharaoh-necho held sway over the land. He put Jehoahaz “in bands” and was taken into Egypt where he died. The Egyptian monarch also placed a heavy tribute on Judah. Since Carchemish was several hundred miles away, it seems clear that Necho remained in Palestine for a time, since we are told that he removed Jehoahaz from the throne after a reign of three months.
 - b. Necho elevated Jehoahaz’s brother, Eliakim, to the throne. Evidently, he thought that the brother would be more easily controlled than Jehoahaz, or else he wanted the Israelites to understand that they were not the ones to choose their own kings anymore.
 - c. Eliakim’s name was changed to Jehoakim by Pharaoh-necho. It will be remembered that it was this Jehoiakim who cut up and burned the prophecy given by Jeremiah (Jer. 36).
 3. Verse 35: “And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give *it* unto Pharaohnechoh.”
 - a. Jehoiakim raised the tribute which he gave to Pharaoh by taxing the owners of the land. He was a mere vassel to Necho, with the Egyptian’s foot placed securely on his neck.
 - b. These were dark times in Judah. God had promised punishment upon them, and they were nearing the time when the full measure of divine judgment was to be exacted. They were about to reap the bitter crop of rebellion. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).
 4. Verses 36-37: “Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.”
 - a. Jehoiakim was no better than his deposed brother; as Jehoahaz walked in the steps of his wicked forebears, so did his brother. Neither of them had any spiritual resemblance to their father. His evil deeds are depicted in part in the writings of Jeremiah, especially in chapter thirty-six.
 - b. His reign extended over a period of eleven years, beginning when he was twenty-five, and ending when he was thirty-six.
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2 KINGS 24

A. 2 Kings 24:1-7: The Chaldeans Invade Judah.

1. Verse 1: "In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him."
 - a. Following his victory at Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar obtained control over Palestine. Jehoiakim was subservient to him for three years before revolting against him. "It was 605 B.C. Habakkuk was revealing his burden and God was sending those that were formerly under tribute to Hezekiah against Jehoiakim, who was at this time rebelling against Babylon. Babylon had defeated Necho at the battle of Carchemish and was now in control of all of Palestine" (Haley, ADL, p.194).
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar "was the son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Chaldee monarchy. The rulers who are entitled 'kings of Babylon' belong to two different periods, separated by the interval of nearly seven centuries. The first period was coeval with the origin of the Assyrian empire, in the twentieth century B.C., and terminated in the middle of the sixteenth. After the lapse of two centuries, Nineveh rose to be the metropolis of the great Assyrian empire; and Babylon being only a provincial capital, the Assyrian kings never assumed to themselves, nor permitted any one to appropriate, the title of king of Babylon. But on the decline and fall of Nineveh, Babylon recovered its metropolitan pre-eminence....This invasion took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar's, reign (Jer. 25:1; cf. 46:2). The young king...being probably detained at home on account of his father's demise, despatched, along with the Chaldean troops on his border, an army composed of the tributary nations that were contiguous to Judea, to chastise Jehoiakim's revolt from his yoke" (JFB, p.447).
 - c. "The words of our text, 'Jehoiakim became servant...to him,' *i.e.* subject to him, simply affirm that he became tributary, not that he was led away. And in the book of Daniel also there is nothing about the leading away of Jehoiakim to Babylon. Whilst, therefore, the three accounts agree in the main with one another, and supply one another's deficiencies, so that we learn that Jehoiakim was taken prisoner at the capture of Jerusalem and put in chains to be led away, but that, inasmuch as he submitted to Nebuchadnezzar and vowed fidelity, he was not taken away, but left upon the throne as vassal of the king of Babylon....In the year referred to Nebuchadnezzar commenced the expedition against Judah, and smote Necho at Carchemish at the commencement of the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer. 46:2), and then, following up this victory, took Jerusalem in the same year, and made Jehoiakim tributary, and at the same time carried off to Babylon a portion of the sacred vessels, and some young men of royal blood as hostages, one of whom was Daniel (2 Chron. 36:7; Dan. 1:2ff)" (Keil, pp.501f).
 - d. Jeremiah 46:1-2: "The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah."
 - e. Daniel 1:1-2: "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."
2. Verse 2: "And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets."
 - a. The Babylonian soldiers thought they were operating entirely on their own initiative, but we are told here that they were actually an instrument in the hands of God. The Lord did not coerce their

- involvement by some supernatural power. Using his providential powers, which no man comprehends fully, God was able to arrange events and conditions that brought the pagans against Jerusalem as punishment for their many offenses.
- b. God had warned his people for many years through many prophets of the punishment he would bring to bear upon them; the cause was their idolatry and other sinful activities; the alternative was repentance.
3. Verses 3-4: "Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon."
 - a. 2 Chronicles 36:16: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy."
 - b. Jeremiah 3:10: "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD."
 - c. They had become so entrenched in their rebellion that it was impossible for God to pardon them; their hearts were so corrupted with sin that they would not turn away from it.
 - d. Men can pervert their minds to the extent that they have no appreciation for the blessings of God, including forgiveness.
 - 1) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
 - 2) Romans 4:7-8: "*Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
 - 3) Psalms 51:10-12: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit."
 - 4) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - 5) Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."
 4. Verses 5-6: "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead."
 - a. 2 Chronicles 36:6-8: "Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they *are* written in the book of
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the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead."

- b. Jehoiakim died after a reign of eleven years, at the age of thirty-six. He was replaced on the throne by his son Jehoiachin.
- c. Some dire prophecies were given regarding Jehoiakim, which undoubtedly were fulfilled.
 - 1) Jeremiah 22:18-19: "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, *saying*, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." We are not told in our text that he was buried; indeed, we are not even appraised of the cause of his death. Jeremiah plainly stated that he would have no burial. "We must therefore assume that he was slain in a battle fought with the troops sent against him, and was not buried at all..." (Keil, p.505).
 - 2) Jeremiah 36:30: "Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." His son began to reign as king, but his rule extended only three months and ten days, scarcely a notable achievement. He was removed from the throne and taken to Babylon at that time (2 Chron. 36:9-10).
- d. Jesophus provides some interesting details about Jehoiakim:
 - 1) NOW in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, one whose name was Nebuchadnezzar took the government over the Babylonians, who at the same time went up with a great army to the city Carchemish, which was at Euphrates, upon a resolution he had taken to fight with Neco king of Egypt, under whom all Syria then was. And when Neco understood the intention of the king of Babylon, and that this expedition was made against him, he did not despise his attempt, but made haste with a great band of men to Euphrates to defend himself from Nebuchadnezzar; and when they had joined battle, he was beaten, and lost many ten thousands [of his soldiers] in the battle. So the king of Babylon passed over Euphrates, and took all Syria, as far as Pelusium, excepting Judea. But when Nebuchadnezzar had already reigned four years, which was the eighth of Jehoiakim's government over the Hebrews, the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim, and threatened upon his refusal to make war against him. He was afrighted at his threatening, and bought his peace with money, and brought the tribute he was ordered to bring for three years.
 - 2) But on the third year, upon hearing that the king of the Babylonians made an expedition against the Egyptians, he did not pay his tribute; yet was he disappointed of his hope, for the Egyptians durst not fight at this time. And indeed the prophet Jeremiah foretold every day, how vainly they relied on their hopes from Egypt, and how the city would be overthrown by the king of Babylon, and Jehoiakim the king would be subdued by him. But what he thus spake proved to be of no advantage to them, because there were none that should escape; for both the multitude and the rulers, when they heard him, had no concern about what they heard; but being displeased at what was said, as if the prophet were a diviner against the king, they accused Jeremiah, and bringing him before the court, they required that a sentence and a punishment might be given against him. Now all the rest gave their votes for his condemnation, but the elders refused, who prudently sent away the prophet from the court of [the prison], and persuaded the rest to do Jeremiah no harm; for they said that he was not the only person who foretold what would come to the city, but that Micah signified the same before him, as well as many others, none of which suffered any thing of the kings that then reigned, but were honored as the prophets of God. So they mollified the multitude with these words, and delivered Jeremiah from the punishment to which he was condemned. Now when this prophet had written all his prophecies, and the people were fasting, and assembled at the temple, on the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim, he read the book

he had composed of his predictions of what was to befall the city, and the temple, and the multitude. And when the rulers heard of it, they took the book from him, and bid him and Baruch the scribe to go their ways, lest they should be discovered by one or other; but they carried the book, and gave it to the king; so he gave order, in the presence of his friends, that his scribe should take it, and read it. When the king heard what it contained, he was angry, and tore it, and cast it into the fire, where it was consumed. He also commanded that they should seek for Jeremiah, and Baruch the scribe, and bring them to him, that they might be punished. However, they escaped his anger.

- 3) Now, a little time afterwards, the king of Babylon made an expedition against Jehoiakim, whom he received [into the city], and this out of fear of the foregoing predictions of this prophet, as supposing he should suffer nothing that was terrible, because he neither shut the gates, nor fought against him; yet when he was come into the city, he did not observe the covenants he had made, but he slew such as were in the flower of their age, and such as were of the greatest dignity, together with their king Jehoiakim, whom he commanded to be thrown before the walls, without any burial; and made his son Jehoiachin king of the country, and of the city: he also took the principal persons in dignity for captives, three thousand in number, and led them away to Babylon; among which was the prophet Ezekiel, who was then but young. And this was the end of king Jehoiakim, when he had lived thirty-six years, and of them reigned eleven. But Jehoiachin succeeded him in the kingdom, whose mother's name was Nehushta; she was a citizen of Jerusalem. He reigned three months and ten days. (Josephus: *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 11, Chapter 6, Sections 1-3; Biblesoft).
5. Verse 7: "And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt."
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar's military successes had been so extensive that the Egyptian king lost all of his territory to the Babylonians, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.
 - b. "He was defeated at Carchemish by the forces of the young king Nebuchadnezzar, who wrested from him all his acquisitions both in Northern and Southern Syria" (JFB, p.447). Necho had taken control in Judah when Josiah was slain; he placed Jehoiakim on the throne. But now the pharaoh lost this territory to the Babylonians.

B. 2 Kings 24:8-9: The Reign of Jehoiachin.

1. Verse 8: "Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem."
 - a. Jehoiachin was only 18 years old when he became king; his reign lasted only three months and ten days. "Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD. And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 36:9-10).
 - b. "At the age of eight his father took him into partnership in the government (2 Chr. 36:9). He began to reign alone at eighteen" (JFB, p.447).
 - c. Jeremiah issued a prophecy against Jehoiachin, bluntly stating that he would remain childless, and that none of his seed would sit on the throne. "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that shall not prosper* in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30).
 - d. In that context, Jeremiah also said regarding Jehoiachin, who was also known as Jeconiah or by the shortened form, Coniah: "*As I live*, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of
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Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand *of them* whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. *Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure?* wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:24-30).

2. Verse 9: "And he did *that which* was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done."
 - a. He did not learn the positive lessons taught by Josiah; he did not learn from the mistakes of his father. His epitaph is simply that "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord."
 - b. Jamieson's statement that Jehoiachin reigned with his father for ten years before officially becoming the king, reconciles the apparent discrepancy between Kings and Chronicles; the former gives his age as eighteen when he began to reign; the latter says he was eight. That eighteen is the correct age is indicated by the fact he is described as one who did evil, scarcely descriptive of a little boy of eight. Both records are accurate.
 - c. Ezekiel describes him as a young lion. "Now when she saw that she had waited, *and* her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, *and* made him a young lion. And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, *and* devoured men. And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring" (Ezek. 19:5-7).

C. 2 Kings 24:10-16: Nebuchadnezzar Captures Jerusalem.

1. Verses 10-11: "At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it."
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar had first taken Jerusalem in 606 B.C., early in the reign of Jehoiakim. The time now was 597 B.C.
 - b. Jehoiachin had occupied the throne of Judah for a mere three months, when Nebuchadnezzar came a second time against the city.
2. Verse 12: "And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign."
 - a. After a siege, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. This was the eighth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. "The eighth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar is reckoned from the time when his father had transferred to him the chief command over the army to make war upon Necho, according to which his *first* year coincides with the *fourth* year of Jehoiakim (Jer. 25:1). As Nebuchadnezzar acted as king, so far as the Jews were concerned, from that time forward, although he conducted the war by command of his father, this is always reckoned as the point of time at which his reign commenced, both in our books and also in Jeremiah (cf. Ch. 25:8; Jer. 32:1). According to this calculation, his reign lasted forty-four years, viz., the eight years of Jehoiakim and the thirty-six years of Jehoiachin's imprisonment, as is evident from ch. 25:27" (Keil, p.507).
 - b. Jehoiachin left the city, and went out to the camp of the Babylonians, perhaps hoping that his surrender might lessen the penalty.

- c. He may have expected to be allowed to continue on the throne, a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar. But in keeping with the prophecy of Jeremiah (22:24-30), both Jehoiachin and his mother were taken from Jerusalem, and carried into Babylonia. The same fate befell his servants, princes, and officers.
3. Verses 13-14: "And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land."
 - a. The Babylonians took the treasures from the temple and the king's palace; they cut up the gold which Solomon has placed in the temple.
 - b. Ten thousand captives, including the princes, the men of war, craftsmen, and smiths were carried away; the poorest of the Jews were allowed to stay in the land
4. Verses 15-16: "And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon."
 - a. There were seven thousand warriors who were carried into captivity; a thousand craftsmen and smiths. Nebuchadnezzar was especially interested in those men who were able to fight.
 - b. Jehoiachin was not treated with any honor, but as a rebel. He was made a prisoner, and led away into captivity. References are made to his stay in Babylon elsewhere:
 - 1) Ezekiel 1:1-2: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the river of Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth *day* of the month, which *was* the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity."
 - 2) 2 Kings 25:27-30: "And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon; And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life."

D. 2 Kings 24:17-20: Zedekiah is Made King.

1. Verses 17-18: "And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah."
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle on the throne. Mattaniah was the brother of Jehoiakim (Jehoiachin's father). Mattaniah's name was changed to Zedekiah. He was the son (said to be the youngest son) of king Josiah.
 - 1) Jeremiah 1:3: "It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month."
 - 2) Jeremiah 37:1: "And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah."

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- b. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old at the time he began to reign; he ruled for eleven years.
2. Verses 19-20: "And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."
 - a. Zedekiah reigned over the remnant of the Jews who had been left in the land after the Babylonian assault of Jerusalem in 597 B.C. The tenor of his reign was in keeping with that of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, who had imitated the worst traits of Manasseh.
 - b. "Zedekiah rebelled. Instigated by ambassadors from the neighbouring states, who came to congratulate him on his accession to the throne (cf. Jer. 17:3 with 28:1), and at the same time get him to join them in a common league to throw off the [Babylonian] yoke. Though warned by Jeremiah against this step, the infatuated and perjured (Ezek. 17:12) Zedekiah persisted in his revolt by forming an alliance with Pharaoh-hophra..." (JFB, pp.448f).
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2 KINGS 25

A. 2 Kings 25:1-3: Nebuchadnezzar Besieges Jerusalem.

1. Verse 1: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about."
 - a. From Jeremiah 39:1, we learn that it was the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign when the Babylonian army came against Jerusalem. The reason for this assault was Zedekiah's rebellion against the rule of Babylon: "For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon" (2 Kings 24:20).
 - b. Jeremiah 39:1: "In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it."
 - c. Jeremiah 52:4-6: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land."
 - d. This military operation by the Babylonians ended the monarchy in Judah, just as the conquest of Samaria in 722 B.C. ended the monarchy and kingdom of Israel.
 - 1) The first time Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians was in 606 B.C., which is described in 2 Kings 24:1: "In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him."
 - 2) The second assault of Jerusalem by Babylon was in 597 B.C., which is reported in 2 Kings 24:10-12: "At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign."
 - e. Nebuchadnezzar, "Having overrun the northern parts of the country, and taken almost all the fenced cities (Jer. 39:7), he marched direct to Jerusalem to invest it. The date of the beginning as well as of the end of the siege is here carefully marked (cf. Ezek. 26:1; Jer. 39:1; 52:4-6)..." (JFB, p.449).
2. Verses 2-3: "And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land."
 - a. The year was 586 B.C. when the city was taken. The final siege of Jerusalem began during the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign, on the 10th day of the 10th month of that year (588 B.C.).
 - b. The siege lasted until the eleventh year of Zedekiah, when the city was taken on the ninth day of the fourth month of his reign. The word *fourth* is italicized here, but the report in the parallel text specifically identifies it as the fourth month. "And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up" (Jer. 39:2).
 - c. "That Jerusalem could sustain a siege of this duration, namely eighteen months, shows what the strength of the fortifications must have been. Moreover the siege was interrupted for a short time, when the approach of the Egyptian king Hophra compelled the Chaldeans to march to meet him and drive him back, which they appear to have succeeded in doing without a battle..."(Keil, p.512).

- d. Jeremiah 37:5-12: "Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem. Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. Thus saith the LORD; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained *but* wounded men among them, *yet* should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire. And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people."
- e. The citizens resisted until they ran out of food and were no longer able to resist. The Babylonians were able to enter the city and capture or kill the people.

The Three Babylonian Conquests of Jerusalem

ATTACK	BEGAN	KING	REIGN	YEAR	ENDED	TEXT
First: 606 B.C.	—	Jehoiakim	3rd Year	606 B.C.	606 B.C.	2 Kings 24:1-4
Second: 597 B.C.	—	Jehoiachin	3 Months	597 B.C.	597 B.C.	2 Ki. 24:9-16
Third: 588 B.C.	10th Month 10th Day	Zedekiah	9th Year	588 B.C.	586 B.C. 4th Month 9th Day	2 Kings 25 Jer. 39

B. 2 Kings 25:4-7: Jerusalem is Captured.

1. Verse 4: "And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the king* went the way toward the plain."
 - a. "From the more minute account of the entrance of the enemy into the city in Jer. 39:3-5 we learn that the Chaldeans made a breach in the northern or outer wall of the lower city, *i.e.* the second wall, built by Hezekiah and Manasseh (2 Chron. 32:5, 33:14), and forced their way into the lower city....When Zedekiah saw them here, he fled by night with the soldiers out of the city, through the gate between the two walls at or above the king's garden, on the road to the plain of the Jordan, while the Chaldeans were round about the city" (Keil, pp.512f).
 - b. Jeremiah 39:3-5: "And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, *even* Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon. And it came to pass, *that* when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain. But the

Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him."

- c. While part of the Babylonian army pursued Zedekiah, the rest of the invasion force began the destruction of Jerusalem.
2. Verses 5-6: "And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him."
 - a. Zedekiah and his soldiers were overtaken in the valley of the Jordan, near Jericho. The king was captured and the remnants of his army were scattered.
 - b. In the meantime, Nebuchadnezzar had set up an encampment at Riblah, in Syria. Zedekiah was brought to him there to receive judgment.
 3. Verse 7: "And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon."
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar's judgment was that the sons of Zedekiah should be slain in his presence. When this harsh penalty had been carried out, Zedekiah's eyes were put out, he was bound with brazen fetters, and carried to Babylon. Ezekiel had predicted that he would go to Babylon, but would not see it, even though he would die there. "My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there" (Ezek. 12:13).
 - b. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he ascended Judah's throne; he was in the eleventh year of his reign when the Babylonians captured him, being about thirty-two years of age at the time. His sons would only be teenagers at the most.
 - c. The harshness of the punishment is obvious. The Babylonians meant for the last thing that Zedekiah should see on earth was the death of his beloved sons. He was himself imprisoned in Babylon until his death: "Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death" (Jer. 52:11).
 - d. "The punishment pronounced upon Zedekiah was the merited reward of the breach of his oath, and his hardening himself against the counsel of the Lord which was announced to him by Jeremiah during the siege, that he should save not only his own life, but also Jerusalem from destruction, by a voluntary submission to the Chaldeans, whereas by obstinate resistance he would bring an ignominious destruction upon himself, his family, the city, and the whole people (Jer. 38:17ff; 32:5; 34:3ff)" (Keil, p.514).

C. 2 Kings 25:8-17: Jerusalem is Ravaged and Spoiled.

1. Verse 8: "And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, which *is* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem."
 - a. About a month later, following the fall of Judah, Nebuzaradan came to Jerusalem to oversee the destruction of the temple and the city, and the disposition of the people remaining. The nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar corresponds to the eleventh year of Zedekiah. It was during the eighth year of the Babylonian's reign that he captured Jerusalem and led Jehoiachin away captive (2 Kings 24:12); Zedekiah's reign began at that same time, so eleven years later (at the end of Zedekiah's rule), Nebuchadnezzar was in his nineteenth year on the Babylonian throne.
 - b. Jeremiah 52:12 says that Nebuzaradan came on the tenth day of the month, while our text gives the

- seventh as the day of his arrival. "In attempting to reconcile these two passages, it must be supposed either that, though he had set out on the seventh, he did not arrive in Jerusalem till the tenth, or that he did not put out his orders in execution till that day" (JFB, p.450). Another likely solution is that the beginning of the burning of Jerusalem was on the seventh and lasted through the tenth day of the month. The second of these suggestions seems to this writer to be the best.
2. Verses 9-10: "And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about."
 - a. Nebuzaradan ordered the burning of the temple, the king's palace, and the houses of every great man. Apparently all the major houses were destroyed. It does not say that every house was razed.
 - b. "On the site afterwards occupied by King Herod the Great's palace stood the royal residence of the kings of Judah, which was destroyed when the Jews were driven into captivity. His office as captain of the guard (Gen. 37:36; 39:1) called him to execute the awards of justice on criminals; and hence, although not engaged in the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 39:13), Nebuzaradan was despatched to raze the city, to plunder the temple, to lay both in ruins, demolish the fortifications, and transport the inhabitants to Babylon" (JFB, p.450).
 - c. The great walls of Jerusalem were broken down, leaving the ruins of the city exposed to anyone who wanted to intrude. Years later, Nehemiah would be moved to request permission from the Persian ruler, whom he served in captivity, to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.
 3. Verses 11-12: "Now the rest of the people *that were* left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away. But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land *to be* vinedressers and husbandmen."
 - a. The people who had been captured in Jerusalem, along with those who had surrendered to the Babylonians during the siege, were deported to Babylonia.
 - b. The poor people of the land, who knew how to dress vines and tend to other crops, were left in the land to continue that work. The land was too productive to be left entirely vacant.
 - c. While the city was under siege and being razed by the Babylonians, certain enemies of Israel were pictured prophetically as encouraging its destruction. "Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze *it*, raze *it*, *even* to the foundation thereof" (Ps. 137:7).
 - d. Jeremiah lamented, "*Is it* nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12).
 - e. Ezekiel 25:8: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Moab and Seir do say, Behold, the house of Judah *is* like unto all the heathen."
 4. Verses 13-17: "And the pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brazen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the firepans, and the bowls, *and* such things as *were* of gold, *in* gold, and of silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took away. The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight. The height of the one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it *was* brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work."
 - a. Anything of value or use was transported to Babylon. The brazen pillars and sea (the great laver used
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in ceremonial washings) were cut into pieces for easier transport.

- b. The pots, shovels, snuffers, spoons, and vessels of brass were all taken away. The firepans, bowls, and everything containing gold or silver, were also taken.
 - c. That this is an abbreviated report of what was taken away, is seen in the statement that there were too many items to give a full accounting. "The brass of all these vessels was without weight" (verse 15). Jeremiah 52:17-23 gives an even fuller list of the items carried from Jerusalem: "Also the pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brazen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon. The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the basins, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; *that which was* of gold *in* gold, and *that which was* of silver *in* silver, took the captain of the guard away. The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brazen bulls that *were* under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. And *concerning* the pillars, the height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof *was* four fingers: *it was* hollow. And a chapiter of brass *was* upon it; and the height of one chapiter *was* five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all *of* brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates *were* like unto these. And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; *and* all the pomegranates upon the network *were* an hundred round about."
 - d. "We have no information given us respecting the fate of the tabernacle or of the ark. Supposing the latter to have been captured and transported to Babylon along with the other appurtenances of the sacred place, some surprise may be felt that, while detained in a heathen country, its stay was not marked by Babylonish emeralds or by some Chaldean stricken for laying hands on it, or by the undirected march of milch-kine conveying it back to the holy land. The circumstances were different then from what they were at the time of the captivity. In the early period, the national covenant was in force, and Jehovah honoured the symbols of his presence placed amongst his people. In the latter, the national covenant had been completely broken by the apostasy of successive kings and the vast majority of their subjects in Judah, and the Lord was no longer bound to preserve or to honour the symbolic pledge of it" (JFB, p.450).
5. Israel was destined to be under the heel of the Babylonians for a total of seventy years (606-536 B.C.). We are told elsewhere that this length of punishment was established by Jehovah for a purpose: "To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for* as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years" (2 Chron. 36:21).

D. 2 Kings 25:18-26: The Disposition of the People of Judah.

1. Verses 18-21: "And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land *that were* found in the city. And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah: And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land."
 - a. Certain individuals identified by name or position, plus sixty men from around the city, were taken to Riblah, to be judged by Nebuchadnezzar. These men were slain there, in the place where the king's sons were put to death, and the king himself was blinded.
 - b. The historian states at the end of verse twenty-one, in summary, that the people of Judah were taken from the land, some to be slain in Riblah, the others to captivity in Babylonia.

2. Verses 22-24: “And *as for* the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. And Gedaliah swore to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.”
 - a. Nebuchadnezzar placed Gedaliah over the people who were left in the land. “Gedaliah was Jeremiah’s friend (Jer. 26:24), and having, by the prophet’s counsel, probably fled from the city as abandoned of God, he surrendered himself to the conqueror (Jer. 38:2,17), and being promoted to the government of Judea, fixed his provincial court at Mizpah. He was well qualified to surmount the difficulties of ruling at such a crisis. Many of the fugitive Jews, as well as the soldiers of Zedekiah who had accompanied the king in his flight to the plains of Jericho, left their retreats (Jer. 40:11,12), and flocked around the governor, who, having counselled them to submit, promised them, on complying with this condition, security on oath, that they would retain their possessions and enjoy the produce of their land (Jer. 40:9)” (JFB, p.451).
 - b. Jeremiah 26:24: "Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death." Ahikam: “Personal name meaning, ‘my brother stood up.’ Son of Josiah’s scribe Shaphan. He took the book of the law found in the Temple to Huldah the prophetess to determine God’s will (2 Kings 22:8-20). His son Gedaliah headed the Jews left in Judah after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem (586 B.C.) briefly before rebels killed him (2 Kings 25:22-25). Ahikam protected Jeremiah when King Jehoiakim wanted to kill the prophet (Jer. 26:24). Later, his son also protected Jeremiah (Jer. 39:14)” (Holman).
 - c. Jeremiah 38:2,17: "Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live....Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house."
 - d. Jeremiah 40:9: "And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan swore unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."
 - e. Jeremiah 40:11-12: "Likewise when all the Jews that *were* in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much."
 3. Verses 25-26: “But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.”
 - a. Ishmael, who was of the royal seed, brought ten men and slew Gedaliah. “He had found refuge with Baalis, king of the Ammonites, and he returned with a bad design, being either instigated by envy of a governor not descended from the house of David, or bribed by Baalis to murder Gedaliah. The generous governor, though appraised of his intentions, refused to credit the report, much less to sanction the proposal made by an attached friend to cut off Ishmael. The consequence was, that he was murdered by this same Ishmael, when entertaining him in his own house (Jer. 41:1)” (JFB, p.451).
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- b. Jeremiah gives a fuller account of this evil deed: "Now it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah. Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, *even* with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war. And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew *it*, That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And it was *so*, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, *and cast them* into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that *were* with him. But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren. Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, *was* it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: *and* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *them that were* slain. Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that *were* in Mizpah, *even* the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites" (Jer. 41:1-10).
- c. A large number of the Jews, fearful of the reprisals of the Babylonians over the death of Gedaliah, sought refuge in Egypt. Jeremiah had warned them against going into Egypt, but they would not listen.
- 1) Jeremiah 43:7-12 "So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they *even* to Tahpanhes. Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which *is* at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, *and deliver* such *as are* for death to death; and such *as are* for captivity to captivity; and such *as are* for the sword to the sword. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace."
 - 2) Jeremiah 44:1,7-10: "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying...Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? They are not humbled *even* unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers."
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E. 2 Kings 25:27-30: Jehoiachin in Captivity.

1. Verse 27: “And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison.”
 - a. About the year 560 B.C., in the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin’s imprisonment, the king of Babylon took pity on the former king of Israel, and released him from prison.
 - b. Evil-merodach was this monarch of Babylonia. Evil-merodach: “Babylonian royal name meaning, ‘worshiper of Marduk.’ Babylonian king (562-560 B.C.) who treated Jehoiachin, king of Judah, with kindness (2 Kings 25:27). The Babylonian form of the name is Amel-Marduk. He was the son of Nebuchadrezzar” (Holman).
 2. Verses 28-30: “And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon; And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.”
 - a. Jehoiachin was about fifty-eight years old at this time. He was eighteen when he became king (2 Kings 24:8); he was arrested and imprisoned after a three-month reign; thirty-seven years later, he was released from his prison.
 - b. There were other conquered kings in Babylon at the time; Jehoiachin was exalted above them in the way he was now treated by his “host.”
 - c. His prison garments were replaced for regular clothes; he was given plenty of food; he received an allowance continually through the rest of his life. However, he was not allowed to return home to Israel. The penalty imposed on him for his rebellion against God was indeed hard, but not so great as that suffered by Zedekiah.
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KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

ISRAEL				JUDAH			
KING	REIGNED	YEARS	KIND	KING	REIGNED	YEARS	KIND
Jeroboam	22 years	933-911	Bad	Rehoboam	17 years	933-916	Not Good
Nadab	2 years	911-910	Bad	Abijah	3 years	915-913	Not Good
Baasha	24 years	910-887	Bad	Asa	41 years	912-872	Good
Elah	2 years	887-886	Bad	Jehoshaphat	25 years	874-850	Good
Zimri	7 days	886	Bad	Jehoram	8 years	850-843	Bad
Omri	12 years	886-875	Very Bad	Ahaziah	1 year	843	Bad
Ahab	22 years	875-854	Very Bad	Athaliah	6 years	843-837	Wicked
Ahaziah	2 years	855-854	Bad	Joash	40 years	843-803	Not Bad
Joram	12 years	854-843	Bad	Amaziah	29 years	803-775	Not Bad
Jehu	28 years	843-816	Not Good	Uzziah	52 years	787-735	Good
Jehoahaz	17 years	820-804	Bad	Jotham	16 years	749-734	Good
Joash	16 years	806-790	Bad	Ahaz	16 years	741-726	Bad
Jeroboam	41 years	790-748	Bad	Hezekiah	29 years	726-697	Good
Zechariah	6 months	748	Bad	Manasseh	55 years	697-642	Bad
Shallum	1 month	748	Bad	Amon	2 years	641-640	Bad
Menahem	10 years	748-738	Bad	Josiah	31 years	639-608	Good
Pekahiah	2 years	738-736	Bad	Jehoahaz	3 months	608	Bad
Pekah	20 years	748-730	Bad	Jehoiakim	11 years	608-597	Bad
Hoshea	9 years	730-721	Bad	Jehoiachin	3 months	597	Bad
				Zedekiah	11 years	597-586	Bad

* The names, dates, and years in the table were taken from *Halley's Bible Handbook*, pp.194f.

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