

BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK SERIES

**The Books
Of
Chronicles**

By

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FIRST AND SECOND CHRONICLES

As the Hebrews prepared to leave Mount Sinai and move toward the conquest of Palestine, at Jehovah's command a census was taken. "They declared their pedigrees after their families" (Numbers 1:18). The term "pedigree" literally means "a crane's foot". The leg of the crane terminates in three distinct branches or toes. The crane's foot is simply the extension of the bird's leg. In that regard it is similar to the family tree and thus the word "pedigree" is used to refer to a register of a line of ancestors. Jehovah's order at Sinai meant a careful counting of the entire assembly along with a detailed registration of ancestors. From the time that God had separated the Hebrews as His peculiar people they were conscious of their spiritual destiny. Names of fathers and sons became very important. Mothers and daughters were important too, but the line of descent through the male was especially emphasized. As the godly line of descent came to be clearly distinguished, Jehovah made certain that there was a succession of Chroniclers and historians who would record and trace the details of the revelation. So the Books of Chronicles begin with Adam and conclude with Cyrus' decree liberating the captive Hebrews. These records survey the whole sweep of Jehovah's self-revelation up to the time of the return from Babylonian captivity. Jerome said that the Books of Chronicles "are an epitome of the Old Testament. They are of such high moment and importance, that he who supposes himself to be acquainted with the sacred writings, and does not know the Books of Chronicles, only deceives himself."¹

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, New York, Carlton and Porter, n.d., p. 574.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

The Books of Chronicles provide a remarkable summary of the entire Old Testament record. Our English Bible (Old Testament) begins with Genesis and concludes with Malachi. The Hebrew Bible begins with Genesis and concludes with the Books of Chronicles. Our Lord knew this same order for the books or canon of the Old Testament. In Matthew 23:35 Jesus reminded the Pharisees of the fact that religious leaders had killed the prophets from the time of Abel (Genesis 4:8) until the murder of Zachariah (II Chronicles 24:21). The entire Old Testament was included in this wonderful reference. Just as the Book of Revelation brings to fulfillment the purposes of God for all people everywhere, so the Chronicles bring the student of Hebrew history to that vantage point from which he can look for the promised Saviour. Harrison, in his Introduction to the Old Testament says, "the two books of Chronicles comprise a history of the Hebrew people from Adam to the time of Cyrus, paralleling the writings from Genesis to Kings, with Ezra and Nehemiah as a conclusion."¹

The title or name of a Bible book is an important key to the content of that particular record. "In the Hebrew Bible the two books of Chronicles form a single work and bear the title "the words of the days" (divere hayyamin). As is seen from I Chr. 27:24, the term is used in the sense of annals. The LXX divided the book into two and called them Paraleipomena, i.e., things omitted or passed over."² The original Hebrew title suggests that these were regarded as historical records. The Greek title used in the LXX would tend to regard these records as supplementary to other Old Testament accounts. The English title "Chronicles", dates from about the time of Jerome (c. 400 A.D.)³ The name "Chronicles", signifies an historical account of events in the order of time.

¹Harrison, Ronald K., *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969, p. 1152.

²Young, Edward J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1949, p. 381.

³Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, Vol. 13, New Ed., Funk and Wagnalls Co., London, n.d., p ii.

FIRST CHRONICLES

The authorship and date of each of the books of the Bible are matters of primary concern to the Bible student. When one has examined the evidence and has made up his mind with regard to the complete inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God and when he is certain that the books in the Bible are the only authentic records of God's revelation, a base is established for the examination of the authorship and date of each Bible book. The position held and maintained by this writer is that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God and that the thirty nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty seven books of the New Testament, and these books only, comprise the inspired written record of God's will for man.

There is ample evidence supporting the inclusion of the books of Chronicles in the canon of the Old Testament. The content of these books is credible and well attested in cross references to many other parts of the Old Testament. Archer, in his book, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, presents a good summary with regard to the authorship and date of these books.

Like the other historical books, Chronicles does not specify the name of its author. Internal evidence points to a period between 450 and 425 B.C. as its time of composition. It is quite possible that the Talmudic tradition (Baba Bathra 15a) is correct in assigning the authorship to Ezra. As the chief architect of the spiritual and moral revival of the Second Commonwealth he would have had every incentive to produce a historical survey of this sort. As a Levite from the priestly line his viewpoint would have been in perfect agreement with that of the author of this work and he would be very apt to lay the stress just where the Chronicler has.⁴

The conservative viewpoint is that the books of Chronicles were written by the priestly scribe, Ezra about 450-425 B.C.⁵ James Orr in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says that

⁴Archer, Gleason G., Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p.

⁵Young, Edward J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 383, 384.

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the books of Chronicles "were completed within the lifetime of Nehemiah, not later or not much later than 400 B. C.⁶ He also holds that since the books of Chronicles conclude the Hebrew Scriptures, their very position would indicate that they are the latest Old Testament writings.

The books of Chronicles contain lists of genealogies in the first seven chapters of I Chronicles which go back to the very beginning and proceed through the times of the Babylonian captivity. There is a brief section in I Chronicles 9:1-34 which describes the re-establishment of ancient inheritances after the return from the Captivity. The primary content from I Chronicles 9:35 to the conclusion of II Chronicles has to do with the history of the kingdom of Judah to the time of the Captivity and the restoration. There is a considerable body of material recorded only in the Books of Chronicles. The same is true with regard to the Books of Samuel and Kings. There are many parallel accounts in the books of Chronicles and Kings.

The materials in the books of Chronicles were not designed merely to supplement the other historical records. The author concerns himself with the great tribe of Judah. It is estimated that five-sixths of the entire work is devoted exclusively to the history of Judah. Much attention is given to the Temple, her priests and services. Looking to the re-establishment of God's people after the Captivity and return, the books of Chronicles formed an authoritative reference with regard to the Temple, territorial assignments, and civil service. These books formed "the charter of the reconstruction of a shattered kingdom on its proper historical basis."⁷

⁶Orr, James, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, The Howard Severance Co., 1915, p. 633.

⁷Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 13, p. xiii.

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

(As presented by Merrill F. Unger in
Introductory Guide to the Old Testament)¹

Part I.	Genealogies from Adam to David	I Chr. 1:1-9:44
	a. From Adam to Jacob	1:1-2:2
	b. Jacob's generation	2:3-9:44
Part II.	History of King David	10:1-29:30
	a. The Death of Saul	10:1-14
	b. Capture of Zion and David's Heroes	11:1-12:40
	c. David's prosperous reign	13:1-22:1
	d. David's accomplishments in behalf of ritualistic worship	22:2-29:30
Part III.	History of King Solomon	II Chronicles 1:1-9:31
	a. Solomon's wealth and wisdom	1:1-17
	b. His building and dedication of the Temple	2:1-7:22
	c. His various activities and death	8:1-9:31
Part IV.	History of the Kings of Judah	10:1-36:23
	a. From Rehoboam to Zedekiah	10:1-36:21
	b. The edict of Cyrus	36:22,23

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

SCHEDULE OF LESSONS

LESSON ONE I Chronicles, chapter 1-3, The Descendants of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Esau, Jacob, Judah, and David.

LESSON TWO I Chronicles, chapter 4-6, The Descendants of Judah, Simeon, Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, and Levi.

LESSON THREE I Chronicles, chapters 7 and 8, The Descendants of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher.

LESSON FOUR I Chronicles, chapters 9 and 10, Return from Babylon, Tribal Settlements, The Overthrow of Saul's House.

¹Unger, Merrill F., *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan Publishing House, 1951, p. 407.

SCHEDULE OF LESSONS

LESSON FIVE I Chronicles, chapters 11 and 12, The Life and Times of David and His Warriors.

LESSON SIX I Chronicles, chapters 13 and 14, David and the Ark of the Covenant. David's Family. War with Philistia.

LESSON SEVEN I Chronicles, chapters 15 and 16, The Ark of the Covenant Brought to Jerusalem. David's Song of Thanksgiving. The Ministers and Worship.

LESSON EIGHT I Chronicles, chapters 17 and 18, David and the Temple. Israel Goes to War.

LESSON NINE I Chronicles, chapters 19 and 20, Israel's Conflict With Ammon. The Conquest of the Philistines.

LESSON TEN I Chronicles, chapters 21 and 22, A Military Census and a Plague.

LESSON ELEVEN I Chronicles, chapters 23 and 24, David's organization of the Levites.

LESSON TWELVE I Chronicles, chapters 25 and 26, The Appointment of Musicians, Doorkeepers and Stewards of the Temple Treasury.

LESSON THIRTEEN I Chronicles, chapters 27-29, David's Military Organization, His Counselors, His Charge to Solomon, His Prayer for the Temple, His Death.

LESSON FOURTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 1-4, Solomon's Kingdom. The Temple and its Furnishings.

LESSON FIFTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 5-8, The Ark and The Temple. Solomon's Prayer of Dedication. A Great Festival. Solomon as King.

LESSON SIXTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 9-11, A Queen comes to Jerusalem. Rehoboam and the Kingdom.

LESSON SEVENTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 12-14, Egypt Invades Israel. Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom. Asa and the Ethiopians.

LESSON EIGHTEEN II Chronicles, chapters 15-17, Asa, the Reformer. Hanani, Man of God. Life and Times of Jehoshaphat.

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LESSON NINETEEN II Chronicles, chapters 18-20, Jehoshaphat and Ahab. War with Moab and Ammon.

LESSON TWENTY II Chronicles, chapters 21-23, The Life and Times of Jehoram. The Reign of Ahaziah. Athaliah's Death. The Coronation of Joash.

LESSON TWENTY-ONE II Chronicles, chapters 24-26, The Reign of Joash, Amaziah's Rise and Fall. Uzziah's Life and Times.

LESSON TWENTY-TWO II Chronicles, chapters 27-29, The Reign of Jotham. Ahaz and His Allies. Hezekiah, the Religious Reformer.

LESSON TWENTY-THREE II Chronicles, chapters 30-33, Hezekiah and the Passover. Reorganization of the Temple Procedures. Assyrian Invasion. The Reign of Manasseh and Amon.

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR II Chronicles, chapters 34-36, Josiah's Reformation. The Last Days of the Southern Kingdom. Babylonian Captivity. The Decree of Cyrus.

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FIRST CHRONICLES

LESSON ONE 1-3

I. GENEALOGIES FROM ADAM TO DAVID (1:1-9:44)

1. THE GENEALOGY OF THE HUMAN RACE FROM ADAM TO NOAH AND NOAH'S THREE SONS

INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters of I Chronicles cover the list of descendants from Adam until the times of Zerubbabel and the return from captivity. Special attention is given to those of the line of descent which would ultimately lead to Jesus Christ.

TEXT

1. Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2. Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, 3. Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4. Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

PARAPHRASE¹

1. These are the earliest generations of mankind: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

COMMENTARY

The record in I Chronicles begins with Adam and lists the patriarchs of whom Noah is the tenth. The chronicler² is not primarily concerned about the creation of the heavens and the earth as described in Genesis, Chapter 1. He is concerned with Adam and those of his kind through whom the promised Seed will come. The men named above are very important in God's plans. It will be clearly evident to the careful student that the chronicler establishes the fact that the house of David will by God's direction produce the Messiah. Questions will arise. Credentials must be presented. What is this house of David? Who is the Messiah? Can you present historical data to support

¹*The Living Bible Paraphrased*, Wheaton, Tyndale House Publishers, 1971.

²The human agent used by God to write the Books of Chronicles.

your conclusions? Both books of Chronicles are designed to answer these questions. Therefore, the first word in the record is "Adam".

The name "Adam" means red or ruddy. While it is a personal name, in the Hebrew it also may mean "mankind". A genuine acquaintance must be formed with Adam if one is to come to appreciate man and the eternal God who created him. Adam is mentioned many times in the scriptures. His creation in God's image (Genesis 1:26; 2:7); his appointment in Eden (Genesis 2:15); his marvelous intelligence manifested as he named the animals (Genesis 2:20); his participation in the creation of Eve (Genesis 2:23); his temptation and sin (Genesis 3:8); his being driven out of Eden (Genesis 3:23); his role as the father of at least three sons (Genesis 4:25); and his office as he pointed to the second Adam, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:12-21; I Corinthians 15:22-47)-- all need to be carefully explored. With Adam, God opened the revelation of Himself to mankind. Since all men must trace their origin to Adam, the line of godly descent leading through David to Christ begins with Adam.

Seth comes on the scene as Adam's son when the father was one hundred thirty years of age sometime after Cain had murdered Abel. His name means "setting" or "appointed". When Abel was killed, Eve said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel" (Genesis 4:25). Eve was concerned about the "seed" promised by God in Genesis 3:15. Seth's main purpose in life was to provide a link in the godly line of descent. At the age of one hundred and five years Seth became the father of Enosh (Genesis 4:26). No other incident in his life is recorded. He died when he was nine hundred and twelve years of age. It was at this time that "men began to call upon the name of Jehovah" (Genesis 4:26).

The fifth chapter of Genesis records the generations from Adam to Noah. Considering the age of each father when his son was born, a total of one thousand six hundred and fifty six years passed from the time of Adam to the beginning of the Flood. When Enosh was ninety years old his son Kenan was born. Enosh died at the age of nine hundred and five years.

Kenan was the contribution of Enosh to God's purpose (Genesis 5:9-11). The birth and training of a godly child can be a most important enterprise.

When Kenan was seventy years old he became the father of Mahalalel. As had been true with preceding patriarchs, in addition to the godly seed, other sons and daughters were born (Genesis 5:12-14). Those not in the godly lineage are not named. Kenan died when he was nine hundred and ten years of age.

Mahalalel was only sixty five years old when his son, Jared, was born. So Mahalalel lived and died at the end of eight hundred and ninety five years (Genesis 5:15-17). Jared, at the age of one hundred and sixty two years, became Enoch's father. Having fathered other unnamed sons and daughters, Jared died in his nine hundred and sixty second year (Genesis 5:18-20). Jared's love for God is revealed in the character of his son, Enoch.* When Enoch was sixty five years of age he became Methuselah's father. When Enoch was three hundred and sixty five years old God "took" him. Unlike the patriarchs before him, he did not die. When he was a young man, in comparison with the long lives of those who preceded and followed him, he walked with God and did not experience death (Genesis 5:21-24). This reflects the training which Enoch undoubtedly received in his father's house. Enoch's faith qualified him for immortality among the faithful (Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14).

At the age of one hundred and eighty seven years Methuselah became the father of Lamech** (Genesis 5:25-27). After that, other sons and daughters were born into his family. Methuselah's claim to distinction is that he lived nine hundred and sixty nine years — the most advanced age for man recorded in scriptures. In this long life there is a hint or foretaste of God's purpose for those who love him.

Lamech, at the age of one hundred and eighty two years, became the father of Noah (Genesis 5:28-31). The name "Noah" means "comfort" or "rest". Lamech said that Noah

*Not to be confused with the Enoch of Genesis 4:17.

**Not to be confused with the Lamech of Genesis 4:18.

will "comfort us in our work and in the toil of our hands". Here is a man whose godly son rose up and called him "blessed". Lamech died at the age of seven hundred and seventy seven years; but his son was destined to be God's man in one of the darkest hours of human history.

Considering the promised seed (Genesis 3:15), Noah carried in his life the prospects of a better day. When he was five hundred years old, his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born (Genesis 5:32). The Flood came when Noah was six hundred years of age (Genesis 7:6). For one hundred and twenty years prior to the Flood Noah was building the ark and doing the work of a "preacher of righteousness" (Genesis 6:3; II Peter 2:5). When he attained the age of nine hundred and fifty years he died (Genesis 9:29). By his godly life he qualified for the roll of the faithful (Hebrews 11:7). Adam's relationship to mankind in the beginning is renewed in Noah's importance in God's plans after the Flood. From his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, (Genesis 9:18,19), the whole earth was eventually to be populated.

These sons were three in number. God will use only one of them as a vehicle for the Godly seed. Genesis, chapter 10, names the sons and descendants of Noah's sons. Japheth's people were the Medes, Greeks, Asians, and Europeans. Ham's descendants were to live in Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and Canaan. Shem's people, called Semites, were to become the Persians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Syrians, and the Hebrews. The godly line will come from Shem through Arpachshad (Genesis 10:22). So it is from this point that the genealogy continues in Genesis, chapter 11 (Genesis 11:10, 11) and carries to Abram (Genesis 11:26).

Against this background every name in I Chronicles 1:1-4 is very important. In the history bound up in these lives the foundation for Israel's history is laid. Apart from these patriarchs, David's life would have no meaning.

2. THE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH'S SONS AND THE SONS OF ESAU (1:5-54)

TEXT

5. The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. 6. And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Diphath, and Togarmah. 7. And the sons of Javen: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

8. The sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 9. And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raama, and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan. 10. And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 11. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, 12. and Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whence came the Philistines), and Caphtorim. 13. And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth, 14. and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, 15. and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, 16. and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

17. The sons of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arpachshad, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech. 18. And Arpachshad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber. 19. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg; for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. 20. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, 21. and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, 22. and Ebal, and Abimael, and Sheba, 23. and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. 24. Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, 25. Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26. Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27. Abram (the same is Abraham).

28. The sons of Abraham: Isaac, and Ishmael. 29. These are their generations: the first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, 30. Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema, 31. Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael. 32. And the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of

Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. 33. And the sons of Midian: Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. 34. And Abraham begat Isaac. The Sons of Isaac: Esau; and Israel 35. The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeushi; and Jalam, and Korah. 36. The sons of Eliphaz: Teman; and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek. 37. The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. 38. And the sons of Seir: Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan. 39. And the sons of Lotan: Hori, and Homan; and Timna was Lotan's sister. 40. The sons of Shobal: Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon: Aiah, and Anah. 41. The sons of Anah: Dishon. And the sons of Dishon: Hamran, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. 42. The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, and Zaavan, Jaakan. The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

43. Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor; and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 44. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. 45. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead. 46. And Husham died, and Hadad the sons of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Avith. 47. And Hadad died, and Samlah of Marekah reigned in his stead. 48. And Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth by the River reigned in his stead. 49. And Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. 50. And Baal-hanan died, and Hadad reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Pai: and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-zahab. 51. And Hadad died. And the chiefs of Edom were: chief Timna, chief Aliah, chief Jetheth, 52. chief Oholibamab, chief Elah, chief Pinon, 53. chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, 54. chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom.

PARAPHRASE,

Chapter 5-9. The sons of Japheth were: Gomer, Magog,

Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Diphath, and Togarmah. The sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

8. The sons of Ham: Cush, Misream, Canaan, and Put. The sons of Cush were: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca. The sons of Raama were Sheba and Dedan. 10. Another of the sons of Cush was Nimrod, who became a great hero. 11, 12. The clans named after the sons of Misream were: the Ludim, the Anamin, the Lehabim, the Naphtuhim, the Pathrusim, the Caphtorim, and the Casluhim (the ancestors of the Philistines). 13-16. Among Canaan's sons were: Sidon (his first-born) and Heth. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathitee.

17. The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech. 18. Arpachshad's son was Shelah, and Shelah's son was Eber. 19. Eber had two sons: Peleg (which means "Divided", for it was during his lifetime that the people of the earth were divided into different language groups), and Joktan. 20-23. The sons of Joktan: Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Ebal, Abima-el, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Joab. 24-27. So the son of Shem was Arpachshad, the son of Arpachshad was Shelah, the son of Shelah was Eber, the son of Eber was Peleg, The son of Peleg was Reu, the son of Reu was Serug, the son of Serug was Nahor, the son of Nahor was Terah, the son of Terah was Abram (later known as Abraham.)

28-31. Abraham's sons were Isaac and Ishmael. The sons of Ishmael: Nabaioth (the oldest), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 32. Abraham also had sons by his concubine Keturah: Zimram, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan's sons were Sheba and Dedan. 33. The sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. These were the descendants of Abraham by his concubine Keturah. 34. Abraham's son Isaac had two sons, Esau and Israel. 35. The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. 36. The sons

of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, and Amalek. 37. The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. 38-39. The sons of Esau also included Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; and Esau's daughter was named Timna. Lotan's sons: Hori and Homan. 40. The sons of Shobal: Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. Zibeon's sons were Aiah and Anah. 41. Ahan's son was Dishon: The sons of Dishon: Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 42. The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan. Dishan's sons were Uz and Aran.

43. Here is a list of the names of the kings of Edom who reigned before the kingdom of Israel began: Bela (the son of Beor), who lived in the city of Dinhabah. 44. When Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah from Bozrah became the new king. 45. When Jobab died, Husham from the country of the Temanites became the king. 46. When Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad—the one who destroyed the army of Midian in the fields of Moab—became king and ruled from the city of Avith. 47. When Hadad died, Samlah from the city of Masrekah came to the throne. 48. When Samlah died, Shaul from the river town of Rehoboth became the new king. 49. When Shaul died, Baalhanan the son of Achbor became king. 50. When Baalhanan died, Hadad became king and ruled from the city of Pai (his wife was Mehetable, the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Mezahab). 51-54. At the time of Hadad's death, the kings of Edom were: Chief Timna, Chief Aliah, Chief Jetheth, Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Kenza, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, Chief Magdi-el, Chief Iram.

COMMENTARY

Japheth's descendants are listed in verses five through seven. He was the father of seven sons. Their names are Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. The sons of Gomer and Javan are also listed. The initial record is in Genesis 10:2-5. The descendants of Gomer settled in the coastlands of the Black and Caspian Seas and spread westward across Europe. Magog was the father of ferocious warriors identified with the

Scythians who lived in the regions beyond the Caspian Sea to the north. Madai is the father of Medes who lived near the south-west shore of the Caspian Sea. Javan was the father of the Greeks who settled near the Aegean Sea. The descendants of Tubal found their place in Asia Minor, while Meschech settled on the south-east shores of the Black Sea in northern Armenia. Tiras is believed to have been the founder of the Thracian people on the west coast of the Black Sea.

The sons of Gomer are named in verse 6. Ashkenaz settled between the Black and the Caspian Seas. There is a possibility that the Germans may have come from him. Diphath, called Riphath in Genesis 10:3, probably settled on the north shores of the Caspian Sea. The Armenians most likely can trace their ancestry to Togarmah. Javan's sons named in verse 7 settled in the region of the Mediterranean Sea. Elishah is associated with the islands of the Aegean Sea. Tarshish is usually identified with Tartessus in Spain far to the west. The island of Cyprus is identified with Kittim. Rodanim, called Dodanim in Genesis 10:4, settled at the south-west shore of the Black sea and was probably the father of the Trojans.

The sons of Ham are named in verses eight through sixteen. He was the father of four sons, namely, Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. Cush is identified with Ethiopia. Egypt is often called "Mizraim". Put was the father of the Libyan people. Canaan settled in the tract of land between Sidon and the Philistine country at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea. Cush's sons were Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca. These would have settled in the regions of Ethiopia and Africa. The sons of Raama, namely, Sheba and Dedan located in Arabia on the shore of the Persian Gulf. Nimrod, descendant of Cush, is named in Genesis 10:8. His name means "rebel". He is identified as a mighty warrior and hunter. He may have been one of earth's earliest kings ruling over many people in the Tigris-Euphrates valleys. The descendants of Mizraim were Ludim, Anamin, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim. We would expect to locate most of these in the environs of Egypt and the Delta country. Pathros usually refers

to Upper Egypt. The name "Philistine", according to an Ethiopic root, means "emigrants" . . . Jeremiah 47:4 and Amos 9:7 relate the Philistines to Caphtorum. The Philistines may have come partly from Egypt and partly from the Mediterranean region.

Canaan's descendants were Sidon, Heth, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite people all settled at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean Sea. The personal name "Sidon" is immortalized in the famed Phoenician city. Heth's people were called Hittites and were one of the seven nations which had to be overcome in the conquest of Canaan. The Jebusites very early settled in Jerusalem and had to be displaced in David's day. The Amorites were mountain people and were located east and west of the Jordan River. The Girgashites were one of the seven nations occupying Canaan in Joshua's day. The Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites settled in the regions of Phoenicia and the Lebanon mountains.

The sons of Shem are of greatest interest to the Chronicler. According to the record in Genesis 10:22, Shem was the father of five sons: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. Elam settled beyond the Tigris River to the east near the Persian Gulf. Asshur is recognized as the ancestor of Assyria and settled in the upper region of the Tigris River. Terah and Abram were Arpachshadites. They lived in ancient Ur, about one hundred and fifty miles north of the Persian Gulf. Lud probably settled in the Euphrates River valley. Later his people moved westward into the regions of Asia Minor. The Syrian people trace their beginnings to Aram. Their ancient capital was Damascus which was located about one hundred and thirty miles NNE of Jerusalem. Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meschech are identified as the sons of Aram.

Of all the sons of Shem (Semites) the writer of this record is most concerned with Arpachshad. The godly line of descent is located in 1:24-27. Shelah was Arpachshad's son. Eber was Shelah's son. Eber had two sons, Peleg and Joktan. The sons of

descendants of Joktan were Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All of these most likely settled in Arabia. Sheba settled at the south-west extremity of Arabia near the Red Sea. From this place the queen came to visit Solomon. Ophir and Havilah were the names of places in the same general area as Sheba. Both of these were renowned as places which provided the finest gold.¹

In one brief statement the chronicler moves from Shem to Abram. All the persons named in verses 24-27 are Shem's direct descendants. The original genealogy is recorded in Genesis 11:10-26. These people are all Semites. Eber is regarded by some as the founder of the Hebrews. The name "Eber" means "regions beyond" or "to pass over". The Hebrews passed over the Euphrates River. Abraham is the first person in Bible record who is called a "Hebrew" (Genesis 14:13).

Verses 28-31 tell about Isaac and Ishmael. God's promise is bound up in Isaac, the son of the promise. Ishmael, the child of worldly wisdom, became the father of twelve sons and a great desert chieftain. Kedar, Teman, and Dumah are mentioned on occasion in the Bible record. They lived on the edge of the desert adjacent to Palestine and Syria.

Late in life Abraham married another wife, Keturah. She was the mother of six of Abraham's sons. Like Ishmael, they took up their abode in the desert. Midian, Abraham's son, settled east of the Sinai peninsula beyond the Gulf of Aqaba. Moses married among these people.

Isaac's sons were Esau and Israel, or Jacob. God's purpose was to be worked out through Jacob and his seed. David came through Jacob's line. Nevertheless, Esau was Isaac's son and he was destined to have a place in history. The sons of Esau and the kings of Edom (Esau's country) are named in verses 35-54. Genesis 36:1-5 lists the five sons of Esau. Esau's country was Mount Seir and the land of Edom south of the Dead Sea. All of these persons named in verses 35-54 settled in that general

¹Pfeiffer, Charles F., *Baker's Bible Atlas*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961, pp. 37-44.

region. The descendants of Seir are listed in verses 38-42. Seir means "rough". He is to be identified as a person and he is known as the ancestor of the Horites who had lived in what became the Edomite country. These sons of Seir are not important from the Messianic viewpoint. They are listed here to underscore the fact that Esau was not completely disinherited. His people were numerous and they inhabited an important territory.

The kings and dukes, or chiefs, of Edom are listed in verses 43-54. This information is initially recorded in Genesis 36:31-43. The author of this account is not primarily interested in Esau and his people; but they were a people with whom Israel had to reckon. The genealogies of this chapter with their parallels in Genesis are notable for standing unique in all the world's writing and in rising far above all the world's mythology. They retrace the pedigree of the wide family of men and especially of the now scattered family of the Jew to its original.¹

Chapter two proceeds to present the genealogy of Jacob and Judah. Verses one and two list the twelve sons of Jacob, here called Israel, the name Jacob received at Peniel (Genesis 32:28). First listed are Leah's six sons, namely Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Bilhah's elder son, Dan, then is named. The sons of Rachael, Joseph and Benjamin, follow. Bilhah's second son, Naphtali, is listed. Finally, Gad and Asher, Zilpah's sons complete the twelve names. It is of interest to note that the usual listing of Ephraim and Manasséh does not appear and that their father Joseph is listed in his own place.

The evident design of the chronicler here is to emphasize the importance of Judah. Verses 3-55 give attention to Judah and his descendants. Jacob had said (Genesis 49:10) that the sceptre would not depart from Judah until Shiloh should come. "Shiloh" is a descriptive term signifying a prince of peace, a kingly seed. God's messianic purpose certainly involves the tribe of Judah. Judah's five sons are named in verses 3-6. They are

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, 1 *Chronicles*, Funk and Wagnalls, London, n.d., p. 6.

named originally in Genesis, chapter 38. Sua was a Canaanite. Judah married his daughter who is not named. She bore him three sons, namely, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er and Onan were stricken down by God. Judah promised Shelah as a husband to Tamar who had been wife to Shelah's older brothers. Judah neglected to fulfil his promise. Tamar joined herself to a heathen temple and played the part of a "religious prostitute". Judah visited this Temple and Tamar became the mother of Judah's last two sons, Perez and Zerah. The line of messianic descent came through Perez (Matthew 1:3).

The sons and descendants of Perez and Zerah are named in verses 5-8. Since the promised seed will come through Perez, his son Hezron is named in verse 5, then Hezron's line is continued in verse 9. The sons of Zerah are named in I Kings 4:31. In this connection Solomon's great wisdom is contrasted with the wisdom of these men. Achar (Achan, Joshua 7:1), is identified with the man who took the devoted things at the time of the overthrow of Jericho. The sons of Hezron are listed in verses 9-24. There are some persons of outstanding importance who are members of this family. Chelubai is identified with Caleb, the faithful spy and great warrior. Boaz became the husband of Ruth and father of Obed. Obed was Jesse's father and Jesse was the father of eight sons (I Samuel 16:10, 11), of whom David was the youngest. Probably one of David's brothers died in infancy (v. 16). David's sister, Zeruah, is renowned in the Bible record as the mother of Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, David's sister, Abigail, was the mother of Amasa who once was Absalom's captain and later was David's captain of the host (II Samuel 17:25). Hur (v. 20) was the man who along with Aaron supported Moses' arms in the conflict with the Amalekites (Exodus 17:12). Bezalel, Hur's grandson, was a master craftsman in the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:2). There was intermarriage between the tribes of Judah and Manasseh as Hezron married a daughter of Machir.

The family of Jerahmeel, Hezron's son, is listed in verses 25-41. Several of the names in this table are familiar Hebrew names: Nadab, Jonathan, Nathan, Jehu, Azariah, and Shallum.

Nothing more definitive is known concerning any of these beyond the fact that they are in the line of descent from Perez through Hezron and Jerahmeel.

Hezron's sons were Jerahmeel, Ram and Chelubai (Caleb — I Chr. 2:9). Verses 42-49 list the sons of Caleb.¹ This Caleb is the one we know as the faithful spy and the one who took his inheritance in Hebron in the tribe of Judah. We are told that his daughter was named Achsah (2:49). She was given as a wife to Caleb's nephew, Othniel (Judges 1:12, 13). There were villages in Judah, such as Ziph and Maon, which probably were named after persons in Caleb's family. Hur, who was a son of Caleb, evidently had a son named Caleb. His people, also, lived in the Judah country. Ephrath was an old name for Bethlehem. Kiriath-jearim was in the environs of Jerusalem. Eshtaol (verse 53) was the village near Samson's birthplace in the tribe of Dan. The Kenites² were a branch of the Midianite people and they lived in Judah toward the southern and western borders of the Dead Sea. Rechab was founder of a people called Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:2). They were a people whose moral standards were so high that they shamed the Hebrews.

David's sons and family are listed in 3:1-9. This third chapter is concerned only with the families of David and Solomon. All that has gone before in the record in Chronicles is preparatory for this account. Verses 1-4 list David's wives and sons during the seven and one-half years he was in Hebron. David's wives were Ahinoam from Jezreel (there was a town in Judah by this name—Joshua 15:56); Abigail from Carmel (also a village in Judah—Joshua 15:55); Maacah from Geshur (a district beyond the Jordan in the Bashan country); Haggith, Abital, and Eglah. Each of these six wives bore David a son. These were his sons born in Hebron: Amnon, Daniel (or Chileab—II Samuel 3:3), Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, and Ithream. Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah figure prominently in the history of David's reign as king of Israel.

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 22.

²Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., I Samuel—Esther, 1967, p. 321.

The sons of David born in Jerusalem were Shimea (Shammua), Shobab, Nathan and Solomon.¹ These were David's sons by Bathsheba. In addition to these, Ibhara, Elishama, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Eliada, Elishama (Elishua — I Chr. 14:5), and Eliphelet (Elpelet — I Chr. 14:5) were born to David in Jerusalem. The mothers of these sons are not identified. A daughter, Tamar, was born in Jerusalem to Maacah. The record in II Samuel 3:2-5 and II Samuel 5:13-16 lists seventeen sons of David and states that he was also the father of "daughters". The record here says that David had sons of the concubines. Of the children of David born in Jerusalem, Solomon and Tamar are the most important in the Bible records. Tamar was humiliated by her half-brother, Amnon (II Samuel 13:14). Solomon succeeded David on Israel's throne.

The descendants of Solomon are listed in 3:10-24. Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (I Kings 11:3). Only one son, Rehoboam, is identified in the Bible as Solomon's son. Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Ahaziah, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah make up the roll-call of the kings of Judah. Josiah's sons were Johanan, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Shallum. Jehoiakim's son was Jeconiah. Redaiah, Jeconiah's son, was the father of Zerubbabel, the Davidic prince who led the Jewish refugees back from Babylonian captivity. Zerubbabel's descendants figured prominently in the history of the post-exilic period.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON ONE 1-3

1. Where in the Bible is the first record of the orderly listing of the names 1:1-4?
2. Why are Cain and Abel not in this list?
3. In what way is Enoch unique?
4. How many sons belonged to Japheth?
5. Where did Madai and Javan settle?
6. How is Kittim otherwise identified?

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 33.

7. What nation is identified with Mizraim?
8. Carefully describe the region where Canaan settled.
9. How are the Philistines identified as this relates to their origin?
10. To whom were the Jebusites related and where did they live?
11. In relation to Babylon where did the Hamites settle?
12. Number the sons of Shem.
13. Which of these sons of Shem is most important in Jehovah's plans?
14. Carefully locate Ophir.
15. Where in the Bible is the first record of the orderly listing of the names in 1:24-27?
16. How many sons did Ishmael have?
17. Who was Ishmael?
18. Locate Jehovah's promise to Ishmael regarding his family.
19. What did the name "Kedar" come to mean?
20. Who was Keturah and how many sons did she bear?
21. Name all of the sons of Abraham.
22. Name Isaac's sons. Which was the older?
23. Number the sons of Esau.
24. Carefully identify Amalek. Relate his people to king Saul's experiences.
25. What had Jacob promised Esau in the patriarchal blessing (Genesis 27:39,40)?
26. Where did the descendants of Esau live? Locate the area carefully.
27. How many kings and chiefs of Edom are named in 1:43-54?
28. Carefully locate Bozrah.
29. Locate the region of the Temanites.
30. Name the sons of Israel. Why are they so important?
31. Name all of Judah's sons.
32. Carefully identify Tamar.
33. Why is Perez so important in the Biblical record?
34. Who is the Achar of 2:7?
35. Who was Chelubai?

36. Identify Boaz, Obed, and Jesse. Name their tribe.
37. Name the sons of Jesse. Compare this with the account in I Samuel 16:10, 11.
38. Name David's sisters.
39. Name David's nephews (2:16, 17).
40. Identify Hur. What did he do in the Exodus record?
41. Who was Bezalel? Relate him to the history in Exodus.
42. Locate the land of Gilead.
43. Who was Machir?
44. Identify Caleb's tribe. Where did Caleb live? Name his daughter. Whose wife did she become?
45. Who were the Kenites?
46. Carefully identify Rechab.
47. Number David's children (3:1-9).
48. How did each of these sons of David die: Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah?
49. Name Solomon's descendants in order until you come to Zedekiah.
50. Who was Zerubbabel? What was his work in Bible history?

LESSON TWO 4-6

I. GENEALOGIES FROM ADAM TO DAVID (1:1-9:44)

3. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH (2:1-55, 4:23)

INTRODUCTION

The sons of Judah were mothered by Canaanite women, however, Perez was destined to be very important in God's plans. Several familiar names appear in chapters 4-6. The families of the Levites were to have their inheritance in the land of Palestine.

TEXT

Chapter 2-1. These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, 2. Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 3. The sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah; which three were born unto him of Shua's daughter the Canaanitess. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah; and he slew him. 4. And Tamar his daughter-in-law bare him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah were five.

5. The sons of Perez: Hezron, and Hamul. 6. And the sons of Zerah: Zimri, and Ehan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara; five of them in all. 7. And the sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who committed a trespass in the devoted thing. 8. And the sons of Ethan: Azariah.

9. The sons also of Hezron, that were born unto him: Jerahmeel, and Ram, and Chelubai. 10. And Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah: 11. and Nahshon begat Salma, and Salma begat Boaz. 12. and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse; 13. and Jesse begat his first-born Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimea the third, 14. Nethanel the fourth, Raddai, the fifth, 15. Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; 16. and their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah: Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three. 17. And Abigail bare Amasa: and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

And Caleb the son of Hezron begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth; and these were her sons: Jeshur, and Shobab, and Ardon. 19. And Azubah died, and Caleb took unto him Ephrath, who bare him Hur. 20. And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat Bezalel. 21. And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he took to wife when he was threescore years old; and she bare him Segub. 22. And Segub begat Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead. 23. And Geshur and Aram took the towns of Jair from them, with Kenath, and the villages thereof, even threescore cities. All these were the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. 24. And after that Hezron was dead in Caleb-ephrathah, then Abijah Hezron's wife bare him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

25. Add the sons of Jerahmeel the first-born of Hezron were Ram the first-born, and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, Ahijah. 26. And Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. 27. And the sons of Ram the first-born of Jerahmeel were Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker. 28. And the sons of Onam were Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai: Nadab, and Abishur. 29. And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail; and she bare him Ahban, and Molid. 30. And the sons of Nadab: Seled, and Appaim; but Seled died without children. 31. And the sons of Appaim: Ishi. And the sons of Ishi: Sheshan. And the sons of Sheshan: Ahlai. 32. And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai: Jether, and Jonathan; and Jether died without children. 33. And the sons of Jonathan: Peleth, and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. 34. Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha. 35. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife; and she bare him Attai. 36. And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat Zabad, 37. and Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat Obed, 38. and Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat Azariah, 39. and Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat Eleasah, 40. and Eleasah begat Sismai, and Sismai begat Shallum, 41. and Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begat Elishama.

And the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel were Mesha

his first-born, who was the father of Ziph; and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. 43. And the sons of Hebron: Korah, and Tappuah, and Rekem, and Shema. 44. And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkeam; and Rekem begat Shammai. 45. And the son of Shammai was Maon; and Maon was the father of Beth-zur. 46. And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez; and Haran begat Gazez. 47. And the sons of Jahdai: Regem, and Jothan, Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph. 48. Maacah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber and Tirhanah. 49. She bare also Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbena, and the father of Gibeaz; and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah.

50. These were the sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah: Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim, 51. Salma the father of Beth-lehem, Hareph the father of Beth-gader. 52. And Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim had sons: Haroeh, half of the Menuhoth. 53. And the families of Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, and the Puthites, and the Shumathites, and the Mishraitites; of them came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites. 54. The sons of Salma: Beth-lehem, and the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab, and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites. 55. And the families of scribes that dwelt at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, the Sucathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

Chapter 3-1. Now these were the sons of David, that were born unto him in Hebron: the first-born, Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess; 2. the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; 3. the fifth, Shephatiah of Abital; the sixth, Ithream by Eglah his wife: 4. six were born unto him in Hebron; and there he reigned seven years and six months. And in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years; 5. and these were born unto him in Jerusalem: Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel; 6. and Ithar, and Elishama, and Eliphelet, 7. and Negah, and Nepheg, and Japhia, 8. and Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine. 9. All these were the

sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister.

10. And Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11. Joram his sons, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, 12. Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, 13. Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14. Amon his son, Josiah his son. 15. And the sons of Josiah: the first-born Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. 16. And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. 17. And the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son, 18. and Malchiram, and Pedaiah, and Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19. And the sons of Pedaiah: Zerubbabel, and Shimei. And the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam, and Hananiah; and Shelomith was their sister; 20. and Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five. 21. And the sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah, and Jeshaiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. 22. And the sons of Shecaniah: Shemaiah. And the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, and Igal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six. 23. And the sons of Neariah: Elioenai, and Hizkiah, and Azrikam, three. 24. And the sons of Elioenai: Hodaviah, and Eliashib, and Pelaiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Delaiah, and Anani, seven.

Chapter 4-1. The sons of Jusah: Perez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal. 2. And Reaiah the son of Shobal begat Jahath; and Jahath begat Ahumai and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites. 3. And these were the sons of the father of Etam: Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazzelelponi; 4. and Penuel the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These are the sons of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem. 5. And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. 6. And Naarah bare him Ahuzzam, and Hopher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah. 7. And the sons of Helah were Zereth, Izhar, and Ethnan. 8. And Hakkoz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum. 9. And Jabez was more honorable than his

brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. 10. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it be not to my sorrow! And God granted him that which he requested. 11. And Chelub, the brother of Shuhah begat Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. 12. And Eshton begat Beth-rapha, and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Irnahash. These are the men of Recah. 13. And the sons of Kenaz: Othniel, and Seraiah. And the sons of Othniel; Hathath. 14. And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Seraiah begat Joab the father of Ge-harashim; for they were craftsmen. 15. And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah, and Naam; and the sons of Elah; and Kenaz. 16. And the sons of Jehallelel: Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. 17. And the sons of Ezrah: Jether, and Mered, and Ephher, and Jalon; and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. 18. And his wife the Jewess bare Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. 19. And the sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, were the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. 20. And the sons of Shimon: Amnon, and Rinnah, Benhanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi: Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth. 21. The sons of Shelah the son of Judah: Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; 22. and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And the records are ancient. 23. These were the potters, and the inhabitants of Nétaim and Gederah: there they dwelt with the king for his work.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 2-1. The sons of Israel were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali,

Gad, Asher. 3. Judah had three sons by Bath-shua, a girl from Canaan: Er, Onan, and Shelah. But the oldest son, Er, was so wicked that the Lord killed him. 4. Then Er's widow, Tamar, and her father-in-law, Judah, became the parents of twin sons, Perez and Zerah. So Judah had five sons.

5. The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamuel. 6. The sons of Zerah were: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara. 7. (Achan, the son of Carmi, was the man who robbed God and was such a troublemaker for his nation.) 8. Ethan's son was Azariah.

9. The sons of Hezron were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai. 10. Ram was the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab was the father of Nahshon, a leader of Israel. 11. Nahshon was the father of Salma, and Salma was the father of Boaz. 12. Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed was the father of Jesse. 13. Jesse's first son was Eliab, his second was Abinadab, his third was Shimea, his fourth was Nethanel, his fifth was Raddai, his sixth was Ozem, and his seventh was David. He also had two girls (by the same wife) named Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's sons were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. 17. Abigail, whose husband was Jether from the land of Ishmael, had a son named Amasa.

18. Caleb (the sons of Hezron) had two wives, Azubah and Jerioth. These are the children of Azubah: Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon. 19. After Azubah's death, Caleb married Ephrath, who presented him with a son, Hur. 20. Hur's son was Uri, and Uri's son was Bezalel. 21. Hezron married Machir's daughter at the age of sixty, and she presented him with a son Segub (Machir was also the father of Gilead.) 22. Segub was the father of Jair, who ruled twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23. But Geshur and Aram wrested these cities from him and also took Kenath and its sixty surrounding villages. 24. Soon after his father Hezron's death, Caleb married Ephrathah, his father's widow, and she gave birth to Ashhur, the father of Tekoa.

25. These are the sons of Jerahmeel (the oldest son of Hezron): Ram (the oldest), Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. 26. Jerahmeel's second wife Atarah was the mother of Onam. 27.

The sons of Ram: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. 28. Onam's sons were Shammai and Jada. Shammai's sons were Nadab and Abishur. 29. The sons of Abishur and his wife Abihail were Ahban and Molid. 30. Nadab's sons were Seled and Appa-im. Seled died without children, but Appa-im had a son named Ishi; Ishi's son was Sheshan; and Sheshan's son was Ahlai. 32. Shammai's brother Jada had two sons, Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without children, but Jonathan had two sons named Peleth and Zaza. 34,35. Sheshan had no sons, although he had several daughters. He gave one of his daughters to be the wife of Jarha, his Egyptian servant. And they had a son whom they named Attai. 36. Attai's son was Nathan; Nathan's son was Zabad; Zabad's son was Ephlal; Ephlal's son was Obed; 38. Obed's son was Jehu; Jehu's son was Azariah; 39. Azariah's son was Helez; Helez's son was Ele-asah; 40. Ele-asah's son was Sismai; Sismai's son was Shellum; 41. Shallum's son was Jekamiah; Jekamiah's son was Elishama.

42. The oldest son of Caleb (Jerahmeel's brother) was Meshah; he was the father of Ziph, who was father of Mareshah, who was the father of Hebron. 43. The sons of Hebron: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. 44. Shema was the father of Raham, who was the father of Jorke-am. Rekem was the father of Shammai. 45. Shammai's son was Maon, the father of Bethzur. 46. Caleb's concubine Ephah bore him Haran, Moza, and Gazez; Haran had a son named Gazez. 47. The sons of Jahdai: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph. 48,49. Another of Caleb's concubines, Maacah, bore him Sheber, Tirhanah, Shaaph (the father of Madmannah), and Sheva (the father of Machbenah and of Gibe-a). Caleb also had a daughter, whose name was Achsah.

50. The sons of Hur (who was the oldest son of Caleb and Ephrathah) were Shobal (the father of Kiriath-jearim), 51. Salma (the father of Bethlehem), and Hareph (the father of Beth-gader). 52. Shobal's sons included Kiriath-jearim and Haroeh, the ancestor of half of the Menuhoth tribe. 53. The families of Kiriath-jearim were the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraitites (from whom descended the

Zorathites and Eshtaolites). 54. The descendants of Salma were his son Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atrothbeth-joab, half the Manahathites, and the Zorites; 55. they also included the families of the writers living at Jabez—the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites. All these are Kenites who descended from Hammath, the founder of the family of Rechab.

Chapter 3-1. King David oldest son was Amnon, who was born to his wife, Ahino-am of Jezreel. The second was Daniel, whose mother was Abigail from Carmel. 2. The third was Absalom, the sons of his wife Maacah, who was the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. The fourth was Adonijah, the son of Haggith. 3. The fifth was Shephatiah, the son of Abital. The sixth was Ithream, the son of his wife Eglah. 4. These six were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned seven and one-half years. Then he moved the capital to Jerusalem, where he reigned another thirty-three years. 5. While he was in Jerusalem, his wife Bathsheba (the daughter of Ammi-el) became the mother of his sons Shime-a, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. 6-8. David also had nine other sons: Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet. 9. (This list does not include the sons of his concubines.) David also had a daughter Tamar.

10-14. These are the descendants of King Solomon: Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah. 15. The sons of Josiah were: Johanan, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, Shallum. 16. The sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah, Zedekiah. 17-18. These are the sons who were born to King Jeconiah during the years that he was under house arrest: She-altiel, Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, Nedabiah. 19-20. Pedaiah was the father of Zerubbabel and Shime-i. Zerubbabel's children were: Meshullam, Hananiah, Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, Shelomith (a daughter). 21-22. Hananiah's sons were Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah; Jeshaiiah's son was Rephaiah; Rephaiah's son was Arnan; Arnan's son was Obadiah; Obadiah's son was Shecaniah.

Shecaniah's son was Shemaiah; Shemaiah had six sons, including Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat. 23. Neariah had three sons: Eli-o-enai, Hizkiah, Azrikam. 24. Eli-o-enai had seven sons: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, Anani.

Chapter 4-1. These are the sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, Shobal. 2. Shobal's son Re-aiah was the father of Jahath, the ancestor of Ahumai and Lahad. These were known as the Zorathite clans. 3-4. The descendants of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, Idbash, Hazzelepni (his daughter), Penuel (the ancestor of Gedor), Ezer (the ancestor of Hushah), The son of Hur, the oldest son of Ephrathah, who was the father of Bethlehem. 5. Ashhur, the father of Tekoa, had two wives-Helah, and Naarah. 6. Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Nopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari; and Helah bore him Zereth, Izhar, and Ethnan. 8. Koz was the father of Anub and Zobebah; he was also the ancestor of the clan named after Aharhel, the son of Harum. 9. Jabez was more distinguished than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because she had such a hard time at his birth (Jabez means "Distress"). 10. He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would wonderfully bless me and help me in my work; please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all evil and disaster!" And God granted him his request. 11, 12. The descendants of Recah were: Chelub (the brother of Shuhah), whose son was Mahir, the father of Eshton; Eshton was the father of Bethrapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah; Tehinnah was the father of Irnahash. 13. The sons of Kenaz were Othni-el and Seraiah. Othni-el's sons were Hathath and Meonothai; 14. Meonothai was the father of Ophrah; Seraiah was the father of Joab, the ancestor of the inhabitants of Craftsman Valley (called that because many craftsmen lived there). 15. The sons of Caleb (the son of Jephunneh): Iru, Elah, Naam. The sons of Elah included Kenaz. 16. Jehallelel's sons were: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiri-a, Asarel. 17. Ezrah's sons were: Jether, Mered, Ephher, Jalon. Mered married Bithi-ah, an Egyptian princess. She was the mother of Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah—an ancestor of Eshtemoa. 18. Eshtemoa's wife was

a Jewess; she was the mother of Jered, Heber, and Jekuthiel, who were, respectively, the ancestors of the Gedorites, Socoites, and Zanoahites. 19. Hodiah's wife was the sister of Naham. One of her sons was the father of Keilah the Garmite, and another was the father of Eshtemoa the Maacathite. 20. The sons of Shimon: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, Tilon. The sons of Ishi: Zoheth, Ben-zoheth. 21-22. The sons of Shelah (the son of Judah): Er (the father of Lecah), Laadah (the father of Nareshah), the families of the linen workers who worked at Beth-ashbea, Jokim, the clans of Cozeba, Joash, Saraph (who was a ruler in Moab before he returned to Lehem). These names all come from very ancient records. 23. These clans were noted for their pottery, gardening, and planting; they all worked for the king:

26. Mishma's sons included Hammu-el (the father of Zaccur and grandfather of Shime-i). 27. Shime-i had sixteen sons and six daughters, but none of his brothers had large families—they all had fewer children than was normal in Judah. 28. They lived at Beer-sheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, 29. Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30. Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31. Bethmar-caboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Sha-araim. These cities were under their control until the time of David. 32-33. Their descendants also lived in or near Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan; some were as far away as Baal. (These facts are recorded in their genealogies.) 34-39. These are the names of some of the princes of wealthy clans who traveled to the east side of Gedor Valley in search of pasture for their flocks: Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah, Joel, Jehu, Eli-o-enai, Ja-akobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adi-el, Jesimi-el, Benaiah, Ziza (the son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son of Jedaiah, son of Shimri, son of Shemaiah).

COMMENTARY

This account of the descendants of the tribe of Judah began in chapter 2 and continues through 4:23. Judah's descendants through Perez are listed in 4:1-23. Judah was the father of five sons. His son, Perez, was the one through whom the line of David passed. 4:1 lists five generations beginning with Perez.

Many of these names in verses 1-23 are not mentioned elsewhere. Hur had been named in 2:19, 20. There was a village in the tribe of Judah called Tekoa. This name appears in the genealogical table (v. 5). Jabez is given some special attention (vv. 9, 10). The experience of sorrow was associated with his birth. He did not want to lead a sorrowful life so he walked with God and he was kept from evil. Buried here in an ancient family record is the affirmation that any person who will trust God can master circumstances which otherwise would defeat him. Othniel (v. 13) was Caleb's nephew and Israel's judge in delivering his people from Cushan-rishathaim and the Mesopotamians (Judges 3:9, 10). Caleb (v. 15) is well known to us. In the hill country of Judah there was a village named "Eshtemoh" (Joshua 15:50). This name is very similar to the "Eshtemoa" of v. 17. The names of Miriam and Shammai are familiar Hebrew names. This Miriam is not to be confused with Moses' sister. A certain woman (v. 18) is called "the Jewess". This is most likely nothing more than a translation of the proper name "Hajehudijah". Another connection with Egypt is reflected in the reference to Bithiah, Pharaoh's daughter, who became wife to Mered. Amnon (v. 20) must be distinguished from David's son by the same name. A brief reference is made to Shelah's sons in verses 21-23. There were among these people some highly skilled craftsmen in the manufacture of fine linen and pottery.

4. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF SIMEON (4:24-43)

TEXT

Chapter 4:24. The sons of Simeon: Nemuel, and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul: 25. Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. 26. And the sons of Mishma: Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. 27. And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply like to the children of Judah. 28. And they dwelt at Beer-sheba, and Moladah, and

Hazar-shual, 29. and at Billah, and at Ezem, and at Tolad, 30. and at Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at Ziklag, 31. and at Beth-marcaboth, and Hazarsusim, and at Beth-biri, and at Shaaraim. These were their cities unto the reign of David. 32. And their villages were Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities; 33. and all their villages that were round about the same cities, unto Baal. These were their habitations, and they have their genealogy. 34. And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah, 35. and Joe, and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, 36. and Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Abiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah, 37. and Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah; 38. these mentioned by names were princes in their families: and their fathers' houses increased greatly. 39. And they went to the entrance of Gedor, even unto the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. 40. And they found fat pasture and good, and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable; for they that dwelt there aforetime were of Ham. 41. And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the Meunim that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their stead; because there was pasture there for their flocks. 42. And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. 43. And they smote the remnant of the Amalekites that escaped and have dwelt there unto this day.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 4:24. The sons of Simeon: Nemu-el, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul. 25. Shaul's son was Shallum, his grandson was Mibsam, and his great-grandson was Mishma. 26. Mishma's sons included Hammu-el (the father of Zaccur and grandfather of Shime-i). 27. Shime-i had sixteen sons and six daughters, but none of his brothers had large families—they all had fewer children than was normal in Judah. 28. They lived at

Beer-sheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, 29. Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30. Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31. Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These cities were under their control until the time of David. 32, 33. Their descendants also lived in or near Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan: some were as far away as Baal. (These facts are recorded in their genealogies.) 34-39. These are the names of some of the princes of wealthy clans who traveled to the east side of Gedor Valley in search of pasture for their flocks: Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah, Joel, Jehu, Eli-o-enai, Ja-akobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adi-el, Jesimi-el, Benaiah, Ziza (the son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son of Jedaiah, son of Shimri, son of Shemaiah). 40, 41. They found good pastures, and everything was quiet and peaceful; but the land belonged to the descendants of Ham. So during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah these princes invaded the land and struck down the tents and houses of the descendants of Ham; they killed the inhabitants of the land and took possession of it for themselves. 42. Later, five hundred of these invaders from the tribe of Simeon went to Mount Seir. (Their leaders were Pelatiah, Ne-ariah; Rephaiah, and Uzziel—all sons of Ishi.) 43. There they destroyed the few surviving members of the tribe of Amalek. And they have lived there ever since.

COMMENTARY

The descendants of Simeon are reviewed in verses 24-43. Since he was not in the direct line of descent leading to Christ, this record is included simply to remind the reader that Jacob had other sons beside Judah. Jacob practically disinherited Simeon at the time of the pronouncement of the patriarchal blessing (Genesis 49:5-7). Simeon had a rather numerous family; however, by God's own design, this tribe was never to be a great one in Israel. The Simeonites took their possession within the limits of the territory of Judah. Some of their chief villages were Beersheba, Hormah, and Ziklag. All of these places are important in Hebrew history. When David came on the scene he found the Simeonites living in the territory which had been theirs since Joshua's day. There was a place in Judah called

“Etam” where Samson took refuge on one occasion (v. 32). The Simeonite people for the most part were shepherds and they lived in good pasture lands. The reference to “Ham” in v. 40 simply states that some of these people who settled mainly in Canaan and Egypt at one time lived in the southern tract of Judah. During Hezekiah’s day (c. 700 B.C.) there had been conflict in Simeon’s territory over pasture lands. The Simeonites were able at that time to take some territory in Edom (Mount Seir). At the same time the Simeonites successfully engaged the Amalekites in war.

5. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF REUBEN (5:1-10)

TEXT

Chapter 5:1. And the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father’s couch, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. 2. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the prince; but the birthright was Joseph’s), 3. the sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel: Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. 4. The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5. Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, 6. Beerah his son, whom Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria carried away captive: he was prince of the Reubenites. 7. And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, 8. and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo and Baal-meon: 9. and eastward he dwelt even unto the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead. 10. And in the days of Saul, they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the land east of Gilead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:1. The oldest son of Israel was Reuben, but since

he dishonored his father by sleeping with one of his father's wives, his birthright was given to his half brother, Joseph. So the official genealogy doesn't name Reuben as the oldest son. 2. Although Joseph received the birthright, yet Judah was a powerful and influential tribe in Israel, and from Judah came a Prince. 3. The sons of Reuben, Israel's son, were: Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, Carmi. 4. Joel's descendants were his son Shemaiah, his grandson Gog, and his great-grandson Shime-i. 5. Shime-i's son was Micah; his grandson was Reaiah; and his great-grandson was Baal. 6. Baal's son was Beerah. He was a prince of the tribe of Reuben and was taken into captivity by King Tilgath-pilneser of Assyria. 7, 8. His relatives became heads of clans and were included in the official genealogy: Je-iel, Zechariah, Bela (the son of Azaz, grandson of Shema, and great-grandson of Joel). These Reubenites lived in Aroer and as far distant as Mount Nebo and Baal-meon. 9. Joel was a cattle man, and he pastured his animals eastward to the edge of the desert and to the Euphrates River, for there were many cattle in the land of Gilead. 10. During the reign of King Saul, the men of Reuben defeated the Hagarites in war and moved into their tents on the eastern edges of Gilead.

COMMENTARY

Once more the natural law of the first-born is violated as the chronicler has already given attention to Judah and Simeon. Reuben was Jacob's first son borne by Leah (Genesis 29:32). This son, who was the hope of Jacob's family, proved unworthy of the trust when he dared to sin sexually with Bilhah, his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22). In the patriarchal meeting (Genesis 49:3, 4), Reuben was disinherited. Genesis, chapter 48, describes the blessings pronounced on Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. The record would indicate that Reuben's blessing was shared with the sons of Joseph. Judah, however, received a blessing and a responsibility which was greater than Reuben's and which also exceeded that of the sons of Joseph. Reuben's sons are listed in Numbers 26:5-7 when in the second census his warriors numbered 43,730. These sons are Hanoah, Pallu,

Hezron, and Carmi. The names that follow in verses 4-10 are Reuben's descendants. Reuben's territory lay beyond the Jordan to the south and east. These tribes suffered at the hands of the Assyrians when Tilgath-pilneser and his armies overthrew Samaria and scattered the tribes of Israel in 722-21 B.C. Aroer and Nebo were located beyond the Jordan eastward. Nebo was the region from which Moses once viewed Canaan. The Gilead country bordered the Jordan river on the east and pertained to the territory of Reuben. The Hagrites may have derived from Hagar. There was a tribe by this name in northern Arabia. At some time the Reubenites fought with these people and displaced them in the Gilead region.

6. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF GAD (5:11-17)

TEXT

Chapter 5:11. And the sons of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of Bashan unto Salecah: 12. Joel the chief, and Shapham the second, and Janai, and Shaphat in Bashan. 13. And their brethren of their fathers' houses: Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jacan, and Zia, and Eber, seven. 14. These were the sons of Abihail and the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; 15. Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of their fathers' houses. 16. And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan, and in its towns, and in all the suburbs of Sharon, as far as their borders. 17. All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:11. Across from them, in the land of Bashan, lived the descendants of Gad, who were spread as far as Salecah. 12. Joel was the greatest and was followed by Shapham, also Janai and Shaphat. 13. Their relatives, the heads of the seven clans, were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber. 14. The descendants of Buz, in the order of their

generations, were: Jahdo, Jeshishai, Michael, Gilead, Jaroah, Huri, Abihail. 15. Ahi, the son of Abdi-el and grandson of Guni, was the leader of the clan. 16. The clan lived in and around Gilead (in the land of Bashan) and throughout the entire pasture country of Sharon. 17. All were included in the official genealogy at the time of King Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel.

COMMENTARY

Gad shared the trans-Jordanic territory with Reuben and Manasseh. These three tribes were in a precarious position because of their nearness to the desert. They were always vulnerable to warring bands of tribesmen and were destined never to play a significant role in Hebrew history. These were the tribes that requested of Moses this part of Palestine for their homeland. Moses suspected that they wanted to avoid military service in the proposed conquest of Canaan (Numbers 32). They assured Moses, Joshua, and Eleazar that they would help take Canaan, but they wanted this land east of the Jordan river because it was good pasture land. In making this choice, they also removed themselves from the main stream of Hebrew history. Bashan lay beyond the Sea of Chinnereth to the east. Salecah was a village on the far east boundary of Bashan. The names that follow in verses 12-15 are Gad's descendants. We know nothing more about them in the Bible record. Through their generations they shared the pasture lands of the Gilead country. There was a beautiful plain of Sharon on the Mediterranean coast in Canaan. This Sharon in v. 16 probably refers to a section in Gilead. There were genealogical studies done in the days of Jotham, King of Judah, (about 740 B.C.) and in the days of Jeroboam II, King of Israel (about 760 B.C.). Perhaps at regular intervals lists of ancestors were revised and brought up to date.

7. THE DESCENDANTS OF REUBEN, GAD, AND MANASSEH, WAR BEYOND THE JORDAN (5:18-26)

TEXT

Chapter 5:18. The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skillful in war, were forty and four thousand seven hundred and threescore, that were able to go forth to war. 19. And they made war with the Hagriles, with Jetur, and Naphish, and Nodab. 20. And they were helped against them, and the Hagriles were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them; for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him. 21. And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men a hundred thousand. 22. For there fell many slain, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their stead until the captivity. 23. And the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land: they increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon and Senir and Mount Hermon. 24. And these were the heads of their fathers' houses: even Ephraim, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, famous men, heads of their fathers' houses. 25. And they trespassed against the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God destroyed before them. 26. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river of Gozan, unto this day.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:18. There were 44,760 armed, trained, and brave troops in the army of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. 19. They declared war on the Hagriles, the Jeturites, the Naphishites, and the Nodabites. 20. They cried out to God

to help them, and he did, for they trusted in him. So the Hagarites and all their allies were defeated. 21. The booty included 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 captives. 22. A great number of the enemy also died in the battle, for God was fighting against them. So the Reubenites lived in the territory of the Hagarites until the time of the Exile. 23. The half-tribe of Manasseh spread through the land from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. They too were very numerous. 24. The chiefs of their clans were the following: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azri-el, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, Jahdi-el. Each of these men had a great reputation as a warrior and leader. 25. But they were not true to the God of their fathers; instead they worshiped the idols of the people whom God had destroyed. 26. So God caused King Pul of Assyria (also known as Tilgath-pilneser III) to invade the land and deport the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the Gozan River, where they remain to this day.

COMMENTARY

There is no indication here as to just when Reuben, Gad and Manasseh went to war against the Hagarites and their allies. It is of interest to note that in Joshua's day when they sent warriors to help conquer Canaan; they sent 40,000 men (Joshua 4:12, 13). In this later day they are able to muster 44,760 men. The Hagarites had been named in 5:10. Nothing more is known about Nodab. Jetur and Naphish are named in Genesis 25:15 among Ishmael's people. The name Jetur is preserved in the name Ituraea (Luke 3:1). The Ituraeans were notorious warriors. As in all other military conflicts in which Israel's cause was righteous and in which she trusted in Jehovah, God gave victory to the transjordanic Hebrew tribes in this conflict. That it was a significant event is evident from the tremendous amount of prey taken. The chronicler is concerned that the reader understand that Jehovah gave the victory—"the war was of God". The land once owned by desert tribes is now possessed by the tribes of Israel. A part of the tribe of Manasseh settled

the Bashan country east of the Sea of Chinnereth. Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon all refer to the same area in the north-east corner of Palestine. The descendants of Manasseh (v. 24) are named only here. They were men of war, as was Machir, Manasseh's son. An often used phrase, "played the harlot", is employed here to describe the idolatry of these Hebrew tribes. Jehovah's response to this breach of the covenant is to send "Pul", Tilgath-pilneser, of Assyria, to over-run and deport the transjordanic tribes. This took place about 722-21 B.C. These Israelites beyond the Jordan to the east joined their brethren from Samaria and Israel west of the Jordan in the captivity (II Kings 17:6). They were scattered in the regions of the upper Euphrates river. Hara probably is the same as Haran in Mesopotamia.

8. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI (6:1-30)

TEXT

Chapter 6:1. The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 2. And the sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. 3. And the children of Amram: Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron: Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 4. Eleazar begat Phinehas, Phinehas begat Abishua, 5. and Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi, 6. and Uzzi begat Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begat Meraioth, 7. Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub, 8. and Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Ahimaaz, 9. and Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan, 10. and Johanan begat Azariah, (he it is that executed the priest's office in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem,) 11. and Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub, 12. and Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Shallum, 13. and Shallum begat Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah, 14. and Azariah begat Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak; 15. and Jehozadak went into captivity, when Jehovah carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. 16. The sons of Levi:

Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. 17. And these are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. 18. And the sons of Kohath were Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. 19. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. And these are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' houses. 20. Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21. Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. 22. The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23. Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son. 24. Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uziah his son, and Shaul his son. 25. And the sons of Elkanah: Amasai, and Ahimoth. 26. As for Elkanah, the sons of Elkanah: Zophai his son, and Nahath his son, 27. Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. 28. And the sons of Samuel: the first-born Joel, and the second Abijah. 29. The sons of Merari: Mahi, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, 30. Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 6:1. These are the names of the sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, Merari. 2. Kohath's sons were: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel. 3. Amram's descendants included: Aaron, Moses, Miriam. Aaron's sons were: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar. 4-15. The oldest sons of the successive generations of Aaron were as follows: Eleazar, the father of Phinehas, the father of Abishua, the father of Bukki, the father of Uzzi, the father of Zerachiah, the father of Meraioth, the father of Amariah, the father of Ahitub, the father of Zadok, the father of Ahima-az, the father of Azariah, the father of Johanan, the father of Azariah (the High Priest in Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem), the father of Amariah, the father of Ahitub, the father of Zadok, the father of Shallum, the father of Hilkiah, the father of Azariah, the father of Seraiah, the father of Jehozadak (who went into exile when the Lord sent the people of Judah and Jerusalem into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar). 16. As previously stated, the sons of Levi were: Gershom, Kohath, Merari. 17. The sons of Gershom were:

Libni, Shime-i. 18. The sons of Kohath were: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel. 19, 20, 21. The sons of Merari were: Mahli, Mushi. The subclans of the Levites were: In the Gershom clan: Libni, Jahath, Zimmah, Joah, Iddo, Zerah, Jeatherai. 22, 23, 24. In the Kohath clan: Amminadab, Korah, Assir, Elkanah, Ebiasaph, Assir, Tahath, Uriel, Uziah, Shaul. 25, 26, 27. The subclan of Elkanah was further divided into the families of his sons: Amasai, Ahimoth, Elkanah, Zophai, Nahath, Eliab, Jeroham, Elkanah. 28. The families of the subclan of Samuel were headed by Samuel's sons: Joe, the oldest; Abijah, the second. 29, 30. The subclans of the clan of Merari were headed by his sons: Mahi, Libni, Shime-i, Uzzah, Shime-a, Haggiah, Asaiah.

COMMENTARY

The sons of Levi and their descendants are named in 6:1-30.¹ Levi attained a real importance among the twelve sons of Jacob. He and Simeon were guilty of taking vengeance upon the Shechemites (Genesis 34:25) for which action they were severely rebuked by their father. Jacob remembered this event (Genesis 49:5) at the time of the patriarchal blessing. Because of his share in the slaughter of the Shechemites, Levi was destined to be given the assignment of the priesthood and tabernacle service. His descendants would be scattered throughout Israel. The tribe of Levi was the smallest of the twelve tribes of Israel. Whatever glory was associated with the work the Levites were to do was theirs because they had distinguished themselves as faithful servants of Jehovah at Sinai when many other Hebrews were involved in worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32:26).

Levi's sons were Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. The record here turns immediately to Kohath because his is the high priestly house. Kohath's sons are named and the most important of these is Amram because he was the father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Aaron was the father of four sons:

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, Carlton and Porter, New York, n.d., p. 588.

Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.¹ Nadab and Abihu used strange fire in offering sacrifices and were struck down by Jehovah (Numbers 3:4). Aaron was the first high priest in Israel. He was succeeded by his son, Eleazar. The next twenty names in the list, from Phinehas through Seraiah, are believed to be names of high priests. Phinehas served as high priest in Joshua's day (Joshua 22:10-33). Seraiah (Jeremiah 52:24) was high priest in the days of Zedekiah, Judah's last king. Some significant events related to the lives of some of these men are recorded in the Bible. Ahitub is identified as the father of Zadok. There are several references to him in the books of Samuel and Kings. Zadok and Abiathar were the leading priests at the time of David's flight from Absalom (II Samuel 15:24). Later, Abiathar cast his lot with Adonijah (I Kings 1:7, 8); but Zadok remained loyal to David. Zadok probably died before the Temple was built. Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, was faithful to David in the Absalom crisis (II Samuel 15:36) and is well known as a post or a runner. In bringing the news of Absalom's death, Ahimaaz outran the Cushite messenger, but could not bring himself to tell David the bad news (II Samuel 18:19ff). Azariah (v. 10) is identified as a priest who served in Solomon's Temple. Ahimaaz' son was named Azariah and there was another priest by the same name who lived in Uzziah's day, about 750 B. C. (II Chronicles 26:17, 20). Since some of these priestly names recur, it is not strange that the names of Ahitub and Zadok appear in verse 8 and also in verse 12. One of the most important names in this priestly list is that of Hilkiah. He was high priest when Josiah was king of Judah (640-609 B. C.). He was a leading spirit in the great religious revival of that era. This revival was launched with the discovery of "the book of the Law in the house of the Lord" (II Kings 22:8). II Chronicles 35:1-19 describes the great Passover in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign under the leadership of Hilkiah. Seraiah is identified as the high priest in the days of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 52:24-27) when Jerusalem fell to Babylon. Jehozadak never attained to the high priestly office because of the overthrow of

¹Spence, H. D. M. *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 83.

Jerusalem; but he is renowned as the father of Jeshua who served as high priest with Zerubbabel when Israel returned from Babylon.

Having traced the high priestly register, the chronicler now turns (verses 16-30) to a general listing of Levi's people. The principal families of Gershom, Kohath, and Merari are named in verses 17-19. Then the lines of descent are traced through Levi's grandsons. Verses 22-28 trace the descendants of Kohath to Joel, Samuel's son. Elkanah, Samuel's father, was a Kohathite Levite. Samuel was the father of Joel and Abijah who were not good priests (I Samuel 8:2, 3).

The regular responsibilities of the Levites are detailed in verses 31-48. David gave special attention to the organization of worship after he set up a tent for the ark in Jerusalem. The Levitical ministry of sacred music comes into its own at that time and was well ordered by the time the Temple was built. Heman, son of Joel, a Kohathite Levite is called a "singer".¹ Careful attention is given in tracing his pedigree back to Israel or Jacob. Asaph is identified as Heman's "brother". He is "brother" in the sense that the two men hold similar offices. Asaph's lineage is traced back to Levi and Jacob through Gershom, son of Levi. Ethan shared the office of musical direction with Heman and Asaph. He descended from Merari, son of Levi. In these three men all of the branches of Levi's tribe were represented. We are advised in verse 48 that Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites continued to perform their respective duties at the tabernacle.

Once more, in verses 49-53, Aaron's family is singled out for special attention. Some of Aaron's descendants down to the time of David are mentioned. Earlier (v. 15), the list carried down to the overthrow of Jerusalem.

The rest of chapter six (verses 54-81) is concerned about the villages of the Levites. When the land of Palestine was originally apportioned among the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi did not receive a designated plot like Judah or Ephraim. To the tribe of Levi forty-eight villages were assigned. These villages were

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 85.

located throughout Palestine and included the six cities of refuge (Numbers 35:1-8). The Kohathite villages were located in Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh (verses 57-61). Since the Kohathites would provide the officiating priests, their villages were nearer the location of the tabernacle and the temple. Among the Kohathite villages were Hebron and Shechem, cities of refuge. The Gershonite (Gershon) villages were situated in the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Manasseh (east of Jordan). Golan and Kedesh Naphtali were the Gershonite cities of refuge. The Merarite villages were located in the territories of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. The cities of refuge pertaining to Merari were Bezer and Ramoth. The "suburbs" of the Levitical cities encompassed an area extending one thousand cubits (about 500 yards) from the wall of the city all the way around the city (Numbers 35:4). This area was used as a pasture land for the Levites' flocks.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWO 4-6

51. Why would special attention be given to Judah's family?
52. Who is this Jabéz named in 4:9?
53. Identify Othniel (4:13). What do you know about him from other references in the Bible?
54. Fully identify Caleb.
55. Who was Shelah? What do you learn about him from earlier Biblical reference?
56. What were some of the occupations of the descendants of Judah?
57. Where did the tribe of Simeon take its possession? Name some of the principal cities.
58. What was meant by the expression "a wide land"?
59. Carefully locate Mt. Seir.
60. Who was the great ancestor of the Amalekites?
61. Why did Reuben lose his birthright? Name the person with whom he was involved.
62. With regard to the birthright, why was Judah preferred

over Joseph?

63. Identify the Tilgath-pileser of 5:6.
64. Where did the tribe of Reuben take its possession? Locate the territory.
65. Carefully locate the regions inhabited by the tribe of Gad.
66. Name the three Hebrew tribes that lived beyond the Jordan eastward.
67. With whom did these tribes East of the Jordan go to war? Why were they able to win?
68. What is meant by "the captivity"?
69. Locate Mount Hermon and name the Hebrew tribe located in this region.
70. Why were the trans-Jordanic tribes deported? Who carried them away?
71. Name the sons of Levi.
72. Who was Amram? Name his children.
73. Name the sons of Aaron.
74. Identify Phinehas.
75. Who was Ahitub? In what other connection do you learn of him in the Bible?
76. What distinction did Azariah hold (6:10)?
77. Identify the Hilkiah of 6:13?
78. Who was Jehozadak?
79. In regard to the tabernacle, what special responsibilities were fulfilled by the sons of Levi? Check Exodus references.
80. Who is the Elkanah of 6:27?
81. Name the sons of Samuel. What kind of men were they?
82. What did David do with the Levites?
83. Who was Heman?
84. Identify Korah. What do you know about him from an earlier record?
85. Identify Asaph.
86. What special services were performed by Aaron and his sons?
87. Trace other Bible references to Zadok.

88. Name and locate the main Kohathite villages.
89. Carefully locate Anathoth.
90. What are "suburbs"?
91. Where were the Gershonite villages located?
92. Describe the general location of the Merarite villages.
93. Name the cities of refuge. Compare these names with the record in Joshua 21:20-39.
94. Why were cities of refuge appointed?

LESSON THREE 7-8

I. GENEALOGIES FROM ADAM TO DAVID (1:1-9:44)

9. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF ISSACHAR (7:1-5)

INTRODUCTION

The representatives of other tribes of Israel clearly identifiable in David's day are mentioned in this section. Joshua and Saul are prominent names appearing in this account.

TEXT

Chapter 7:1. And of the sons of Issachar: Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four. 2. And the sons of Tola: Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Ibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their fathers' houses, to wit, of Tola; mighty men of valor in their generations: their number in the days of David was two and twenty thousand and six hundred. 3. And the son of Uzzi: Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah: Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Isshiah, five; all of them chief men. 4. And with them, by their generations, after their fathers' houses, were bands of the host for war, six and thirty thousand for they had many wives and sons. 5. And their brethren among all the families of Issachar, mighty men of valor, reckoned in all by genealogy, were fourscore and seven thousand.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:1. The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub, Shimron. 2. The sons of Tola, each of whom was the head of a subclan: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeri-el, Jahmai, Ibsam, Shemuel. At the time of King David, the total number of men of war from these families totaled 22,600. 3. Uzzi's son was Izrahiah among whose five sons were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah, all chiefs of subclans. 4. Their descendants, at the time of King David, numbered 36,000 troops; for all five of them had several wives and many sons. 5. The total number of men available for military service from all the clans of the tribe of Issachar

numbered 87,000 stouthearted warriors, all included in the official genealogy.

COMMENTARY

The enumeration in chapter seven was taken "in the days of David" (7:2).¹ Issachar was Jacob's fifth son by Leah (Genesis 35:23). He was the father of four sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron. Tola's descendants at the time of this record numbered 22,600. The descendants of Uzzi, son of Tola, numbered 36,000. Tola's and Uzzi's people total 58,600. Verse five indicates that "all of the families of Issachar" numbered 87,000. This latter number agrees well with the census figures in Moses' day (Numbers 26:23-25). The Issacharites are described as mighty men of valor, great warriors.

10. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN (7:6-12)

TEXT

Chapter 7:6. The sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Becher, and Jediael, three. 7. And the sons of Bela: Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of fathers' houses, mighty men of valor; and they were reckoned by genealogy twenty and two thousand and thirty and four. 8. And the sons of Becher: Zemirah, Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jeremoth, and Abijah, and Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Becher. 9. And they were reckoned by genealogy, after their generations, heads of their fathers' houses, mighty men of valor, twenty thousand and two hundred. 10. And the sons of Jediael: Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan: Jeush, and Benjamin, and Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tarshish, and Ahishahar. 11. All these were sons of Jediael, according to the heads of their fathers' houses, mighty men of valor, seventeen thousand and two hundred, that were able to go forth in the host for war. 12. Shuppim also, and Huppim, the sons of Ir, Hushim. the sons of Aher.

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, The First and Books of Chronicles, Abingdon Press, New York, 1954, p. 371.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:6. The sons of Benjamin were: Bela, Becher, Jedia-el. 7. The sons of Bela: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, Iri. These five mighty warriors were chiefs of subclans and were the leaders of 22,034 troops (all of whom were recorded in the official genealogies). 8. The sons of Becher were: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Eli-o-enai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, Alemeth. 9. At the time of David there were 22,200 mighty warriors among their descendants; and they were led by their clan chiefs. 10. The son of Jedia-el was Bilhan. The sons of Bilhan were: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, Ahishahar. 11. They were the chiefs of the subclans of Jedia-el, and their descendants included 17,200 warriors at the time of King David. 12. The sons of Ir were Shuppim and Huppim. Hushim was one of the sons of Aher.

COMMENTARY

The indications here are that Benjamin had three sons, namely, Bela, Becher, and Jediael. The list in Genesis 46:21 names the sons of Benjamin. Some of these are to be identified as grandsons. At the time when this present enumeration was taken, Bela's descendants numbered 22,034. Becher's direct descendants numbered 20,200 (verses 8 and 9), and Jedia-el's people numbered 17,200. Evidently these enumerations have to do with warriors. The total military strength of Benjamin at this time was 59,434.

11. THE DESCENDANTS OF NAPHTALI (7:13)

TEXT

Chapter 7:13. The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:13. The sons of Naphtali (descendants of Jacob's wife Bilhah) were: Jahzi-el, Guni, Jezer, Shallum. The reference to this tribe is very brief. Bilhah, Jacob's concubine, was the

mother of Naphtali and Dan. In the first census Naphtali's tribe numbered 53,400 warriors (Numbers 1:42, 43). In the second census in the Plains of Moab this tribe numbered 45,400, having suffered considerable loss in the wilderness wanderings. The territory of this tribe was situated in what later came to be known as the Galilee country. There is no additional specific information on Naphtali's sons.

12. THE DESCENDANTS OF MANASSEH (7:14-19)

TEXT

Chapter 7:14. The sons of Manasseh: Asriel, whom his concubine the Aramitess bare; she bare Machir the father of Gilead: 15. and Machir took a wife of Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name was Maacah; and the name of the second was Zelophehad: and Zelophehad had daughters. 16. And Maacah the wife of Machir bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rakem. 17. And the sons of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. 18. And his sister Hammolecheth bare Ishhod, and Abiezer, and Mahlah. 19. And the sons of Shemida were Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:14. The sons of Manasseh, born to his Aramaean concubine, were, Asri-el and Machir (who became the father of Gilead). 15. It was Machir who found wives for Huppim and Shuppim. Machir's sister was Maacah. Another descendant was Zelophehad, who had only daughters. 16. Machir's wife, also named Maacah, bore him a son whom she named Peresh; his brother's name was Sheresh, and he had sons named Ulam and Rakem. 17. Ulam's son was Bedan. So these were the sons of Gilead, the grandsons of Machir, and the great-grandsons of Manasseh. 18. Hammolecheth, Machir's sister, bore Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah. 19. The sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

COMMENTARY

We studied an earlier reference to the tribe of Manasseh in 5:23-26. Several names in the paragraph now under attention are of interest. Machir, Manasseh's son, is known as a frontiersman. Gilead, the son of Machir, left his name on a considerable part of the territory bordering the Jordan River on the east. Zelophehad was the great-grandson of Manasseh (Joshua 17:3). He had five daughters; but he had no sons. He died in his sins during the wilderness wanderings. His daughters came to Moses (Numbers 27:1) requesting their father's inheritance. This was granted. A ruling was also passed in Numbers 36 that heiress must marry within their own tribe. It is of interest to note that the name "Gilead" became more prominent than that of "Machir". Abiezer (verse 18) was the grandson of Machir and the ancestor of Gideon, who was an Abiezrite of the tribe of Manasseh and a judge in Israel.

13. THE DESCENDANTS OF EPHRAIM (7:20-29)

TEXT

Chapter 7:20. And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eleadah his son, and Tahath his son, 21. and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in the land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. 22. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. 23. And he went in to his wife, and she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house. 24. And his daughter was Sheerah, who built Beth-horon the nether and the upper, and Uzzes-sheerah. 25. And Rephah was his son, and Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son, 26. Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27. Nun his son, Joshua his son. 28. And their possessions and habitations were Beth-el and the towns thereof, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer, with the towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof, unto Azzah and the towns thereof; 29. and by

the borders of the children of Manasseh, Beth-shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:20, 21: The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, Bered, Tahath, Eleadah, Tahath, Zabad, Shuthelah, Ezer, Ele-ad. Ele-ad and Ezer attempted to rustle cattle at Gath, but they were killed by the local farmers. 22. Their father Ephraim mourned for them a long time, and his brothers tried to comfort him. 23. Afterwards, his wife conceived and bore a son whom he called Beriah (meaning "a tragedy") because of what had happened. 24. Ephraim's daughter's name was Sheerah. She built Lower and Upper Beth-horon and Uzzen-sheerah. 25, 26, 27. This is Ephraim's line of descent: Rephah, the father of Resheph, the father of Telah, the father of Tahan, the father of Ladan, the father of Ammihud, the father of Elishama, the father of Nun, the father of Joshua. 28. They lived in an area bounded on one side by Bethel and its surrounding towns, on the east by Naaran, on the west by Gezer and its villages, and finally by Shechem and its surrounding villages as far as Ayyah and its towns. 29. The tribe of Manasseh, descendants of Joseph the son of Israel, controlled the following cities and their surrounding areas: Beth-shean, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor.

COMMENTARY

The sons of Ephraim do not figure prominently in the Bible record. Ephraim's sons most likely were born in Egypt. Their conflict with the men of Gath, or the Philistines, would have taken place early in the conquest of Canaan. Because of the reverses suffered by Ephraim's sons, when another son was born, he was called "Beriah", ill-favored. There may be some ground for suggesting that men of Gath made an excursion into the Goshen country in Egypt while Ephraim and his sons were

yet in that country.¹ Joshua, son of Nun, is the best known of all Ephraimites in his association with Moses and in the conquest of Canaan. The expression "children of Joseph" can refer to both of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. The principal villages in Ephraim were Bethel, Gezer, Shiloh, and Shechem. Bethshean, Taanach, and Megiddo were located in Manasseh west of the Jordan river. The tribe of Ephraim became the most important tribe in the north after the division of the kingdom at Solomon's death.

14. THE DESCENDANTS OF ASHER (7:30-40)

TEXT

Chapter 7:30. The sons of Asher: Imnah, and Ishvah, and Ishvi, and Beriah, and Serah their sister. 31. And the sons of Beriah: Heber, and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith. 32. And Heber begat Japhlet, and Shomer, and Hotham, and Shua their sister. 33. And the sons of Japhlet: Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath. These are the children of Japhlet. 34. And the sons of Shemer: Ahi, and Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram. 35. And the sons of Helem his brother: Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal. 36. The sons of Zophah: Suah, and Harnepher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah, 37. Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and Ithran, and Beera. 38. And the sons of Jether: Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara. 39. And the sons of Ulla: Aran, and Hanniel, and Rizia. 40. All these were the children of Asher, heads of the fathers' houses, choice and mighty men of valor, chief of the princes. And the number of them reckoned by genealogy for service in war was twenty and six thousand men.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 7:30. The children of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, Serah (their sister). 31. The sons of Beriah were: Heber, Machi-el (the father of Birzaith). 32. Heber's children were:

¹Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary, Chronicles*, Charles Scribners Sons, New York, 1901, p. 79.

Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, Shua (their sister). 33. Japhlet's sons were: Pasach, Bimhal, Ashvath. 34. His brother Shomer's sons were: Rohgah, Jehubbah, Aram. 35. The sons of his brother Hotham were: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, Amal. 36, 37. The sons of Zophah were: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, Be-era. 38. The sons of Ithran were: Jephunneh, Pispa, Ara. 39. The sons of Ulla were: Arah, Hanniel, Rizia. 40. These descendants of Asher were heads of subclans and were all skilled warriors and chiefs. Their descendants in the official genealogy numbered 36,000 men of war. Another list of Asher's people is recorded in Genesis 46:17. Some forty descendants are listed here. The number of men of war at the time of this enumeration was 26,000. They numbered 41,500 in the first census (Numbers 1:40, 41). The 26,000 in this present counting most likely is a reference to only a part of the tribe. Asher was assigned the territory north of Mt. Carmel and the Kishon river, the Phoenician country. It was said of Asher that his dwelling would be by the sea. In spite of their remarkable valor, they never displaced the Phoenician people.

15. THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN (8:1-40)

TEXT

Chapter 8:1. And Benjamin begat Bela his first-born, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third, 2. Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. 3. And Bela had sons: Addar, and Gera, and Abihud, 4. and Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah, 5. and Gera, and Shephuphan, and Hiram. 6. And these are the sons of Ehud: these are the heads of fathers' houses of the inhabitants of Geba, and they carried them captive to Manahath: 7. and Naaman, and Ahijah, and Gera, he carried them captive; and he begat Uzza and Ahihud. 8. And Shaharaim begat children in the field of Moab, after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara were his wives. 9. And he begat of Hodesh his wife, Jobab, and Zibia, and Mesha, and Malcam, 10. and Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of fathers' houses. 11. And

of Hushim he begat Abitub and Elpaal. 12. And the sons of Elpaal: Eber, and Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod, with the towns thereof; 13. and Beriah, and Shema, who were heads of fathers' houses of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath; 14. and Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth, 15. and Zebadiah, and Arad, and Eder, 16. and Michael, and Ishpah, and Joha, the sons of Beriah, 17. and Zebadiah, and Meshullam, and Hizki, and Heber, 18. and Ishmerai, and Izliah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal, 19. and Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi, 20. and Elienai, and Zillethai, and Eliel, 21. and Adaiah, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of Shimei, 22. and Ishpan, and Eber, and Eliel, 23. and Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan, 24. and Hananiah, and Elam, and Anthothijah, 25. and Iphdeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak, 26. and Shamsherai, and Shehariah, and Athaliah, 27. and Jareshiah, and Elijah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham. 28. These were heads of fathers' houses throughout their generations, chief men: these dwelt in Jerusalem.

29. And in Gibeon there dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, whose wife's name was Maacah; 30. and his first-born son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab, 31. and Gedor, and Ahio, and Zecher. 32. and Mikloth begat Shimeah. And they also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against their brethren. 33. And Ner begat Kish and Kish begat Saul; and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Eshbaal. 34. And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat Micah. 35. And the sons of Micah: Pithon, and Melech, and Tarea, and Ahaz. 36. And Ahaz begat Jehoaddah; and Jehoaddah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza. 37. And Moza begat Binea; Raphah was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 38. And Azel had six sons, whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel. 39. And the sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam his first-born, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. 40. And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor, archers, and had many sons, and sons' sons, a hundred and fifty. All these were of the

sons of Benjamin.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 8:1. The sons of Benjamin, according to age, were: Bela, the first; Ashbel, the second; Aharah, the third; Nohah, the fourth; Rapha, the fifth. 3, 4, 5. The sons of Bela were: Addar, Gera, Abihud, Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, Gera, Shephuphan, Hiram. 6, 7. The sons of Ehud, chiefs of the subclans living at Geba, were captured in war and exiled to Manahath. They were: Naaman, Ahijah, Gera (also called Heglam), the father of Uzza and Ahihud. 8, 9, 10. Shaharaim divorced his wives Hushim and Baara, but he had children in the land of Moab by Hodesh, his new wife: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, Jeuz, Sachia, Mirmah. These sons all became chiefs of subclans. 11. His wife Hushim had borne him Abitub and Elpaal. 12. The sons of Elpaal were: Eber, Misham, Shemed (who built Ono and Lod and their surrounding villages). 13. His other sons were Beriah and Shema, chiefs of subclans living in Aijalon; they chased out the inhabitants of Gath. 14. Elpaal's sons also included: Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth. 15, 16. The sons of Beriah were: Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, Michael, Ishpah, Joha. 17, 18. The sons of Elpaal also included: Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, Ishmerai, Izliah, Jobab. 19, 20, 21. The sons of Shime-i were: Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, Eli-enai, Zille-thai, Eliel, Adaiiah, Beraiah, Shimrath. 22-25. The sons of Shashak were: Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, Iphdeiah, Penuel. 26, 27. The sons of Jeroham were: Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, Jaareshiah, Elijah, Zichri. 28. These were the chiefs of the subclans living at Jerusalem.

29. Je-iel, the father of Gibeon, lived at Gibeon; and his wife's name was Maacah. 30, 31, 32. His oldest son was named Abdon, followed by: Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio, Zecher, Mikloth who was the father of Shimeah. All of these families lived together near Jerusalem. 33. Ner was the father of Kish, and Kish was the father of Saul; Saul's sons included: Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab. Eshbaal. 34. The son of

Jonathan was Mephibosheth; The son of Mephibosheth was Micah. 35. The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, Ahaz. 36. Ahaz was the father of Jehoaddah, Jehoaddah was the father of: Alemeth, Azmaveth, Zimri. Zimri's son was Moza. 37. Moza was the father of Bine-a, whose sons were: Raphah, Eleasah, Azel. 38. Azel had six sons: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, Hanan. 39. Azel's brother Eshek had three sons: Ulam, the first; Jeush, the second; Eliphelet, the third. 40. Ulam's sons were prominent warriors who were expert marksmen with their bows. These men had 150 sons and grandsons, and they were all from the tribe of Benjamin.

COMMENTARY

Some attention had already been given to the tribe of Benjamin in chapter 7:6-12 as this tribe took its place among the other descendants of Israel. Inasmuch as some special attention is now focused on Saul, the first king of Israel, a more complete genealogy of Benjamin is in order. Benjamin was the youngest of Jacob's sons and he was the son of the beloved Rachel. His mother died in giving him birth (Genesis 35:16-20). Ten sons of Benjamin are named in Genesis 46:21. Some of these were actually grandsons. Any variations in the Genesis record and this record may be accounted for on the basis of the use of different genealogical records, some of which are more complete than others. Ehud is identified as a great grandson of Benjamin (I Chronicles 7:10). Ehud, son of Gera, a Benjamite, was the left handed warrior judge who slew Eglon, king of Moab (Judges 3:15). Geba was a village in Benjamin prominently mentioned in the days when Saul was fighting the Philistines (I Samuel 13:3). Verses 9-11 name seven unknown persons of the tribe of Benjamin. Verses 12-28 list the descendants of Elpaal. Lod (Lydda) was in the Plain of Sharon, southeast of Joppa. The village of Ono was near Lod. Once Nehemiah was invited to the plain of Ono by those who would hinder his rebuilding program in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 6:2). Aijalon was the valley northwest of Jerusalem where Joshua fought the enemy the day the sun stood still. Some of the names such as Shimei,

Hananiah, Athaliah, and Elijah are quite familiar from other connections and in other days. Their use here only indicates that these were popular names from early times among the Hebrew people. Jerusalem was within the limits of the territory of Benjamin.

The nearer relatives of Saul are included in the review in verses 29-40. Chapter 9:35-44 presents a similar account of Saul's house. Eight sons of Jeiel are listed in verses 30, 31. Ner is presented here as the grandfather of Saul.¹ I Samuel 9:1 would seem to list Abiel as the grandfather instead of the great-grandfather. That is not unusual in genealogical references. I Samuel 14:51 appears to identify Ner as Saul's uncle, but may be read in such a way as to make him Saul's grandfather. Kish, the Benjamite, was Saul's father. It was he who had the estate at Gibeah and it was he who owned the lost asses for which Saul was searching when he found Samuel. It is evident from the Bible records that Saul was the father of nine children: Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, Eshbaal, Merab, Michal (I Samuel 14:49), Ishvi (I Samuel 14:49), Armoni and Mephibosheth, sons of Rizpah, the concubines (II Samuel 21:8). Jonathan was Saul's eldest son and was in line to succeed him on the throne in Israel. Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, is the one known as the lame prince. He was crippled at five years of age when he was dropped by his nurse (II Samuel 4:4). Mephibosheth is called Merib-baal here in Chronicles. He had a son named Micah (Mica). Zimri is a famous name in Hebrew history. This Zimri (v. 36) may be identified as the man in I Kings 16:9-20 who slew Elah and who committed suicide when pressed by Tibni. The Benjamite men through all the years were regarded as strong, fearless warriors. It is significant that Jehovah turned to this tribe when he selected Saul, the first king of Israel. Saul was called to be king that he might deliver his people from the power of the Philistines.

¹Spence, H. P. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 109.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON THREE (7-8)

95. In the genealogical list of Issachar's tribe what was the total enumeration?
96. Where was Issachar's territory located?
97. How many were numbered in the tribe of Benjamin? Locate the territory of Benjamin.
98. Carefully locate the Naphtali country.
99. Who was Machir?
100. Trace other Bible references to Zelophehad and his daughters.
101. Carefully locate the Ephraimite country.
102. Where was Gath?
103. Who is this Joshua named in 7:27?
104. Name two important villages in the Ephraimite territory.
105. How many warriors were numbered out of Asher's tribe?
106. Where was Asher's territory located?
107. Name the father and mother of Benjamin?
108. Describe the location of the territory of Benjamin.
109. Locate Aijalon.
110. Name the main villages in the tribe of Benjamin.
111. Who is Kish?
112. Name the sons of Saul. How do these names relate to the previous account in I Samuel?
113. Identify Merib-baal.
114. What do we learn in the earlier record about Micah (8:34)?

LESSON FOUR 9-10

I. GENEALOGIES—ADAM TO DAVID

16. THE DWELLERS IN JERUSALEM (9:1-34)

INTRODUCTION

A brief review of certain Levites and priests who had returned from Babylonian captivity is the subject of Chapter 9. Saul's house and his ruin at the hands of the Philistines is recounted.

TEXT

Chapter 9:1. So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. And Judah was carried away captive to Babylon for their transgression. 2. Now the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions in their cities were Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the Nethinim. 3. And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh: 4. Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children of Perez the son of Judah. 5. And of the Shilonites: Asaiah the first-born, and his sons. 6. And of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brethren, six hundred and ninety. 7. And of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah, 8. and Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibrijah; 9. and their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty and six. All these men were heads of fathers' houses by their fathers' houses.

10. And of the priests: Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, Jachin, 11. and Azariah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God; 12. and Adaiyah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; 13. and their brethren, heads

of their fathers' houses, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

14. And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; 15. and Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph, 16. and Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netophathites.

17. And the porters: Shallum, and Akkub, and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their bretheren (Shallum was the chief), 18. who hitherto waited in the kings' gate eastward: they were the porters for the camp of the children of Levi. 19. And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, of his father's house, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent: and their fathers had been over the camp of Jehovah, keepers of the entry. 20. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was ruler over them in time past, and Jehovah was with him. 21. Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was porter of the door of the tent of meeting. 22. All these that were chosen to be porters in the thresholds were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their office of trust. 23. So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of Jehovah, even the house of the tent, by wards. 24. On the four sides were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south. 25. And their brethren, in their villages, were to come in every seven days from time to time to be with them: 26. for the four chief porters, who were Levites, were in an office of trust, and were over the chambers and over the treasuries in the house of God. 27. And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge thereof was upon them; and to them pertained the opening thereof morning by morning.

28. And certain of them had charge of the vessels of service; for by count were these brought in and by count were these

taken out. 29. Some of them also were appointed over the furniture, and over all the vessels of the sanctuary, and over the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices. 30. And some of the sons of the priests prepared the confection of the spices. 31. And Mattithiah, one of the Levites, who was the first-born of Shallum the Korahite, had the office of trust over the things that were baded in pans. 32. And some of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the showbread, to prepare it every sabbath.

33. And these are the singers, heads of fathers' houses of the Levites, who dwelt in the chambers and were free from other service; for they were employed in their work day and night. 34. These were heads of fathers' houses of the Levites, throughout their generations, chief men: these dwelt at Jerusalem.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:1. The family tree of every person in Israel was carefully recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. Judah was exiled to Babylon because the people worshipped idols. 2. The first to return and live again in their former cities were families from the tribes of Israel, and also the priests, the Levites, and the Temple assistants. 3. Then some families from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh arrived in Jerusalem: 4. One family was that of Uthai (the son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son Bani) of the clan of Perez (son of Judah). 5. The Shilonites were another family to return, including Asaiah (Shilon's oldest son) and his sons; 6. there were also the sons of Zerah, including Jeuel and his relatives: 690 in all. 7, 8. Among the members of the tribe of Benjamin who returned were these: Sallu (the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah); Ibneiah (the son of Jeroham); Elah (the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri); Meshullam (the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah). 9. These men were all chiefs of subclans. A total of 956 Benjaminites returned.

10, 11. The priests who returned were: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, Azariah (the son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of

Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub). He was the chief custodian of the Temple. 12. Another of the returning priests was Adaiah (son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah). Another priest was Massai (son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer). 13. In all, 1,760 priests returned.

14. Among the Levites who returned was Shemaiah (son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, who was a descendant of Merari). 15, 16. Other Levites who returned included: Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, Mattaniah (the son of Mica, who was the son of Zichri, who was the son of Asaph). Obadiah (the son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun). Berechiah (the son of Asa, son of Elkanah, who lived in the area of the Netophathites).

17, 18. The gatekeepers were Shallum (the chief gatekeeper), Akkub, Talmon, and Ahiman—all Levites. They are still responsible for the eastern royal gate. 19. Shallum's ancestry went back through Kore and Ebiasaph to Korah. He and his close relatives the Korahites were in charge of the sacrifices and the protection of the sanctuary, just as their ancestors had supervised and guarded the Tabernacle. 20. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was the first director of this division in ancient times. And the Lord was with him. 21. At that time Zechariah, the son of Meshelemiah, had been responsible for the protection of the entrance to the Tabernacle. 22. There were 212 doorkeepers in those days. They were chosen from their villages on the basis of their genealogies, and they were appointed by David and Samuel because of their reliability. 23. They and their descendants were in charge of the Lord's Tabernacle. 24. They were assigned to each of the four sides: east, west, north, and south. 25. And their relatives in the villages were assigned to them from time to time, for seven days at a time. 26. The four head gatekeepers, all Levites, were in an office of great trust, for they were responsible for the rooms and treasuries in the Tabernacle of God. 27. Because of their important positions they lived near the Tabernacle, and they opened the gates each morning.

28. Some of them were assigned to care for the various vessels used in the sacrifices and worship; they checked them in and out to avoid loss. 29. Others were responsible for the furniture, the items in the sanctuary, and the supplies such as fine flour, wine, incense, and spices. 30. Other priests prepared the spices and incense. 31. And Mattithiah (a Levite and the oldest son of Shallum the Korahite) was entrusted with making the flat cakes for grain offerings. 32. Some members of the Kohath clan were in charge of the preparation of the special bread each Sabbath.

33, 34. The cantors were all prominent Levites. They lived in Jerusalem at the Temple and were on duty at all hours. They were free from other responsibilities and were selected by their genealogies.

COMMENTARY

Family registers and genealogical connections were very important to a people who so often found themselves uprooted and disconnected from relatives and homeland. This fact is brought into sharp focus in 9:1. By this time in the record we have arrived at the grievous overthrow of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 B.C. The historian faithfully records the fact that "Judah was carried away to Babylon for their transgression", (see also I Kings, chapters 24 and 25).

At this point in the record the historian proceeds to present a summary of those who returned from Babylon. He passes over any details related to the seventy years of captivity and fixes his attention on those who returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua in 538 B.C. Four classes of people are distinguished in 9:2: Israel, priests, Levites, and Nethinim. In distinguishing between "priests" and "Levites" it must be observed that every priest must necessarily be a Levite; however, not every Levite would be qualified to serve as a priest. The term "Nethinin" means "wholly given" and was a name attached to those who were bondmen of the Temple, helpers of the priests. In this fourfold reference in verse two the focus of interest is upon the priesthood and the Temple services. The place that holds priority in

importance is Jerusalem. Solomon's Temple had been situated here. In this place of sacred memory Zerubbabel's Temple would be built. It was not until during the Babylonian captivity and the return that the Hebrews were generally referred to as the "Jews". This name may well have originated out of ill will and was most likely associated with the remnant of the tribe of Judah. It is not to be supposed that the only representatives of the Hebrews who remained after the Captivity were of the tribe of Judah. For all practical purposes, the identity of the ten northern tribes was lost in the Assyrian overthrow in 722-21 B.C.; however, there were scattered remnants of these tribes which along with Judah were taken into Babylon between the years of 606 and 586 B.C. and who returned to Palestine in 536 B.C. So the Chronicler says that the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Levi were certainly represented in Jerusalem after the return from Babylon. We met Perez in Genesis 38. He was the son of Judah and his mother was Tamar. Perez is an ancestor of Jesus Christ. When the author (verse 5) speaks of the Shilonites, he is referring to those who had lived in Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim. In earlier days the tabernacle had been located in Shiloh. Zerah (verse 6) was a twin brother of Perez. The tribes and persons named and numbered in verses 3-9 correspond to the reference to Israel in verse 2.

The priests who are named in verses 10-13 are men who served in this office after the return from Captivity. A similar list is recorded in Nehemiah 11:12-14. Apparently it was not the intention of the historian to provide a complete list of the priests. Out of records which were available to him and directed by the Holy Spirit, he selected these representatives of the priesthood. In like manner there is a list of Levites in Nehemiah 11:15-18 which compares with I Chronicles 9:14-16. Descendants of familiar heads of families such as Merari, Asaph, and Jeduthun are named here. There was a village named Netophah (verse 16) located near Bethlehem Judah. When the wall of Jerusalem was dedicated in Nehemiah's day (Nehemiah 12:28) the sons of the singers from among the Netophathites shared in the ceremonies at Jerusalem.

The respective responsibilities of the priests and the Levites in the renewed Jerusalem are reviewed in verses 17-34. The "porters" were men who were assigned as door-keepers at the gates leading into the Temple. "The king's gate eastward" and "the door of the tent of meeting" were places of special assignment. These porters were stationed at entrances on all four sides of the Temple and they served in courses or shifts for a week at a time. The porters were carefully organized (verse 26) and exercised responsibility with regard to the chambers or living quarters and storage rooms at the Temple. They were also responsible for the security of the Temple treasuries. While on duty, these officers lived in quarters round about the Temple.

The details of certain Levitical responsibilities are spelled out in verses 28-34. Since the vessels used in the Temple were made of precious metal, they were very valuable. Precautions against theft or mismanagement were always in order. The vessels were very important also because they had been sanctified for special service. The Temple furniture, in like manner, was very special and required particular attention. The flour, wine, oil, frankincense, spices all had to be procured and properly processed. The spices used in the holy incense had been carefully prescribed in Moses' day (Exodus 30:34, 35). This prescription was to be used only in the Tabernacle. The baking of the unleavened bread and the preparation of the shewbread were important details under Levitical supervision.

Those who were leaders in the ministry of singing were from among the Levites. They were specialists in this service and were excused from other aspects of the work. Provisions were made for their lodging at the Temple when they were on duty.

17. THE PEDIGREE OF THE HOUSE OF SAUL (9:35-44)

TEXT

Chapter 9:35. And in Gibeon there dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, whose wife's name was Maacah; 36. and his first-born son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab, 37. and Gedor, and Ahio, and Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38. And Mikloth begat Shimeam. And they also dwelt with

their brethren in Jerusalem, over against their brethren. 39. And Ner begat Kish; and Kish begat Saul; and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and Eshbaal. 40. And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat Micah. 41. And the sons of Micah: Pithon, and Melech, and Tahrea, and Ahaz. 42. And Ahaz begat Jarah; and Jarah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza; 43. and Moza begat Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 44. And Azel had six sons, whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan: these were the sons of Azel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:35, 36, 37: Jeiel (whose wife was Maacah) lived in Gibeon. He had many sons, including: Gibeon, Abdon (the oldest), Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, Mikloth. 38. Mikloth lived with his son Shime-am in Jerusalem near his relatives. 39. Ner was the father of Kish, Kish was the father of Saul, Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal. 40. Jonathan was the father of Mephibosheth; Mephibosheth was the father of Micah; 41. Micah was the father of Pithon, Melech, Tahre-a, and Ahaz; 42. Ahaz was the father of Jarah; Jarah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, Zimri; Zimri was the father of Moza. 43. Moza was the father of Bine-a, Rephaiah, Eleasah, and Azel. 44. Azel had six sons: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishamel, She-ariah, Obadiah, Hanan.

COMMENTARY

Once more, as in chapters 8:29-40, attention is focused on the ancestors and descendants of King Saul. This information (verses 35-44) is pertinent at this time because it provides an introduction to a review of Saul's final conflict with the Philistines in chapter 10.

II. THE HISTORY OF KING DAVID (10:1-29:30)

1. THE OVERTHROW OF SAUL (10:1-14)

TEXT

Chapter 10:1. Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa. 2. And the Philistines followed hard after Saul and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. 3. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him, and he was distressed by reason of the archers. 4. Then said Saul unto his armorbearer, "Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell upon it. 5. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died. 6. So Saul died, and his three sons; and all his house died together. 7. And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8. And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in Mount Gilboa. 9. And they stripped him, and took his head, and his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry the tidings unto their idols, and to the people. 10. And they put his armor in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the house of Dagon. 11. And when all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12. all the valiant men arose, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days, 13. So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against Jehovah, because of the word of Jehovah, which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire thereby, 14. and inquired not of Jehovah: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom

unto David the son of Jesse.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 10:1. The Philistines attacked and defeated the Israeli troops, who turned and fled and were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. 2. They caught up with Saul and his three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, and killed them all. 3. Saul had been hard pressed with heavy fighting all around him, when the Philistine archers shot and wounded him. 4. He cried out to his bodyguard, "Quick, kill me with your sword before these uncircumcised heathen capture and torture me." But the man was afraid to do it, so Saul took his own sword and fell against its point; and it pierced his body. 5. Then his bodyguard, seeing that Saul was dead, killed himself in the same way. 6. So Saul and his three sons died together; the entire family was wiped out in one day. 7. When the Israelis in the valley below the mountain heard that their troops had been routed and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities, and fled. And the Philistines came and lived in them. 8. When the Philistines went back the next day to strip the bodies of the men killed in action and to gather the booty from the battlefield, they found the bodies of Saul and his sons. 9. So they stripped off Saul's armor and cut off his head; then they displayed them throughout the nation and celebrated the wonderful news before their idols. 10. They fastened his armor to the walls of the Temple of the Gods and nailed his head to the wall of Dagon's temple. 11. But when the people of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12. their heroic warriors went out to the battlefield and brought back his body and the bodies of his three sons. Then they buried them beneath the oak tree at Jabesh and mourned and fasted for seven days. 13. Saul died for his disobedience to the Lord and because he had consulted a medium, 14. and did not ask the Lord for guidance. So the Lord killed him and gave the kingdom to David, the son of Jesse.

COMMENTARY

The last chapter in I Samuel (chapter 31) describes the

defeat of Israel's army and the deaths of Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa. The chronicler, after dealing with some lengthy genealogical tables, hastens to his main consideration—the life and times of David. In order to set the stage for David's kingship, the account of the overthrow of Saul is reviewed. The Philistines were Israel's ancient enemy. They inhabited the coastal plain along the Mediterranean within the limits of the territory assigned to Judah. Until David's kingdom was established, the Israelites could not achieve any consistent superiority with regard to this enemy. The usual condition found the Hebrews subjected to these people who lived along the coast and in the foothills. The Philistines were war-like when the Hebrews were ready to leave Egypt in Moses' day. When Joshua led Israel into Canaan the Philistines challenged the Hebrews' claim to their territory. Shamgar (Judges 3:31) and Samson (Judges, chapters 14-16) were champions of Israel's conflict with this people. In the days of Samuel the Philistines seriously threatened the Hebrews with complete extinction. At this juncture, Jehovah agreed that Israel should have a king. One of the king's chief responsibilities was that he should deliver his people from the tyranny of the Philistines. In spite of all the wonderful qualifications with which Saul was endowed for this office, he never found any delight in his primary responsibility. His son, Jonathan, dared to enter the conflict with the enemy. When the Philistines encamped in the vale of Elah west of Bethlehem and Goliath challenged Israel, Saul could do nothing to relieve his people until David came and slew the giant. This was a great victory for Israel; but for Saul it became a matter of humiliation. David was praised by the Hebrews as a fearless leader. Saul was tolerated as a cowardly king. Saul spent the rest of his days trying to find a way to kill David. If the Philistines made a raid on Israel, Saul would make some attempt to relieve his people. Just as soon as the threat from the enemy was passed, Saul returned to chase David. This whole story is carefully related in I Samuel, chapters 18-31. David knew how Saul feared the Philistines. In order that he might work on some other projects in preparation for this kingship, David went to

Achish, king of Gath in Philistia, and set up a working agreement with him (I Samuel, chapter 27). At about this time the Philistines prepared for a full-scale war against Saul and Israel. As they moved their warriors from the coastal plain up to Mount Gilboa, David and his men were with the Philistines. David's reputation as an enemy warrior was too well known. He was forced to return to his village, Ziklag, and the Philistines drew up their battle lines at Mount Gilboa. The armies of Israel were not prepared for the conflict. Jehovah would use the enemy to chastise Saul and his people for their lack of faith. The armies of Israel retreated and the enemy took full advantage of the overthrow. Jonathan, Abinadab, and Machishua, Saul's sons, were killed. Only one son escaped. His name was Ishbosheth (II Samuel 2:8). He is called Eshbaal in I Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39. Saul found himself in a predicament. The battle was lost. The men with bows and arrows were pressing in upon him. He urged his armor-bearer to kill him with his sword. He would not be taken alive by "these uncircumcised Philistines". Circumcision was the mark of the covenant between Israel and Jehovah. Evidently the covenant had not meant very much to Saul; but he regarded his enemy as heathen. In this bitter moment Saul took his own life. Since the whole cause was lost, the armor-bearer, in like manner, committed suicide. It was a sad day in Israel.

As a result of this military defeat the Hebrews were entirely at the mercy of the Philistines. So the enemy made deep penetration into Israel's territory. Stripping the slain was regular procedure after a great battle. Often those not immediately involved in the conflict would gather considerable wealth by this gruesome activity. The Philistine prize was Saul's body. They beheaded him as David had mutilated Goliath's body and after parading his head and armor among their people, they deposited these things in Dagon's Temple. They believed that their idols had brought them victory. The earlier record in I Samuel states that the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the wall at Beth-shan, a village near Mount Gilboa. Early in Saul's kingship the Jabesh-gileadites, who lived east of the

Jordan river about twelve miles from Beth-shan, had been delivered from the Ammonites by Saul. Remembering his consideration for them, the Jabesh-gileadites rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons and brought them to their village. Here they burned the remains and laid away the ashes. This was done to protect these remains from further ravages by the enemy. Later, these ashes were removed to Gibeah, Saul's home village, and were deposited under an oak tree.

Saul had begun so well, but he failed to do God's will. He had not utterly destroyed the Amalekites (I Samuel, chapter 15). In jealous rage he had repeatedly tried to kill David. In desperation he dared to go to a witch to try to learn about the future (I Samuel 28:3ff). Because he had completely disqualified himself as king, Jehovah brought David to the throne in Israel.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON FOUR 9-10

115. What is this "book of Kings" mentioned in 9:1?
116. How does this record account for Judah's captivity?
117. Who were the Nethinim?
118. Upon returning from the captivity, name the tribes that settled in Jerusalem.
119. Identify Zadok and Ahitub (9:11).
120. Who were Asaph and Jeduthun? Check other Bible references.
121. What is a porter's task?
122. Identify Phinehas.
123. How is Samuel described in 9:23 and what does this mean?
124. Where did the porters live while on duty?
125. Why were the vessels counted?
126. How were spices used in connection with Temple services?
127. What materials were baked?
128. Who were the song leaders at the Temple?

129. Why is such careful attention given to the record of Saul's genealogy?
130. Carefully locate Mt. Gilboa. Where was this in relation to the Philistine country?
131. Who was with Saul in the battle? Where was David?
132. By what term did Saul describe the Philistines and what did he mean?
133. Precisely how did Saul die?
134. Name David's dearest friend who died in this conflict.
135. What did the Philistines do with regard to the Israelite villages?
136. What was done with Saul's head and his armor?
137. Carefully describe Dagon.
138. Locate Jabesh and tell why that place is important in this history.
139. What were the details of Jehovah's judgment of Saul?
140. Explain the reference to "the familiar spirit".
141. Who now receives the appointment to be king of Israel?

LESSON FIVE 11 – 12

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID AND HIS WARRIORS

2. THE REIGN OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

The writer of Chronicles now comes to his principal theme, David and his kingdom. Joab, Abishai and Uriah play their roles in relation to David and his times. David's ability to unify the kingdom is a highlight of these chapters.

TEXT

Chapter 11:1. Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bond and thy flesh. 2. In times past, even when Saul was king, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah thy God said unto thee, "Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over my people Israel." 3. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of Jehovah by Samuel. 4. And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (the same is Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there. 5. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "Thou shalt not come in hither." Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David. 6. And David said, whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. And Joab the son of Zeruah went up first, and was made chief. 7. And David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the city of David. 8. And he built the city round about, from Millo even round about; and Joab repaired the rest of the city. 9. And David waxed greater and greater; for Jehovah of hosts was with him.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:1. Then the leaders of Israel went to David at Hebron and told him, "We are your relatives, 2. and even when

Saul was king, you were the one who led our armies to battle and brought them safely back again. And the Lord your God has told you, 'You shall be the shepherd of my people Israel. You shall be their king.' " 3. So David made a contract with them before the Lord, and they appointed him as a king of Israel, just as the Lord had told Samuel. 4. Then David and the leaders went to Jerusalem (or Jebus, as it used to be called) where the Jebusites—the original inhabitants of the land—lived. 5, 6. But the people of Jebus refused to let them enter the city. So David captured the fortress of Zion, later called the City of David, and said to his men, "The first man to kill a Jebusite shall be made commander-in-chief!" Joab, the son of Zeruah, was the first, so he became the general of David's army. 7. David lived in the fortress and that is why that area of Jerusalem is called the City of David. 8. He extended the city out around the fortress while Joab rebuilt the rest of Jerusalem. 9. And David became more and more famous and powerful, for the Lord of the heavens was with him.

COMMENTARY

Upon the overthrow of Saul and his house David was anointed king in Hebron. David's tribe was Judah and Hebron was a principal city in that territory.¹ I Chronicles 11:1 says that "all Israel gathered" for this ceremony. The record in II Samuel indicated that Abner and Ishbosheth set up a rival government at Mahanaim out beyond the sea of Chinnereth to the east. This attempt was doomed to failure because it was Jehovah's will that David should rule over all Israel. The rebel forces lost their power when a quarrel arose between Abner and Ishbosheth with regard to a concubine. Ishbosheth was killed by two of his servants and Abner lost his life at the hands of Joab. So "all Israel" came under David's authority.

David had proved himself to be a powerful general. As Saul was plagued by an evil spirit, the spirit of Jehovah empowered David to accomplish Jehovah's will. The first anointing of David

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 143.

took place at Bethlehem (I Samuel 16:1, 3, 12, 13). The second and third anointings were done at Hebron.

Once David had settled accounts with his rivals in the north and had all of Israel under his leadership, he sought out a place for the capital of his kingdom. Hebron was provincial and it was in the tribe of Judah. Jerusalem was more centrally located. It was on the border of the tribe of Benjamin and within the limits of that tribe. Jerusalem was set in a natural fortress of hills and it was very strategically elevated. Through all the years the Jebusites had occupied this city. They had not been displaced in Joshua's day. The tribe of Benjamin had not been able to dislodge them. These native peoples were so secure in their citadel that they taunted an enemy who would presume to overthrow them (II Samuel 5:6). The defiant attitude of the Jebusites did not alarm David. He offered the position of captain of the host to the man who would devise a way to take the city. Joab led a brave band of men through a water conduit (II Samuel 5:8) into the city. The Jebusites were smitten and David moved in, built up the city, fortified the walls and established this as his capital. Millo was a tower and an important part of the fortification of Jerusalem.¹ The establishment of Jerusalem was very important in the setting up of David's kingdom.

3. DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN (11:10-47)

TEXT

Chapter 11:10. Now these are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who showed themselves strong with him in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him King, according to the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. 11. And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam, the son of a Hachmonite, the chief of the thirty; he lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them at one time. 12. And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who was one of the three mighty men. 13. He was

¹Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary, Chronicles*, p. 98.

with David at Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines. 14. And they stood in the midst of the plot, and defended it, and slew the Philistines; and Jehovah saved them by a great victory.

15. And three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines were encamped in the valley of Rephaim, 16. And David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem. 17. And David longed, and said, "Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate!" 18. And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto Jehovah, 19. and said, "My God forbid it me, that I should do this: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it; These things did the three mighty men.

20. And Abishai, the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for he lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them, and had a name among the three. 21. Of the three, he was more honorable than the two, and made their captain: howbeit he attained not to the first three. 22. Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, he slew the two sons of Ariel of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow. 23. And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand was a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. 24. These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name among the three mighty men. 25. Behold, he was more honorable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three: and David set him over his guard. 26. Also the mighty men of the armies: Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son

of Dodo of Bethlehem, 27. Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, 28. Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, 29. Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, 30. Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, 31. Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, 32. Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, 33. Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, 34. the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shagee the Hararite, 35. Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur. 36. Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, 37. Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, 38. Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, 39. Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruah, 40. Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 41. Uriah the Hittite, Zabab the son of Ahlai, 42. Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, 43. Hanan the son of Maacah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, 44. Uzzi the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, 45. Jedaiel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 46. Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, 47. Eliel, and Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:10: These are the names of some of the bravest of David's warriors (who also encouraged the leaders of Israel to make David their king, as the Lord had said would happen): 11. Jashobeam (the son of a man from Hachmon) was the leader of the Top Three—the three greatest heroes among David's men. He once killed 300 men with his spear. 12. The second of The Top Three was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, a member of the subclan of Ahoh. 13. He was with David in the battle against the Philistines at Paddanimit. The Israeli army was in a barley field and had begun to run away, 14. but he held his ground in the middle of the field, and recovered it and slaughtered the Philistines; and the Lord saved them with a great victory.

15. Another time, three of The Thirty went to David while he was hiding in the cave of Adullam. The Philistines were camped in the Valley of Rephaim, 16. and David was in the stronghold at the time; an outpost of the Philistines had occupied Bethlehem, 17. David wanted a drink from the Bethlehem well beside the gate, and when he mentioned this to his men, 18, 19. these three broke through to the Philistine camp, drew some water from the well, and brought it back to David. But he refused to drink it! Instead he poured it out as an offering to the Lord and said, "God forbid that I should drink it! It is the very blood of these men who risked their lives to get it."

20. Abishai, Joab's brother, was commander of The Thirty. He had gained his place among The Thirty by killing 300 men at one time with his spear. 21. He was the chief and the most famous of The Thirty, but he was not as great as The Three.

22. Benaiah, whose father was a mighty warrior from Kabzeel, killed the two famous giants from Moab. He also killed a lion in a slippery pit when there was snow on the ground. 23. Once he killed an Egyptian who was seven and one-half feet tall, whose spear was as thick as a weaver's beam. But Benaiah went up to him with only a club in his hand and pulled the spear away from him and used it to kill him. 24, 25. He was nearly as great as The Three, and he was very famous among The Thirty. David made him captain of his bodyguard.

26-47. Other famous warriors among David's men were: Asahel (Joab's brother); Elhanan, the son of Dodo from Bethlehem; Shammoth from Harod; Helez from Pelon; Ira (son of Ikkesh) from Tekoa; Abi-ezer from Anathoth; Sibbecai from Hushath; Ilai from Ahoh; Maharai from Netophah; Heled (son of Baanah) from Netophah; Ithai (son of Ribai) a Benjaminite from Gibe-ah; Benaiah from Pirathon; Hurai from near the brooks of Gaash; Abiel from Arbath; Azmaveth from Baharum; Eliahba from Sha-albon; The sons of Hashem from Gizon; Jonathan (the son of Shagee) from Harar; Ahiam (son of Sacher) from Harar; Eliphai (son of Ur); Hopher from Mecherath; Ahijah from Pelon; Hezro from Carmel; Naarai (son

of Ezbai); Joel (brother of Nathan); Mibhar (son of Hagri); Zelek from Ammon; Naharai from Be-eroth—he was General Joab's armor bearer; Ira from Ithra; Gereb from Ithra; Uriah the Hittite; Zabad (son of Ahlai); Adina (son of Shiza) from the tribe of Reuben—he was among the thirty-one leaders of the tribe of Reuben; Hanan (son of Maacah); Joshaphat from Mithna; Uzzia from Ashterath; Shama and Je-iel (sons of Hotham) from Aroer; Jedia-el (son of Shimri); Joha (his brother) from Tiza; Eliel from Mahavi; Jeribai and Joshaviah (sons of Elnaam); Ithmah from Moab; Eliel; Obed; Ja-asiel from Mezoba.

COMMENTARY

Having introduced us to David, the chronicler now turns to a roll call of some of the warriors who were associated with the king. When David first fled from Saul (I Samuel, chapter 21); he had just a few men with him. Not long after this in the wilderness of Judah he was the leader of a band of four hundred men. Later, as he lived near the Philistine country in Ziklag, he numbered six hundred warriors in his bands as they engaged in guerilla warfare. Very early David demonstrated his ability as a leader of men. These men who first associated themselves with David were outlaws, debtors, slaves, distressed, discontented (I Samuel 22:2). David won their confidence. To them he was their champion, their pattern of excellence. He welded these men into a fighting force that terrorized every enemy. They became the nucleus of a mighty army which under David conquered Moab, Edom, Philistia, Ammon, Zobah, and Syria. When David received the control of the government upon Saul's death, Israel's territory could be contained in about six thousand square miles. When David died Israel controlled sixty thousand square miles. This territory extended from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Euphrates river on the north and east. Some of the men who assisted in this expansion and who held responsible positions under David are named here.

Joab must be listed among the officers of the first rank. He is mentioned in I Samuel 26:6 as the brother of Abishai. David's

sister, Zeruah, was the mother of three sons—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. So these three men were nephews to David. It is likely that Joab was with David when he was running from Saul. He certainly took a prominent part in the conflict against Abner and Ishbosheth. Early in this struggle Abner killed Asahel. Joab, under the compulsion of the blood feud, waited for his opportunity. One day when Abner had come to Hebron to transfer the allegiance of the northern tribes to David, Joab caught Abner near the city gate at Hebron and there he killed Abner (II Samuel 3:27). Joab led in the conquest of the Syrians (II Samuel 10:13) and of the Ammonites (II Samuel 11:1). He also led in the conquest of the Edomites (I Kings 11:25). David became involved with Bathsheba. Uriah, the Hittite, another mighty warrior for David, had to be removed. Joab was the general who was ordered by his commander-in-chief to put Uriah at the front of the battle (II Samuel 11:14). When Absalom rebelled against David, Joab was still in charge of David's army. Joab personally killed Absalom as he hung by his hair from a tree. After Absalom had been killed in the battle by Joab, David reacted by appointing Amasa, who had been Absalom's captain, as military leader in Joab's place. When Sheba rebelled and Amasa could not command the respect of David's soldiers, Joab cruelly murdered Amasa and silenced the revolt. Near the conclusion of David's reign Adonijah tried to take the throne. Joab cast his lot with this son of David, knowing that Solomon had already been designated to be king. Before David died he told Solomon not to let Joab die a natural death. After David's death, Benaiah, Solomon's chief executioner, killed Joab (I Kings 2:34). Joab lived a long and turbulent life. He was one of the most important leaders in the establishment of David's empire.

Some separate incidents involving David's warriors are recorded here in this history. Jashobeam killed three hundred on one occasion by using his spear. A reference in II Samuel 23:8 probably concerns the same warrior. There he is said to have slain eight hundred at one time. It is possible that these are references to different occasions. Eleazar led in an engagement

against the Philistines in a barley field. The main Israelite army retreated. David and his three mighty men held their positions and repulsed the enemy. Jashobeam and Eleazar are two of the renowned warriors. Shammah (II Samuel 23:11, 33) most likely was the third. Pas-dammim may be translated "boundary of blood". Other bloody skirmishes had been fought there. The village was about fourteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. The account in II Samuel 23:11, 12 speaks of a field of lentils. The Hebrew words for barley and lentils are quite similar. Kennicott suggests that one word is spelled incorrectly by accident. Barley was an important cereal grain, but not as valuable as wheat. Lentils was a kind of bean widely used for soup. It is possible that barley and lentils were being grown in plots that joined each other. In this conflict the credit for the victory is Jehovah's.

Often in the record thirty chief men are referred to in relation to David's warriors. The "three" to whom reference is made here may have been Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah. The "three" were with David at the cave of Adullam. The region of Adullam was known as early as the days of Juhad, Jacob's son (Genesis 38:1, 12, 20). One of the kings of Canaan located his government in this place (Joshua 12:15; 15:35). It was situated in Judah. There is some question as to its exact location. One suggestion is that it was in the foothills near Gaza. Another possibility would fix the site between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea (Dr. Thomson—"The Land and the Book"). At the time of the incident recorded in I Chronicles 11:15-19 the Philistine army was in the Valley of Rephaim. This valley lay just southwest of Jerusalem. Considering the risks involved in obtaining water from Bethlehem, Adullam was most likely situated in the area between the Valley of Rephaim and the Mediterranean. David's men dared to stir up the whole Philistine army in order to satisfy David's desire for a drink of water from the old home well at Bethlehem. David's men "brake through the host" of the Philistines. This most likely involved face to face encounter with the enemy. David recognized that courage beyond the line of duty had been required in order for his men

to procure the precious water. Motivated by a basic principle which he stated on another occasion (II Samuel 24:24) when he said he would not offer to his God that which had not cost him something, he poured out the thirst-quenching water as an offering (a libation) to Jehovah. His soldiers surely respected him for this act of self-denial and worship.

David's nephew, Abishai, was renowned for his bravery. When David was running from Saul (I Samuel 26:6, 7) in the wilderness of Ziph, Abishai went with David to take away Saul's spear and water bag. In these later days he distinguished himself among David's warriors. In this one engagement (verse 20) he was responsible for the slaughter of three hundred of the enemy. We do not know the names of the other two over whom he was chief.

Benaiah was of the tribe of Levi and he was always faithful in all assignments given him by David and Solomon. In David's government Joab was the captain of the host (II Samuel 8:16, 18), while Benaiah had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites. These people were David's select bodyguards. The Cherethites lived south of Philistia. The Pelethites are usually identified with the Philistines. David's bodyguards were recruited largely from these people and through many crises remained loyal to the king. Benaiah's responsibility to David was great. In David's later years Benaiah grew in David's favor. When Adonijah rebelled (I Kings 1:7) and Joab went with him, Joab signed his own death warrant. In the charge given by David to Solomon (I Kings 2:5, 6), Joab was not to be allowed to die naturally. In Solomon's early reign Benaiah was charged (I Kings 2:34) as executioner to put Joab to death. Having done this, Benaiah became captain of the host. In his day Benaiah fought many and varied kinds of enemies. We learn here that he slew two Moabites. He killed an Egyptian giant. The giant must have been more than seven feet tall. The shaft of the giant's spear was "like a weaver's beam". This is a reference to a part of a great loom upon which the threads of the weaving would be attached. An ordinary man's hand could not grasp such a handle. Benaiah skillfully disarmed the Egyptian and turned the giant's weapon

upon the giant himself. In his own time David had used Goliath's sword to sever the giant's head after he felled him with a stone. On another occasion Benaiah matched his strength against the fury of a lion. Benaiah's memoirs surely would have contained many other accounts of remarkable courage.

Verses 26-47 list other men who served with honor in David's army. A comparable list is recorded in II Samuel 23:24-39. The number thirty (30) seemed to have a special meaning as it related to these warriors. No doubt, only those who demonstrated heroic bravery attained to this elite group. Sometimes thirty seven (37) were numbered among them (II Samuel 23:39). On occasion as many as forty eight (48) were named as belonging to this honored band (I Chronicles 11:26-47). Asahel had died at the hands of Abner (II Samuel 2:23). These great warriors represented various districts throughout Palestine. Elhanan came from Bethlehem. Shammoth the Harorite most likely came from Harod near the sea of Chinnereth. Ira represented Tekoa in Judah. Abiezer was from the village of Anathoth, a priestly town in Benjamin near Jerusalem. Zelek was of Ammonite descent and Uriah was from among the Hittites. The tribe of Reuben was represented by Adina. Haharai is identified as Joab's armor-bearer. Uriah the Hittite was Bathsheba's husband who carried his own death warrant to Joab. This entire record leaves us with many unanswered questions as to the complete identity and pedigree of each of these men. Their loyalty to the king and to the cause of Israel is well demonstrated in Uriah's obedience to his commanders and his comradeship with his fellow soldiers. Every one of them was willing to die for the king and for the people of Israel.

4. DAVID'S MEN IN SAUL'S DAY (12:1-22)

TEXT

Chapter 12:1. Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, his helpers in

war. 2. They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in slinging stones and in shooting arrows from the bow: they were of Saul's brethren of Benjamin. 3. The chief was Ahiezer; then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite, and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Beracah, and Jehu the Anathothite, 4. and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty, and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite, 5. Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6. Elkanah, and Isshiah, and Azarel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites, 7. and Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8. And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David to the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for war, that could handle shield and spear; whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains: 9. Ezer the chief, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10. Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11. Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12. Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13. Jeremiah the tenth, Machbannai the eleventh. 14. These of the sons of Gad were captains of the host: he that was least was equal to a hundred, and the greatest to a thousand. 15. These are they that went over the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all them of the valleys both toward the east and toward the west.

16. And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the stronghold unto David. 17. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, "If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine adversaries, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look there-on, and rebuke it." 18. Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the thirty, and he said, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

19. Of Manasseh also there fell away some to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not; for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, "He will fall away to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads." 20. As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediah, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of thousands that were of Manasseh. 21. And they helped David against the band of rovers: for they were all mighty men of valor, and were captains in the host. 22. For from day to day men came to David to help him, until there was a great host, like the host of God.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 12:1. These are the names of the famous warriors who joined David at Ziklag while he was hiding from King Saul. 2. All of them were expert archers and slingers, and they could use their left hands as readily as their right! Like King Saul, they were all of the tribe of Benjamin. 3-7. Their chief was Ahi-ezer, son of Shemaah from Gibe-ah. The others were: His brother Joash; Jezi-el and Pelet, sons of Azmaveth; Beracah; Jehu from Anathoth; Ishmaiah from Gibeon (a brave warrior rated as high or higher than The Thirty); Jeremiah; Jahaziel; Johanan; Jozabad from Gederah; Eluzai; Jerimoth; Bealiah; Shemariah; Shephatiah from Haruph; Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Jo-ezer, Jashobe-am—all Korahites; Jo-elah and Zebadiah (sons of Jeroham from Gedor).

8-13. Great and brave warriors from the tribes of Gad also went to David in the wilderness. They were experts with both shield and spear and were "lion-faced men, swift as deer upon the mountains." Ezer was the chief; Obadiah was second in command; Eliab was third in command; Mishmannah was fourth in command; Jeremiah was fifth in command; Attai was sixth in command; Eliel was seventh in command; Johanan was eighth in command; Elzabad was ninth in command; Jeremiah was tenth in command; Machbannai was eleventh in command. 14. These men were army officers; the weakest was worth a

hundred normal troops, and the greatest was worth a thousand! 15. They crossed the Jordan River during its seasonal flooding and conquered the lowlands on both the east and west banks.

16. Others came to David from Benjamin and Judah. 17. David went out to meet them and said, "If you have come to help me, we are friends; but if you have come to betray me to my enemies when I am innocent, then may the God of our fathers see and judge you." 18. Then the Holy Spirit came upon them, and Amasai, a leader of The Thirty, replied, "We are yours, David; We are on your side, son of Jesse, Peace, peace be unto you, And peace to all who aid you; For your God is with you." So David let them join him, and he made them captains of his army.

19. Some men from Manasseh deserted the Israeli army and joined David just as he was going into battle with the Philistines against King Saul. But as it turned out, the Philistine generals refused to let David and his men go with them. After much discussion they sent them back, for they were afraid that David and his men would imperil them by deserting to King Saul. 20. Here is a list of the men from Manasseh who deserted to David as he was en route to Ziklag; Adnah, Jozabad, Jedia-el, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, Zillethai. Each was a high-ranking officer of Manasseh's troops. 21. They were brave and able warriors, and they assisted David when he fought against the Amalek raiders at Ziklag. 22. More men joined David almost every day until he had a tremendous army—the army of God.

COMMENTARY

The record in this chapter has to do with those friends who joined themselves to David and who were associated with him when he occupied the village of Ziklag in Saul's day. There is also a review of those leaders and tribes pledging their faithfulness to David at the time when he was anointed king of all Israel. When David went to the Philistines rather late in his experiences with Saul he was given the village of Ziklag where he and his soldiers and their families could make their

encampment (I Samuel 27:2-6). He remained in this territory for a year and four months (I Samuel 27:7). Although the exact site of Ziklag has not been determined in our day, it was known to be in the south of Judah on the border of the Philistine country. At Ziklag David experienced one of the most serious crises through which he was ever to pass as a leader in Israel. Presuming that the Philistines would let him and his men go to war with them against Saul and Israel (I Samuel 29), he had left his wives and the wives and families of his soldiers back at Ziklag unprotected. When the Philistine officers superior to Achish demanded that David and his men be dismissed from their army, David returned to Ziklag. Upon his arrival in the village he was shocked to learn that in his absence a band of Amalekites had raided the encampment and had escaped with wives, children, cattle and anything else they could carry. It was at this time (I Samuel 30:1-6) that David's soldiers were just about ready to turn on their leader and stone him. All of them were deeply grieved over the loss of wives and families. "David strengthened himself in Jehovah his God" and weathered this storm. He was then able to lead his men in speedy pursuit of the Amalekite raiders and miraculously they were able to re-possess every person and everything which had been stolen. So David was reinstated in his office as a leader in Israel.

This account in chapter 12 is particularly valuable because this information is not repeated.¹ A matter of primary concern in verses 1-7 is the listing of David's warriors from the tribe of Benjamin. That there should be such able soldiers in David's camp from Benjamin is all the more remarkable because king Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul's own people lost faith in him some considerable time before he died on Mount Gilboa. The kind of weapons used by soldiers at this time in history is a matter of interest. The bow and arrow was an ancient hunting and military device. The bow was made of elastic wood or of bronze. No doubt, bows were of different sizes, depending on the strength of the men who carried them. The bowstring was usually made from the intestines of oxen or

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, p. 340.

camels. The arrows were constructed from reeds or light weight wood. Arrow heads were made of stone, bronze and iron. The quiver would usually be carried on the back or at the soldier's left side. The sling was used by the soldier, the shepherd, and the hunter. It was a leather thong, or it might be woven from rushes, hair, or the sinews of animals. The middle of the throng was wider than the ends. In this hollow place the stone was set. With the ammunition in position, the slinger would hold both ends of the weapon in his hand. He would swing it around his head until it attained the desired velocity. The stone was sent on its way as one end of the thong was released just at the right instant. The Benjamites were especially skilled in the use of the sling. They were said to be able "to sling a stone at a hair-breadth and not miss" (Judges 20:16). They could do this with the left hand. One of the remarkable details in this account (I Chronicles 12:2) is that David's soldiers from Benjamin could with equal expertness employ bow or sling with the right or the left hand. Several villages in Benjamin were represented by these warriors such as Gilbeah (Saul's home town), Anathoth, Gibeon. These men were with David in Ziklag.

The Gadites (verses 8-15) were from beyond the Jordan to the east. Like the men from Benjamin, the Gadite warriors had worthy credentials. They were men of valor, men trained for war. They could handle shield and spear. They had faces like lions. No enemy could frighten them or make them retreat. They were agile and could run like the deer. All of these qualifications required constant training. These men were certainly well conditioned physically and mentally for the work that was theirs to do. One soldier from among the Gadites was the equal of a hundred ordinary men. An outstanding Gadite warrior might be worth more than a thousand ordinary soldiers. There is no further detail with regard to verse 15. At some time of real distress the Gadite warriors had opportunity to demonstrate their prowess as soldiers. The enemy had fled before them.

Verses 16-18 tell of an incident when certain warriors out of Benjamin and Judah came to David when he was hiding out in

the territory of Judah. When David met them he advised them if they had come to cast their lot with him, they would be graciously received. He warned them, however, that if they intended to deal treacherously with him, as others of his supposed friends had done, the wrath of Jehovah would be unleashed against them. This incident reflects experiences David had known among his own people at Keilah and at Ziph. The chief spokesman here is named Amasai. He may have been the same person named in 2:17, Amasa, the son of Abigail, David's sister. David was immediately informed that these brethren had come to assist him. The Spirit of Jehovah took control of Amasai and taught him what to say. So he spoke words of peace and David gladly received these men into his camp. They were given positions of leadership among David's warriors.

Warriors from the tribe of Manasseh cast their lot with David (verses 19-22). As David turned back from following the Philistines into the final battle against Saul and as he returned to Ziklag, these Manassehite soldiers joined David's men. These helpers were especially valuable at this time because David had to pursue the "band of rovers", the Amalekites. These were important days in David's life. Every day more and more soldiers were joining his ranks. His army was about to become "like the army of God". This is just another way of saying that the small band of guerillas which he had gathered around him early has now become a well-organized task force.

The historian now calls the roll of the tribes of Israel. Each tribe can answer for itself as soldiers have come from every part of the kingdom to join themselves to David's army accepting him as their commander-in-chief (verses 23-40). The situation described here has to do with the time when Saul had died and David had come to Hebron where he was anointed king of Israel. The tribes presented warriors according to the following schedule:

Judah	6,800	Benjamin	3,000	Zebulun	50,000
Simeon	7,100	Ephraim	20,800	Naphtali	38,000
Levi	4,600	Manasseh (W)	18,000	Dan	28,600
Aaron	3,700	Issachar	200	Asher	40,000
Reuben-Gad-Manasseh (E) 120,000					

This gave David control over an army that numbered about 340,000 men. This compares with 603,550 soldiers in Israel's army at Sinai in Moses' day (Numbers 1:46). When David took the last census near the close of his life, he numbered 1,300,000 warriors (II Samuel 24:9). These 340,000 who now accept his generalship stand in sharp contrast to the 400 who first joined him as he fled from Saul. It is of interest to note that all of the tribes of Israel are represented among those who provide warriors for David. Even the tribe of Levi, which was exempt from military service, along with the house of Aaron, sent men for David's army.

The purpose of this assembly at Hebron was "to turn the kingdom of Saul over to David according to Jehovah's word" (verse 23). Jehoiada was the father of Benaiah and he presented himself as the leader of the house of Aaron. Zadok was the high priest. He was the son of Ahitub (II Samuel 8:17). He came as the leader of the Levites. The tribe of Issachar sent two hundred chieftains. No doubt they sent warriors too, but the number of warriors is not indicated. The warriors representing Zebulun were well qualified for any military assignment (verse 33). They were "not of a double heart." They had no second thoughts about what they ought to do when they heard the call to battle. The tribes beyond the Jordan had sent 40,000 men with Joshua in his day to help in the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 4:13). It had been feared that they might refuse to help their brethren take Canaan. Now in this later day they sent 120,000 warriors to serve under David. They were a part of the kingdom and wanted full representation.

The genuine military ability of all these soldiers is carefully emphasized. They could "order the battle array" (verse 38). The marvelous unity and happy disposition of the whole assembly promised better days and a new era for Israel. A divided kingdom was united. David had the potential for making a great king. It was a time for feasting. "There was joy in Israel" (verse 40).

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON FIVE 11-12

142. Name and locate the place where David was made king.
143. Locate the previous Bible reference mentioned in 11:2.
144. What had Jehovah told Samuel about David?
145. Name and carefully locate the place David chose for his capital city.
146. In David's military plans how could one become the captain of the host?
147. Identify Zeruah. How was Joab related to David?
148. Name the original sector of Jerusalem taken by David.
149. What is "Millo"?
150. What was the nature of the achievements of the "mighty men" of 11:10ff?
151. How was Jashobeam remembered?
152. In conflict with what enemy did Eleazar distinguish himself?
153. Carefully locate Adullam.
154. Describe the risks taken by David's warriors in securing water for the king.
155. What did David do with the water and why did he do this?
156. How did Abishai distinguish himself?
157. What military distinctions were earned by Benaiah?
158. How large is a weaver's beam?
159. Name two of Asahel's brothers.
160. Identify Uriah (11:41).
161. How many of David's highest ranking military leaders are numbered here?
162. What was Naharai's special assignment?
163. Carefully locate Ziklag.
164. What was a peculiarity about the warriors from the tribe of Benjamin?
165. Name two Benjaminite villages mentioned in 12:1-7.
166. How were the Gadite warriors described?

167. Identify two other men in the Old Testament named Obadiah.
168. How were the warriors from Judah and Benjamin answered by David when they first came to him?
169. In the last great Philistine conflict resulting in Saul's death why would the Philistines refuse David's help?
170. Identify the "band of rovers" in 12:21.
171. How is David's army described in 12:22?
172. List the various Hebrew tribes and the number of warriors each provided.
173. What does this listing indicate with regard to David's kingdom?
174. Describe the "perfect heart" of 12:38.
175. List the items of food used at a time of festival.
176. Why was there "joy in Israel"?

LESSON SIX 13-14

DAVID AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT DAVID'S FAMILY WAR WITH PHILISTIA.

6. THE ARK AND OBED-EDOM (Chapter 13)

INTRODUCTION

David's desire to make Jerusalem a holy city is now evident, so the ark was brought to Jerusalem. The Philistines were never victorious in their encounters with David. Their gods failed them and they fled before the mighty invisible army of Jehovah.

TEXT

Chapter 13:1. And David consulted with the captains of thousands and of hundreds, even with every leader. 2. And David said unto all the assembly of Israel, "If it seem good unto you, and if it be of Jehovah our God, let us send abroad everywhere unto our brethren that are left in all the land of Israel, with whom the priests and Levites are in their cities that have suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us; 3. and let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we sought not unto it in the days of Saul." 4. And all the assembly said that they would do so; for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. 5. So David assembled all Israel together, from the Shihor the brook of Egypt even unto the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. 6. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God Jehovah that sitteth above the cherubim, that is called by the Name. 7. And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. 8. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, even with songs, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

9. And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled.

10. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put forth his hand to the ark; and there he died before God. 11. And David was displeased, because Jehovah had broken forth upon Uzza: and he called that place Perezuzza, unto this day. 12. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" 13. So David removed not the ark unto him into the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 14. And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months: and Jehovah blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 13:1. After David had consulted with all his army officers, 2. he addressed the assembled men of Israel as follows: "Since you think that I should be your king, and since the Lord our God has given his approval, let us send messages to our brothers throughout the land of Israel, including the priests and Levites, inviting them to come and join us. 3. And let us bring back the Ark of our God, for we have been neglecting it ever since Saul became king." 4. There was unanimous consent, for everyone agreed with him. 5. So David summoned the people of Israel from all across the nation so that they could be present when the Ark of God was brought from Kiriath-jearim. 6. Then David and all Israel went to Baalah (i.e., Kiriath-jearmin) in Judah to bring back the Ark of the Lord God enthroned above the angels. 7. It was taken from the house of Abinadab on a new cart. Uzza and Ahio drove the oxen. 8. Then David and all the people danced before the Lord with great enthusiasm, accompanied by singing and by zithers, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.

9. But as they arrived at the threshing-floor of Chidon, the oxen stumbled and Uzza reached out his hand to steady the Ark. 10. Then the anger of the Lord blazed out against Uzza, and killed him because he had touched the Ark. And so he died there before God. 11. David was angry at the Lord for what he had done to Uzza, and he named the place "The Outbreak

Against Uzza." And it is still called that today. 12. Now David was afraid of God and asked, "How shall I ever get the Ark of God home?" 13. Finally he decided to take it to the home of Obed-edom the Gittite instead of bringing it to the City of David. 14. The Ark remained there with the family of Obed-edom for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his family.

COMMENTARY

Having explained how David had become commander-in-chief over the great army of Israel and how he had been duly anointed king over a great united kingdom, the historian now turns to David's establishment of Jerusalem as a holy city.¹ David demonstrated wise leadership when he counseled with properly constituted officers who represented the people. As early as Moses' day responsible men had been selected to help Moses bear the burdens of leadership (Exodus 18:13-27). This probably was the historical basis for the Sanhedrin, or the high court of the Jews, which continued to function in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry. David spoke also to "the whole assembly of Israel" and took the people into his confidence. His government was not to be that of an autocrat or a tyrant. Moreover, he was concerned about the will of God. "If it be of Jehovah our God, we will bring the ark of God into Jerusalem." David knew the failures of Saul's kingship. He wanted to build the nation of Israel on the solid foundation of seeking out and doing God's will. If Jerusalem is to be the capital, then David thought that the center of worship should be located there. He had to be certain that Jehovah was directing any action he might take. Consideration was given to the priests and Levites. These had been appointed to sacred service by Jehovah. The ark of the covenant would immediately concern these religious leaders so they are specifically invited to this national gathering.

The ark of the covenant had been in the tabernacle at Shiloh for years (Joshua 18:1). In the days of Eli and Samuel

¹Pfeiffer, Charles F., *The Biblical World*, pp. 309-323.

the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant. The power of Jehovah through this scared chest wrought havoc in the cities in Philistia (I Samuel 4:1-4, 11, 22, 5:1-10; 6:9-13). Plagued by their idolatry and superstition, the Philistines suffered greatly before they decided to relinquish the ark and send it back with golden tumors and golden mice. The ark came back to Bethshemesh in Judah. The people of Judah were so glad to see it, but in their rejoicing they dared to become too familiar with it. A great slaughter followed (I Samuel 6:19). The ark was then taken to the house of Abinadab in Kiriath-jearim, a village just west of Jerusalem. The ark remained there, separated from the tabernacle, until David's day. To this place David brought all Israel so that the ark might be brought into Jerusalem. In the meantime, after the ark had been removed from the tabernacle at Shiloh, the tabernacle had been moved to the village of Nob on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The ark and the tabernacle would never be re-united until they were both brought into Solomon's Temple.

A great assembly was called together for this sacred occasion (verse 5). The record in II Samuel 6:1, 2 number thirty thousand of "the chosen men of Israel". The term "Shihor" according to Gesenius is from a root meaning "turbid" or "black". The River of Egypt, the modern Wady el-Arish, marked the southwestern boundary of Palestine. It flowed into the Mediterranean south and west of the Brook Besor and the Cherethite country south of Philistia. The Nile also is on occasion referred to as "Shihor". The intention of the author here is to indicate the all-inclusive character of the assembly as people came from the farthest boundaries on the south and west to the farthest boundaries in the north. Hamath was about three hundred miles to the north from Jerusalem on the Orontes river in Syria. This must have involved sending runners to these distant places with summons for all Hebrews to attend this sacred meeting.

The village where the ark was located is called by various names in the Bible record. Baalah, Kiriath-jearim, Kiriath-baal all refer to the same place. At one time this must have been a

center of Baal worship. "Kiriath" means "city of" or "village". Kiriath-jearim signifies "a village of forests". The exact location is not known, but it is generally located about eight and one-half miles north of Jerusalem.¹ The account we are now studying assigns the village to Judah. In earlier times it was named in connection with Gibeon and other Hivite villages.

The combination of the terms "God" and "Jehovah" in this particular order is rare in the Scriptures. The Hebrew names involved are "Elohim" (God) and "Yahweh" (Jehovah). Elohim is used over two thousand times in the Old Testament and presents God as the all-powerful Creator and Sustainer. Yahweh was the name God chose for Himself when He sent Moses into Egypt to deliver Israel. By this term God is designated as the only existent deity who is in covenant relationship with His people. The Hebrews who loved God held His name in highest reverence. On occasion they feared even to attempt to pronounce His name "Yahweh" lest they blaspheme His name by mispronunciation. They coined another term, "Ha-shem" or "Shem", which they used in reference to Him. This term is used in verse 6 and is translated "the Name". The focal point of God's glory was between wings of the cherubim just over the ark of the covenant. There seemed to have been no lack of reverence for God on David's part on this occasion. No explanation is given as to why Kohathite Levites were not designated to carry the ark on their shoulders as they had done by divine appointment in the days of Moses and Joshua. Had this been done at this time, the accident involving Uzza would have been avoided. No charge is brought against David in this matter. The new cart would seem to be a poor substitute for personal attention by the priests. The fact that the cart was new is probably emphasized to clarify the point that the cart was built especially to bear this holy treasure. Abinadab lived in Kiriath-jearim and had graciously consented to provide a place for the ark of the covenant through several years after it had been returned from Philistia. Uzza and Ahio (II Samuel 6:3, 6)

¹Pfeiffer, Charles F., *The Biblical World*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1966, p. 16.

were sons or grandsons of Abinadab. Eleazar was Abinadab's eldest son (I Samuel 7:1). Uzza and Ahio were charged with the responsibility of managing the oxen and the cart with its precious cargo. It was a happy day, a time for laughing, rejoicing, singing. The songs were accompanied with a full orchestration of musical instruments. David led in all of the religious exercises of the day.

The death of Uzza very abruptly ended the ceremonies of what had been a very happy occasion. As the procession moved up the road toward Jerusalem everything was in good order until they came to the threshing floor of Chidon (Nacon—II Samuel 6:6). The two names most likely refer to the same place. A threshing floor would measure from fifty to one hundred feet in diameter and would be located so as to take advantage of the wind in separating the grain from the straw. Places of importance were often designated by familiar objects such as great rocks, trees, or as in this instance, a threshing floor. It may be that the procession stopped at this place for rest or worship. While they waited, the oxen shook the cart. Instinctively, Uzza reached out with hand to try to avert the disaster of the ark's being thrown to the ground.¹ Uzza's action caused his death. Staves were to remain in the ark at all times so it could be put on priests' shoulders at a moment's notice and lead the line of march as Israel came to Canaan. Whether or not these handles were in the ark just now is not known. They were in the ark when it was later put in the Oracle in Solomon's Temple. Most likely, Uzza was not a priest. His action was one of undue familiarity with the most sacred vessel known to the Hebrews. Jehovah struck him down. What happened here should underscore God's attitude toward anyone who would profane sacred things. David's laughter turned to anger and grief. David was displeased with the whole turn of events. It would appear that he came dangerously close to passing judgment on Jehovah's action. If he was about to do this, he soon recovered, because the word says (verse 12), "David was afraid of God". He revered God and knew he had to accept

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, I *Chronicles*, p. 196.

what had happened. The threshing floor was then named "Perez-uzza", or the breach of Uzza, because God's wrath had broken through on Uzza that day. David then decided not to attempt to take the ark into Jerusalem at this time. He may have thought that Uzza's death was God's way of telling him that the time was not yet right for this move. He found a man, Obed-edom the Gittite, who lived nearby and who would receive the ark into his house.¹ In this matter Obed-edom was taking considerable risk. The wrath of God could break out upon him. This great assembly broke up and everybody returned to his own place unsatisfied with regard to the disposition of the ark. Periodically in the days that followed David checked with Obed-edom. The ark remained in his house for three months. During this time "Jehovah blessed the house of Obed-edom." There is no indication that David suffered any other reverses for not bringing the ark into Jerusalem. However, when it was apparent that the presence of the ark in a house did not bring death, David resumed his plans to bring the ark to the capital city.

7. DAVID'S PALACE, WIVES, AND EARLY MILITARY VICTORIES (Chapter 14)

TEXT

Chapter 14:1. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar-trees, and masons, and carpenters, to build him a house. 2. And David perceived that Jehovah had established him king over Israel; for his kingdom was exalted on high, for his people Israel's sake. 3. And David took more wives at Jerusalem; and David begat more sons and daughters. 4. And these are the names of the children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, 5. and Ibhar, and Elishua, and Elpelet, 6. and Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia, 7. and Elishama, and Beeliada, and Eliphelet. 8. And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David: and David heard

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 394.

of it, and went out against them. 9. Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. 10. And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into my hand?" And Jehovah said unto him, "Go up; for I will deliver them into thy hand?" 11. So they came up to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there; and David said, God hath broken mine enemies by my hand, like the breach of waters. Therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim. 12. And they left their gods there; and David gave commandment, and they were burned with fire. 13. And the Philistines yet again made a raid in the valley. 14. And David inquired again of God; and God said unto him, "Thou shalt not go up after them: turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees. 15. And it shall be, when thou hearest the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle; for God is gone out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." 16. And David did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gezer. 17. And the fame of David went out into all lands; and Jehovah brought the fear of him upon all nations.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 14:1. King Hiram of Tyre sent masons and carpenters to help build David's palace and he supplied him with much cedar lumber. 2. David now realized why the Lord had made him king and why he had made his kingdom so great; it was for a special reason—to give joy to God's people!

3. After David moved to Jerusalem, he married additional wives and became the father of many sons and daughters. 4-7. These are the names of the sons born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishu-a, Elpelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Beeliada, Eliphelet.

8. When the Philistines heard that David was Israel's new king, they mobilized their forces to capture him. But David learned that they were on the way so he called together his army. 9. The Philistines were raiding the Valley of Rephaim, 10.

and David asked the Lord, "If I go out and fight them, will you give me the victory?" And the Lord replied, "Yes, I will." 11. So he attacked them at Baal-perazim and wiped them out. He exulted, "God has used me to sweep away my enemies like water bursting through a dam!" That is why the place has been known as Baal-perazim ever since (meaning, "The Place of Breaking Through"). 12. After the battle the Israelis picked up many idols left by the Philistines, but David ordered them burned.

13. Later the Philistines raided the valley again, 14. and again David asked God what to do. The Lord replied, "Go around by the mulberry trees and attack from there. 15. When you hear a sound like marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, that is your signal to attack, for God will go before you and destroy the enemy." 16. So David did as the Lord commanded him; and he cut down the army of the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer. 17. David's fame spread everywhere, and the Lord caused all the nations to fear him.

COMMENTARY

As David began to organize his government in Jerusalem he was able to enjoy a friendly relationship with the Phoenician people who shared the eastern coastline of the Mediterranean with Israel. Phoenicia boasted with regard to two great cities, Sidon and Tyre. Sidon was the older of the two cities and had been in contention with Egypt as early as 1500 B.C. When Sidon was subdued by the Philistines in the twelfth century B.C., Tyre came into a position of prominence. From the Biblical viewpoint Hiram was Tyre's most illustrious king. There is no certain information as to his background. He was contemporary with David and Solomon. "Hiram was ever a lover of David" (I Kings 5:1), and he used his office to establish an alliance between his country and Israel. Such a relationship was mutually helpful. The Phoenicians needed the grain and olive oil produced in Israel. David and Solomon needed the cedar, fir, and marble from Phoenicia and the Lebanon region. From early times the Phoenicians were skilled craftsmen in the

use of lumber and stone. While many of their neighbors continued to live in tents, the Phoenicians were already living in well constructed wooden houses. These people were expert builders of ships. These remarkable vessels plied the waters of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean carrying to distant places their works in bronze, the precious purple dye, textiles, and glass products. Hiram's reign extended through about forty years. He beautified Tyre and made it one of the truly great cities of the near east. When David made Jerusalem his capital, Hiram moved quickly to offer products and services useful to David and Israel in return for which he hoped to receive David's good will and substantial food exports. So cedar trees, masons and carpenters provided by Phoenician friends resulted in well constructed kingly quarters for David and his family. The "house" (I Chronicles 14:1) was David's own residence in Jerusalem. It was this circumstance (II Samuel 7:1) that caused David to originate the idea of the Temple, a House for God. David saw the ark housed in a tent while he lived in a house of cedar. So the Temple idea was born. We are not to presume that the house Hiram built for David would even suggest the splendor of Solomon's palaces, yet David's house was surely the most splendid in Israel in David's day. The student should observe that this incident introduces a Gentile contribution to the kingdom of God. It looked ahead to that day when Gentiles would receive the "Bread of Life" from the true Israel. David was well pleased with this turn of events (II Samuel 5:11, 12) and saw in them an evident token of Jehovah's blessing.

A review of David's own family is in order at this point in the record. II Samuel 3:2-5 lists David's wives and children in those days when he lived in Hebron. At that time David had six wives; namely, Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah. Ahinoam most likely came from Jezreel, a village in Judah. Abigail originally was the wife of Nabal, the wealthy rancher at Carmel in Judah (I Samuel 25:10, 42). Maacah came from the region of Geshur near Mahanaim on the frontier of the Gilead country east of the Jordan river. The origins of the other

three wives are not indicated. These six wives each bore David a son. When David came to Jerusalem he brought his six wives plus Michal, Saul's daughter, and his six sons; namely, Amnon, Chileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, and Ithream. The order of birth was a matter of great importance in consideration of the responsibilities resting on the first born. Amnon should have been heir to the throne. He raped his sister, Tamar (II Samuel 13:1, 14). Chileab does not figure prominently in the history and may have died in infancy. Maacah was the mother of both Absalom and Tamar. When Amnon, a half brother, outraged his sister, Absalom killed Amnon. So Absalom was in line to be king. He "stole the people's hearts" (II Samuel 15:6) and rebelled against David (II Samuel 15:10). As he hung by the hair of this head from the limb of a tree Absalom was slain by Joab (II Samuel 18:14) who may well have hoped that he might be king of Israel. With Absalom removed, Adonijah also rebelled against David as he sought to place himself of the throne (I Kings 1:5). His hopes were dashed as Benaiah, upon Solomon's command, put him to death. So the order in which David's sons were born determined the course of events in the history

We do not know just how extensive David's harem was. In addition to the seven wives already named, we are told that "he took more wives at Jerusalem" (verse 3). Among these was Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite (II Samuel 11:27).¹ It was she who became Solomon's mother. We are told that David was the father of "daughters". The only one named is Tamar. In verses 4-7 thirteen sons of David are named in addition to the six born in Hebron. The thirteen include Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet. Whether or not any of these at any time attempted to seize the throne is not known to us. Just prior to his death, David placed Solomon on the throne (I Kings 1:30) and we hear nothing more of the sons of David. We understand from this record that David was husband

¹Schultz, Samuel J., *The Old Testament Speaks*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1960, pp. 136, 137.

to at least eight wives. He was the father of nineteen sons and at least one daughter. Among kings in the near east the harem and the king's household were very important status symbols. In this respect David qualified. There is no evidence that he sought God's approval for his polygamy. This aspect of his life brought him many sorrows. His lack of self-control in these matters almost ruined him.

He built a great house. David had a rather extensive harem. He allied himself with Hiram and the Phoenicians. This whole situation threatened the position of the Philistines as they shared Judah's territory along the coastal plain. A new kingdom was rapidly being established on the Philistine frontier. It was being set up around a warrior-king well known to this ancient enemy of Israel. The Philistines could not let this go unchallenged. If they could attack David before he made any other alliances or became stronger militarily, they might be successful in strangling this new kingdom in its infancy. They "went up to seek David" (verse 8). David was the key person. He had humiliated the Philistines many times. The Philistines organized their army for an attack on Israel in the Valley of Rephaim.¹ This valley lay just to the southwest of Jerusalem. Perhaps they intended to move through the valley and come directly into the capital. As on other occasions, David inquired of Jehovah. When Abiathar had joined David as David fled from Saul, he brought the ephod with him. The Urim and Thummim probably were carried in the ephod. David had the services of this priest and by use of the sacred lot the immediate will of Jehovah could be determined. He also had the counsel of the prophets, Nathan and Gad. He had no difficulty in finding out what God wanted him to do. As in the account in II Samuel 5:17-25, so here, two questions were of urgent concern to David. The first was this, "Do you want me to fight the Philistines?" He may have wondered whether or not he had sinned against God and if the Philistines were being sent by God to chastise him. The second question was, "If I am to wage war, will you give me victory?" The answer to both questions was

¹Schultz, Samuel J., *The Old Testament Speaks*, p. 131. Pfeiffer, Charles F., *The Biblical World*, p. 447.

affirmative. God said, "Go. I will deliver them into thy hand" (verse 10). The battle between David's forces and the Philistines raged in that valley. The Philistine army was completely routed. They had brought images of the fertility god, Baal, with them into the battle. Baal was supposed to guarantee victory to his people. In their haste to escape the pursuing Israelites, the Philistines flung their gods to the ground. When the dust of battle settled, the battlefield was strewn with corpses of soldiers and broken idols. So this place of conflict was called "Baal-perazim", or "the break-up of Baal". Involved in this was the unleashing of the wrath of Jehovah on the Philistine army. The reader is impressed with the unusual power on the side of David's forces. It was "like the breach of waters", as if a great dam had broken loose. The enemy was caught in the flood and swept away before it. The idols were gathered up and burned. Israel was to have no doubt about who gave the victory that day.

Sometime after this, when the Philistines had had time to gather their forces and forget the stinging defeat of the earlier encounter, they decided to make another attack at the same place. This was their most direct approach to the capital city. The hour was growing late for Philistia. David's kingdom became stronger with each passing day. So once again they moved into the Valley of Rephaim. David inquired of God again. He took nothing for granted. Each situation was different. This time David was told not to go after the enemy but to "turn away from them" (verse 14). A tactic similar to this was employed when Joshua led Israel's army against Ai (Joshua 8:15). When the men of Ai came out to attack, Joshua led Israel in an organized retreat setting up the men of Ai for a maneuver that brought victory to Israel. The "mulberry trees" probably were a species of balsam. Somewhere in the vicinity of the valley the balsam groves appeared to offer a hiding place for Israel's army. In feverish pursuit the Philistines came on. When they could no longer see the Israelite army clearly, suddenly they began to hear the "sound of marching" (verse 15) in the balsam woods. Miraculously once more Jehovah intervened. He

caused the Philistines to hear what they could not see and did not need to see. They heard the sounds of mighty armies, not just the sounds of David's soldiers. Had David's allies arrived? Where was the enemy they could hear but could not see? Their ears did not deceive them. Jehovah had brought in His "host". David and his men turned on the Philistines as they reversed their apparent retreat. The enemy was cut off from the rear and could not get back to the coastal plain. The Philistines were pursued all the way from Gibeon, just north of Jerusalem, to Gezer, which was some fifteen miles west of Gibeon. These two engagements broke the Philistine military power. Never again were they to trouble Israel seriously. All of these events served to accomplish the very thing the Philistines wanted to avoid—the establishment of David's kingdom.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON SIX 13-14

177. Whose counsel did David seek as he thought about moving the ark of the covenant?
178. What does David say about the ark in relationship to the times of Saul?
179. Carefully locate Shihor.
180. Where was Hamath?
181. Locate Kiriath-jearim in relation to Jerusalem.
182. Explain the relationship between Jehovah and the cherubim.
183. What is meant by "the Name"?
184. How long had the ark been in the house of Abinadab?
185. In earlier times when the ark was moved how was it moved? Relate this to David's plan for moving the ark.
186. Carefully identify Uzza and Ahio.
187. Explain the word "played" in 13:8.
188. Describe the psalteries and timbrels.
189. Explain Uzza's sudden action.
190. Was David's displeasure justified? Explain.
191. What name was given to mark the place of this tragedy?

192. Describe David's fear of Jehovah.
193. Identify the "city of David".
194. What was done with the ark and what happened?
195. What did Hiram do for David?
196. How did David know that all was well with his kingdom?
197. How many of David's sons are numbered in this account (14:4-7)?
198. Which of these sons became most famous?
199. What ancient enemy now challenges Israel?
200. Why was this a strategic time for the enemy to attack?
201. Carefully locate the Valley of Rephaim.
202. Describe David's procedure in meeting this challenge.
203. Why was this place called Baal-perazim?
204. What was done with the gods?
205. Explain the strategy employed in meeting the second attack.
206. What was to be the signal for Israel to go out to battle?
207. Where were Gibeon and Gezer located?
208. Why did all of the neighboring nations have such great respect for David?

LESSON SEVEN 15-16

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING

THE MINISTERS AND WORSHIP

8. BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM (15-16)

INTRODUCTION

The completion of the movement of the ark to Jerusalem is accomplished at this time. David's concern for worship is underscored in his appointment of Levitical ministers and his composition of a beautiful hymn of thanksgiving.

TEXT

Chapter 15:1. And David made him houses in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. 2. Then David said, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever". 3. And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of Jehovah unto its place, which he had prepared for it. 4. And David gathered together the sons of Aaron, and the Levites: 5. of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twenty; 6. of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty; 7. of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and thirty; 8. of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred; 9. of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore; 10. of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twelve. 11. And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, 12. and said unto them, "Ye are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of Jehovah, the

God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it. 13. For because ye bare it not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance." 14. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 15. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah.

16. And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren the singers, with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding aloud and lifting up the voice with joy. 17. So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; 18. and with them their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Eliphehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the doorkeepers. 19. So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed, with cymbals of brass to sound aloud; 20. and Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries set to Alamoth; 21. and Mattithiah, and Eliphehu, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps set to the Sheminith, to lead. 22. And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was over the song: he instructed about the song, because he was skillful. 23. And Berechiah and Elkanah were doorkeepers for the ark. 24. And Shebaniah, and Joshaphat, and Nethanel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark.

25. So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the house of Obed-edom with joy. 26. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, that they sacrificed seven bullocks and seven rams. 27. And David was clothed with a robe of fine

linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: and David had upon him an ephod of linen, 28. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, sounding aloud with psalteries and harps.

29. And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came to the city of David; that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window, and saw king David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her heart.

Chapter 16:1. And they brought in the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before God. 2. And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Jehovah. 3. And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a portion of flesh, and a cake of raisins.

4. And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of Jehovah, and to celebrate and to thank and praise Jehovah, the God of Israel: 5. Asaph the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, with psalteries and with harps; and Asaph with cymbals, sounding aloud; 6. and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually, before the ark of the covenant of God.

7. Then on that day did David first ordain to give thanks unto Jehovah, by the hand of Asaph and his brethren. 8. O give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name; 9. Sing unto him, sing praises unto him; Talk ye of all his marvellous works. 10. Glory ye in his holy name; Let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah. 11. Seek ye Jehovah and his strength; Seek his face evermore. 12. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth, 13. O ye seed of Israel his servant, Ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. 14. He is Jehovah our God; His judgments are in all the earth. 15. Remember his covenant for ever, The word which he

commanded to a thousand generations, 16. The covenant which he made with Abraham, And his oath unto Isaac, 17. And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, To Israel for an everlasting covenant, 18. Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, The lot of your inheritance; 19. When you were but a few men in number, Yea, very few, and sojourners in it; 20. And they went about from nation to nation, And from one kingdom to another people. 21. He suffered no man to do them wrong; Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, 22. Saying, Touch not mine anointed ones, And do my prophets no harm. 23. Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth; Show forth his salvation from day to day. 24. Declare his glory among the nations. His marvellous works among all the peoples. 25. For great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised: He also is to be feared above all gods. 26. For all the gods of the peoples are idols: But Jehovah made the heavens. 27. Honor and majesty are before him: Strength and gladness are in his place. 28. Ascribe unto Jehovah, ye kindreds of the peoples, Ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength; 29. Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name: Bring an offering, and come before him; Worship Jehovah in holy array. 30. Tremble before him, all the earth: The world also is established that it cannot be moved. 31. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; And let them say among the nations, Jehovah reigneth. 32. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; Let the field exult, and all that is therein; 33. Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy before Jehovah; For he cometh to judge the earth. 34. O give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; For his lovingkindness endureth for ever. 35. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, And gather us together and deliver us from the nations. To give thanks unto thy holy name, And to triumph in thy praise, 36. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, From everlasting even to everlasting. And all the people said, Amen, and praised Jehovah.

37. So he left there, before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required; 38. and Obed-edom with their brethren, threescore and eight; Obed-edom also the

son of Jeduthun and Hosah to be doorkeepers; 39. and Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of Jehovah in the high place that was at Gibeon, 40. to offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah upon the altar of burnt-offering continually morning and evening, even according to all that is written in the law of Jehovah, which he commanded unto Israel; 41. and with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were mentioned by name, to give thanks to Jehovah, because his lovingkindness endureth for ever; 42. and with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should sound aloud, and with instruments for the songs of God; and the sons of Jeduthun to be at the gate. 43. And all the people departed every man to his house: and David returned to bless his house.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 15:1. David now built several palaces for himself in Jerusalem, and he also built a new Tabernacle to house the Ark of God, 2. and issued these instructions: (When we transfer the Ark to its new home), no one except the Levites may carry it, for God has chosen them for this purpose; they are to minister to him forever." 3. Then David summoned all Israel to Jerusalem to celebrate the bringing of the Ark into the new Tabernacle. 4-10. These were the priests and Levites present: 120 from the clan of Kohath; with Uriel as their leader; 220 from the clan of Merari; with Asaiah as their leader; 130 from the clan of Gershon; with Joel as their leader; 200 from the subclan of Elizaphan; with Shemaiah as their leader; 80 from the subclan of Hebron; with Eliel as their leader; 112 from the subclan of Uzziel; with Amminadab as their leader. 11. Then David called for Zadok and Abiathar, the High Priests, and for the Levite leaders: Uriel, Asiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12. "You are the leaders of the clans of the Levites," he told them. "Now sanctify yourselves with all your brothers so that you may bring the Ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. 13. The Lord destroyed us before because we handled the matter im-

properly—you were not carrying it.” 14. So the priests and the Levites underwent the ceremonies of sanctification in preparation for bringing home the Ark of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 15. Then the Levites carried the Ark on their shoulders with its carrying poles, just as the Lord had instructed Moses.

16. King David also ordered the Levite leaders to organize the singers into an orchestra, and they played loudly and joyously upon psaltries, harps, and cymbals. 17. Heman (son of Joel), Asaph (son of Berechiah), and Ethan (son of Kushaiah) from the clan of Merari were the heads of the musicians. 18. The following men were chosen as their assistants: Zechariah, Ja-aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Ma-asseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom and Je-iel, the door keepers. 19. Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were chosen to sound the bronze cymbals; 20. and Zechariah, Azi-el, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Ma-aseiah, and Benaiah comprised an octet accompanied by harps. 21. Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Je-iel, and Azaziah were the harpists. 22. the song leader was Chenaniah, the chief of the Levites, who was selected for his skill. 23. Berechiah and Elkanah were guards for the Ark. 24. Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer—all of whom were priests—formed a bugle corps to march as the head of the procession. And Obed-edom and Jehiah guarded the Ark.

25. Then David and the elders of Israel and the high officers of the army went with great joy to the home of Obed-edom to take the Ark to Jerusalem. 26. And because God didn't destroy the Levites who were carrying the Ark, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven lambs. 27. David, the Levites carrying the Ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the song leader were all dressed in linen robes. David also wore a linen ephod. 28. So the leaders of Israel took the Ark to Jerusalem with shouts of joy, the blowing of horns and trumpets, the crashing of cymbals, and loud playing on the harps and zithers.

29. (But as the Ark arrived in Jerusalem, David's wife Michal, the daughter of King Saul, felt a deep disgust for David

as she watched from the window and saw him dancing like a madman.)

Chapter 16:1. So the Ark of God was brought into the Tabernacle. David had prepared for it, and the leaders of Israel sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2. At the conclusion of these offerings David blessed the people in the name of the Lord; 3. then he gave every person present (men and women alike) a loaf of bread, some wine, and a cake of raisins.

4. He appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the Ark by giving constant praise and thanks to the Lord God of Israel and by asking for his blessings upon his people. These are the names of those given this assignment: 5. Asaph, the leader of this detail, sounded the cymbals. His associates were Zechariah, Je-iel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Je-iel; they played the harps and zithers. 6. The priests Benaiah and Jahaziel played their trumpets regularly before the Ark.

7. At that time David began the custom of using choirs in the Tabernacle to sing thanksgiving to the Lord. Asaph was the director of this choral group of priests. 8. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord and pray to him," they sang. "Tell the peoples of the world About his mighty doings. 9. Sing to him; yes, sing his praises and tell of his marvelous works. 10. Glory in his holy name; Let all rejoice who seek the Lord. 11. Seek the Lord; yes, seek his strength, And seek his face untiringly. 12, 13. Oh descendants of his servant Abraham, O chosen sons of Jacob, Remember his mighty miracles, And his marvelous miracles, And his authority: 14. He is the Lord our God! His authority is seen throughout the earth. 15. Remember his covenant forever—The words he commanded, To a thousand generations: 16. His agreement with Abraham; And his oath to Isaac, 17. And his confirmation to Jacob. He promised Israel, With an everlasting promise: 18. 'I will give you the land of Canaan, As your inheritance.' 19. When Israel was few in number—oh, so few—And merely strangers in the Promised Land; 20. When they wandered from country to country, From one kingdom to

another—21. God didn't let anyone harm them. Even kings were killed who sought to hurt them. 22. 'Don't harm my chosen people,' he declared. 'These are my prophets—touch them not.' 23. Sing to the Lord, O earth, Declare each day that he is the one who saves! 24. Show his glory to the nations! Tell everyone about his miracles. 25. For the Lord is great, and should be highly praised; He is to be held in awe above all gods. 26. The other so-called gods are demons, But the Lord made the heavens. 27. Majesty and honor march before him, Strength and gladness walk beside him. 28. O people of all nations of the earth, Ascribe great strength and glory to his name! 29. Yes, ascribe to the Lord, The glory due his name! Bring an offering and come before him; Worship the Lord when clothed with holiness! 30. Tremble before him, all the earth! The world stands unmoved. 31. Let the heavens be glad, the earth rejoice; Let all the nations say, 'It is the Lord who reigns.' 32. Let the vast seas roar, Let the countryside and everything in it rejoice! 33. Let the trees in the woods sing for joy before the Lord, For he comes to judge the earth. 34. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; His love and his kindness go on forever. 35. Cry out to him, 'Oh, save us, God of our salvation; Bring us safely back from among the nations. Then we will thank your holy name, And triumph in your praise.' 36. Blessed be Jehovah, God of Israel, Forever and forevermore." And all the people shouted "Amen!" and praised the Lord.

37. David arranged for Asaph and his fellow Levites to minister regularly at the Tabernacle, doing each day whatever needed to be done. 38. This group included Obed-edom (the son of Jeduthun), Hosah and sixty-eight of their colleagues as guards. 39. Meanwhile the old Tabernacle of the Lord on the hill of Gibeon continued to be active. David left Zadok the priest and his fellow-priests to minister to the Lord there. 40. They sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord each morning and evening upon the altar set aside for that purpose, just as the Lord had commanded Israel. 41. David also appointed Heman, Jeduthun, and several others who were chosen by name to give thanks to the Lord for his constant love and mercy. 42. They

used their trumpets and cymbals to accompany the singers with loud praises to God. And Jeduthun's sons were appointed as guards. 43. At last the celebrations ended and the people returned to their homes, and David returned to bless his own household.

COMMENTARY

In spite of the reverses suffered in his previous attempt to locate the ark in the capital city, David was determined to complete this project. He fortified Jerusalem and continued to build "houses" in the city. These houses would be directly related to his government. As the king directed all of this activity Jerusalem came to be known as "the city of David", peculiarly identified with him. As he was caught up in the business of establishing his government in Jerusalem David could not forget the ark of the covenant. A special tent was constructed in the city to serve temporarily as a shelter for the sacred vessel. The tabernacle constructed at Sinai in Moses' day had been located at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim for many years. It was at Shiloh that Eli and Samuel ministered in the tabernacle (I Samuel 3:3). Later the tabernacle was moved to Nob (I Samuel 21:6) near Jerusalem. At this place David had been provided with shewbread and Goliath's sword as he fled Saul's wrath. There are indications that the tabernacle was moved to Gibeon where it most likely remained until the Temple was built. The ark had been captured by the Philistines, was returned to Beth-shemesh, moved to Kiriath-jearim and brought to the house of Obed-edom. During the three months after the death of Uzza, David laid careful plans for the moving of the ark. The sad experience with the oxen and the cart brought David to the decision announced in verse 2. Since the Levites had been appointed by Jehovah to carry the ark, this holy vessel must be carried on their shoulders (Numbers 1:15-53). Boards, bars, pillars, sockets and curtain materials could be transported on carts; but the sacred vessels were to be carried in the arms of the Kohathite Levites. Once more, runners were sent throughout the kingdom to announce the

happy occasion and a great assembly convened at Jerusalem. A careful distinction was made between "the sons of Aaron" and "the Levites". Every priest in order to serve, had to be a Levite; however, all Levites were not qualified to serve as priests. The Kohathite Levites who were physically perfect and ceremonially clean qualified to serve as priests. The Merarites and Gershonites (Gershom) could serve as hewers of wood and drawers of water, but they could not do the work of the regular priests. Zadok and Abiathar (verse 11) were the chief priests in David's administration. Zadok (II Samuel 8:17) and Ahimelech (I Samuel 22:20) were sons of Ahitub. Abiathar was Ahimelech's son. Only one High Priest functioned in Israel at a given time. Zadok would have the primary responsibility in David's day and Abiathar, his nephew, would serve as chief assistant. These two priests were called before David and he gave them special charge concerning the ark. "Sanctify yourselves" (verse 12). David had read the Law. He had concluded that because they had failed to observe this regulation concerning the priests and the ark they had incurred the wrath of Jehovah. The priests were very willing to do exactly as David commanded. They would give their personal attention to this matter. The ark with staves in place would be carried upon their shoulders, "in their arms". One hundred and twenty Kohathites, two hundred and twenty Merarites, and one hundred and thirty Gershonites were numbered and appointed to see that this mission would be accomplished. Others among the Levites were given specific appointments within the limits of Jehovah's Law. David made every effort to avoid any problem like that which had resulted in Uzza's death.

To make certain that everything was properly arranged for the occasion, David gave special instruction to those who would lead in the services. Singers, those who played on musical instruments, doorkeepers for the ark were all briefed regarding their respective duties. Psalteries, harps, cymbals, and trumpets were to be used. It was to be a happy day. The musical instruments were to be played skillfully with volume suited to the occasion. The singing was to be joyful. Heman, Asaph, and

Ethan, Levitical master musicians and their assistants were charged to lead in worship through song. The musical instruments were of varying kinds and were designed to produce excellent balance in tone. "Psalteries set to Alamoth" produced a high pitch harmonizing with the singing voices of men. "Harps set to the Sheminith" which means "the eighth or octave", produced a tone similar to that of the singing voices of men. This music was to be of the highest quality. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, had special duties on this occasion. There is some question as to the exact nature of these duties. Verse 22 mentions "the song". The term used here may be translated "in the carrying", possibly of the ark. So Chenaniah had specific assignment given him either with regard to the music or with regard to the actual carrying of the ark itself.¹ Berechiah, Elkanah, Obed-edom, and Jehiah were appointed to serve as doorkeepers for the ark. They probably served as a special guard to avoid any possibility of anyone touching the sacred vessel. Special assignments were made to seven of the priests who preceded the ark. These priests were also musicians who sounded trumpets as they led the procession. The trumpets were most likely made of silver like those designated for priestly use in Moses' day (Numbers 10:1-10). They were long, straight, narrow instruments with an expanded mouth. Such horns had been used to call people for a religious assembly, to announce the beginning of a new month or a new year, and to warn of an enemy attack. Originally there were only two silver trumpets. By the time of David and Solomon (II Chronicles 5:12) their number had been increased to one hundred and twenty.

The actual bringing in of the ark of the covenant is described in verses 25-28. The chronicler reflects the deep satisfaction experienced by all who shared in this joyous occasion. II Samuel 6:12-16 provides the parallel record of these events. It was with utmost reverence that the priests approached the ark to move it. There were sad memories of another day. What will the God of Israel do today? Will He unleash His wrath or will He smile upon His people? In great

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 608.

fear the priests dared to lay hold upon the staves and carefully lift the sacred ark to their shoulders. The historian recorded the words, "God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah". In effect, Jehovah said, "What you do here today meets my approval". In return, the priests offered animal sacrifices and rejoiced in God's help. At regular intervals (six paces or measurements) along the route to Jerusalem the whole company stopped and offered sacrifices. The Levites were careful to wear the clothing appointed for them as they carried out the sacred service. The regular priests could be easily distinguished from the High Priest by their garments. David, as the king, was dressed in a beautiful linen robe. In addition, David also wore a linen ephod. Historically, the ephod was worn only by the High Priest (Exodus 28:4-12). Samuel, as a child in the tabernacle, also wore a linen ephod (I Samuel 2:18). The ephod was worn much like a vest or jacket. When the High Priest wore it, the breastplate was attached to it. Jehovah evidently approved David's actions. In David the offices of king and priest were combined. This anticipated the time when the offices of king, priest, and prophet would all be united in Jesus Christ. All Israel joined in singing as the Levites played upon the musical instruments. The people also expressed their joy by shouting.

David was completely caught up in the joy of the occasion as he "danced and played". He leaped about in half-circles. He led in the celebration. His wife, Michal, took exception to his actions. She most likely had not been a part of the great assembly as the ark was brought into Jerusalem. From the window of her room she observed the king and was not sympathetic with his attitudes or the manner of his self-expression. She judged him to be guilty of conduct unbecoming to his position as king. II Samuel 6:23 says that Michal died childless. This curse was directly related to her severe judgment of David. Whereas Uzzah had died when the ark was moved on the earlier occasion, Michal is now cursed and through her there will be no son for David and no glory for her father, Saul.

Verses 1-3 of chapter sixteen are inseparably connected

with the concluding verses of the previous chapter. The ark was brought to the special tent David had constructed in Jerusalem for this purpose. Chapter 15:1 made direct reference to this appointment. There are no indications that David had intended to return the ark to the original tabernacle. Many sacrifices had been lifted up to Jehovah that day; however, burnt and peace offerings are now presented as the ark is set inside the tent. In the whole round of offerings designated in Leviticus, chapters 1-7, the burnt offering was the basic form of worship and the peace offering was the concluding presentation. In the burnt offering the worshipper pledged total consecration to Jehovah. This was symbolized in the complete reduction of the animal to ashes. The peace offering involved the presentation of the blood and fat of the animal to Jehovah. The wave breast and the heave thigh were food for the priests. The offerer and his family feasted on the sacrifice. So Jehovah, priests, and the worshipper all shared in this happy occasion. The peace offering symbolized the wonderful covenant relationship between Jehovah and His people. So burnt and peace offerings were presented when the ark was set in its place. In his official capacity as king, ruling by divine appointment and governing God's people by His sacred Law, David blessed Israel that day. With all of the rejoicing and the deep satisfaction that Jehovah had moved into Jerusalem, it was a time to give and receive gifts. David's generosity was equal to the joy of this occasion. The record indicates that he gave bread, flesh, and raisin cakes to all who were gathered there that day. The bread may be described as circular perforated cakes. The portion of flesh is translated by some to mean a measure of wine. The dried pressed cakes of raisins or grapes completed this festive gift.

David made certain that all Levitical appointments were in order (verses 4-6). The work of officiating priests is here carefully outlined. They are to celebrate the name of Jehovah. This may be translated "to cause others to remember". Priests had a two-fold duty of officiating in the sacrifices at the altar and in serving as teachers for Israel. "The name of Jehovah" was a phrase used in reference to the total character of the God of

Israel. It involved His complete self-revelation. When one sincerely called upon "the name of Jehovah", he fully accepted God's presentation of Himself and he agreed, without reservation, to do God's will. The priests must "celebrate" Jehovah's name. They must lead the people in thanksgiving. This expression would proceed naturally out of the remembrance of Jehovah's provisions for Israel. The priests would also be leaders in formal praises and worship of the one true God. David, Israel's king, clarified these matters. He used the cymbals of worship. Asaph had special responsibility in these matters. He used the cymbals in the musical service. Benaiah and Jahaziel were responsible for the trumpets. Zechariah was assistant to Asaph. The other men named in verse 6 played the psalteries and harps. This service was done with utmost solemnity "before the ark of covenant of God."

The reader is impressed with the indication that these preparations were made for this special day in Israel's history; but not for this day only. It was the chief work of the priests to lead in the whole round of worship day after day. A liturgy and order of worship had already been begun. God's Word must be reduced to written form. The Law (or Torah) had already been prepared. It formed the basis for all sacred writings pertaining to Jehovah's people. Some of the prophets had written their records of Jehovah's Word. Other prophets were yet to come and leave with men their burning messages prefaced with the call, "Hear the Word of the Lord". A few hymns, like the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, had been composed. The bringing of the ark into Jerusalem signalled the era for the flowering of Hebrew poetry and sacred song. David, himself, was called "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (II Samuel 23:1).¹ When Jesus made reference to the sacred writings in Luke 24:44, He spoke of the law, the prophets, and the psalms. These three divisions include the entire Old Testament as we know it. David and the good men associated with him shared the major responsibility for the third division, the Psalms. The Book of Psalms was the

¹Oehler, Gustave F., *Theology of the Old Testament*, Zondervan Publishing Co., 1883, p. 373.

hymnbook for the Hebrew church. In the section now under study, I Chronicles 16:7-36, it is of considerable interest that the hymn of praise used on this occasion contained portions from at least four hymns recorded in the Book of Psalms. Verses 8-22 echo Psalm 105:1-15. Verses 23-33 repeat Psalm 96:1-13. Verse 34 repeats Psalms 107:1; 118:1; 136:1. Verses 35 and 36 employ words and ideas used in Psalm 106:47, 48.

In the true spirit of priestly ministry verses 8-22 "celebrate" or cause Israel to remember what Jehovah had done for her. "Call upon His name". "Glory in His holy name". Fifteen times in twenty-nine verses the name "Jehovah" is used. Who is this God? He is "Yahweh", the only existent God who has entered into covenant relationship with His people. What should Israel do in response to this great God? They are to give thanks, make Him known, sing praises, talk about Him, glory in His name, seek Him, remember His works, His miracles, His covenant, bring an offering, worship, tremble in His presence. When psalmists sang of Jehovah's wonders, they often recalled what he had done in the plagues sent on Egypt (Psalm 78:43). The covenant concept distinguished Israel's God. The gods of the heathen, though made in the form of man, could not think, feel, will, speak, or move. Israel's God was alive, real, a genuine person, intelligent, sympathetic, disposed to enter into reciprocal agreements with men, especially with Israel. The covenant first enunciated to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) and ratified with blood (Genesis 15), renewed to Isaac and Jacob, was still in force. When Jacob and his sons were forced by famine to find refuge in Egypt, Jehovah did not abandon His people. As Abimelech, king of Gerar (Genesis 20:7), was forbidden to harm Abraham, so Jehovah's mercies followed His people. "O give thanks unto Jehovah", "Glory ye in his holy name", priests and people sang.

Verses 23-26 carry the worshipper beyond the limits of the Hebrews. What He had been to Israel He will be to all mankind. Let all the peoples of the earth join in the song of praise. Before this wonderful vision could become reality, Israel would have to do her work. She must make Jehovah known to the peoples of

the world. In large measure she failed in this task. The nations are to be brought into the presence of Jehovah in the same attitude of worship as demonstrated in Israel's example. The nations are to sing to Jehovah, declare His glory, reverence Him as Creator, ascribe glory unto Him, bring an offering, worship in holy order, tremble in His presence, joyfully accept Jehovah as king. Verse 26 contrasts Jehovah with heathen gods. The gods are idols (elilim), nothings. Paul said in I Corinthians 8:4 that an idol is not anything. Verse 26 does not recognize the reality of heathen gods. On the contrary, it is a strong denial of the existence of such. Once more, the basic revelation of Jehovah as the Creator is underscored. In a crescendo of praise, the Psalmist (verses 28, 29) calls for the proper recognition of Jehovah's deity. Even inanimate things such as the sea, the field, and the tree are called upon to join in hallelujah chorus. The role of Jehovah as judge of the earth, of all mankind, is mentioned in verse 34. Even when He comes in judgment, all men must know that Jehovah is good. He will judge according to His standard of righteousness. Loving-kindness is the term used to describe Jehovah's religious duty. In every instance He will do what ought to be done according to the circumstances. Finally, the song turns once more to Israel's praise of Jehovah. This composition provided a very fitting hymn for this special occasion. The people willingly followed the leaders of worship.

The regular ministry for the service in the presence of the ark was carefully designated in verses 37-43. Special assignments on a continuing schedule were set up for the work in Jerusalem and for the tabernacle which at this time was in Gibeon.¹ The priests were to be very careful in observing "all that is written in the law of Jehovah". When the ceremonies of this very special day were completed, everybody went home. David returned to his own quarters deeply grateful for the blessings he enjoyed, yet somewhat concerned about an unsympathetic wife.

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. 11, p. 610.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON SEVEN 15-16

209. What did David do for the ark?
210. What specific assignment was determined for the Levites?
211. Where is the tabernacle at this time?
212. Which of Aaron's sons now receive special assignment?
213. How is the trouble involving Uzza's death explained?
214. How many Levites are numbered here in the special assignment?
215. Identify Zadok and Abiathar.
216. How could the priests sanctify themselves? What was the procedure?
217. How is the ark to be moved? What is the significance of this?
218. Name the principal Levites who share responsibilities with regard to the program of music.
219. What kind of musical instrument was used just ahead of the movement of the ark?
220. Where was the ark of the covenant at this time? How long had it been there?
221. Describe the exercises the people shared as the ark was brought to Jerusalem.
222. Why would David wear a robe and an ephod of linen?
223. Describe the cornet and the cymbal.
224. Who was Michal? Why did she react as she did?
225. Relate the special meaning of the burnt offering and the peace offering to worship.
226. Why did David present gifts to the people and what were the gifts?
227. What was the work of the Levites according to 16:4?
228. Which of the Psalms repeats the message of this song in chapter 16?
229. What was the specific occasion for this song?

230. What are the "judgments of Jehovah"?
231. Describe Jehovah's covenant with Abraham.
232. Chapter 16:19 refers to a time when Israel was few in number. How many Hebrews went into Egypt in Jacob's day?
233. Which of the Psalms echoes the song beginning with 16:23?
234. Does verse 25 admit that other gods exist? Explain.
235. How does Jehovah differ from the gods according to verse 26?
236. When will the trees of the wood sing?
237. What was the nature of Asaph's work?
238. Explain the specific work assigned to Heman and Jeduthun.
239. What were the morning and the evening sacrifices?

LESSON EIGHT 17-18

DAVID AND THE TEMPLE. ISRAEL GOES TO WAR.

9. DAVID'S PLANS FOR THE TEMPLE (Chapter 17)

INTRODUCTION

David's purpose to build the Temple resulted in Jehovah's revelation of the eternal establishment of David's house. David proceeded to extend his territory from the Great Sea to the Euphrates River.

TEXT

Chapter 17:1. And it came to pass, when David dwelt in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "Lo, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of Jehovah dwelleth under curtains. 2. And Nathan said unto David, "Do all that is in thy heart; for God is with thee. 3. And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4. "Go and tell David my servant, 'Thus saith Jehovah, "Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in: 5. For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel, unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. 6. "In all places wherein I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to be shepherd of my people, saying, 'Why have ye not built me a house of cedar? 7. "Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, 'Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over my people Israel: 8. "And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast gone, and have cut off all thine enemies before thee; and I will make thee a name, like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth. 9. "And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the first, 10. and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel; and I will subdue all thine enemies.

Moreover I tell thee that Jehovah will build thee a house. 11. "And it shall come to pass, when thy days are fulfilled that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will set up thy seed after thee, who shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12. He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13. "I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; 14. "but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established forever." 15. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Then David the king went in, and sat before Jehovah; and he said, "Who am I, O Jehovah God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far? 17. "And this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and has regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Jehovah God. 18. "What can David say yet more unto thee concerning the honor which is done to thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant. 19. "O Jehovah, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou wrought all this greatness, to make known all these great things. 20. "O Jehovah, there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21. "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem unto himself for a people, to make thee a name by great and terrible things, in driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou redeemest out of Egypt? 22. "For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people forever; and thou, Jehovah, becamest their God. 23. "And now, O Jehovah, let the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, be established forever, and do as thou hast spoken. 24. "And let thy name be established and magnified forever, saying 'Jehovah of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel: and the house of David thy servant is established before thee.' 25. "For thou, O my God, hast revealed to thy servant

that thou wilt build him a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray before thee. 26. "And now, O Jehovah, thou art God, and hast promised this good thing unto thy servant: 27. "and now it hath pleased thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue forever before thee: for thou, O Jehovah, hast blessed, and it is blessed forever."

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 17:1. After David had been living in his new palace for some time he said to Nathan the prophet, "Look! I'm living here in a cedar-paneled home while the Ark of the Covenant of God is out there in a tent!" 2. And Nathan replied, "Carry out your plan in every detail, for it is the will of the Lord." 3. But that same night God said to Nathan, 4. "Go and give my servant David this message: 'You are not to build my temple! 5. I've gone from tent to tent as my home from the time I brought Israel out of Egypt. 6. In all that time I never suggested to any of the leaders of Israel—the shepherds I appointed to care for my people—that they should build me a cedar-lined temple.' 7. "Tell my servant David, 'The Lord of heaven says to you, I took you from being a shepherd and made you the king of my people. 8. And I have been with you everywhere you've gone; I have destroyed your enemies, and I will make your name as great as the greatest of the earth. 9. And I will give a permanent home to my people Israel, and will plant them in their land. They will not be disturbed again; the wicked nations won't conquer them as they did before, 10. when the judges ruled them. I will subdue all of your enemies. And I now declare that I will cause your descendants to be kings of Israel just as you are. 11. " 'When your time here on earth is over and you die, I will place one of your sons upon your throne; and I will make his kingdom strong. 12. He is the one who shall build me a temple, and I will establish his royal line of descent forever. 13. I will be his father, and he shall be my son; I will never remove my mercy and love from him as I did from Saul. 14. I will place him over my people and over the kingdom of Israel forever—and his descendants will always be kings.' " 15. So Nathan told King

David everything the Lord had said.

16. Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, "Whom am I, O Lord God, and what is my family that you have given me all this? 17. For all the great things you have already done for me are nothing in comparison to what you have promised to do in the future! For now, O Lord God, you are speaking of future generations of my children being kings too! You speak as though I were someone very great. 18. What else can I say? You know that I am but a dog, yet you have decided to honor me! 19. O Lord, you have given me these wonderful promises just because you want to be kind to me, because of your own great heart. 20. O Lord, there is no one like you—there is no other God. In fact, we have never even heard of another god like you! 21. "And what other nation in all the earth is like Israel? You have made a unique nation and have redeemed it from Egypt so that the people could be your people. And you made a great name for yourself when you did glorious miracles in driving out the nations from before your people. 22. You have declared that your people Israel belong to you forever, and you have become their God. 23. "And now I accept your promise, Lord, that I and my children will always rule this nation. 24. And may this bring eternal honor to your name as everyone realizes that you always do what you say. They will exclaim, 'The Lord of heaven is indeed the God of Israel!' And Israel shall always be ruled by my children and their posterity! 25. Now I have the courage to pray to you, for you have revealed this to me. 26. God himself has promised this good thing to me! 27. May this blessing rest upon my children forever, for when you grant a blessing, Lord, it is an eternal blessing!"

COMMENTARY

The parallel to the account in chapter 17 is recorded in II Samuel 7:1-29.¹ David's "house of cedar" which Hiram had

¹Beecher, Willis J., *The Prophets and the Promise*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1963, pp. 229-232. Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, pp. 268-269.

helped him build caused David to experience some mixed emotions. He and his rather extensive family were very comfortably housed. The provisions made for them were such as would be worthy of a king and his household. All of this, David deeply appreciated. At the same time, his conscience accused him because the ark was in a tent and no permanent house had been built for Jehovah. David was disposed to give Jehovah first place in all considerations. Even to himself it appeared that in this matter of housing, his God had been sadly neglected. He must rule by the divine law. Jerusalem is the established capital. The ark is already in the city. God's house was only a tent. Surely Jehovah would smile upon him if he could be instrumental in building a house far more splendid and of grander proportions than his own in which the glory of the God of Israel would dwell. Moses took Jehovah's pattern and became the chief human agent in the building of the Tabernacle. David, in like manner, desired to serve his God in this later day setting up a permanent place of worship to be used by a people now permanently established.

David shared his thoughts with Nathan, the prophet and counselor. Nathan, as the spokesman for Jehovah, probably brought God's word to David many times. Three specific occasions are recorded. David sinned with Bathsheba (II Samuel 12:1) and Jehovah sent Nathan with words of bitter condemnation. When Adonijah was about to seize the throne (I Kings 1:34), Nathan reminded David that Solomon was to be David's successor. The reference now under consideration (17:1) introduces us to this man of God, Nathan. What happened here makes it clear that Nathan was not briefed concerning Jehovah's will as this related to David and the Temple. To Nathan, David's concern for the ark was most gratifying. The prophet did not question the matter. He presumed that Jehovah would grant full approval and that God would be with David in this project. Here again the student learns that a prophet could only know what had been specifically revealed to him.

Verses 4-15 record the plans that Jehovah had decreed for

fulfillment with regard to David and his descendants. These plans were far-reaching and could have been initiated and executed only by Him who is all-wise and not bounded by time. Jehovah did not delay the announcement of His program involving David once the king had suggested building God's House. "The same night" Nathan received directly and in detail the particulars of Jehovah's plan. The careful wording of the divine decree impresses the reader both here and in II Samuel 7. David is called Jehovah's "servant". Even though David was king, he was completely satisfied with his servant relationship to Jehovah. That which David had planned to do was absolutely reversed. "Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in". These words surely fell on David's ears as a stunning rebuke. They only served to make it plain that man's thoughts often do not agree with God's thoughts. David could well have reasoned within himself, "Jehovah is very difficult to understand. What I wanted to do seemed to me to be so necessary and so proper". God had other plans involving David and his descendants which were far more elaborate than David's most imaginative designs for a Temple. In the detailed veto of David's proposal, Jehovah emphasized the fact that in all of His experiences with Israel He had been satisfied to live in a tent. He had tabernacled with His people. At no time had He ordered a house (a more permanent structure) to be built for Him. The judges of Israel, men like Moses, Joshua, and Samuel had never heard the suggestion, much less the express command to build Jehovah a house of cedar. In effect, God said to David, "I appreciate the consideration, but the time is not right and you are not the man". If the word of God had been complete in verse six, David would have graciously accepted the over-ruling decision. By Jehovah's wise design David was prepared to be introduced to God's plan for him and for his house. Once more David is called Jehovah's "servant". Nathan was told to be careful to remind David that from the humble life of a shepherd he had been lifted to the throne of Israel. The sheepcote was a resting place for sheep and shepherds. It would refer to a kind of pasture which would provide good natural protection for the flocks. A

shepherd had become a king, the leader of the unique people, Israel. Nathan was ordered to remind David how Jehovah had been with him through every experience until this hour. All enemies had been removed. David's own brothers, Saul, the Philistines, Ishbosheth with their combined antagonism had not been able to thwart God's purpose. This was history. It had already happened. Now, the hour had struck when the Lord would reveal His plans for the future. "I will make thee a name like the great ones of the earth" (verse 8). David, the warrior, the administrator, the righteous ruler, Jehovah's special representative will take his place among the world's most illustrious kings. Israel, Jehovah's people, will be established in their own land. Enemies will not be able to scatter them and as a people they will be bound together by a genuine righteousness. The great revelatory proclamation involving David is recorded in verse 10, "Jehovah will build thee a house". The term "house" has to do with one's descendants. David had no lack of sons, as we have seen. Through a chosen son Jehovah will guarantee the continuation of David's reign. David would accomplish his ministry of kingship and even as he passed from earth's scene, Jehovah promised to set David's son on Israel's throne. The time came when by divine appointment Solomon, David's son, was made king (I Chronicles 29:1, 22, 23). Every promise made to Solomon was fulfilled. His kingdom was fully established. The far-reaching Messianic implications of this were recognized by Peter (Acts 2:29-33) and Paul (Acts 13:34) and in Gabriel's message to Mary (Luke 1:32, 33). David's son, Solomon, received divine orders to build Jehovah's house, the Temple. Solomon would be hedged about with every protection so he could be a great king. If Solomon failed, Jehovah could not be charged with lack of concern. "I will be his father, and he shall be my son". Jehovah would do whatever ought to be done to provide grace for a fruitful reign. The one who "was before thee" (verse 13) referred to king Saul. Jehovah removed His lovingkindness from Saul; but not before Saul had determined to do as he pleased. Saul hardened his own heart. He chose to be abandoned by God. Saul's house was doomed to

extinction. In the promise made to David (verse 10) Jehovah committed Himself to the maintenance of David's line. A successor to David may forget God and rule wickedly. Such a king will be judged on his own merits, however the Davidic king's son will have his opportunity to bring the people back to Jehovah. Often, for David's sake, Jehovah graciously endured the hateful attitudes of His people. The tremendous promise made to David was that as long as there should be a people of God, a true Israel, there will be a king of David's line ruling over this people. This promise found the beginning of its fulfillment in Solomon and its ultimate completion in Jesus Christ. The concept of an eternal kingdom (Daniel 2:44) is a favorite prophetic theme and is the major concern in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Upon hearing Jehovah's word through Nathan, David immediately began to express his appreciation to God in a prayer of thanksgiving. This prayer is recorded in verses 16-27. A careful analysis of the prayer reveals David's comprehension of Jehovah's promise and the depth of the king's appreciation. David "sat before Jehovah". Most likely he went to the tent where the ark was housed and there he prayed. The king was sincere in his humility. His humble beginning in Bethlehem and his being the youngest of Jesse's eight sons did not qualify him for the high office he held. Why would the Lord turn to such a person promising to establish his house forever? By Jehovah's help David had been "brought thus far". This phrase echoes Samuel's gratitude to God when at Ebenezer he had said "hitherto hath Jehovah helped us" (I Samuel 7:12). At this time David had already been richly blessed. David had considered himself to be quite insignificant. Jehovah chose him from among all men to be the kingly representative of the people of God. Repeatedly David spoke of himself as a servant. A servant had become a prince. What had happened in this tremendous transaction had taken place through Jehovah's own free will. There was only one God. The decisions He made expressed His sovereign will. Having considered his own unworthiness, David in his prayer turned to expressions of thanksgiving for the people, Israel. God had brought Israel out

of Egypt and He had displaced powerful nations in Palestine to make a place of His people. Jehovah had entered into a covenant relationship with Israel. In this prayer the king pledged that he would use all of his energies to establish and magnify Jehovah's name. David rose from his prayer in wonderment repeating the words, "the Lord has said He will build me a house".

10. WAR WITH MOAB, PHILISTIA, AND SYRIA

(Chapter 18)

TEXT

Chapter 18:1. And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and its towns out of the hand of the Philistines. 2. And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became servants to David, and brought tribute.

3. And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates. 4. And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen; and David hocked all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for a hundred chariots.

5. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadarezer king of Zobah, David smote of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. 6. Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought tribute. And Jehovah gave victory to David whithersoever he went. 7. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8. And from Tibhath and from Cun, cities of Hadarezer, David took very much brass, wherewith Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass.

9. And when Tou king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah, 10. he sent Hadoram his son to king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadarezer and smitten him (for

Hadarezer had wars with Tou); and he had with him all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass. 11. These also did king David dedicate unto Jehovah, with the silver and the gold that he carried away from all the nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

12. Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah smote of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt eighteen thousand. 13. And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became servants to David. And Jehovah gave victory to David whithersoever he went.

14. And David reigned over all Israel; and he executed justice and righteousness unto all his people. 15. And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; 16. and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests; and Shavsha was scribe; 17. and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and Pelethites; and the sons of David were chiefs about the king.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 18:1. David finally subdued the Philistines and conquered Gath and its surrounding towns. 2. He also conquered Moab and required its people to send him a large sum of money every year.

3. He conquered the dominion of King Hadadezer of Zobah (as far as Hamath) at the time Hadadezer went to tighten his grip along the Euphrates River. 4. David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand cavalry, and twenty thousand troops. He crippled all the chariot teams except a hundred that he kept for his own use.

5. When the Syrians arrived from Damascus to help King Hadadezer, David killed twenty-two thousand of them; 6. then he placed a garrison of his troops in Damascus, the Syrian capital. So the Syrians, too, were forced to send him large amounts of money every year. And the Lord gave David victory everywhere he went. 7. He brought the gold shields of King

Hadadezer's officers to Jerusalem, 8. as well as a great amount of bronze from Hadadezer's cities of Tibhath and Cun. (King Solomon later melted the bronze and used it for the Temple. He molded it into the bronze tank, the pillars, and the instruments used in offering sacrifices on the altar.)

9. When King Tou of Hamath learned that King David had destroyed Hadadezer's army, 10. he sent his son Hadoram to greet and congratulate King David on his success and to present him with many gifts of gold, silver, and bronze, seeking an alliance. For Hadadezer and Tou had been enemies and there had been many wars between them. 11. King David dedicated these gifts to the Lord, as he did the silver and gold he took from the nations of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, and the Philistines.

12. Abishai (son of Zeruiah) then destroyed eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13. He put garrisons in Edom and forced the Edomites to pay large sums of money annually to David. This is just another example of how the Lord gave David victory after victory.

14. David reigned over all of Israel and was a just ruler. 15. Joab (son of Zeruiah) was commander-in-chief of the army; Jehoshaphat (son of Ahilud) was the historian; 16. Zadok (son of Ahitub) and Ahimelech (son of Abiathar) were the head priests; Shavsha was the king's special assistant; 17. Benaiah (son of Jehoiada) was in charge of the king's bodyguard—the Cherethites and Pelethites—and David's sons were his chief aides.

COMMENTARY

The record at this point provides occasion for the student to recall how David the shepherd became commander-in-chief of a great army. The purpose of the present chapter is to summarize David's early military victories as king of Israel. The Philistines, Israel's ancient foe, had challenged David's army on two occasions in the Valley of Rephaim. Once the Philistines fled leaving behind their broken gods. Again, Jehovah caused the Philistines to hear the sounds of a mighty army coming down

upon them through the tops of the mulberry trees. No doubt, David followed the Philistines into their own country occupying Gath and other villages. Gath was about thirty five miles southwest of Jerusalem and about fifteen miles from the coast. It was one of the key Philistine cities. Israel's armies moved against the Moabites whose country was just to the east of the Dead Sea. Ruth, David's great great grandmother on his father's side, had come from Moab. I Samuel 22:3, 4 records how David had requested the Moabites to provide a place of refuge for his parents while he tried to avoid Saul. II Samuel 8:2 describes David's war with the Moabites indicating that he dealt with them in a very cruel manner. It is possible that the Moabites had not been faithful in the matter of caring for David's parents. The Moabites began to pay tribute to David. These people were the descendants of Lot.

The Hadarezer of verse three is called Hadadezer in other references in the Bible. His kingdom was called Zobah and was located between Damascus and the Euphrates River. With the rise of this new power of Israel, Hadarezer moved to extend his kingdom even as far west as Hamath. This city was located on the Orontes River about 250 miles north of Jerusalem. The region involved would mark the northern-most part of the territory to be controlled by David. In subduing Hadarezer David extended the boundaries of his kingdom to the Euphrates River. This was a military victory of considerable proportions. One thousand chariots represented a fortune in military equipment. Solomon (I Kings 10:29) brought chariots out of Egypt at a price of six hundred shekels of silver each. This may be estimated at about four hundred dollars for each chariot. A horse in Solomon's day could be bought for one hundred fifty shekels of silver, or about one-fourth the price of a chariot. David may already have had all of the horses he needed and for this reason he "hocked" the enemy's horses. A sharp slash of the sword at the back of the horse's hoof cut the tendon and made the animal unfit for service. David did select from among all of the horses taken in this battle one hundred choice animals to be added to his stables. Seven thousand horsemen and

twenty thousand foot soldiers were taken. These most likely were simply taken as prisoners of war and were subjected to task work.

When Hadarezer found himself in real difficulty contesting Israel's power, the Syrians called out their army to help him. The ancient capital of Syria was Damascus. This important city was about one hundred and thirty miles north northeast of Jerusalem. Through this city a very important trade route passed between the east and the west. Abraham had traveled this road when he had come to Canaan. There he had purchased Eliezer who became his chief servant. In the days of Ahab, more than a hundred years after David's time, the kings of Syria once more would trouble Israel. However, Damascus and the Syrians could not withstand David's power. Twenty two thousand enemy warriors fell before Israel's onslaught. To make certain that the Syrians were kept in their place, David stationed detachments of Hebrew warriors at Damascus. At regular intervals tribute was collected from the conquered people. David did not set out to conquer the world. Whatever territories were annexed to his kingdom were within the limits of the original promises to Abraham—between the Great Sea and the Euphrates River. Within these limits "Jehovah gave victory to David whithersoever he went" (verse 6). David knew that it was not his work to build the Temple; but from the time he first thought about it until he died, preparations for the Temple were of primary importance. The gold taken in battle from the Syrians was laid up in Jerusalem. The fact that the warriors of Zobah had "shields of gold" indicates the remarkable wealth of that nation. Tibhath and Cun are identified as cities of Hadarezer. Their exact location is not known. From them the armies of Israel took a great amount of brass. This brass (or copper) was used for the "brazen sea" which was set in the court of priests at the Temple. It measured ten cubits (about 15 feet) in diameter. It was five cubits high (about 7½ feet). It was a hand-breadth in thickness (three or four inches). The capacity of the vessel has been estimated at about twenty four thousand gallons. The pillars were located at the entrance to the Holy

Place, one on either side (I Kings 7:15-22). Each pillar with its capital was twenty three cubits high. Each had a circumference of twelve cubits (about 18 feet). The vessels of brass included ten lavers used in connection with the great sea of brass. The bases for these lavers measured four cubits by four cubits by three cubits in height (I Kings 7:27). Each contained about four hundred eighty gallons. In addition to these, bowls, flagons, spoons, pans and many other instruments were made of this material. So much brass was used in the construction of the Temple that no attempt was made to weigh or evaluate it. In his wars David was concerned with preparing a stockpile of materials out of which a splendid Temple could be built.

The king who is here called "Tou" is called "Toi" in other references. He is identified as king of Hamath. Tou had engaged Hadarezer in battle on previous occasions and had formed no real obstacle in the king of Zodah's move toward the Great Sea. When Tou learned that David had overpowered the great king to the East, he decided not to challenge David. His son, Hadoram, elsewhere called Joram, came with precious gifts of gold, silver, and brass. Abundant wealth flowed into David's treasuries and he dedicated all of it to Jehovah. Edom paid tribute to Israel. This was a reversal of what happened when Jacob had sent gifts to Esau upon Jacob's return from Haran (Genesis, chapter 33). The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. Moab and Ammon, sons of Lot, often contested the right of Israel to live in Palestine. In David's day they, too, bring their tribute. David continually maintained military superiority over the Philistines. The Amalekites, like the Edomites, were descendants of Esau. Like the other nations, this ancient enemy, which sent the first army to attack Israel after the Hebrews left Egypt, is forced to pay tribute to David. Jehovah blessed David in all of his enterprises.

Abishai (verse 12) was one of three sons of Zeruah, David's sister. Joab and Asahel, Abishai's brothers, were great warriors. The Valley of Salt, sometimes called the Vale of Siddim, was located at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea. A valley, called the Arabah, extended south of the Dead Sea to the Gulf

of Aqaba. The Valley of Salt was in the Edomite country. At some time in David's day Abishai led an expedition against the Edomites which conflict resulted in the deaths of eighteen thousand of the enemy. As David had done at Damascus in stationing garrisons of soldiers to hold conquered territory, so he did in the land of Edom. This guaranteed the collection of the tribute.

David's remarkable ability in subduing Israel's enemies magnified his reputation as a great king. At this point in the history David was making good progress as he ushered in Israel's "golden age". The expanding kingdom not only brought power and fame to David as king, but it also magnified the importance of each office in the government under David. The kingdom was united as it had never been before. David's rule was characterized by justice and righteousness. He ruled by Jehovah's Law. He was no respecter of persons. His reign was to become the model for all who followed him. Joab was the chief military leader under David. From this time every Hebrew king had a man on his cabinet called a "recorder" whose responsibility was to write an accurate account of the king's reign. Jehoshaphat held this responsible position in David's court. We are indebted to the work of these recorders for the accurate records of the life and times of the kings of Israel and Judah. Shavsha was the scribe or secretary. He probably held the responsible position of secretary of state and would serve as chief diplomat in all foreign relations. Zadok and Abimelech (or Ahimelech) served as the chief priests. One most likely served at the Tabernacle, the other at the ark in Jerusalem. Benaiah had the chief responsibility over the Cherethites and Pelethites who served as David's personal bodyguard. They formed his secret service corps. David practiced nepotism in that he set his own sons in certain offices of trust. The expanding kingdom necessitated a more highly developed government than that which would have been required in king Saul's day.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON EIGHT 17-18

240. Describe David's private house in Jerusalem.
241. Who is Nathan?
242. What was the nature of Nathan's error?
243. Why was David prohibited in building the Temple?
244. Summarize Jehovah's word to David regarding building a Temple.
245. Explain the circumstances of David's humble beginning.
246. Explain the phrase, "I will make thee a name".
247. What will be the fate of David's enemies?
248. What wonderful revelation does Jehovah now make to David? Where is a previous record of these events in the Bible?
249. Whose destiny involved the actual construction of the Temple?
250. How long is this kingdom to function?
251. In what attitude did David receive this revelation?
252. What did David say about Jehovah?
253. How did Egypt figure into David's prayer?
254. How does David understand Jehovah's promise to "build David a house"?
255. Carefully locate Gath.
256. Name the person who was the father of Moab.
257. Locate Zobah and Hamath.
258. Describe the "hocking" of a horse.
259. How did David deal with the Syrians?
260. What did David do with the gold taken in war?
261. For what purposes was the brass used?
262. Explain the reference to the pillars in 18:8.
263. Explain the action taken by Tou.
264. Carefully locate Edom. From what person were the Edomites descended?
265. Who was the father of Ammon?
266. Identify Amalek.
267. Where was the Valley of Salt?

268. Identify Abishai and Zeruiah.
269. Why was David so successful in his military endeavors?
270. Who was Joab and how had he earned his position?
271. What were the duties of a recorder?
272. Name the chief priests. Why would there be two men in this office?
273. Describe the work of the scribe.
274. Explain the peculiar responsibilities of the Cherethites and Pelethites.
275. How did David employ his sons? Was this wise?

LESSON NINE 19-20

ISRAEL'S CONFLICT WITH AMMON THE CONQUEST OF THE PHILISTINES

11. VICTORY OVER AMMON AND SYRIA (19:1-19)

INTRODUCTION

The conflict with the Ammonites was one of the most critical in which David was ever involved. During this encounter David sinned with Bathsheba and opened the door to numerous troubles which plagued him until he died. He was a great king, but he failed God in this Bathsheba incident.

TEXT

Chapter 19:1. And it came to pass after this, that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his stead. 2. And David said, "I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me. So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father." And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him. 3. But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, "Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, in that he hath sent comforters unto thee? Are not his servants come unto thee to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land?" 4. So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away. 5. Then there went certain persons, and told David how the men were served. And he sent to meet them; for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return."

6. And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Aram-maacah, and out of Zobah. 7. So they hired them thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people, who

came and encamped before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle. 8. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men. 9. And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the gate of the city: and the kings that were come were by themselves in the field.

10. Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians. 11. And the rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother; and they put themselves in array against the children of Ammon. 12. And he said, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will help thee. 13. Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God: and Jehovah do that which seemeth him good." 14. So Joab and the people that were with him drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and they fled before him. 15. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem.

16. And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that were beyond the River, with Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer at their head. 17. And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel together, and passed over the Jordan, and came upon them, and set the battle in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him. 18. And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians the men of seven thousand chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the host. 19. And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and served him: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

12. WARS WITH RABBAH AND THE PHILISTINES (20:1-8)

Chapter 20:1. And it came to pass, at the time of the return

of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that Joab led forth the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and overthrew it. 2. And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: and he brought forth the spoil of the city, exceeding much. 3. And he brought forth the people that were therein, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. And thus did David unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

4. And it came to pass after this, that there arose war at Gezer with the Philistines: then Sibbecai the Hushathite slew Sippai, of the sons of the giant; and they were subdued. 5. And there was again war with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 6. And there was again war at Gath, where was a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were four and twenty, six on each hand, and six on each foot; and he also was born unto the giant. 7. And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother slew him. 8. These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

PARAPHASE

Chapter 19:1. When King Nahash of Ammon died, his son Hanun became the new king. 2, 3. Then David declared, "I am going to show friendship to Hanun because of all the kind things his father did for me." So David sent a message of sympathy to Hanun for the death of his father. But when David's ambassadors arrived, King Hanun's counselors warned him, "Don't fool yourself that David has sent these men to honor your father! They are here to spy out the land so that they can come in and conquer it!" 4. So King Hanun insulted King David's ambassadors by shaving their beards and cutting their robes off at the middle to expose their buttocks; then he

sent them back to David in shame. 5. When David heard what had happened, he sent a message to his embarrassed emissaries, telling them to stay at Jericho until their beards had grown out again.

6. When King Hanun realized his mistake he sent \$2,000,000 to enlist mercenary troops, chariots, and cavalry from Mesopotamia, Aram-maacah, and Zobah. 7. He hired thirty-two thousand chariots, as well as the support of the king of Maacah and his entire army. These forces camped at Medeba where they were joined by the troops King Hanun had recruited from his cities. 8. When David learned of this, he sent Joab and the mightiest warriors of Israel. 9. The army of Ammon went out to meet them and began the battle at the gates of the city of Medeba. Meanwhile, the mercenary forces were out in the field.

10. When Joab realized that the enemy forces were both in front and behind him, he divided his army and sent one group to engage the Syrians. 11. The other group, under the command of his brother Abishai, moved against the Ammonites. 12. "If the Syrians are too strong for me, come and help me," Joab told his brother; "and if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll come and help you. 13. Be courageous and let us act like men to save our people and the cities of our God. And may the Lord do what is best." 14. So Joab and his troops attacked the Syrians, and the Syrians turned and fled. 15. When the Ammonites, under attack by Abishai's troops, saw that the Syrians were retreating, they fled into the city. Then Joab returned to Jerusalem.

16. After their defeat, the Syrians summoned additional troops from east of the Euphrates River, led personally by Shophach, King Hadadezer's commander-in-chief. 17, 18. When this news reached David, he mobilized all Israel, crossed the Jordan River, and engaged the enemy troops in battle. But the Syrians again fled from David, and he killed seven thousand of their troops. He also killed Shophach, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian army. 19. Then King Hadadezer's troops surrendered to King David and became his subjects. And never

again did the Syrians aid the Ammonites in their battles.

Chapter 20:1. The following spring (spring was the season when wars usually began) Joab led the Israeli army in successful attacks against the cities and villages of the people of Ammon. After destroying them, he laid siege to Rabbah and conquered it. Meanwhile, David had stayed in Jerusalem. 2. When David arrived on the scene, he removed the crown from the head of King Milcom of Rabbah and placed it upon his own head. It was made of gold inlaid with gems and weighed seventy-five pounds! David also took great amounts of plunder from the city. 3. He drove the people from the city and set them to work with saws, iron picks, and axes, as was his custom with all the conquered Ammonite peoples. Then David and all his army returned to Jerusalem.

4. The next war was against the Philistines again, at Gezer. But Sibbecai, a man from Hushath, killed one of the sons of the giant, Sippai, and so the Philistines surrendered. 5. During another war with the Philistines, Elhanan (the son of Jair) killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the giant; the handle of his spear was like a weaver's beam! 6, 7. During another battle, at Gath, a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot (his father was also a giant) defied and taunted Israel; but he was killed by David's nephew Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimea. 8. These giants were descendants of the giants of Gath, and they were killed by David and his soldiers.

COMMENTARY

Among the military campaigns of David none was more important and none involved more tragic personal consequences than the war with Ammon and Syria. The parallel account of this conflict is in II Samuel 10:1-19. The first five verses in the present chapter describe the Ammonite insult to David's ambassadors and to Israel. When Saul was king of Israel the Ammonite king was named Nahash. "Nahash" means serpent. The serpent was regarded as symbolic of wisdom and craftiness. Nahash and the Ammonites held the Gileadite people in subjection in the days preceding the reign of Saul. When the

Jabesh-gileadites were told to present themselves so the Ammonites could gouge out their right eyes (I Samuel 11:1-11), an urgent message was sent to Saul. The newly appointed Hebrew king organized his army and delivered the Jabesh-gileadites. For this service the people of Jabesh-gilead were always grateful to Saul. Some fifty or sixty years elapsed between this incident and the one presently being considered. This "Nahash" may be the same person to whom reference is made in I Samuel, chapter 11, or he may be the son of the king of Ammon in Saul's day. Some nations used class names for their kings. "Agag" was such a name among the Amalekites. "Pharaoh" was used in this manner in Egypt. "Nahash" could have been used the same way among the Ammonites.

Upon the death of Nahash, as a friendly gesture, David sent representatives to express Israel's sympathy. In time past Nahash had been kindly disposed toward David. We do not have a record of any special kindnesses, but David felt obligated to the neighboring nation. Hanun, son of Nahash, ruled in his father's place. We have no reason to question David's motives, but Hanun's counselors suspected that David's men came as spies. Because of David's conquests, the Ammonites knew that they would have to challenge Israel if they maintained their territory. Hanun accepted his counselors' advice and used this occasion to show Ammon's disdain for Israel. A servant was not permitted to grow a beard. David's representatives were shaved. The ambassadors were further humiliated in that their robes were cut off so as to expose the men's secret parts. Then they were sent on their way and were made a public spectacle. When David learned what had happened, he advised his representatives to stay at Jericho until their beards were grown. Then they would most likely return to Jerusalem.

The Ammonites did not have to wait for David to declare war against them. In their shameful treatment of David's men war had already been declared. Hanun's people did not suppose that by their own power they could contest Israel's claim to their territory. They hurriedly made arrangements to call for help of mercenaries. Mesopotamia was the territory in the

vicinity of Haran between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers. Aram-maacah was a region in the vicinity of Mt. Hermon. Zobah lay in the district beyond Damascus. Out of these places soldiers were brought in. The Ammonites paid a very high price for their services (1000 talents of silver, or perhaps as much as \$1,500,000). In addition to these great armies there were thirty two thousand chariots. This powerful expeditionary force set itself in battle order at Medeba. Medeba lay about twenty miles south-west of Rabbah, the capitol city of the Ammonites. With the mercenaries on the scene, the Ammonites organized their own forces and the combined armies presented a very serious threat to David and Israel. At this juncture David ordered Joab, the captain of his host, to call the army of Israel for the conflict.

Joab was a seasoned veteran. He knew the dangers involved if Israel's army should be encompassed and cut off by the enemy. He was also aware of fact that the hired soldiers were more dangerous than the Ammonites. He, personally, took "the choice men of Israel" and engaged the mercenaries in battle. Joab assigned the rest of Israel's army to Abishai, whose responsibility was to engage the Ammonites in battle. If Abishai could hold the Ammonites, and if Joab could rout the hired soldiers, Israel would win the battle. If either Hebrew captain experienced trouble, the other would come to his aid. It was a very wise battle plan. Before the battle was joined, Joab charged all of Israel's soldiers to "play the man for our people and for the cities of our God". A similar battle-cry is recorded in I Samuel 4:9 when the Philistine officers charged their warriors to "quit themselves like men" and fight. Paul, in I Corinthians 16:13, used this battle-charge again when he said, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong". The word "quit" in this context meant to equip oneself, to concentrate one's energies for the task at hand. Joab's thought was that the Hebrew soldiers should do their very best and leave the outcome to Jehovah. Joab, with Jehovah's help, was able to scatter and put to flight all of the soldiers hired by Hanun. When their help was dispersed, the Ammonites retreated into the walled

city of Rabbah. Joab then reported to David in Jerusalem.

David understood that in order to take advantage of this initial success he would need to maintain pressure on the enemy. Shopach (Shobach) came on the scene as the captain of the Syrians who were beyond the River (the Euphrates). The mercenaries who had been turned back by Joab sent runners to their allies in Mesopotamia requesting help. The enemy regrouped. In the meantime, David personally led the Hebrew army to war with the Syrians. Somewhere beyond the Jordan River, probably in northeastern Palestine, the battle was joined. Forty thousand enemy soldiers fell. The captain, Shopach, was killed. Seven thousand warriors who drove chariots were put to death. Those who remained surrendered. Never again were the Ammonites able to secure aid from the Syrians. Through these events David annexed the territory of Ammon, consolidated his holdings in Syria, and laid undisputed claim on lands reaching all the way to the Euphrates River.

While the Syrians and their allies had been vanquished, the Ammonites had taken refuge behind the walls of Rabbah, their main city. Chapter twenty, verses 1-3, describes the completion of the conquest of Ammon. At this time the Ammonites finally paid the price for humiliating David's ambassadors and for challenging Israel to war. By the time David's army had won the conflict with the Syrians, the winter season was rapidly approaching. A token siege likely was set around Rabbah. David returned to Jerusalem and the rest of his army would take up winter quarters in appointed places. The winter passed. When spring came, Joab was sent to tighten the siege at Rabbah and maintain it until the city fell. The terrors troubling people in a besieged city almost defy description. The Book of Lamentations describe this hopeless situation in the siege of Jerusalem. There was no traffic in or out of the city. When food and water were exhausted, the only alternative was to fall to the enemy. Usually, this meant death for the helpless victims. Joab set such a siege at Rabbah. In the meantime David "tarried at Jerusalem" (verse 1). At this point in the Book of II Samuel two chapters (eleven and twelve) are given to the account of

David's sin with Bathsheba.¹ It is a matter of curious interest that the chronicler omits this incident in David's life. David's sin could not be hidden. Perhaps the historian was permitted by the Holy Spirit to omit this painful account because it was fully treated in the record in II Samuel. Here in the Book of Chronicles David moves from one victory to another. This Bathsheba affair would certainly break the continuity of this account. If David had gone with the army on this occasion as he had when the Syrians were ruined, history might have been written differently. The fact is, "he tarried at Jerusalem". He sinned with Bathsheba. He dealt deceitfully with Uriah. Uriah carried his own death warrant to Joab, his commander. Many other Hebrew soldiers died so Joab could guarantee Uriah's death. David was caught in the web of his sin and in many ways, his life was never the same again. The flood-gates of lust, revenge, grief, and heart-break were opened. David lived in turmoil from that time until the day he died. "He tarried at Jerusalem". Perhaps duties of state kept him there. Had he been somewhere else, he might have fallen in the same sin or in some greater sin. The fact remains, he was tempted and he sinned against God. (See Psalm 51).

While these things were taking place in Jerusalem, Joab was doing his work well at Rabbah. One day the Ammonites reached their extremity. An urgent message came to David. He must hurry to Rabbah if the city is to fall to him. Otherwise, it will fall to Joab. Hanun, king of Ammon, had a great crown which was symbolic of his office. It was composed of a talent of gold. The value of the gold talent may be estimated at thirty to fifty thousand dollars. The crown probably weighed about one hundred pounds. It may well have adorned the head of the Ammonites' chief god, Molech. The crown was decorated with precious stones. Strong men would hold this crown over David's head. The spoil of the city was laid at his feet. The Ammonites in Rabbah became prisoners of war, many of whom were mercilessly mutilated by David and his warriors. This was regarded as divine retribution for the antagonistic actions and

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, p. 316.

military rebellion of these descendants of Lot.

The paragraph in verses four through eight reminds the Bible student of the parallel section in II Samuel 21:18-22. The historian simply recalls some matters both courageous and curious in connection with Israel's military engagements. The name "Gob" in II Samuel 21:18 is not identified. The Septuagint versions uses "Gath" in this place. Gath was in Philistia some twenty miles due east of Ashkelon which was situated very near the coast of the Great Sea. Gezer was about twenty miles north of Gath on the border of the tribe of Ephraim. Sibbecai is listed among David's warriors in I Chronicles 11:29. Sippai, the giant, is elsewhere called Saph. This was certainly an important encounter which resulted in the defeat of the Philistines. Bible students have given considerable attention to verse 5 in the passage under consideration. The parallel to this in II Samuel 21:19 says that "Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim the Bethlehemite slew Goliath the Gittite". The record here says that Elhanan slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite. Another warrior named Elhanan is mentioned in I Chronicles 11:26. He cannot be identified with the man now under consideration. It is possible that the "Lahmi" here may well be accounted for by the "Bethlehem" in the reference in II Samuel. Since Goliath was such a champion of the Philistine cause, it would be no strange circumstance if others among the giants bore that name. The reference to these men of giant stature proves information concerning this remnant of the Anakim (long necked men) among the Philistines. An ordinary man would not have been able to handle the giant's spear. "The weaver's beam" refers to a wooden bar about ten inches in circumference used to anchor the threads on a loom. The head of the spear carried by the Goliath who fell before David weighed about twenty pounds. Among the oddities Israel encountered was the giant who had six digits on each hand and foot. Even so, he was not equal to the warrior in David's ranks who cut him down in Gath. The defiance of Israel sealed Goliath's doom when he challenged David in the vale of Elah. In like manner, Jonathan, David's

nephew, took up the challenge on this later occasion. It is possible that the giant with the abnormal number of fingers and toes was the father of other giant sons. Just as Caleb in his day was at his best when warring with the Anakim at Hebron, so this kind of opposition proved the real courage of David and his men.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON NINE 19-20

276. Who was Hanash? Name his son.
277. Why did David send some men to Ammon and how were they received?
278. Explain the action of the Ammonites.
279. Why mention the matter of shaving?
280. Locate and name the place where David's men were told to wait.
281. What does the term "odious" mean?
282. From what sources did the Ammonites get military aid?
283. Carefully locate Medeba.
284. Who among David's men had the chief military responsibility?
285. In what difficult circumstances did the Hebrew commander find himself?
286. Who was Abishai?
287. Which particular sector of the enemy lines was Abishai to attack?
288. Explain the value of the words in 19:13.
289. What happened in the battle?
290. As a result of the battle what did the Syrians do?
291. After this initial battle what did the Syrians do?
292. Who was Shopach?
293. In the second conflict who led the armies of Israel?
294. How many men did the Syrians lose?
295. What does the record say about future relations between Ammon and Syria?

296. Explain the reference to "the return of the year".
297. Who now leads Israel's army?
298. Carefully locate Rabbah.
299. What is the weight of a talent of gold?
300. How was the crown decorated?
301. How were the Ammonites punished?
302. Where was Gezer located?
303. Who was Lahmi?
304. How large is a weaver's beam?
305. Describe the giant at Gath.
306. Who is the Jonathan of 20:7?

LESSON TEN 21-22

A MILITARY CENSUS AND A PLAGUE

13. DAVID'S MILITARY CENSUS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (Chapter 21)

INTRODUCTION

The final serious mistake David made was this military census. God did not withhold judgment. Israel suffered. David repented and begged for God's mercy. Preparing for the building of the Temple and charging Solomon with the responsibility of carrying out the plans occupied king David's last days.

TEXT

Chapter 21:1. And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. 2. And David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring me word, that I may know the sum of them." 3. And Joab said, "Jehovah make his people a hundred times as many as they are: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants; Why doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt unto Israel?" 4. Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. 5. And Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and a hundred thousand men that drew sword; and Judah was four hundred three score and ten thousand men that drew sword. 6. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them; for the king's word was abominable to Joab. 7. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. 8. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing: but now put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

9. And Jehovah spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, 10. Go and speak unto David, saying, "Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee". 11. So Gad came to David, and said unto him,

“Thus saith Jehovah, Take which thou wilt: 12. either three years of famine; or three months to be consumed before thy foes, while the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of Jehovah, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of Jehovah destroying throughout all the borders of Israel. Now therefore consider what answer I shall return to him that sent me.” 13. And David said unto Gad, “I am in a great strait: let me fall, I pray, into the hand of Jehovah; for very great are his mercies: and let me not fall into the hand of man.” 14. So Jehovah sent a pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. 15. And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was about to destroy, Jehovah beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the destroying angel, “It is enough; now stay thy hand.” And the angel of Jehovah was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 16. And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Jehovah standing between earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. 17. And David said unto God, “Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done; Let thy hand, I pray thee, O Jehovah my God, be against me, and against my father's house; but not against they people, that they should be plagued.”

18. Then the angel of Jehovah commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and rear an altar unto Jehovah in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of Jehovah. 20. And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons that were with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. 21. And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground. 22. Then David said to Ornan, “Give me the place of this threshing-floor, that I may build thereon an altar unto Jehovah: for the full price shalt thou give it me, that the plague may be stayed from

the people." 23. And Ornan said unto David, "Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen for burnt-offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meal-offering; I give it all." 24. And king David said to Ornan, "Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for Jehovah, nor offer a burnt-offering without cost." 25. So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. 26. And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon Jehovah; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burn-offering. 27. And Jehovah commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

28. At that time, when David saw that Jehovah had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. 29. For the tabernacle of Jehovah, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt-offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon. 30. But David could not go before it to inquire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of Jehovah.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:1. Then Satan brought disaster upon Israel, for he made David decide to take a census. 2. "Take a complete census throughout the land and bring me the totals," he told Joab and the other leaders. 3. But Joab objected. "If the Lord were to multiply his people a hundred times, would they not all be yours? So why are you asking us to do this? Why must you cause Israel to sin?" 4. But the king won the argument, and Joab did as he was told; he traveled all through Israel and returned to Jerusalem. 5. The total population figure which he gave came to 1,100,000 men of military age in Israel and 470,000 in Judah. 6. But he didn't include the tribes of Levi and Benjamin in his figures because he was so distressed at what the king had made him do. 7. And God, too, was displeased with the census and punished Israel for it. 8. But David said to God, "I am the one who has sinned. Please forgive me, for I

realize now how wrong I was to do this.”

9. Then the Lord said to Gad, David's personal prophet, 10, 11. "Go and tell David, "The Lord has offered you three choices. Which will you choose? 12. You may have three years of famine, or three months of destruction by the enemies of Israel, or three days of deadly plague as the angel of the Lord brings destruction to the land. Think it over and let me know what answer to return to the one who sent me." 13. "This is a terrible decision to make," David replied, "but let me fall into the hands of the Lord rather than into the power of men, for God's mercies are very great." 14. So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel and 70,000 men died as a result. 15. During the plague God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem; but then he felt such compassion that he changed his mind and commanded the destroying angel, "Stop! It is enough!" (The angel of the Lord was standing at the time by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.) 16. When David saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth with his sword drawn, pointing toward Jerusalem, he and the elders of Israel clothed themselves in sackcloth and fell to the ground before the Lord. 17. And David said to God, "I am the one who sinned by ordering the census. But what have these sheep done? O Lord my God, destroy me and my family, but do not destroy your people."

18. Then the angel of the Lord told Gad to instruct David to build an altar to the Lord at the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19,20. So David went to see Ornan, who was threshing wheat at the time. Ornan saw the angel as he turned, and his four sons ran and hid. 21. Then Ornan saw the king approaching. So he left the threshing-floor and bowed to the ground before King David. 22. David said to Ornan, "Let me buy this threshing-floor from you at its full price; then I will build an altar to the Lord and the plague will stop." 23. "Take it, my lord, and use it as you wish," Ornan said to David. "Take the oxen, too, for the wheat for the grain offering. I give it all to you." 24. "No," the king replied, "I will buy it for the full price; I cannot take what is yours and give it to the Lord. I will not offer a burnt offering that has cost me nothing!" 25. So

David paid Ornan \$4,300 in gold, 26. and built an altar to the Lord there, and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings upon it; and he called out to the Lord, who answered by sending down fire from heaven to burn up the offering on the altar. 27. Then the Lord commanded the angel to put back his sword into its sheath;

28. and when David saw that the Lord had answered his plea, he sacrificed to him again. 29. The Tabernacle and altar made by Moses in the wilderness were on the hill of Gibeon, 30. but David didn't have time to go there to plead before the Lord, for he was terrified by the drawn sword of the angel of Jehovah.

COMMENTARY

Chapter twenty-one describes another sin in David's life. Why his sin with Bathsheba is omitted in Chronicles and why this account of the sin in the military census is included are matters not explained in the Bible. The particulars of the military census are detailed in verses 1-8. The parallel account is recorded in II Samuel 24:1-25. The record in Samuel says that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them" (24:1). The chronicler says (I Chronicles 21:1) that "Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel." The king in the later years of his reign stubbornly insisted that a numbering of the warriors be done even though it was unnecessary and contrary to Jehovah's will. As in the matter when David sinned with Bathsheba, so David permitted Satan to have control of his life. The results were disastrous. Every indication pointed to a military census of Israel as we consider the kind of numbering that was to be done. Chapter 27 in I Chronicles describes the careful organization of David's army. When he set up twelve courses of warriors, one for each month of the year, for special duties, he was careful not to number those under twenty years of age (27:23). Joab was the chief military captain. He and the princes of each tribe were charged with this responsibility. The whole procedure had to do with the military establishment. The project involved an extensive review and description of Israel's

total manpower. All of the territory from Dan to Beersheba had to be traversed. David was quite old at this time. Israel's wars under his leadership were past. What he ordered with regard to this census could have no real motive other than that of self-congratulation. The whole matter was contrary to Jehovah's will. Joab saw through David's problem in this matter and at great personal risk dared to hesitate to do what David had appointed. Joab warned that David would bring Jehovah's judgment on Israel by this act. Satan was powerful. David would not be denied. The census probably could have been completed in a relatively short time. Joab and the princes gave some attention to the assignment and after nine months and twenty days (II Samuel 24:8) reported to David in Jerusalem. The census takers had gone across the Jordan river through the Gilead country to Tyre and turning south they journeyed to Beersheba. In numbering all of Israel except the tribe of Judah, one million one hundred and ten thousand warriors were counted. In addition to these, four hundred and seventy thousand warriors of Judah were numbered. The Levites were not numbered. This had been characteristic of the earlier censuses. The tribe of Benjamin was not included simply because Joab was unhappy with his assignment.¹ The total number of warriors amounted to one million five hundred and seventy thousand. After the numbering had been done, David began to think clearly about his motives. His own conscience condemned him and Jehovah used the prophet, Gad, to bring David to his senses. David, like other great leaders of Israel, was capable of terrible sins. He also, like Moses and Aaron, had unusual ability to experience genuine repentance. David said, "I have sinned greatly". "I have done foolishly." He pleaded for Jehovah's forgiveness. He humbled himself. No longer was he a selfish, stubborn king; he would be "Jehovah's servant".

The rest of the chapter (verses 9-30) describes Jehovah's judgment on David and Israel. Gad was David's personal spiritual adviser. He had been with David (I Samuel 22:5) in the wilderness of Judah when David was hiding from Saul. He was

¹Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary, Chronicles*, p. 132.

an historian of the life of David (I Chronicles 29:29). Jehovah used Gad on this occasion to inform David with regard to Jehovah's judgment on his sin. In a rare action Jehovah through Gad laid before David three terrible penalties from among which David had to choose one. The penalties were (1) three years of famine, (2) three months of military reverses at the hand of Israel's enemies, (3) three days of the sword of Jehovah which would include an awful pestilence. These three choices were only a suggestion of the vast numbers and kinds of trouble which Jehovah could unleash upon those who disobey Him. Jehovah's mercy cannot be weighed. He is also the God of wrath. When David had been charged to make a choice, he found himself cornered by the Lord. He faced the most tragic dilemma of his life. Which choice would be best for him and for his people? Famine, military defeat, and the deadly pestilence had not been known in Israel in David's day. David was the one who had sinned. Which of the choices would bring the least amount of suffering on Israel and cause David himself to bear the weight of the judgment? David admitted his predicament. "I am in a great straight." He did not choose any one of the three possibilities. Instead, he humbly submitted himself to God. He preferred to "fall into Jehovah's hand" and not into "the hand of man". He trusted Jehovah's mercy. He made the best choice. Jehovah sent the deadly pestilence. The tenth plague visited upon the Egyptians in Moses' day bears many similarities to this death. Before proper intercession was made, seventy thousand Hebrews died because of this pestilence. The trouble moved toward Jerusalem. Many had already died and the lives of David and his family were seriously threatened. Jehovah intervened. "It is enough", God said. The angel in charge of the judgment stood by the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite. The Jebusites were original inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jehovah permitted David to see the angel suspended between earth and heaven and holding the sword in a threatening manner. Sackcloth was a symbol of mourning. David and the elders prostrated themselves on the ground pleading for Israel. David's heart was broken because so many Israelites (sheep) had

died. He, alone, had been responsible for the sin. He pleaded with God to judge him and to spare the people.

At the angel's direction Gad told David what to do. The threshing floor most likely was located on Mount Moriah in the eastern sector of Jerusalem. An altar was to be built on the threshing floor. In typical oriental fashion David bargained with Ornan for the threshing floor. David said he would pay the full price. Ornan said he would give it to David. Abraham was involved in a similar experience when he secured a burial place for Sarah (Genesis 23:9). Ornan intended to get the full price for his property. David revealed an important key to worship when he said he would not present to Jehovah any offering which did not cost him something. This is the essence of genuine worship. Hebrews could not offer a fish to God on the altar of burnt offering. No human labor or investment was required to produce the fish. Jehovah freely accepted lambs, goats, and bullocks as sacrificial materials because those who offered these kinds of sacrifices had labored over them for this purpose. When a shepherd offered a lamb, he also offered something of himself. David knew that a burnt offering and a peace offering had to be lifted up before Jehovah immediately if the plague was to be arrested. So he bought the site where he set up the altar. This altar would have been formed out of natural rock on which no tool had been used. David paid Ornan six hundred shekels of gold (perhaps about 6,000 dollars). Under normal conditions this would have been a very high price. As the offerings were on the altar and the smoke and fire ascended, the angel sheathed his sword. God's wrath was turned. David's house and the people of Jerusalem were spared. After such a wonderful experience on Mount Moriah, David often returned to that place to worship Jehovah. The Temple had not yet been built. The tabernacle was at Gibeon which was located in Benjamin about eight miles north of Jerusalem. The fear of Jehovah kept David from going to Gibeon. The angel's sword, as had been the case with Balaam (Numbers 22:31), made a deep impression on David. To "inquire of God" meant to seek God's will. Priests and prophets often assisted in this

matter. David's declaration in 22:1 accounts for the choice of this site for Solomon's Temple. "This is the house of Jehovah" and "this is the altar of burnt offering" came to be regarded as historic declarations.

14. DAVID'S PROVISIONS FOR THE TEMPLE (Chapter 22)

TEXT

Chapter 22:1. Then David said, "This is the house of Jehovah God, and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel."

2. And David commanded to gather together the sojourners that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. 3. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the couplings; and brass in abundance without weight; 4. and cedar-trees without number: for the Sidonians and they of Tyre brought cedar-trees in abundance to David. 5. And David said, "Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for Jehovah must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore make preparation for it". So David prepared abundantly before his death.

6. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for Jehovah, the God of Israel. 7. And David said to Solomon his son, "As for me, it was in my heart to build a house unto the name of Jehovah my God. 8. But the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, 'Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. 9. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. 10. He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11. "Now, my son, Jehovah be with thee; and prosper thou, and

build the house of Jehovah thy God, as he hath spoken concerning thee. 12. "Only Jehovah give thee discretion and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel; that so thou mayest keep the law of Jehovah thy God. 13. "Then shalt thou prosper, if thou observe to do the statues and the ordinances which Jehovah charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; fear not, neither be dismayed. 14. "Now, behold, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of Jehovah a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. 15. "Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all men that are skilful in every manner of work: 16. "Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise and be doing, and Jehovah be with thee."

17. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, 18. "Is not Jehovah your God with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side? For he hath delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before Jehovah, and before his people. 19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek after Jehovah your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary God, into the house that is to be built to the name of Jehovah."

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:1. Then David said, "Right here at Ornan's threshing-floor is the place where I'll build the Temple of the Lord and construct the altar for Israel's burnt offering!"

2. David now drafted all the resident aliens in Israel to prepare blocks of squared stone for the Temple. 3. They also manufactured iron into the great quantity of nails needed for the doors in the gates and for the clamps; and they smelted so much bronze that it was too much to weigh. 4. The men of Tyre and Sidon brought great rafts of cedar logs to David. 5. "Solomon my son is young and tender," David said, "and the

Temple of the Lord must be a marvelous structure, famous and glorious throughout the world; so I will begin the preparations for it now." So David collected the construction materials before his death.

6. He now commanded his son Solomon to build a temple for the Lord God of Israel. 7. "I wanted to build it myself," David told him, 8. "but the Lord said not to do it. 'You have killed too many men in great wars,' he told me. 'You have reddened the ground before me with blood: so you are not to build my Temple. 9. But I will give you a son,' he told me, 'who will be a man of peace, for I will give him peace with his enemies in the surrounding lands. His name shall be Solomon (meaning "Peaceful"), and I will give peace and quietness to Israel during his reign. 10. He shall build my temple, and he shall be as my own son and I will be his father; and I will cause his sons and his descendants to reign over every generation of Israel.' 11. "So now, my son, may the Lord be with you and prosper you as you do what he told you to do and build the Temple of the Lord. 12. And may the Lord give you the good judgment to follow all his laws when he makes you king of Israel. 13. For if you carefully obey the rules and regulations which he gave to Israel through Moses, you will prosper. Be strong and courageous, fearless and enthusiastic! 14. "By hard work I have collected \$3,000,000,000 worth of gold bullion, \$2,000,000 worth of silver, and so much iron and bronze that I haven't even weighed it; I have also gathered timber and stone for the walls. This is at least a beginning, something with which to start. 15. And you have many skilled stonemasons and carpenters and craftsmen of every kind. 16. They are expert gold and silver smiths and bronze and iron workers. So get to work, and may the Lord be with you!" 17. Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to assist his son in this project. 18. "The Lord your God is with you," he declared. "He has given you peace with the surrounding nations, for I have conquered them in the name of the Lord and for his people. 19. Now try with every fiber of your being to obey the Lord your God, and you will soon be bringing the Ark and the other holy articles of

worship into the Temple of the Lord!"

COMMENTARY

Chapter twenty-two describes plans made for the Temple. This was a primary concern for David in the latter years of his reign. The expanding kingdom of Israel brought many foreigners to Jerusalem. Some of these became proselytes or converts to Israel's religion. Others of them simply brought their skills as master workmen and found ready employment under David and Solomon. This provided an interesting preview of the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's kingdom. Men skilled in building with stone and marble, men who were master craftsmen in using copper, and others who were skilled workmen with wood came to David's assistance. Great marble slabs were prepared for the Temple. Some of these measured twelve by fifteen feet and weighed as much as five tons. These stones were quarried in Phoenicia not far from the great Lebanon forests. Some marble was quarried in the Jordan valley. All of the great stones were hewn to specific dimensions where they were quarried so that no sound of hammers was heard at the building site of the Temple. The Phoenicians from Tyre and Sidon were master craftsmen in wood. They were expert builders of ships and houses. The great cedar logs and marble slabs were floated down the Mediterranean on wood rafts. David knew that Solomon was to build the Temple. Solomon would need much assistance if the House was to approach the magnificance which David envisioned. "So David prepared abundantly before his death." To prepare for the Temple became David's chief concern.

In verses six through sixteen David spoke directly to Solomon emphasizing his successor's responsibility with regard to the construction of the Temple. Solomon's specific charge was "to build a house for Jehovah". David once again recalled his purpose to build the Temple and Jehovah's forbidding him to do so. Because of the peculiar responsibilities which were David's he had been a man of war. The blood of many persons was upon his hands. Before Solomon was born, David had

known what his son's name and character would be. The name, Solomon, means "peaceful". He would be a "man of rest". In quietness and confidence he would do his work as king. Not only was Solomon the son of David, he was also the son of God. As Jehovah had revealed in II Samuel, chapter 7, Solomon would be the first successor of David in the establishment of the Davidic kingship. So David charged Solomon with solemn responsibility and prayed for Jehovah's richest blessings to attend his son. "Discretion" is that ability to make the right choices. "Understanding" is more than mere intelligence. It involves comprehension, sympathy, sensitivity to God's revelation and man's needs. To "keep the law" involved careful study of Jehovah's revealed will and courage to be a real spiritual leader. Solomon would receive the crown in one hand. Into his other hand the scrolls of the Law would be placed on his coronation day. As Moses had led God's people out of Egypt to the Plains of Moab, Solomon is to lead in strength and without fear or dismay. David reminded his son, Solomon, that he had prepared a great stockpile of materials for the construction of the Temple. When constructed, the materials used in the building of the Temple were so lavish that their value could not be estimated.¹ One hundred thousand talents of gold at thirty thousand dollars a talent would amount to three hundred million dollars. One million talents of silver at two thousand dollars a talent would amount to two million dollars. It is best to say that the building would be of inestimable value. Not only did Solomon have all of the goods at his disposal, he also had unlimited resources in the skilled artisans and men who would do the menial tasks. David had done everything humanly possible to assure the grand success of this project. His charge was equal to the solemnity of the occasion, "Arise and be doing and Jehovah be with thee". David charged the princes to assist Solomon. The wars had been fought, enemies had either surrendered or had been annihilated. To the princes David said, "Arise and build the sanctuary of Jehovah God. Prepare a

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 419

permanent place for the ark".¹

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TEN 21-22

307. Why did David decide to take a census at this time?
308. What is the meaning of name "Satan"?
309. Why was Joab given this assignment?
310. Carefully locate Dan and Beersheba and state the distance separating these places.
311. Why was Joab hesitant to obey the king?
312. How could David be a "cause of guilt" in this matter?
313. To what city did Joab finally come with his report?
314. How many Israelites were counted?
315. How many of Judah were counted?
316. On what basis would the Levites be excluded from this census?
317. Why was the tribe of Benjamin passed over?
318. How did David come to the realization that he had sinned?
319. Who announced to David the alternatives with regard to Jehovah's judgment?
320. State the choices presented to David.
321. Finally, what choice did David make? Explain his wisdom in this matter.
322. How many of the Hebrew people perished as a result of David's census?
323. Why was the angel coming to Jerusalem and what would have been the consequences?
324. Why would Jehovah repent?
325. Describe what David saw according to 21:16. Relate this to a vision once granted to Daniel.
326. Why wear sackcloth?
327. Why would David refer to the people as sheep?
328. Explain David's actions in building an altar.
329. Who was Ornan?

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 620

330. How did David propose to obtain the right to use the threshing floor?
331. What did Ornan offer to "give" David?
332. Explain the important principle involved in 21:24.
333. About how much is a shekel of gold worth?
334. What kind of offerings did David present to Jehovah?
335. What did the angel do?
336. Where was the tabernacle located at this time?
337. David was a fearless warrior, however what are we told in 21:30?
338. What is the essential meaning of the burnt offering?
339. Explain the nature of the work assigned to the masons.
340. Summarize the building materials which David collected and stored.
341. How did the Sidonians help in David's program? Where was Sidon located?
342. What kind of Temple did David hope would be built?
343. Why was David not permitted to build the Temple?
344. Explain the meaning of the name "Solomon".
345. What would be the nature of Solomon's reign?
346. What specific matters did David mention in his charge to Solomon?
347. To what promise does David refer in 22:10?
348. How was it that the princes of Israel now could give full attention to the Temple?
349. What was to be housed in the Temple?
350. What does it mean "to build to the name of Jehovah"?

LESSON ELEVEN 23-24

THE LEVITES AND THEIR DUTIES

15. THE LEVITES AND THEIR WORK (Chapter 23)

INTRODUCTION

The successful functioning of the Temple required a careful organization of the priesthood. All of the Levites were appointed special assignments with regard to the Temple.

TEXT

Chapter 23:1. Now David was old and full of days; and he made Solomon his son king over Israel. 2. And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. 3. And the Levites were numbered from thirty years old and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand. 4. Of these, twenty and four thousand were to oversee the work of the house of Jehovah; and six thousand were officers and judges; 5. and four thousand were doorkeepers; and four thousand praised Jehovah with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith. 6. And David divided them into courses according to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7. Of the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei. 8. The sons of Ladan: Jehiel the chief, and Zetham, and Joel, three. 9. The sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, and Haziël, and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' house of Ladan. 10. And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei. 11. And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second; but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; therefore they became a fathers' house in reckoning.

12. The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. 13. The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons, forever, to burn incense before Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name forever. 14. But as for Moses the man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi. 15. The sons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer. 16. The sons of

Gershom: Shebuel the chief. 17. And the sons of Eliezer were: Rehabiah the chief; and Eliezer had no other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18. The sons of Izhar: Shelomith the chief. 19. The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. 20. The sons of Uzziel: Micah the chief, and Isshiah the second.

21. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. 22. And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters only: and their brethren Kish took them to wife. 23. The sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder and Jeremoth, three.

24. There were the sons of Levi after their fathers' houses, even the heads of the fathers' houses of those of them that were counted, in the number of names by their polls, who did the work for the service of the house of Jehovah, from twenty years old and upward. 25. For David said, Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath given rest unto his people; and he dwelleth in Jerusalem for ever: 26. and also the Levites shall no more have need to carry the tabernacle and all the vessels of it for the service thereof. 27. For by the last words of David the sons of Levi were numbered, from twenty years old and upward. 28. For their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of Jehovah, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, even the work of the service of the house of God; 29. for the showbread also, and for the fine flour for a meal-offering, whether of unleavened wafers, or of that which is baked in the pan, or of that which is soaked, and for all manner of measure and size; 30. and to stand every morning to thank and praise Jehovah, and likewise at even; 31. and to offer all burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, on the sabbaths, on the new moons, and on the set feasts, in number according to the ordinance concerning them, continually before Jehovah; 32. and that they should keep the charge of the tent of meeting, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, for the service of the house of Jehovah.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:1. By this time David was an old, old man, so he

stepped down from the throne and appointed his son Solomon as the new king of Israel. 2. He summoned all the political and religious leaders of Israel for the coronation ceremony. 3. At this time a census was taken of the men of the tribe of Levi who were thirty years or older. The total came to 38,000. 4,5. "Twenty-four thousand of them will supervise the work at the Temple," David instructed, "six thousand are to be bailiffs and judges, four thousand will be temple guards, and four thousand will praise the Lord with the musical instruments I have made." 6. Then David divided them into three main divisions named after the sons of Levi—the Gershom division, the Kohath division and the Merari division.

7. Subdivisions of the Gershom corps were named after his sons Ladan and Shime-i. 8, 9. These subdivisions were still further divided into six groups named after the sons of Ladan: Jehiel the leader, Zetham, Joel; and the sons of Shime-i—Shelomoth, Haziël, and Haran. 10, 11. The subclans of Shime-i were named after his four sons: Jahath was greatest, Zizah was next, and Jeush and Beriah were combined into a single subclan because neither had many sons.

12. The division of Kohath was subdivided into four groups named after his sons Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 13. Amram was the ancestor of Aaron and Moses. Aaron and his sons were set apart for the holy service of sacrificing the people's offerings to the Lord. He served the Lord constantly and pronounced blessings in his name at all times. 14, 15. As for Moses, the man of God, his sons Gershom and Eliezer were included with the tribe of Levi. 16. Gershom's sons were led by Shebuel, 17. and Eliezer's only son, Rehabiah, was the leader of his clan for he had many children. 18. The sons of Izhar were led by Shelomith. 19. The sons of Hebron were led by Jeriah. Amariah was second in command, Jahaziel was third, and Jekameam was fourth. 20. The sons of Uzziel were led by Micah, and Isshiah was the second in command.

21. The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli were Eleazar and Kish. 22. Eleazar died without any sons, and his daughters were married to their cousins, the sons of

Kish. 23. Mushi's sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth.

24. In the census, all the men of Levi who were twenty years old or older were classified under the names of these clans and subclans; and they were all assigned to the ministry at the Temple. 25. For David said, "The Lord God of Israel has given us peace, and he will always live in Jerusalem. 26. Now the Levites will no longer need to carry the Tabernacle and its instruments from place to place." 27. (This census of the tribe of Levi was one of the last things David did before his death.) 28. The work of the Levites was to assist the priests—the descendants of Aaron—in the sacrifices at the Temple; they also did the custodial work and helped perform the ceremonies of purification. 29. They provided the Bread of the Presence, the flour for the grain offerings, and the wafers made without yeast (either fried or mixed with olive oil); they also checked all the weights and measures. 30. Each morning and evening they stood before the Lord to sing thanks and praise to him. 31. They assisted in the special sacrifices of burnt offerings, the Sabbath sacrifices, the new moon celebrations, and at all the festivals. There were always as many Levites present as they required for the occasion. 32. And they took care of the Tabernacle and the Temple and assisted the priests in whatever way they were needed.

COMMENTARY

A further proof that David was deeply concerned about the Temple is evident in his careful organization of the Levites with respect to their Temple duties. When David became very old and his health failed, he proclaimed Solomon to be king in his place. David's son, Adonijah, forced his hand in this matter (I Kings, chapter 1). The military census which Joab had taken did not include the Levites. It was necessary that a careful count of this tribe be made so proper work assignments could be given. The Levite males thirty years of age and older were counted. There were thirty eight thousand. Twenty four thousand had assigned responsibility with regard to the Temple. Six thousand would serve as officers and judges. The officers were overseers

of work outside the Temple which pertained to the functioning of the Temple. The Levitical judges had responsibility in those matters which had to do with decisions pertaining to the Temple. The doorkeepers would be charged with the security of the Temple. Four thousand Levites had charge of the musical instruments such as harps and cymbals as these would be used in Temple services. The census would indicate the particular Levitical family to which each Levite belonged. Responsibilities were assigned which agreed with the kind of service that the Kohathite, Gershonite, or Merarite could perform. Verses 7-11 name certain leaders of the Gershonite family. Nine households were counted. Three of these belonged to Shimei and six belonged to Ladan (Libni). In Moses' day the Gershonites had charge of the tent materials in the moving of the Tabernacle. Now they were appointed other tasks relating to services at the Temple. Verses 12-20 concern the Kohathites. Kohath, Levi's son, had four sons. Amram was the father of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. Aaron's "separation" or selection for the high priesthood was an important event in Israel's history. His responsibilities were "to sanctify the most holy things", to regard Jehovah's appointments in the tabernacle as most sacred; "to burn incense before Jehovah", the sweet odor of dutiful service, the symbol of prayer; "to minister unto him", to carry out every detail of the ritual; "to bless in his name forever", to be Jehovah's agent in mediating his grace to men. Moses' sons, Gershom and Eliezer, were heads of houses and shared Kohathite obligations. Moses is here called "the man of God", a most honored descriptive phrase. No false prophet in Biblical record is ever called "a man of God". The Kohathite assignments in Moses' day had to do with the sacred furniture of the tabernacle which they carried on their shoulders or arms. The priests who officiated at the altar were members of this family. Their duties would be of this highest order in the Temple. Verses 21-23 concern the Merarites. Merari was Levi's third son (Genesis 46:11). Gershon was represented by nine houses, Kohath by eleven, and Merari by four. Altogether there were twenty-four divisions of the tribe of Levi. In Moses' day the

Merarites had to transport the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets of the tabernacle. They probably assisted in cutting wood and carrying water for the Temple. Verse three in the present chapter indicated that the Levites were numbered beginning at age thirty. Verse twenty four states that the enumeration began at age twenty. It is possible that David understood that more Levites would be needed than could be provided under the thirty year limitation. Among the last directives (verse 27) given by David was the one which lowered the age limit to twenty years. A summary of the tasks reveals a variety of exercises that had to be done to keep the Temple functioning. Work in the courts, in the rooms built in the Temple walls, officiating at the altar, and serving in the Temple proper would involve many men. Preparing shewbread, processing the meal offerings, presenting daily sacrifices, and discharging added responsibilities during the sabbath days and special feast days required many willing hands. The whole Temple routine was amazingly involved and wonderfully demanding. It was the heart of Jehovah's government of His people. It was the life line of the total relationship of Israel to Jehovah. It was peculiarly the charge of the Levites to keep this institution functioning.

16. THE CLASSES OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES

(Chapter 24)

TEXT

Chapter 24:1. And the courses of the sons of Aaron were these. The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. 3. And David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their ordering in their service. 4. And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided: of the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen, heads of fathers' houses; and of the sons of Ithamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight. 5. Thus were they

divided by lot, one sort with another; for there were princes of the sanctuary, and princes of God, both of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar. 6. And Shemaiah the son of Nethanel the scribe, who was of the Levites, wrote them in the presence of the king, and the princes and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and of the Levites; one fathers' house being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar.

7. Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, 8. the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, 9. the fifth to Malchijah the sixth to Mijamin, 10. the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, 11. the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, 12. the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, 13. the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, 14. the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, 15. the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez, 16. the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel, 17. the one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul, 18. the three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah. 19. This was the ordering of them in their service, to come into the house of Jehovah according to the ordinance given unto them by Aaron their father, as Jehovah, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

20. And of the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21. Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, Isshiah the chief. 22. of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. 23. And the sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. 24. The sons of Uzziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. 25. The brother of Micah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. 26. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah: Beno. 27. The sons of Merari: of Jaaziah, Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. 28. Of Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. 29. Of Kish; the sons of Kish: Jerahmeel. 30. And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites after their fathers' houses. 31. These likewise cast lots even as their

brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and of the Levites; the fathers' house of the chief even as those of his younger brother.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 24:1. The priests (the descendants of Aaron) were placed into two divisions named after Aaron's sons, Eleazar and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu were also the sons of Aaron, but they died before their father did and had not children; so only Eleazar and Ithamar were left to carry on. 3. David consulted with Zadok, who represented the Eleazar clan, and with Ahimelech, who represented the Ithamar clan; then he divided Aaron's descendants into many groups to serve at various times. 4. Eleazar's descendants were divided into sixteen groups and Ithamar's into eight (for there was more leadership ability among the descendants of Eleazar). 5. All tasks were assigned to the various groups by coin-toss so that there would be no preference, for there were many famous men and high officials of the Temple in each division. 6. Shemaiah, a Levite and the son of Nethanel, acted as recording secretary and wrote down the names and assignments in the presence of the king and of these leaders; Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the priests and Levites. Two groups from the division of Eleazar and one from the division of Ithamar were assigned to each task.

7-18. The work was assigned (by coin-toss) in this order: First, the group led by Jehoiarib; Second, the group led by Jedaiah; Third, the group led by Harim; Fourth, the group led by Se-orim; Fifth, the group led by Malchijah; Sixth, the group led by Mijamin; Seventh, the group led by Hakkoz; Eighth, the group led by Ahijah; Ninth, the group led by Jeshua; Tenth, the group led by Shecaniah; Eleventh, the group led by Eliashib; Twelfth, the group led by Jakim; Thirteenth, the group led by Huppah; Fourteenth, the group led by Jeshebe-ab; Fifteenth, the group led by Bilgah; Sixteenth, the group led by Immer; Seventeenth, the group led by Hezir; Eighteenth, the group led

by Happizzesz; Nineteenth, the group led by Pethahiah; Twentieth, the group led by Jehezkel; Twenty-first, the group led by Jachin; Twenty-second, the group led by Gamul; Twenty-third, the group led by Delaiah; Twenty-fourth, the group led by Maaziah. 19. Each group carried out the Temple duties as originally assigned by God through their ancestor Aaron. 20. These were the other descendants of Levi: Amram; his descendant Shuba-el; and Shubael's descendant Jehdeiah; 21. the Rehabiah group, led by his oldest son Isshiah; 22. the Izhar group consisting of Shelamoth and his descendant Jahath. 23. The Hebron group: Jeriah, Hebron's oldest son; Amariah, his second son; Jahaziel, his third son; Jekameam, his fourth son. 24, 25. The Uzziel group was led by his son Micah and his grandsons Shamir and Isshiah, and by Isshiah's son Zechariah. 26, 27. The Merari group was led by his sons: Mahli and Mushi. (Ja-aziah's group, led by his son Beno, included his brothers Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.) 28. Mahli's descendants were Eleazar, who had no sons, 29. and Kish, among whose sons was Jerahmeel. 30. The sons of Mushi were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the descendants of Levi in their various clans. 31. Like the descendants of Aaron, they were assigned to their duties by coin-toss without distinction as to age or rank. It was done in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the leaders of the priests and the Levites.

COMMENTARY

David requested the advice and assistance of Zadok and Ahimelech in setting up the courses of the Levites for Temple service. Four sons were born to Aaron. Nadab and Abihu had been stricken down by Jehovah and they had left no sons. Eleazar and Ithamar remained and Jehovah gave them sons. In David's day Zadok represented the line of Eleazar and Abiathar (Ahimelech's son) represented Ithamar's descendants. In organizing the courses of priests in the high priestly line sixteen courses were from the line of Eleazar and eight courses were lineal descendants from Ithamar. The distinction between "princes of the sanctuary" and "princes of God" is difficult.

The suggestion has been made that the princes of God refer only to the regular high priests. Sacred lots were cast in determining the divisions and Shemaiah served by keeping the written record listing the personnel of each course.

The names of the persons who were the chief leaders of the twenty four courses are listed in verses 7-19. Some of the descendants of Jehoiarib (Joiarib) were among those returning from the Babylonian exile about 536 B.C. (Nehemiah 11:10). Jedaiah is also mentioned later in the same connection (Ezra 2:36). Sons of Harim in Ezra 2:39 and Nehemiah 7:35 would relate to this present reference. Malchijah is named in Nehemiah 11:12 and Jeremiah 21:1. Abijah, who headed the eighth course is named in Nehemiah 10:7 and Luke 1:5. The father of John the Baptist served in this course. References in the lists of those who returned from Babylonian captivity include the people of Jeshua. Descendants of some of the other heads of these Levitical courses are named in the lists in Ezra and Nehemiah. The sacred lot by which these divisions were determined may have involved the Urim and the Thummim or a similar instrument. In the using of the lot, the leaders did not simply trust mere chance. This was David's way of emphasizing the fact that Jehovah made the decision as to which persons should be in each course of priests.

Assignments for "the rest of the sons of Levi" are detailed in verses 20-31. These are the Levites who were not of the high priestly order. They could not officiate at the altar and do that kind of priestly work. These Levites had obligations as musicians, doorkeepers, and Temple guards. Jehdeiah and Isshiah were the chieftains over "the rest of the sons of Levi". These leaders were descended from Amram. David, along with Zadok and Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, cast lots to determine how and when these men should serve.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON ELEVEN 23-24

351. How old was David at this time?

352. Why was Solomon placed on the throne? David had sons older than Solomon.
353. How many Levites are numbered at this time?
354. Describe the work assignments given to the Levites.
355. At what age would the Levite begin to serve at the Temple?
356. Name Gershon's two sons.
357. Name Kohath's four sons.
358. What had been Aaron's specific assignment?
359. How is Moses described in 23:14?
360. Name Moses' sons.
361. Name Aaron's sons.
362. Name Merari's two sons.
363. Why would the writer of Chronicles be concerned about this detailed genealogy of the Levites?
364. According to 23:24, at what age might a Levite begin to serve?
365. What is the "rest" of which David speaks?
366. Once the Temple was established, how were the Levites relieved of certain responsibilities?
367. List the specific tasks of the Levites who served in the Temple.
368. Describe showbread.
369. When did the Levites thank and praise Jehovah?
370. When were the new moons celebrated?
371. Identify the three great "set feasts" or annual festivals.
372. What had happened to Nadab and Abihu? Why?
373. Why did David use two chief priests? Who were they?
374. How many courses of priests were set up out of the house of Eleazar and out of the house of Ithamar?
375. What service did Shemaiah accomplish?
376. Where in the Bible outside of this chapter is there a record of a priest named Jeshua?

377. Locate in the Bible another reference to the name "Jachin". What does the name mean?
378. Why not let the priests come and serve at their own pleasure?
379. Why is Amram important in the Biblical record?
380. Identify two other persons in the Bible named Micah besides the one in 24:24.
381. Mahli's son was Eleazar. Identify another priest by this name.
382. Another Biblical character was named Kish. Who was he? Identify his tribe.
383. What device would be used in the matter of "casting lots"?

LESSON TWELVE 25-26

THE APPOINTMENT OF MUSICIANS DOORKEEPERS AND STEWARDS OF THE TEMPLE TREASURY

17. THE TEMPLE SINGERS (Chapter 25)

INTRODUCTION

David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, showed real interest in the musical program of the Temple. The instrumentalists and the singers were equipped and appointed. The physical matters such as guards and treasurers were also attended to by David.

TEXT

Chapter 25:1. Moreover David and the captains of the host set apart for the service certain of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of them that did the work according to their service was: 2. of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asharelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hand of Asaph, who prophesied after the order of the king. 3. Of Jeduthun; the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun with the harp, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising Jehovah. 4. Of Heman; the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romanti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. 5. All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. 6. All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of Jehovah, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God; Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman being under the order of the king. 7. And the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in singing unto Jehovah, even all that were skillful, was two hundred fourscore and eight. 8. And they cast lots for

their offices, all alike, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.

9. Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah; he and his brethren and son were twelve: 10. the third to Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 11. the fourth to Izri, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 12. the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 13. the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 14. the seventh to Jesharelah, his sons and his brethren twelve: 15. the eighth to Jeshaiiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 16. the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 17. the tenth to Shimei, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 18. the eleventh to Azarel, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 19. the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 20. for the thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 21. for the fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 22. for the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 23. for the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 24. for the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 25. for the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 26. for the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 27. for the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 28. for the one and twentieth to Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 29. for the two and twentieth to Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 30. for the three and twentieth to Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 31. for the four and twentieth to Romanti-ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:1. David and the officials of the Tabernacle then appointed men to prophesy to the accompaniment of zithers, harps, and cymbals. These men were from the groups of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. Here is a list of their names and their work: 2. Under the leadership of Asaph, the king's private prophet, were his sons Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and

Asharelah. 3. Under Jeduthun, who led in giving thanks and praising the Lord (while accompanied by the zither), were his six sons: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shime-i, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah. 4, 5. Under the direction of Heman, the king's private chaplain, were his sons: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Geddalti, Romanti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazi-oth. (For God had honored him with fourteen sons and three daughters.) 6,7. Their music ministry included the playing of cymbals, harps, and zithers; all were under the direction of their father as they performed this ministry in the Tabernacle. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman reported directly to the king. They and their families were all trained in singing praises to the Lord; each one—288 of them in all—was a master musician. 8. The singers were appointed to their particular term of service by coin-toss, without regard to age or reputation.

9-31. The first toss indicated Joseph of the Asaph clan; The second, Gedaliah, along with twelve of his sons and brothers; The third, Zaccur and twelve of his sons and brothers; The fourth, Izri and twelve of his sons and brothers; Fifth, Nethaniah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Sixth, Bukkiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Seventh, Jesharelah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Eighth, Jeshaiiah and twelve of his sons; Ninth, Mattaniah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Tenth, Shime-i and twelve of his sons and brothers; Eleventh, Azarel and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twelfth, Hashabiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Thirteenth, Shuba-el and twelve of his sons and brothers; Fourteenth, Mattithiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Fifteenth, Jeremoth and twelve of his sons and brothers; Sixteenth, Hananiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Seventeenth, Joshbekasha and twelve of his sons and brothers; Eighteenth, Hanani and twelve of his sons and brothers; Nineteenth, Mallothi and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twentieth, Eliathah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twenty-first, Hothir and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twenty-second, Giddalti and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twenty-third, Mahazi-oth and twelve of his sons and

brothers; Twenty-fourth, Romamti-ezer and twelve of his sons and brothers.

COMMENTARY

As he had done on previous occasions, David gathered all of his counselors (captains of the host) to assist in the appointments of the musicians and singers.¹ This was not a military matter, but it did concern the princes, the heads of tribes and other principal leaders. Three important families among the Hebrews provided the personnel for the corps of musicians. Asaph was a Gershonite Levite. Heman belonged to the Kohathite family. Jeduthun was a Merarite. In these three men all of the tribe of Levi was represented. From these three branches of the tribe of Levi a choir numbering two hundred and eighty eight was selected and trained (verse 7). The specific assignment for the musicians was that they should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals (verse 1). Asaph's sons were Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah. Their ministry is described as "prophesying", Like the seventy elders who assisted Moses by prophesying when Israel murmured against Jehovah (Numbers 11:16-30), so these men were to speak out for Jehovah, to declare His wonder through sacred music and song. In like manner, Jeduthun's six sons (verse 3), who with their father were master harpists "Prophesied in giving thanks and praising Jehovah." Heman's fourteen sons (verse 4) were trained in the use of the horn (or trumpet). These sons were under their father's direction. Heman was also regarded as a seer. Samuel filled this office at the time when Saul sought his father's lost asses (I Samuel 9:9). The seer was able by divine help to give direction to men. All of these men and their sons were trained in "the words of God" (verse 5). Their music was useful only in connection with the "word". Some of the psalms are attributed to Asaph (see Psalms 50, 73-83). Jeduthun's name appears in the titles of some Psalms (see Psalms 39, 62, 77). Several Psalms have the phrase "for the chief musician" in

¹Oehler, Gustave F., *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 375. Archer, Gleason L. Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 395.

their titles without naming the chief musician. Perhaps certain songs were to be directed by particular leaders when singing and instrumental accompaniment were first introduced into the Temple liturgy. The sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were under the direction of their fathers and all of the musicians were under orders from the king who in his own person was "the sweet psalmist of Israel". Music was considered to be a very important part of worship and those who served in this manner were carefully trained (verse 7). The twenty four named above were charged with the training and employment of eleven others in each instance, making a total of two hundred eighty eight musicians. To determine particular appointments, the casting of lots were used. Men with varying talents would serve in each of the twenty-four courses. Verses 9-31 list the details of the courses of the Levitical singers as they were selected by casting the sacred lot. The first lot went to Joseph, Asaph's son. The twenty fourth lot went to Romantiezer, son of Heman. The student is impressed with the careful attention given to these assignments. All of this was set up prior to David's death and before the construction of the Temple was begun.

18. THE GATEKEEPERS (26:1-28)

TEXT

Chapter 26:1. For the courses of the doorkeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. 2. And Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the first-born, Jediel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, 3. Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. 4. And Obededom had sons: Shemaiah the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethanel the fifth, 5. Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peullethai the eighth; for God blessed him. 6. Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled over the house of their father; for they were mighty men of valor. 7. The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren were valiant men, Elihu, and Semachiah. 8. All these were of the sons

of Obededom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men in strength for the service; threescore and two of Obed-edom. 9. And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, valiant men, eighteen. 10. Also Hasah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the chief (for though he was not the first-born, yet his father made him chief), 11. Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.

12. Of these were the courses of the doorkeepers, even of the chief men, having offices like their brethren, to minister in the house of Jehovah. 13. And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to their fathers' houses, for every gate. 14. And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a discreet counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward. 15. To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons the storehouse. 16. To Shuppim and Hosah westward, by the gate of Shallecheth, at the causeway that goeth up, watch against watch. 17. Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day and for the store-house two and two. 18. For Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar. 19. These were the courses of the doorkeepers; of the sons of the Korahites, and of the sons of Merari.

20. And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things. 21. The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to Ladan, the heads of the fathers' houses belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. 22. The sons of Jehieli: Zetham, and Joel his brother, over the treasures of the house of Jehovah. 23. Of the Amramites, of the Izharites, of the Hebronites, of the Uzzielites: 24. and Shuebuel the son of Gershon, the son of Moses, was ruler over the treasures. 25. And his brethren: of Eliezer came Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomoth his son. 26. This Shelomoth and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the heads of the fathers' houses, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated. 27. Out of the spoil

won in battles did they dedicate to repair the house of Jehovah. 28. And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruah, had dedicated, whosoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomoth, and of his brethren.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:1. The Temple guards were from the Asaph division of the Korah clan. The captain of the guard was Meshelemiah, the son of Kore. 2, 3. His sergeants were his sons: Zechariah (the oldest), Jedia-el (the second), Zebadiah (the third), Jathni-el (the fourth), Elam (the fifth), Jeho-hanan (the sixth), Elie-ho-enani (the seventh). 4, 5. The sons of Obed-edom were also appointed as Temple guards: Shemaiah (the oldest), Jehozabad (the second), Joah (the third), Sacar (the fourth), Nathanel (the fifth), Ammi-el (the sixth), Issachar (the seventh), Pe-ulleshai (the eighth), What a blessing God gave him with all those sons! 6, 7. Shemaiah's sons were all outstanding men, and had positions of great authority in their clan. Their names were: Othni, Repha-el, Obed, Elzabad. Their brave brothers, Elihu and Semachiah, were also very able men. 8. All of these sons and grandsons of Obed-edom—all sixty-two of them—were outstanding men who were particularly well qualified for their work. 9. Meshelemiah's eighteen sons and brothers, too, were real leaders. 10. Hosah, one of the Merari group, appointed Shimri as the leader among his sons, though he was not the oldest. 11. The names of some of his other sons were: Hilkiah, the second; Tebaliah, the third; Zechariah, the fourth. Hosah's sons and brothers numbered thirteen in all.

12. The divisions of the Temple guards were named after the leaders. Like the other Levites, they were responsible to minister at the Temple. 13. They were assigned guard duty at the various gates without regard to the reputation of their families, for it was all done by coin-toss. 14, 15. The responsibility of the east gate went to Shelemiah and his group; of the north gate to his son Zechariah, a man of unusual wisdom; of the south gate to Obed-edom and his group (his sons were given

charge of the storehouses); 16. of the west gate and the Shallecheth Gate on the upper road, to Shuppim and Hosah. 17. Six guards were assigned daily to the east gate, four to the north gate, four to the south gate, and two to each of the storehouses. 18. Six guards were assigned each day to the west gate, four to the upper road, and two to the nearby areas. 19. The Temple guards were chosen from the clans of Korah and Merari.

20, 21, 22. Other Levites, led by Ahijah, were given the care of the gifts brought to the Lord and placed in the Temple treasury. These men of the Ladan subclan from the clan of Gershom included Zetham and Joel, the sons of Jehieli. 23, 24. Shebuel, son of Gershom and grandson of Moses, was the chief officer of the treasury. He was in charge of the divisions named after Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 25. The line of descendants from Eliezer went through Rehabiah, Jeshai, Joram, Zichri, and Shelomoth. 26. Shelomoth and his brothers were appointed to care for the gifts given to the Lord by King David and the other leaders of the nation such as the officers and generals of the army. 27. For these men dedicated their war loot to support the operating expenses of the Temple. 28. Shelomoth and his brothers were also responsible for the care of the items dedicated to the Lord by Samuel the prophet, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, Joab the son of Zeruiah, and anyone else of distinction who brought gifts to the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The Korahites, or the descendants of Korah, and certain descendants of Merari were charged with the doorkeeping service at the Temple. I Chronicles 26:19 in a summary statement distinguishes these men from other Levites. Verses 1-9 in chapter 26 list eight courses of doorkeepers which were directly related to Korah. The name "Korah" means "baldness" and is well remembered in Hebrew history because of the rebellion led by Korah against Moses and Aaron (Numbers, chapter 16). Two hundred and fifty princes representing all of Israel's tribes joined Korah in challenging the authority of Moses and Aaron. Jehovah prepared "a new thing" in the earthquake which

swallowed these men alive. Korah's sons evidently were not involved in the trouble. In Exodus 6:24 Korah's sons are identified as Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. The Asaph in verse 1 is a shortened form of Abiasaph. Obed-edom entered the history earlier when the ark of the covenant had been taken to his house (II Samuel 6:10). He had an extensive family numbering sixty-two persons in the register used by the chronicler. This number would include sons, grandsons, and others. Obed-edom may well have been among the descendants of Korah. He and his sons served in the south sector of the Temple and in the storehouse (verse 15). Considering the nature of Korah's sin and the divine judgment that followed, it is remarkable that a place of service was reserved for his descendants. Korah was of the Kohathite family of the Levites.

Some of the doorkeepers were selected from among the Merarite Levites (verse 9). In order to determine where each course would serve, the sacred lot was employed. Nothing was left to chance and even such an ordinary matter as service at a gate required Jehovah's sanction. Each of the four sectors from which the Temple could be approached was assigned to a responsible chief doorkeeper. Shelemiah (Meshelemiah, verse 1) and his group kept the east gate. Zechariah was allotted the north sector. Obed-edom was charged to keep the entrances to the south. Shupim and Hosah shared the obligations toward the west. The daily watch at the east entrance required six Levites, while four were required in each of the other sectors. The Temple would face toward the east. The main entrance necessitated additional doorkeepers. While this might appear to be a rather unimportant service, Psalm 84, a psalm of the sons of Korah, beautifully expresses the attitude of these Levites. Verse 10 of this Psalm says, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

The Temple became the depository for much of the tangible wealth of Israel. When David had defeated Goliath, the giant's sword was laid up in the Tabernacle. Treasuries and store rooms would be provided in the Temple in which the gold, silver, and precious stones accumulated through Israel's wars and

commerce would be deposited. When Israel went to war, pledges and vows would be made to Jehovah with regard to spoil and prey if Jehovah would grant victory. When the victory came, often tremendous wealth would be brought to the Temple. Verses 20-28 refer to the things so dedicated by David and his captains. Israel at this time was in possession of things so dedicated by Samuel, Saul, Abner, Joab and others. When Joshua and Israel conquered Jericho (Joshua 6), the city was devoted to destruction. Any gold or silver taken in the overthrow was to be laid by in the Tabernacle. Achan died because he disregarded this agreement. He demonstrated selfishness and he failed to glorify Jehovah. David and his people saw in the dedication of these treasures a very appropriate way to thank Jehovah for victory. Ahijah, a Levite, had the chief responsibility for these treasures. Certain Gershonites and Kohathites assisted in this important assignment. The act of dedication was very sacred and involved an unconditional release of all claims on goods given to Jehovah's service. Goods or persons once dedicated could never be reclaimed by the giver. The "spoil" had to do with any kind of useful goods taken in battle. "Prey" was a term used to refer to any living thing taken by conquest, such as persons or animals. The idea of re-dedication was completely foreign to the Hebrew.

19. THE OFFICERS AND THE JUDGES (26:29-32)

TEXT

Chapter 26:29. Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges. 30. Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valor, a thousand and seven hundred, had the oversight of Israel beyond the Jordan westward, for all the business of Jehovah, and for the service of the king. 31. Of the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even of the Hebronites, according to their generations by fathers' houses. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead. 32. And his

brethren, men of valor, were two thousand and seven hundred, heads of fathers' houses, whom king David made overseers over the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites, for every matter pertaining to God, and for the affairs of the king.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:29. Chenaniah and his sons (from the subclan of Izhar) were appointed public administrators and judges. 30. Hashabiah and 1,700 of his clansmen from Hebron, all outstanding men, were placed in charge of the territory of Israel west of the Jordan River; they were responsible for the religious affairs and public administration of that area. 31, 32. Twenty-seven hundred outstanding men of the clan of the Hebronites, under the supervision of Jerijah, were appointed to control the religious and public affairs of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. These men, all of whom had excellent qualifications, were appointed on the basis of their ancestry and ability at Jazer in Gilead in the fortieth year of King David's reign.

COMMENTARY

Certain Levites were assigned to attend to civil matters, "the outward business", which had no direct relationship to the Temple. The terms "officers and judges" are used to detail the kind of secular service to be done. These men were chosen from the Izharites and the Hebronites, the direct descendants of Kohath, the son of Levi. Hashabiah, the Hebronite, was assigned 1700 assistants and was charged with all of the territory west of the Jordan River. Jerijah, the head of the Hebronite family, lived in the village of Jazer in Gilead, east of the Jordan River. "The business of Jehovah and the service of the king" were the principal considerations of these men.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWELVE 25-26

384. Name three of the men who were chief musicians.
385. Identify a Psalm with which each of these names of chief musicians is associated.
386. Is there any relation between prophecy and music (25:2)?
387. Describe the principal musical instruments named here.
388. Identify another Hanani (25:4) in addition to this one.
389. How is Heman described in 25:5? What does this mean?
390. How many skilled singers were appointed?
391. Identify another Gedaliah in the Bible.
392. What other person in the Bible was called Shimei?
393. How many courses of singers were appointed?
394. Who was the original Korah in the Bible?
395. In what connection was an Obed-edom named earlier?
396. Describe a "Man of valor".
397. At what time in Bible history did a priest named Hilkiah find a copy of the Law?
398. What was Zechariah's peculiar talent?
399. From how many sectors were entrances provided for the Temple?
400. Identify another Ahijah in the Bible.
401. What kinds of treasures would be stored in the Temple?
402. How was the spoil taken in battle to be used?
403. Explain the phrase, "the dedicated things".
404. What "affairs of the king" concerned David as these related to the tribes beyond the Jordan.

LESSON THIRTEEN 27-29

DAVID'S MILITARY ORGANIZATION. HIS COUNSELLORS. HIS CHARGE TO SOLOMON. HIS PRAYER FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS DEATH. (27-29)

20. THE CAPTAINS OF THE ARMY (27:1-15)

INTRODUCTION

David's consuming interest late in his life was the Temple. Having furnished Solomon with the pattern, David prayed for his people and set Solomon on the throne.

TEXT

Chapter 27:1. Now the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the heads of fathers' houses and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and their officers that served the king, in any matter of the courses which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year—of every course were twenty and four thousand. 2. Over the first course for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 3. He was of the children of Perez, the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month. 4. And over the course of the second month was Dodai the Ahohite, and his course; and Mikloth the ruler: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 5. The third chief: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 6. This is that Benaiah, who was the mighty man of the thirty, and over the thirty: and of his course was Ammizabad his son. 7. The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 8. The fifth captain for the fifth month was Shamhuth the Izrahite: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 9. The sixth captain for the sixth month was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 10. The seventh captain for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 11.

The eighth captain for the eighth month was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zerahites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 12. The ninth captain for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 13. The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zerahites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 14. The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 15. The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:1. The Israeli army was divided into twelve regiments, each with 24,000 troops, including officers and administrative staff. These units were called up for active duty one month each year. Here is the list of the units and their regimental commanders: 2, 3. The commander of the First Division was Jashobeam. He had charge of 24,000 troops who were on duty the first month of each year. 4. The commander of the Second Division was Dodai (a descendant of Ahohi). He had charge of 24,000 troops who were on duty the second month of each year. Mikloth was his executive officer. 5, 6. The commander of the Third Division was Benaiah. His 24,000 men were on duty the third month of each year. (He was the son of Jehoiada the High Priest, and was the chief of the thirty highest-ranking officers in David's army.) His son Ammizabad succeeded him as division commander. 7. The commander of the Fourth Division was Asahel (brother of Joab), who was later replaced by his son Zebadiah. He had 24,000 men on duty the fourth month of each year. 8. The commander of the Fifth Division was Shamuth from Izrah, with 24,000 men on duty the fifth month of each year. 9. The commander of the Sixth Division was Ira, the son of Ikkesh from Tekoa; he had 24,000 men on duty the sixth month of each year. 10. The commander of the Seventh Division was Helez from Pelona in Ephraim, with

24,000 men on duty the seventh month of each year. 11. The commander of the Eighth Division was Sibbecai of the Hushite subclan from Zerah, who had 24,000 men on duty the eighth month of each year. 12. The commander of the Ninth Division was Abi-ezer (from Anathoth in the tribe of Benjamin), who commanded 24,000 troops during the ninth month of each year. 13. The commander of the Tenth Division was Maharai from Netophah in Zerah, with 24,000 men on duty the tenth month of each year. 14. The commander of the Eleventh Division was Benaiah from Pirathon in Ephraim, with 24,000 men on duty during the eleventh month of each year. 15. The commander of the Twelfth Division was Heldai from Netophah in the area of Othni-el, who commanded 24,000 men on duty during the twelfth month of each year.

COMMENTARY

David was concerned to set every department of his government in order before he died and before Solomon ascended the throne. The religious considerations were of primary importance; however he did not neglect the civil or military provisions. He established a standing army of two hundred eighty eight thousand men. These men were organized into twelve sections of twenty four thousand each. Each section was under the direction of a captain who by sheer strength and courage had won the coveted position as chief of his course. Verses 1-15 recorded the detail of this military provision and the names of the twelve captains. Jashobeam, one of David's mighty warriors, was from the tribe of Judah. Benaiah, though a Levite, held the high office of captain for the third month. Asahel, Joab's brother, had been slain by Abner. His name is memorialized in this assignment as chief captain for the third month. Asahel, Joab's brother, had been slain by Abner. His name is memorialized in this assignment as chief captain for the fourth month. His son, Zebadiah, most likely stood in his heroic father's place. Since Ira was the son of a Tekoite, he was from the tribe of Judah. The great tribe of Ephraim was represented among these warriors by Helez, captain for the seventh month.

Sibbecai was of the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin had its champion in Abiezer from the village of Anathoth. Maharai represented Judah. Benaiah's charge was the eleventh month and he represented Ephraim. Heldai (or Heled) had charge of the militia over which he was captain. He was descended from Othniel, the judge and Caleb's nephew, and he represented Judah. The twelfth month was his time of special service as appointed by the king. The tribe of Judah furnished seven of the twelve captains. Benjamin and Ephraim each provided two leaders. Levi was represented by one.

21. THE PRINCES OF THE TRIBES (27:16-24)

TEXT

Chapter 27:16. Furthermore over the tribes of Israel: of the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri the ruler: of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah: 17. of Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of Aaron, Zadok: 18. of Judah, Elihu, one of the brethren of David: of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael: 19. of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of Naphtali, Jeremoth the son of Azriel: 20. of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son on Pedaiiah: 21. of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner: 22. of Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These were the captains of the tribes of Israel. 23. But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under, because Jehovah had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of heaven. 24. Joab the son of Zeruijah began to number, but finished not; and there came wrath for this upon Israel; neither was the number put into the account in the chronicles of king David.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:16-22. The top political officers of the tribes of Israel were as follows: Over Reuben, Eliezer (son of Zichri); Over Simeon, Shephatiah (son of Maacah); Over Levi,

Hashabiah (son of Kemuel); Over the descendants of Aaron, Zadok; Over Judah, Elihu (a brother of King David); Over Issachar, Omri (son of Michael); Over Zebulun, Ishmaiah (son of Obadiah); Over Naphtali, Jeremoth (son of Azriel); over Ephraim, Hoshea (son of Azaziah); Over the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel (son of of Pedaiah); Over the other half of Manasseh, in Gilead, Iddo (son of Zechariah); Over Benjamin, Ja-asiel (son of Abner); Over Dan, Azarel (son of Jeroham). 23. When David took his census he didn't include the twenty-year-olds, or those younger, for the Lord had promised a population explosion for his people. 24. Joab began the census, but he never finished it, for the anger of God broke out upon Israel; the final total was never put into the annals of King David.

COMMENTARY

Before David passed he was concerned about the political organization of each of the tribes of Israel. Among the other matters in his check list and in the sacred record of the chronicler would be the detail of the naming of the ruler or prince of each tribe. The tribes of Gad and Asher are not listed here. For this there is no satisfactory explanation. The tribe of Levi is listed and receives special attention in that Hashabiah is the ruler over the Levites while Zadok is the ruler over the priests (those of Aaron's house). When the historian turns to Joseph he names three rulers or princes for this tribe. Hoshea is prince of Ephraim. Joel rules over Manasseh in Canaan. Iddo is prince over Manasseh beyond the Jordan eastward. Elihu (verse 18) most likely was Eliah, David's brother, who is prince of Judah. Thirteen men were named here in spite of the omission of the tribes of Gad and Asher. David had taken a military census of the tribes of Israel (II Samuel 24:1-9; I Chronicles 21) contrary to Jehovah's will. That it was a military accounting is evident in this record (verse 23) which says that he would not number those under twenty years of age.¹ The military age was "twenty years old and upwards" (Numbers 1:3). Jehovah had made this wonderful promise about multiplying Israel (Genesis

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel—Esther, p. 363

15:5), but David was not considering that promise when he ordered Joab to take the census. Joab saw no need for the numbering and went about the task half-heartedly. Joab made no attempt to number the people of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin (I Chronicles 21: 6), so the census was never actually completed. Jehovah's wrath came in the form of an awful pestilence (I Chronicles 21:1-7) which killed seventy thousand Israelites. While David made remarkable provisions for all of the tribes of Israel at this time in the record, the historian called to remembrance David's sin which had disastrously reduced Israel's population.

22. THE STEWARDS OF THE TREASURIES (27:25:31)

TEXT

Chapter 27:25. And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over the treasures in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, was Jonathan the son of Uzziah: 26. and over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground was Ezri the son of Chelub: 27. and over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite: and over the increase of the vineyards for the winecellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite: 28. and over the olive-trees and the sycamore-trees that were in the lowland was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash: 29. and over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds that were in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai: 30. and over the camels was Obil the Ishmaelite: and over the asses was Jehdeiah the Meronothite: and over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagrite. 31. All these were the rulers of the substance which was king David's.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:25. Azmaveth (son of Adi-el) was the chief financial officer in charge of the palace treasuries, and Jonathan (son of Uzziah) was chief of the regional treasuries throughout the cities, villages, and fortresses of Israel. 26. Ezri (son of

Chelub) was manager of the laborers on the king's estates. 27. And Shime-i from Ramath had the oversight of the king's vineyards; and Zabdi from Shiphma was responsible for his wine production and storage. 28. Baal-hanan from Gedera was responsible for the king's olive yards and sycamore trees in the lowlands bordering Philistine territory, while Joash had charge of the supplies of olive oil. 29. Shitrai from Sharon was in charge of the cattle on the Plains of Sharon, and Shaphat (son of Adlai) had charge of those in the valleys. 30. Obil, from the territory of Ishmael, had charge of the camels, and Jehdeiah from Meronoth had charge of the donkeys. 31. The sheep were under the care of Jaziz the Hagrite. These men were King David's overseers.

COMMENTARY

The stewardship of the treasures of the king, himself, was assigned to Azmaveth. Jonathan was chargeable for the grain, fruit, produce of the agricultural operation. Ezri had charge of the field laborers and the actual preparation and care of the soil. Shimei was assigned to manage the production of grapes. Zabdi was a specialist in the storage of the vintage. Baal-hanan was the chief officer responsible for olive groves and sycamore trees which produced a kind of edible fig. The prophet, Amos, dressed sycamore trees (Amos 7:14). The storage of olive oil was Joash's field of service. Sharon was a beautiful plain and provided good pasture between Mt. Carmel and Joppa. Shitrai specialized in animal husbandry in that district. Other valley regions and the oversight of flocks and grazing fell to the direction of Shaphat. Obil was the camel man. The name "Obil" means camel. Jehdeiah had charge of the asses. This assignment was very important because the mule was the royal carriage. Jaziz was David's steward responsible for the king's sheep and goats. There were many departments in David's government. He was careful to see that someone was responsible for every area of concern.

23. SPECIAL COUNSELLORS (27:32-34)

TEXT

Chapter 27:32. Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counsellor, a man of understanding, and a scribe: and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons: 33. and Ahithophel was the king's counsellor: and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend: 34. and after Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and the captain of the king's host was Joab.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:32. The attendant to the king's sons was Jonathan, David's uncle, a wise counsellor and an educated man. Jehiel (the son of Hachmoni) was their tutor. 33. Ahithophel was the king's official counsellor and Hushai the Archite was his personal advisor. 34. Ahithophel was assisted by Jehoiada (the son of Benaiah) and by Abiathar. Joab was commander-in-chief of the Israeli army.

COMMENTARY

Jonathan, here called David's uncle, is named in II Samuel 21:21 as David's brother Shimea's son. He would then be David's nephew. The term used here may simply refer to Jonathan as a relative. His credentials in this record are very good. He must have been intelligent, well educated, an able consultant to David. Ahithophel was a trusted counsellor of David's. He is identified as the grandfather of Bathsheba. When Absalom rebelled, Ahithophel went with him. Hushai returned to Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion so he could defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. When Ahithophel saw that he had taken second place to Hushai, he went home and hanged himself (II Samuel 17:23). David also received some valuable assistance in policy making from Jehoiada and Abiathar, both of whom were from the priestly connection. Joab certainly was one of David's closest confidants. All of these men were makers

of history. Each was very influential in his own right and carried the destiny of many people on his shoulders.

24. DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON (28:1-10)

TEXT

Chapter 28:1. And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that served the king by course, and the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, and the rulers over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officers, and the mighty men, even all the mighty men of valor, unto Jerusalem. 2. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, "Hear me, my brethren, and my people: as for me, it was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and for the footstool of our God; and I had made ready for the building. 3. "But God said unto me, 'Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood.' 4. "Howbeit Jehovah, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever: for he hath chosen Judah to be prince; and in the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel; 5. "and of all my sons (for Jehovah hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel. 6. "And he said unto me, 'Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7. 'And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my commandments and mine ordinances, as at this day.' 8. "Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of Jehovah, and in the audience of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of Jehovah your God; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.

9. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all

the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. 10. "Take heed now; for Jehovah hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it."

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:1. David now summoned all of his officials to Jerusalem—the political leaders, the commanders of the twelve army divisions, the other army officers, those in charge of his property and livestock and all the other men of authority in his kingdom. 2. He rose and stood before them and addressed them as follows: "My brothers and my people! It was my desire to build a temple in which the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord could rest—a place for our God to live in. I have now collected everything that is necessary for the building, 3. but God has told me, 'You are not to build my temple, for you are a warrior and have shed much blood.' 4. "Nevertheless, the Lord God of Israel has chosen me from among all my father's family to begin a dynasty that will rule Israel forever; he has chosen the tribe of Judah, and from among the families of Judah, my father's family; and from among his sons, the Lord took pleasure in me and has made me king over all Israel. 5. And from among my sons—the Lord has given me many children—he has chosen Solomon to succeed me on the throne of his Kingdom of Israel. 6. He has told me, 'Your son Solomon shall build my temple; for I have chosen him as my son and I will be his father. 7. And if he continues to obey my commandments and instructions as he has until now, I will make his kingdom last forever.' " 8. Then David turned to Solomon and said: "Here before the leaders of Israel, the people of God, and in the sight of our God, I am instructing you to search out every commandment of the Lord so that you may continue to rule this good land and leave it to your children to rule forever.

9. Solomon, my son, get to know the God of your fathers. Worship and serve him with a clean heart and a willing mind, for the Lord sees every heart and understands and knows every thought. If you seek him, you will find him; but if you forsake

him, he will permanently throw you aside. 10. So be very careful, for the Lord has chosen you to build his holy temple. Be strong and do as he commands."

COMMENTARY

All that has gone before has been but prelude for this grand occasion. David's remaining days were numbered. In a formal way he must charge Solomon with the awful burden of building Jehovah's house and ruling as king of Israel. Everybody who had any responsible position in the life and government of Israel was called to the capital city for this memorable occasion. Princes, captains, rulers, officers, military heroes, along with common people assembled to hear King David. The king summoned all his energies so he could stand up and speak with enough volume to be heard. He addressed the hearers as "brethren" and as "my people". Once more he recalled his intention to build God's house. He reminded all of the leaders of Israel how Jehovah had chosen his tribe, his family, himself, and now, his son, Solomon for kingship. David clearly stated that Jehovah had named Solomon to succeed him as king and to be the one who would build Jehovah's "house and courts". Solomon's kingdom was to be established forever, provided he was obedient to the Lord. David's charge to Solomon and the entire assembly was that they should learn Jehovah's will and practice it. His charge reminds one of Joshua's word to the twelve tribes when he said "possess this good land". "Enjoy its blessings and leave it for your children after you."

Specifically, David charged Solomon to come to know God. Let God be real to you. Be intimately acquainted with Him. The perfect heart would let Jehovah lead and would think God's thoughts after Him. The willing mind is the steadfast purpose to do God's will God's way. David reminded his son that he would have to answer "the searcher of hearts". "If you seek Him, you will find Him. If you forsake Him, He will abandon you". Solomon stood alone in that moment before Jehovah as the one man charged to build and to lead.

25. TEMPLE BUILDING-PLANS (28:11-21)

TEXT

Chapter 28:11. Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper rooms thereof, and of the inner chambers thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat; 12. and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, for the courts of the house of Jehovah, and for all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things; 13. also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of Jehovah, and for all the vessels of service in the house of Jehovah; 14. of gold by weight for the vessels of gold, for all vessels of every kind of service; of silver for all the vessels of silver by weight, for all vessels of every kind of service; 15. by weight also for the candlesticks of gold, and for the lamps thereof, of gold, by weight for every candlestick and for the lamps thereof; and for the candlesticks of silver, silver by weight for every candlestick and for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick; 16. and the gold by weight for the tables of showbread, for every table; and silver for the tables of silver; 17. and the flesh-hooks, and the basins, and the cups, of pure gold; and for the golden bowls by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls by weight for every bowl; 18. and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot, even the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. 19. "All this," said David, "have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern."

20. And David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah God, even my God, is with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until all the work for the service of the house of Jehovah be finished. 21. "And, behold, there are the courses of the priests and the Levites, for all the service of the house of God: and there shall be with thee in all manner of work every

willing man that hath skill, for any manner of service: also the captains and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment."

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:11. Then David gave Solomon the blueprint of the Temple and its surroundings—the treasuries, the upstairs rooms, the inside rooms, and the sanctuary for the place of mercy. 12. He also gave Solomon his plans for the outer court, the outside rooms, the Temple storage areas, and the treasuries for the gifts dedicated by famous persons. For the Holy Spirit had given David all these plans. 13. The king also passed on to Solomon the instructions concerning the work of the various groups of priests and Levites; and he gave specifications for each item in the Temple which was to be used for worship and sacrifice. 14. David weighed out enough gold and silver to make these various items, 15. as well as the specific amount of gold needed for the lampstands and lamps. He also weighed out enough silver for the silver candlesticks and lamps, each according to its use. 16. He weighed out the gold for the table on which the Bread of the Presence would be placed and for the other gold tables. and he weighed the silver for the silver tables. 17. Then he weighed out the gold for the solid gold hooks used in handling the sacrificial meat and for the basins, cups, and bowls of gold and silver. 18. Finally, he weighed out the refined gold for the altar of incense and for the gold angels whose wings were stretched over the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.

19. "Every part of this blueprint," David told Solomon, "was given to me in writing from the hand of the Lord."

20. Then he continued, "Be strong and courageous and get to work. Don't be frightened by the size of the task, for the Lord my God is with you; he will not forsake you. He will see to it that everything is finished correctly. 21. And these various groups of priests and Levites will serve in the Temple. Others with skills of every kind will volunteer, and the army and the entire nation are at your command."

COMMENTARY

A building so elaborate as the Temple would require an extensive set of blueprints. When Jehovah was ready to set His Tabernacle in the center of Israel's camp He provided a complete pattern for the structure. David planned this rather formal presentation of the design for the building to Solomon. One can imagine how David turned the respective pages of the blueprint. The pattern for the porch at the entrance on the east, the plans for the "houses" (the Holy Place and the Oracle), the diagrams for the "treasuries" (storerooms built in the walls of the Temple), the blueprints for the "inner chambers" (the ground level rooms in the Temple walls), the plans for the place of the mercy seat (the Oracle) were all delivered directly to Solomon. The complete pattern in all of its details was given to David "by the Spirit". The Spirit of God communicated very clearly with the spirit of David. The design for the courts and store rooms were also submitted to Solomon. The schedule of the courses of priests and Levites was formally presented. The specific dimensions and details of the vessels of gold and silver, of the candlesticks, of the tables of shewbread (of which there were ten—II Chronicles 4:8), of the tools, bowls, flasks, altar of incense, of the cherubim were placed in Solomon's hands on this occasion. The laws of Jehovah given at Mt. Sinai were written with the fingers of God. Jehovah spoke to Moses "face to face". David said with regard to the Temple plans, "all of this have I received in writing from Jehovah's hand". He had no misgivings as to the origin of the total design. David once again charges Solomon to be firm in his commitment to begin and complete the Temple. Jehovah would be with Solomon. The priests, the Levites, master craftsmen, willing workmen, and all the people would provide the human resources to build Jehovah's House.

26. GIFTS AND THANKSGIVING (29:1-25)

TEXT

Chapter 29:1. And David the king said unto all the

assembly, "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for Jehovah God. 2. "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the brass for the things of brass, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, stones for inlaid work, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. 3. "Moreover also, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver, I give it unto the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, 4. even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, wherewith to overlay the walls of the houses; 5. of gold for the things of gold, and of silver for the things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. Who then offereth willingly to consecrate himself this day unto Jehovah?"

6. Then the princes of the fathers' houses, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly; 7. and they gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand darics, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and of iron a hundred thousand talents. 8. And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of Jehovah, under the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to Jehovah: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

10. Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11. "Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as

head above all. 12. "Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. 13. "Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. 14. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all the things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. 15. "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding. 16. "O Jehovah our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thy holy name cometh of thy hand, and is all thine own. 17. "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, that are present here, offer willingly unto thee. 18. "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee; 19. "and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for which I have made provision.

20. And David said to all the assembly, "Now bless Jehovah your God." And all the assembly blessed Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped Jehovah, and the king. 21. And they sacrificed sacrifices unto Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel, 22. and did eat and drink before Jehovah on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto Jehovah to be prince, and Zadok to be priest. 23. Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. 24. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the

king. 25. And Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:1. Then King David turned to the entire assembly and said: "My son Solomon, whom God has chosen to be the next king of Israel, is still young and inexperienced, and the work ahead of him is enormous; for the temple he will build is not just another building—it is for the Lord God himself! 2. Using every resource at my command, I have gathered as much as I could for building it—enough gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and great quantities of onyx, other precious stones, costly jewels, and marble. 3. And now, because of my devotion to the Temple of God, I am giving all of my own private treasures to aid in the construction. This is in addition to the building materials I have already collected. 4, 5. These personal contributions consist of \$85,000,000 worth of gold from Ophir and \$20,000,000 worth used for the articles made of gold and silver and for the artistic decorations. Now then, who will follow my example? Who will give himself and all that he has to the Lord?"

6, 7. Then the clan leaders, the heads of the tribes, the army officers, and the administrative officers of the king pledged \$145,000,000 in gold; \$50,000 in foreign currency; \$30,000,000 in silver; 800 tons of bronze; and 4,600 tons of iron. 8. They also contributed great amounts of jewelry, which were deposited at the Temple treasury with Jehiel (a descendant of Gershon). 9. Everyone was excited and happy for this opportunity of service, and King David was moved with deep joy.

10. While still in the presence of the whole assembly, David expressed his praises to the Lord: "O Lord God of our father Israel, praise your name forever and ever! 11. Yours is the mighty power and glory and victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. 12.

Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the Ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength. 13. O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name, 14. but who am I and who are my people that we should be permitted to give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we only give you what is yours already! 15. For we are here for but a moment, strangers in the land as our fathers were before us; our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon, without a trace. 16. O Lord our God, all of this material that we have gathered to build a temple for your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you! 17. I know, my God, that you test men to see if they are good; for you enjoy good men. I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

18. "O Lord God of our fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! Make your people always want to obey you, and see to it that their love for you never changes. 19. Give my son Solomon a good heart toward God, so that he will want to obey you in the smallest detail, and will look forward eagerly to finishing the building of your temple, for which I have made all of these preparations."

20. Then David said to all the people, "Give praise to the Lord your God!" And they did, bowing low before the Lord and the king. 21. The next day they brought a thousand young bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs as burnt offerings to the Lord; they also offered drink offerings and many other sacrifices on behalf of all Israel. 22. Then they feasted and drank before the Lord with great joy. And again they crowned King David's son Solomon as their king. They anointed him before the Lord as their leader, and they anointed Zadok as their priest. 23. So God appointed Solomon to take the throne of his father David; and he prospered greatly, and all Israel obeyed him. 24. The national leaders, the army officers, and his brothers all pledged their allegiance to King Solomon. 25. And the Lord gave him great popularity with all the people of Israel,

and he amassed even greater wealth and honor than his father.

COMMENTARY

While David had all of the dignitaries and leaders of Israel gathered before him, he charged them with the work at hand. In verses 1-5 the principal question was, "who will consecrate himself to Jehovah to build the Temple?"¹ David feared what might happen after his death. Solomon was young. As king he could become interested in many things besides Jehovah's house. Solomon and all Israel needed to be impressed with the fact that the "palace" (the Temple) is not for man, but for Jehovah-God. Once more David summarized the provisions he had made.² In addition to the precious metals and expensive wood, all kinds of precious stones had been laid by for use in decorating the Temple. The onyx stone had been used in the ephod of the High Priest. This was a beautiful green stone. There were stones of variegated colors. Some of the precious stones were marble-like or white. Considering the provisions made by David, every kind of precious gem in abundance would be in the stock-pile of goods for the Temple. In addition to all other preparations, David gave a "treasure of his own gold and silver". The value of this cannot accurately be estimated. When the name "Ophir" is associated with gold it describes gold of highest quality. Ophir may have been located in India, but most likely was in the region of Sheba in southwestern Arabia.

The manner in which all of the Israelites "offered willingly" for their work reminds us of the similar situation when Moses called for materials and workmen for the Tabernacle (Exodus 36:2-7). Every person with authority pledged himself and those associated with him to the work. A reference is made in verse 7 to the daric which was a Persian coin. There is no evidence of the use of coined money by the Hebrews in David's time. Princes and rulers brought gold, silver, brass, and precious stones to add to the stock-pile of materials. There was great joy in Israel that day.

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, pp. 438, 439.

²Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary, I Chronicles*, pp. 434, 435.

David took time to speak directly to Jehovah in the presence of the entire assembly. Jehovah was the only existent God and He was Israel's God. He hailed Jehovah as king and confessed Him to be owner of all things. To Jehovah belonged the kingdom, power, and glory. In all of the presentations made by king and people for the Temple, David admitted that they had only returned to Jehovah a part of that which He had given them. The brevity of man's time on earth was contrasted with the eternity of God. Just as a refiner of precious metals burns away the impurities, so Jehovah "triest the heart". David specifically addressed "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel." Once, even "the imaginations of men's hearts were evil" and Jehovah sent the Flood. Now, David prayed that the wonderful spirit moving in Israel would always motivate God's people. Commandments, testimonies, and statutes have to do with the total law of Jehovah. David prayed that Solomon would be blessed with perfect understanding of God's will. The whole congregation shared on this memorable worship experience.

All that remained to be done was the sacrificing of the animals and the enthronement of Solomon. Verses 21-25 refer to the super-abundance of the burnt offerings. "A thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, plus the drink offerings" were given in Jehovah's name. The burnt offerings always symbolized the complete devotion of the offerer to his God. The eating and drinking most likely was associated with the peace offerings in which the offerer and his family shared. They were in happy covenant relationship with Jehovah. A previous public statement had been made (I Chronicles 23:1) about Solomon as king. On this occasion the holy oil was poured on his head. This symbolized his reception of the Holy Spirit. He received the crown and Jehovah's law. Zadok was there as High Priest. Solomon was Jehovah's choice for this high office. The Hebrew people, the leaders and princes (except Adonijah, Joab and Abiathar) all gladly accepted Solomon. The kingly office in Israel was to be magnified as never before.

27. THE CLOSE OF DAVID'S REIGN (29:26-30)

TEXT

Chapter 29:26. Now David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. 28. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. 29. Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Samuel the seer, and in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the history of Gad the seer, 30. with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:26, 27. David was king of the land of Israel for forty years; seven of them during his reign in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 28. He died at an old age, wealthy and honored; and his son Solomon reigned in his place. 29. Detailed biographies of King David have been written in the history of Samuel the prophet, the history written by Nathan the prophet, and in the history written by the prophet Gad. 30. These accounts tell of his reign and of his might and all that happened to him and to Israel and to the kings of the nearby nations.

COMMENTARY

The concluding words in I Chronicles refer to the life and death of David. A son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, had ruled as king of Israel. His reign spanned forty years (that perfect Biblical number). "And he died", a phrase necessarily a part of every biography since Adam, had to be a part of this history. He was about seventy years of age, "a good old age", though not nearly as old as Abraham or Moses when they died. Those who shared in writing the history of David were Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. These men were seers and prophets and were personally acquainted with David. We have the Biblical books of Samuel;

but we have no books which are attributed to Nathan and Gad. These men were aware that very important events were transpiring in their day. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit they recorded this sacred history. With regard to David's death, Adam Clarke said that David had attained "a good old age; having lived as long as living could be desirable, and having in the main enjoyed good health. Full of days; having lived till he saw everything that he lived for either accomplished or in a state of forwardness. Full of riches; witness the immense sums left for the Temple. Full of honour; having gained more renown than any crowned head ever did, either before his time or since—laurels that are fresh to the present hour." Adam Clarke quotes Dr. Delaney's evaluation of David's life:

"To sum up all, David was a true believer. A zealous adorer of God, teacher of his law and worship, and inspirer of his praise. A glorious example. A perpetual and inexhaustible fountain of true piety. A consummate and unequalled hero; a skillful and fortunate captain; a steady patriot; a wise ruler; a faithful, generous, and magnanimous friend; and what is yet rarer, a no less generous and magnanimous enemy. A true penitent, a divine musician. A sublime poet, and an inspired prophet. By birth, a peasant; by merit, a prince; in youth, a hero; in manhood, a monarch; and in age, a saint".¹

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

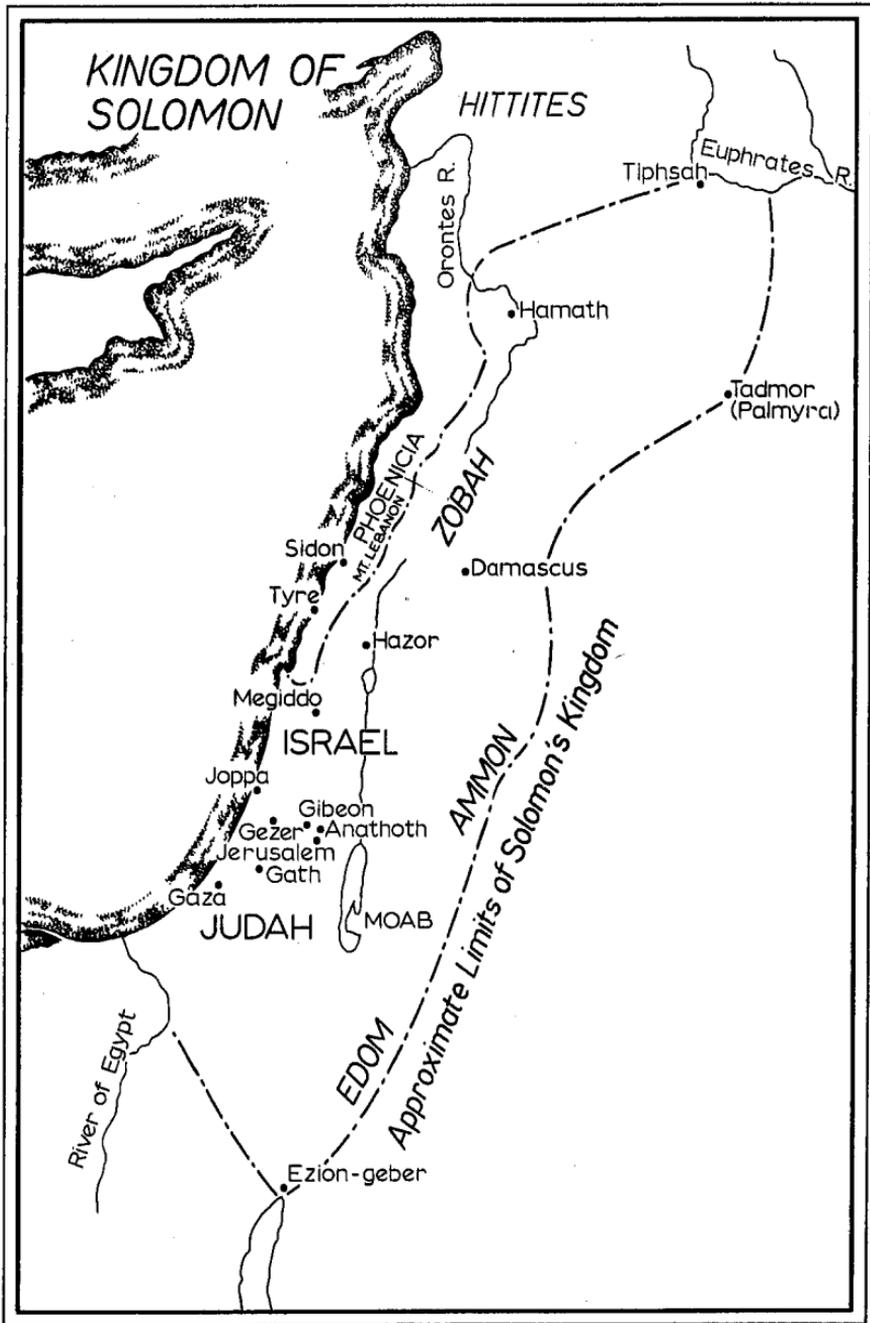
LESSON THIRTEEN 27-29

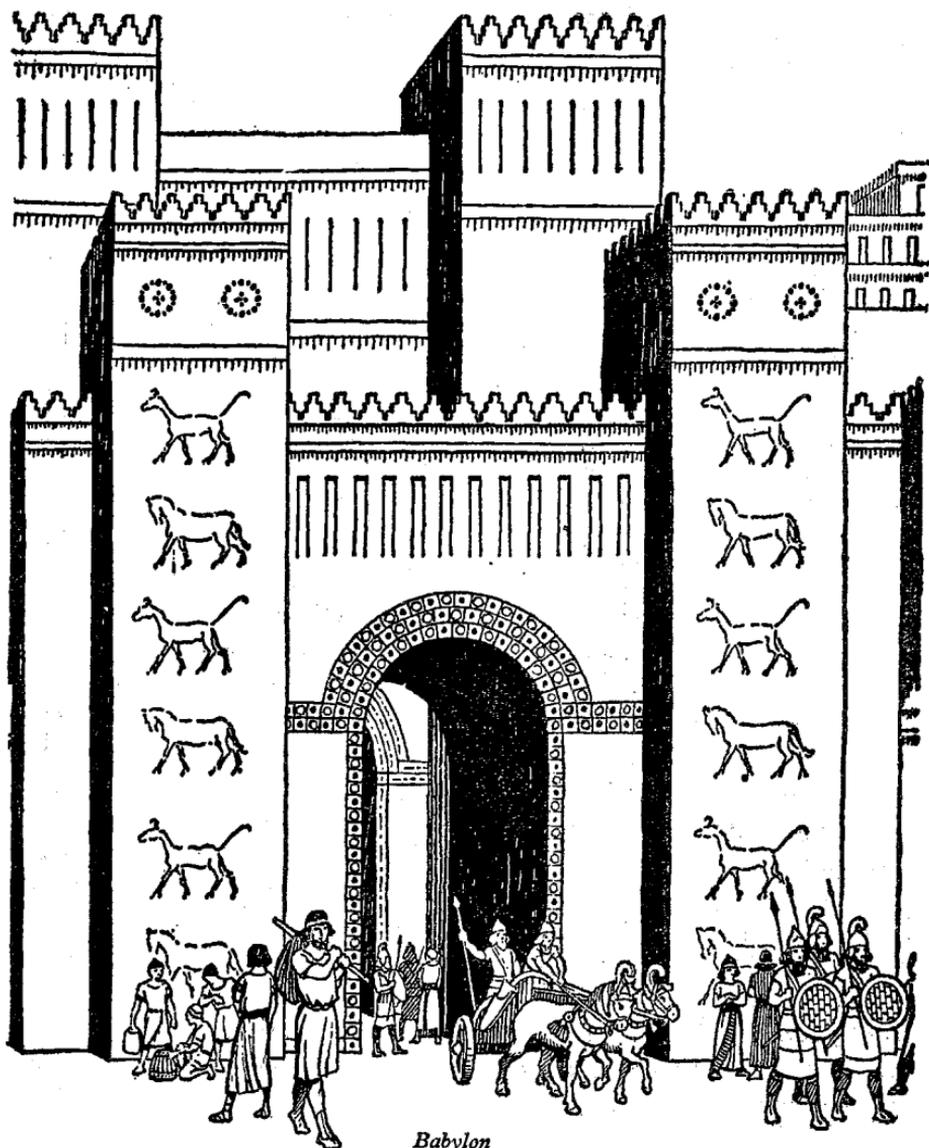
405. How many special officials were appointed each month to serve David in Jerusalem?
406. Name the person responsible for each course of special officials.
407. Who was the Benaiah of 27:5?
408. What additional information outside of Chronicles is provided concerning Asahel?

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 634.

409. Name the princes of each of the twelve tribes of Israel.
410. Who specifically represented the house of Aaron?
411. To whom did Jehovah promise increasing Israel like the stars of heaven?
412. Twelve rulers of David's substance are named. List the names and responsibilities of each.
413. Name David's counsellors.
414. For what purpose did David call a meeting of all his princes, captains, and mighty men?
415. Which of all the tribes of Israel did Jehovah choose for the kingly tribe?
416. What did Jehovah intend to do for Solomon?
417. What did David mean when he charged his people to possess the land of Israel?
418. How should Solomon serve Jehovah?
419. How does the Word account for the origin of the pattern of the Temple?
420. How would the fashion and weight of the candle-stick, basins, and bowls be determined?
421. Concerning the work, what promise did David make to Solomon?
422. What would Solomon do about skilled workmen for the Temple?
423. Explain David's word, "the palace is not for man". (29:1)
424. List the various kinds of materials David had prepared for the building of the Temple.
425. What did David do with his personal fortune?
426. Carefully locate Ophir.
427. In addressing the people what challenge did David propose?
428. Describe the response of the princes, captains, and rulers.
429. According to 29:11-12 what was David's concept of Jehovah?
430. What did David mean in the last part of 29:14?

431. Historically, who were the fathers of the Hebrew people?
432. What request did David make of Jehovah for Solomon?
433. How can an assembly of people bless Jehovah?
434. Why was Solomon made king a second time?
435. How did Solomon's kingdom compare with other kingdoms?
436. What was the total length of David's reign over God's people?
437. Name three men who wrote accounts of David's reign. Carefully identify each man.





Babylon

SECOND CHRONICLES

LESSON FOURTEEN 1-4

I. THE HISTORY OF KING SOLOMON (1:1-9:31)

SOLOMON'S KINGDOM

THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS

1. SOLOMON AT GIBEON (II Chronicles, Chapter 1)

INTRODUCTION

Solomon's choice of wisdom qualified him to be a very effective leader of Israel. He is faithful as he begins to carry out the work that his father, David had committed to him. The details of the Temple and the elaborate appointments for its adornment describe the beauty of this amazing building.

TEXT

Chapter 1:1. And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and Jehovah his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly. 2. And Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every prince in all Israel the heads of the fathers' houses. 3. So Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of Jehovah had made in the wilderness. 4. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kiriath-jearim to the place that David had prepared for it; for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5. Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of Jehovah: and Solomon and the assembly sought unto it. 6. And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before Jehovah, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.

7. In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee." 8. And Solomon said

unto God, "Thou hast showed great lovingkindness unto David my father, and hast made me king in his stead. 9. "Now, O Jehovah God, let thy promise unto David my father be established; for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. 10. "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" 11. And God said to Solomon, "Because this was in thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of them that hate thee, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: 12. wisdom and knowlege is granted unto thee? and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee; neither shall there any after thee have the like." 13. So Solomon came from the high place that was at Gibeon, from before the tent of meeting, unto Jerusalem; and he reigned over Israel.

14. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: for he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. 15. And the king made silver and gold to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. 16. And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price. 17. And they fetched up and brought out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:1. King David's son Solomon was now the undisputed ruler of Israel, for the Lord his God had made him a powerful monarch. 2, 3. He summoned all the army officers and judges to Gibeon as well as all the political and religious leaders of Israel. He led them up to the hill to the old Tabernacle

constructed by Moses, the Lord's assistant, while he was in the wilderness. 4. (There was a later Tabernacle in Jerusalem, built by King David for the Ark of God when he removed it from Kiriath-jearim.) 5, 6. The bronze altar made by Bezalel (son of Uri, son of Hur) still stood in front of the old Tabernacle, and now Solomon and those he had invited assembled themselves before it, as he sacrificed upon it 1,000 burnt offerings to the Lord.

7. That night God appeared to Solomon and told him, "Ask me for anything, and I will give it to you!" 8. Solomon replied, "O God, you have been so kind and good to my father David, and now you have given me the kingdom—9. this is all I want! For you have fulfilled your promise to David my father and have made me king over a nation as full of people as the earth is full of dust! 10. Now give me wisdom and knowledge to rule them properly, for who is able to govern by himself such a great nation as this one of yours?" 11. God replied, "Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you haven't asked for personal wealth and honor, and you haven't asked me to curse your enemies, and you haven't asked for a long life, but for wisdom and knowledge to properly guide my people—12. yes, I am giving you the wisdom and knowledge you asked for! And I am also giving you such riches, wealth, and honor as no other king has ever had before you! And there will never again be so great a king in all the world!" 13. Solomon then left the Tabernacle, returned down the hill, and went back to Jerusalem to rule Israel.

14. He built up a huge force of 1,400 chariots and recruited 12,000 cavalry to guard the cities where the chariots were garaged, though some, of course, were stationed at Jerusalem near the king. 15. During Solomon's reign, silver and gold were as plentiful in Jerusalem as rocks on the road! And expensive cedar lumber was used like common sycamore! 16. Solomon sent horse-traders to Egypt to purchase entire herds at wholesale prices. 17. At that time Egyptian chariots sold for \$400 each and horses for \$100, delivered at Jerusalem. Many of these were then resold to the kings of the Hittites and Syria.

COMMENTARY

—First and second Chronicles were considered as one book in the Hebrew canon. II Chronicles, chapter 1 concerns itself with the reign of Solomon, a very proper sequel to I Chronicles, chapter 29. II Chronicles 1:1 repeats I Chronicles 29:25. "Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly." In the transfer of authority from David to Solomon, the young king had every advantage which would promise a highly successful reign. As the human leader, Solomon was in complete control of the kingdom. All of the captains, judges, and princes gave attention to the king's words. Solomon was about twenty years of age when he became king. The prospects for a great era in Israel's history were exceptionally good. One of Solomon's first official acts was to call a grand assembly of all Israel to meet in Gibeon in Benjamin about five miles north of Jerusalem. At some time prior to this assembly the tabernacle (tent of meeting) had been set up at Gibeon. Everything that pertained to the tabernacle was there at Gibeon except the ark of the covenant which was in Jerusalem.¹ That which seemed so very important at this time in connection with the tabernacle was the altar of burnt offering. Bezalel is named as the one who had constructed the altar. This had been done in Moses' day at Mount Sinai (Exodus 31:1-11). The high place at Gibeon became very sacred to Solomon. "He offered a thousand burnt offerings" upon the altar. In spite of all the preparations made for the Temple, Solomon did not begin to build the great building until the fourth year of his reign (I Kings 6:1). In this period Solomon was often at Gibeon worshiping Jehovah.

On one of these occasions at Gibeon God appeared to Solomon in a very vivid visitation. Jehovah graciously offered to grant any request Solomon might make. Considering the circumstances and the timing of this proposition, it was a time of real testing for the new king. The promised establishment of the house of David (II Samuel 7) was a consideration of primary importance. Solomon was very appreciative of Jehovah's blessings and he humbly admitted that he had a most

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 5

demanding position to fill in behalf of a people who "were like the dust of the earth", a great multitude. Solomon's request for "wisdom and knowledge" revealed his strength of character. "Knowledge" has to do with any kind of factual information which might come to a person's consciousness. "Wisdom" is the practical application of knowledge. One acts wisely when he searches for all the facts that pertain to a given subject and decides what to do and say on the basis of what he has learned. On another occasion Solomon said, "the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). In order to be able to use all of the resources at his command, the king knew that he had to be humble in his relationship with Jehovah. The king had to move among God's people. His every word and deed would be tested by fire. No mere human being relying upon himself could succeed in this high office. Jehovah knew Solomon's heart and He was pleased at the king's request.

The young king had made his decision and Jehovah did not hesitate to answer. For one in such a place as that in which Solomon found himself the kinds of things he could have requested were without limit. Without regard for others, the king could have acted like the prodigal son in Jesus' parable. He chose the best way when he asked for wisdom and knowledge for the peoples' benefit. Jehovah was well pleased. When God gives a person the capacity to know, there is no limit to the dimensions of that consciousness. Is it possible that the wonderful intellectual sensitivity which was Adam's before he sinned is now in large measure given to Solomon by Jehovah's decree? Solomon was to be wise, not by natural endowment, not by diligent study on his own part. Solomon's wisdom was Jehovah's gift to this select person. These unique gifts would bless the king and his people as long as both kept faith with God. If the king and Israel should break covenant, the very life-line with Jehovah would be severed. "Riches, wealth, and honor" would be Solomon's portion. Even in these matters as a wise king he would use the kingdom's wealth to benefit the citizens and he would find in his personal honor additional opportunity to be Jehovah's humble servant. No king ever

enjoyed a more exciting and promising beginning of a reign. In the glow of the sacred experience at Gibeon Solomon climbed the road to Jerusalem and began his reign.

Solomon soon involved himself in establishing chariotry installations in strategic places in the kingdom. Considered from a military standpoint, the horses and chariots were useful, but probably not necessary. Israel was already strong militarily. Fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses imported into Israel would cause some concern in Egypt and other surrounding countries. Egypt became a famous market for horses and chariots. People who lived in Asia Minor and other people who lived in the regions of Syria traded with Egypt. Horses could be purchased more cheaply than chariots. These were days of great prosperity in Israel. Tribute flowed into Solomon's treasury in great abundance. The proverbial expression, "gold like stones and cedars like sycamore trees", in an exaggerated way described good days in Israel.

2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE (Chapter 2)

TEXT

Chapter 2:1. Now Solomon purposed to build a house for the name of Jehovah, and a house for his kingdom. 2. And Solomon counted out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand men that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them. 3. And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, "As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him a house to dwell therein, even so deal with me. 4. "Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of Jehovah my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him incense of sweet spices, and for the continual showbread, and for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the set feasts of Jehovah our God. This is an ordinance forever to Israel. 5. "And the house which I build is great; for great is our God above all gods. 6. "But who is able to build him a house, seeing heaven and the heaven of

heavens cannot contain him? Who am I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn incense before him? 7. "Now therefore send me a man skillful to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that knoweth how to grave all manner of gravings, to be with the skillful men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. 8. "Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and algum-trees, out of Lebanon; for I know that thy servants know how to cut timber in Lebanon. And, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants, 9. even to prepare me timber in abundance; for the house which I am about to build shall be great and wonderful. 10. "And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil."

11. Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because Jehovah loveth his people, he hath made thee king over them. 12. Hiram said moreover, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with discretion and understanding, that should build a house for Jehovah, and a house for his kingdom. 13. "And now I have sent a skillful man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's, 14. the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan; and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson, also to grave any manner of graving, and to devise any device; that there may be a place appointed unto him with thy skillful men, and with the skillful men of my lord David thy father. 15. "Now therefore the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants: 16. "and we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need; and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem."

17. And Solomon numbered all the sojourners that were in

the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found a hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. 18. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people at work.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 2:1. Solomon now decided that the time had come to build a temple for the Lord and a palace for himself. 2. This required a force of 70,000 laborers, 80,000 stonemasons in the hills, and 3,600 foremen. 3. Solomon sent an ambassador to King Hiram at Tyre, requesting shipments of cedar lumber such as Hiram had supplied to David when he was building his palace. 4. "I am about to build a temple for the Lord my God," Solomon told Hiram. "It will be a place where I can burn incense and sweet spices before God, and display the special sacrificial bread, and sacrifice burnt offerings each morning, and evening, and on the Sabbaths, and at the new moon celebration and other regular festivals of the Lord our God. For God wants Israel always to celebrate these special occasions. 5. It is going to be a wonderful temple because he is a great God, greater than any other. 6. But who can ever build him a worthy home? Not even the highest heaven would be beautiful enough! And who am I to be allowed to build a temple for God? But it will be a place to worship him.

7. "So send me skilled craftsmen—goldsmiths and silversmiths, brass and iron workers; and send me weavers to make purple, crimson, and blue cloth; and skilled engravers to work beside the craftsmen of Judah and Jerusalem who were selected by my father David. 8. Also send me cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees from the Forests of Lebanon, for your men are without equal as lumbermen, and I will send my men to help them. 9. An immense amount of lumber will be needed, for the temple I am going to build will be huge and incredibly beautiful. 10. As to the financial arrangements, I will pay your

men 20,000 sacks of crushed wheat, 20,000 barrels of barley, 20,000 barrels of wine, and 20,000 barrels of olive oil.”

11. King Hiram replied to King Solomon: “It is because the Lord loves his people that he has made you their king!” 12. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who made the heavens and the earth and who has given to David such a wise, intelligent, and understanding son to build God’s Temple, and a royal palace for himself. 13. “I am sending you a master craftsman—my famous Hiramabi! He is a brilliant man, 14. the son of a Jewish woman from Dan in Israel; his father is from here in Tyre. He is a skillful goldsmith and silversmith, and also does exquisite work with brass and iron, and knows all about stonework, carpentry, and weaving; and he is an expert in the dying of purple and blue linen and crimson cloth. He is an engraver besides, and an inventor! He will work with your craftsmen and those appointed by my lord David, your father. 15. So send along the wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine you mentioned, 16. and we will begin cutting wood from the Lebanon mountains, as much as you need, and bring it to you in log floats across the sea to Joppa, and from there you can take them inland to Jerusalem.”

17. Solomon now took a census of all foreigners in the country (just as his father David had done) and found that there were 153,600 of them. 18. He indentured 70,000 as common laborers, 80,000 as loggers and 3,600 as foremen.

COMMENTARY

As Solomon considered the Temple, he desired “to build a house for the name of Jehovah”.¹ It should be the kind of building that would give wings to a man’s imagination as he thought of the character of Jehovah. Two kinds of houses are suggested in 2:1. Solomon would build Jehovah’s Temple and he would also build for himself a whole range of palaces. Seventy thousand men would bear burdens. Eighty thousand

¹Larue, Gerald A., *Old Testament Life and Literature*, Allyn and Bacon Inc., Boston, 1968, p. 351. Grosvenor, Melville B., *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C., 1967, p. 222.

men would cut timbers in the Lebanon Forests. Men who would oversee these laborers numbered three thousand six hundred. In David's day good relations had been established with the Phoenician people. Solomon turned to Hiram (Hiram), king of Tyre and requested provision of cedar timbers. He would, at the same time, assure the Phoenicians that Israel would allow them to keep their territory by the sea. In the word sent to Hiram, Solomon emphasized that he was going to build a "great house", a house "great and wonderful", one that would require the finest building materials Hiram could provide. The kinds of religious exercises to be conducted at the Temple involved the burning of incense, the presentation of showbread, the morning and evening sacrifices, the special offerings for sabbath days and feast days. The Phoenician king would not be familiar with all of these services; but their mention would help him understand the importance of this "house". Even though Solomon was requesting goods from Gentiles, he boldly affirmed the supremacy of the God of Israel over all other gods. This did not imply that Solomon accepted the belief in other gods. Solomon's God was so great that no house would ever be sufficient to contain Him; yet the king of Israel would build a house worthy of Jehovah's name. He requested Hiram to send him materials and workmen for this project. The algum trees mentioned in verse 8 were usually imported from India or Ophir. In other places they are called "almug" trees. Phoenicia imported every kind of merchandise. She could have supplied some of this expensive wood. Solomon agreed to provide Hiram with twenty thousand measures (co-equal to about eleven bushels) of wheat and the same amount of barley. Twenty thousand baths (bath—equals about ten gallons) of wine and oil were also a part of Solomon's obligation to Hiram. The king of Tyre was well pleased with these arrangements. He pronounced blessings in Jehovah's name. He advised Solomon that he had procured the services of a skilled artisan (Hiram, I Kings 7:13, 14) whose mother was a Danite (perhaps at one time living in Naphtali) and whose father was from Tyre. This man combined the respective skills of Bezalel and Oholiab, the

master craftsmen of the Tabernacle. He could work in precious metals or in brass. He was a skilled carpenter. He was expert in the craft of textile fabrics. He was a master engraver. Hiram advised Solomon of his complete satisfaction with the proposed contract and of his willingness to do as Solomon had requested.

There was a considerable native population in Palestine that had not been removed by Israel. These were called "sojourners". In an enumeration, one hundred fifty three thousand six hundred such persons were counted. These were they who were subjected to taskwork by Solomon (verse 2).

3. BUILDING THE TEMPLE (3-5:1)

TEXT

Chapter 3:1. Then Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem on mount Moriah, where Jehovah, appeared unto David his father, which he made ready in the place that David had appointed, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2. And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign. 3. Now these are the foundations which Solomon laid for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure was three-score cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits. 4. And the porch that was before the house, the length of it, according to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and the height a hundred and twenty; and he overlaid it within with pure gold. 5. And the greater house he ceiled with fir-wood, which he overlaid with fine gold, and wrought thereon palm-trees and chains. 6. And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim. 7. He overlaid also the house, the beams, the thresholds, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubim on the walls.

8. And he made the most holy house: the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits; and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents. 9. And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

10. And in the most holy house he made two cherubim of image work; and they overlaid them with gold. 11. And the wings of the cherubim were twenty cubits long: the wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. 12. And the wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub. 13. The wings of these cherubim spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were toward the house. 14. And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubim thereon.

15. Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the capital that was on the top of each of them was five cubits. 16. And he made chains in the oracle, and put them on the tops of the pillars; and he made a hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains. 17. And he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.

Chapter 4:1. Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof. 2. Also he made the molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass; and the height thereof was five cubits; and a line of thirty cubits compassed it round about. 3. And under it was the likeness of oxen, which did compass it round about, for ten cubits, compassing the sea round about. The oxen were in two rows, cast when it was cast. 4. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set upon them above, and all their hinder parts were inward. 5. And it was a handbreadth thick; and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily: it received and held three thousand baths. 6. He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and

five on the left, to wash in them; such things as belonged to the burnt-offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

7. And he made the ten candlesticks of gold according to the ordinance concerning them; and he set them in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left. 8. He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made a hundred basins of gold. 9. Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass. 10. And he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, toward the south.

11. And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram made an end of doing the work that he wrought for king Solomon in the house of God: 12. the two pillars, and the bowls, and the two capitals which were on the top of the pillars, and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars, 13. and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks; two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were upon the pillars. 14. He made also the bases, and the lavers made he upon the bases; 15. one sea, and the twelve oxen under it. 16. The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks, and all the vessels thereof, did Hiram his father make for king Solomon, for the house of Jehovah, of bright brass. 17. In the plain of the Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredah. 18. Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.

19. And Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon was the showbread; 20. and the candlesticks with their lamps, to burn according to the ordinance before the oracle, of pure gold; 21. and the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, and that perfect gold; 22. and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the firepans, of pure gold. And as for the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy place, and

the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple, were of gold.

Chapter 5:1. Thus all the work that Solomon wrought for the house of Jehovah was finished. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, even the silver, and the gold, and all the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the house of God.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 3:1. Finally the actual construction of the Temple began. Its location was in Jerusalem at the top of Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to Solomon's father, King David, and where the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite had been. David had selected it as the site for the Temple. 2. The actual construction began on the seventeenth day of April in the fourth year of King Solomon's reign. 3. The foundation was ninety feet long and thirty feet wide. 4. A covered porch ran along the entire thirty-foot width of the house, with the inner walls and ceiling overlaid with pure gold! The roof was 180 feet high. 5. The main part of the Temple was paneled with cypress wood, plated with pure gold, and engraved with palm trees and chains. 6. Beautiful jewels were inlaid into the walls to add to the beauty; the gold, by the way, was of the best, from Parvaim. 7. All the walls, beams, doors, and thresholds throughout the Temple were plated with gold, with angels engraved on the walls.

8. Within the Temple, at one end, was the most sacred room—the Holy of Holies—thirty feet square. This too was overlaid with the finest gold, valued at \$18,000,000. 9. Twenty-six-ounce gold nails were used. The upper rooms were also plated with gold.

10. Within the innermost room, the Holy of Holies, Solomon placed two sculptured statues of angels, and plated them with gold. 11, 12, 13. They stood on the floor facing the outer room, with wings stretched wingtip to wingtip across the room, from wall to wall. 14. Across the entrance to this room he placed a veil of blue and crimson finespun linen, decorated with angels.

15. At the front of the Temple were two pillars $52\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, topped by a $7\frac{1}{2}$ foot capital flaring out to the roof. 16. He made chains and placed them on top of the pillars, with 100 pomegranates attached to the chains. 17. Then he set up the pillars at the front of the Temple, one on the right and the other on the left. And he gave them names: Jachin (the one on the right), and Boaz (the one on the left).

Chapter 4:1. He also made a bronze altar thirty feet long, thirty feet wide, and fifteen feet high. 2. Then he forged a huge round tank fifteen feet across from rim to rim. The rim stood $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the floor, and was forty-five feet around. 3. This tank was set on the backs of two rows of metal oxen. The tank and oxen were cast as one piece. 4. There were twelve of these oxen standing tail to tail, three facing north, three west, three south, and three east. 5. The walls of the tank were five inches thick, flaring out like the cup of a lily. It held 3,000 barrels of water. 6. He also constructed ten vats for water to wash the offerings, five to the right of the huge tank and five to the left. The priests used the tank, and not the vats, for their own washing.

7. Carefully following God's instructions, he then cast ten gold lampstands and placed them in the Temple, five against each wall; 8. he also built ten tables and placed five against each wall on the right and left. And he molded 100 solid gold bowls. 9. Then he constructed a court for the priests, also the public court, and overlaid the doors of these courts with bronze. 10. The huge tank was in the southeast corner of the outer room of the Temple.

11. Huramabi also made the necessary pots, shovels, and basins for use in connection with the sacrifices. So at last he completed the work assigned to him by King Solomon: 12-16. The construction of the two pillars, The two flared capitals on the tops of the pillars, The two sets of chains on the capitals, The 400 pomegranates hanging from the two sets of chains on the capitals, The bases for the vats, and the vats themselves, The huge tank and the twelve oxen under it, The pots, shovels, and fleshhooks. This skillful craftsman, Huramabi, made all of the

above-mentioned items for King Solomon, using polished bronze. 17, 18. The king did the casting at the claybanks of the Jordan valley between Succoth and Zeredah. Great quantities of bronze were used, too heavy to weigh.

19. But in the Temple only gold was used. For Solomon commanded that all of the utensils, the altar, and the table for the Bread of the Presence must be made of gold; 20. also the lambs and lampstands, 21. the floral decorations, tongs, 22. lamp snuffers, basins, spoons, and firepans—all were made of pure gold. Even the doorway of the Temple, the main door, and the inner doors to the Holy of Holies were of gold.

Chapter 5:1. So the Temple was finally finished. Then Solomon brought in the gifts dedicated to the Lord by his father, King David. They were stored in the Temple treasuries.

COMMENTARY

Moriah was located on the Eastern side of the city of Jerusalem. It may well have been the place where Abraham went to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:2), although some stoutly dispute this. It is identified as the location of Ornan's threshing floor where David offered the sacrifice that stopped the plague (I Chronicles 21:18). The place was already hallowed by sacrifice.¹ It was on an elevation commanding attention from all sections of Jerusalem. There seemed to be no doubt that this was Jehovah's choice for the building site for the Temple. Why Solomon waited until the fourth year of his reign is not clear. He might have wanted the beginning to coincide exactly with the four hundred eightieth anniversary of the release from Egypt (I Kings 6:1). He could have been so busy setting up his kingdom, entering into contracts with other countries, that he could not begin the work any earlier. We suggest that the date when the Temple was begun was about 967 B.C. This historian was careful to mark the second day of the second month for this important event. The rest of chapters three and four describe the Temple as it was built.

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 638. Spence, H. D. M. *The Pulpit Commentary, II Chronicles*, p. 31.

The dimensions of the Temple proper (the Holy Place and the Oracle) were sixty cubits by twenty cubits. The Tabernacle had measured thirty cubits by ten cubits. The exact length of the cubit cannot now be determined. It is estimated to have varied between sixteen and twenty-one inches. The usually accepted standard for the cubit is eighteen inches. The porch served as an introduction to the Holy Place and is said to have measured twenty cubits in length and one hundred and twenty cubits in height. There was nothing like this in connection with the Tabernacle. I Kings 6:3 describes the porch as twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad, no reference being made to its height. Since the Temple measured thirty cubits in height, the porch would appear to be considerably out of proportion if it was one hundred cubits high. There is no satisfactory way to settle this matter. The interior of the porch was overlaid with pure gold. The skilled artisans who constructed the Tabernacle were experts in gold overlay. In this later day, Hiram and his fellow craftsmen brought their finest skills to these tasks.

“The greater house” (verse 5) was the Holy Place. The imported fir or cypress wood from Lebanon was used to cover the interior of the Holy Place. Artists carved palm trees and chains of wreathen work in this beautiful wood all of which was then overlaid with gold. This gold overlay would most likely be in the form of a transparency highlighting the grain of wood and the beauty of the carvings in the wood. The use of precious stones was not mentioned in the records in I Kings. I Chronicles 29:2 describes David’s collection of onyx stones, all kinds of precious stones, and marble stones. These were used in beautifying the interior of the Holy Place. The gold of Parvaim (verse 6) is difficult to identify because the location of Parvaim is unknown. It may describe a kind of gold of rare quality. The complete interior of the Holy Place was carved with cherubim (winged figures) and overlaid with gold. The priest would enter through the golden porch. In the Holy Place the priest walked on a golden floor, looked on walls and ceiling of gold.

“The most holy house” (the Oracle) measured twenty cubits in all three dimensions. It was a perfect cube (I Kings

6:20). The most holy place in the Tabernacle was ten cubits in all three dimensions. Since the height of the holy place was thirty cubits, there was another room ten cubits high above the Oracle. This room most likely contained "the upper chambers" which also were overlaid with gold. A very lavish proportion of gold (600 talents) was applied to the Most Holy Place as an overlay. This Oracle must have been a place of exquisite beauty defying description.

The cherubim in the tabernacle were fashioned out of the gold that formed the mercy seat, the cover for the ark. These were winged figures beneath whose wings the glory of Jehovah rested. These cherubim were in the Temple when the ark was moved into the Oracle. In addition to these cherubim, two cherubim of olivewood (I Kings 6:23) were made to hover over the ark. Each cherub was overlaid with gold and had a wingspan of ten cubits. The ark rested between these cherubim and the tip of a wing of each cherub touched a wall of the Oracle. The cherubim looked toward the Holy Place. These sacred creatures always represented the presence and the unapproachableness of Jehovah. A wall divided the Oracle from the Holy Place (I Kings 6:31, 32). Two doors of olive-wood provided entrance to the Oracle. This wall was draped with a beautiful multi-colored fine linen veil. Chains of gold were a part of this divider between the Oracle and the Holy Place (I Kings 6:21).

Two pillars of brass were made to be set at the entrance to the Holy Place. Each of these was thirty-five cubits high with a capital five cubits high crowning the column. The account in I Kings 7:15 gives the height of each pillar as eighteen cubits plus the five cubit capital. These dimensions are proportionate with those of the porch. The thirty five cubits in our present reference (verse 15) may be explained as an error by a scribe. These pillars were ornately decorated and were situated so as to command the entrance to the Holy Place. The one on the right was named Jachin (shall establish). Boaz (in it is strength) was the name for the left pillar. Those who worshipped Jehovah and went in and out of His Temple would be strengthened and established by God.

The great altar of brass was placed in the court of priests and measured twenty cubits by twenty cubits by ten cubits. The altar in the Tabernacle was five cubits by five cubits by three cubits. It has been estimated that as many as forty priests could serve at this altar at one time. The molten sea measured ten cubits in diameter. It was five cubits high and thirty cubits in circumference. The walls of the great vessel were four inches thick (a handbreadth). The reference in I Kings 7:26 indicates that the sea held two thousand baths. This may refer to the amount of water usually maintained in the vessel. The present reference (verse 5) states the capacity as three thousand baths. This may be the absolute capacity of the great sea. The estimated content of the "bath" as a liquid measure varies from about five to twelve gallons. The brim of this great vessel was ornamented "like the flower of a lily". It set upon a curiously wrought base consisting of the figures of twelve oxen. The number "twelve" was typical in its representation of the twelve tribes of Israel. The brazen sea was apparently reserved for the ceremonial washings of the priests.

Whereas there had been but one laver of brass in the Tabernacle, in addition to the great sea in the Temple there were ten lavers of brass. Each of these contained forty baths (I Kings 7:38) and was mounted on wheels so as to be mobile. These were used for the washing of the offerings and related services. Five of them were placed on either side of the court of priests.

The Temple was lighted by ten golden candlesticks. Five of these were located on either side of the Holy Place. I Kings 7:48 mentions "the table whereupon the showbread was". Here in verse 8 we read about ten tables and verse 19 refers to "tables whereon was the showbread". In the cleansing of the Temple in II Chronicles 29:18 only one table of showbread is mentioned. These ten tables may have been auxiliary to the other services in the Holy Place. The basins of gold would be used in the ministries in the Holy Place. The setting up of the court of priests in which the great altar, the sea, and the lavers were located was accomplished by laying a marble pavement and

enclosing the court with three courses of hewn stone and a course of cedar beams (I Kings 7:12). The "great court", or court of Israel enclosed the court of priests and like the other court, it too, was paved and protected by the rock wall.

All of the utensils necessary to the work of the Temple were made by Hiram. He completed the pillars of brass with all of their intricate decorations (four hundred pomegranates). The place where the casts were prepared for the works of brass was beyond the Jordan river near the Jabbok. The clay in that region was very useful for this purpose. So much brass was used in the Temple that no attempt was made to keep a record of it. The golden altar of incense, the candlesticks properly ornamented, the snuffers for servicing the lights, the firepans (golden censers), the doors for the Holy Place and the Oracle were all made according to the pattern by the master craftsman, Hiram.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON FOURTEEN 1-4

438. How does the chronicler account for Solomon's greatness?
439. Carefully locate Gibeon and explain why this place was so important to Solomon.
440. Where was the ark of the covenant at this time? Where was the brazen altar?
441. With regard to the brazen altar explain the phrase, "and Solomon and the assembly sought unto it."
442. What does 1:6 say about burnt offerings?
443. Did God really speak to Solomon? Explain.
444. To what promise did Solomon refer in 1:9?
445. Relate Solomon's reference to a "people like the dust of the earth" to Genesis 13:16.
446. What offer did God make to Solomon in 1:7?
447. What request did Solomon make of God in 1:10?

448. List the other things Solomon might have asked for.
449. Define the terms "knowledge" and "wisdom" and distinguish between them.
450. Concerning wealth and honor, what did Jehovah promise?
451. What was the number of Solomon's chariots and horse-men? Why would he need these?
452. Explain the figures of speech used in 1:15.
453. Name the country which provided horses for Israel and neighboring nations.
454. How did the cost of a chariot compare with the cost of a horse?
455. Is more than one house mentioned in 2:1? Explain.
456. How many men did Solomon have to work on the Temple?
457. Who is the Hiram of 2:3?
458. How will this "house" be used as Solomon explains his purpose in building it?
459. What is the continual showbread?
460. Why does Solomon intend that the house be great and wonderful?
461. What is the answer to Solomon's question, "Who is able to build him a house?"
462. What kind of man does Solomon describe in 2:7?
463. Describe the "algum-tree".
464. Where did these trees grow?
465. List the goods Solomon would give in exchange for time and services of workmen.
466. How much is the measure called a "bath"?
467. How did Hiram inform Solomon concerning what he would do?
468. What did Hiram say about Jehovah?
469. Identify the skilled workman provided by Hiram.

470. How would Hiram transport the building materials to Israelite country?
471. How far was Joppa from Jerusalem?
472. Who were the sojourners? How many did Solomon number?
473. How were the sojourners employed?
474. Just where in Jerusalem was the Temple built?
475. Locate a reference to Moriah in Genesis and tell what happened there?
476. What is the importance of Ornan's threshing floor?
477. Exactly when did Solomon start building the Temple? Why would he wait so long?
478. How long and how wide was the Temple?
479. What kind of structure provided entrance to the Temple?
480. What kind of wood was used for the Temple ceiling and what final application was made to this wood?
481. In what connection is Parvaim named?
482. What were cherubim?
483. What was the final application made with regard to the inner Temple walls?
484. Describe the measurements of the Holy of Holies. Compare this with the same room in the tabernacle.
485. How much gold was used in the Holy of Holies?
486. Where were the upper chambers located?
487. What was the wing spread of each cherub in the Holy of Holies?
488. According to the record in I Kings what material was used in making the cherubim?
489. Describe the veil separating the most holy place from the holy place.
490. Describe and name the pillars in the porch at the Temple entrance.
491. What is the "Oracle"?

492. What is the meaning of the names of the pillars?
493. What were the measurements of the great altar and where would it be located?
494. Describe the size of the molten sea or great laver.
495. Describe the base of the molten sea.
496. How much is a "handbreath"?
497. How much water in terms of gallons would this sea contain?
498. In addition to the great laver, how many other lavers were made?
499. What distinction was made in the usage of the molten sea and the other lavers?
500. How many candlesticks had been in use in the Tabernacle? How many are now prepared for the Temple?
501. How many tables of showbread are to be in the Temple?
502. Where would the court of the priests be located in relation to the Temple?
503. Where was the molten sea located?
504. Name the skilled artisans who made the vessels of brass.
505. Four hundred pomegranates are numbered. Where were these used?
506. Locate the foundry where the brass was molded.
507. How much brass was used in constructing the Temple?
508. Of what material were the tables of showbread and the candlesticks made?
509. What is a snuffer?
510. How would spoons be used in the Temple?
511. If one would have had the privilege of standing just inside the door of the Temple, describe what he would have seen.

LESSON FIFTEEN 5-8

THE ARK AND THE TEMPLE. SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION. A GREAT FESTIVAL. SOLOMON AS KING.

3. BUILDING THE TEMPLE—Continued (3-5:1)

INTRODUCTION

The ark was set in the Holy of Holies. The Temple was finished. When the prayer was completed, the Temple was filled with the light of the glory of God. Solomon established himself as the king of Israel.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Fourteen)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Fourteen)

COMMENTARY

Solomon was faithful in all matters that pertained to the Temple. Those vessels that were specifically designed for the Temple services were completed according to their respective patterns. In addition to these there were many sacred vessels acquired in David's day and dedicated to Jehovah. These were placed in special rooms set apart for such treasures. The building of the Temple was complete in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign after seven years of diligent work on the magnificent structure (I Kings 6:38). Solomon called a great assembly of elders and princes to a meeting in Jerusalem for the purpose of bringing the ark of the covenant into the Temple. Although the Temple was not completed until the eighth month, this significant event of bringing in the ark took place in the seventh month. The seventh month, Tisri, was the first month of the civil year. The first day of this month was the Hebrew New Year. The tenth day was the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated through eight days beginning on the fifteenth day of the month. Through several

years the ark had been kept in the tent David had set up for it in Jerusalem. On this important occasion the ark, the Tent, the furnishings and utensils of the old Tabernacle were carried into the Temple. Here is a beautiful picture of the progress of Jehovah's self-revelation. Having completed His purpose with regard to the old Tabernacle, He now causes it to be folded away and laid in storage rooms in the Temple. In its place a grand new institution was brought into being. The day would come when the Temple would have fulfilled its purpose. It too, would be removed, and in its place the grandest institution of all, the Church, would be brought on the scene. The assignment for moving the ark and the Tabernacle was given to the Levites. To underscore the consecration of the king and the people, great numbers of sacrifices were offered. We would assume that these offerings were presented on the altar of burnt offering in the court of priests at the Temple. Of all the parts of the Old Tabernacle, only the ark of the covenant would actually be used in the Temple. Once the ark had contained the tables of the Law, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. The only treasure in the ark when it was brought into the Temple were the tables of the Law. The manna and Aaron's rod probably had been removed by the Philistines when they had the ark in Samuel's day. The ark was carried into the Oracle and placed beneath the extended wings of the large cherubim which were built for the Oracle. The curious note concerning the staves is not clear. The staves were to remain in the rings of the ark at all times so that it could readily be lifted to the shoulders of priests and moved at Jehovah's direction. The ark with its staves in place was in the Oracle at the time that the writer of II Chronicles completed his record. So the most sacred vessel out of the old Tabernacle was placed in the holiest part of the Temple.

4. DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE (5:2 - 7:22)

TEXT

Chapter 5:2. Thus all the work that Solomon wrought for the house of Jehovah was finished. And Solomon brought in the

things that David his father had dedicated, even the silver, and the gold, and all the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the house of God.

2. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. 3. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king at the feast, which was in the seventh month. 4. And all the elders of Israel came: and the Levites took up the ark; 5. and they brought up the ark, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; these did the priests the Levites bring up. 6. And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be counted nor numbered for multitude. 7. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. 8. For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. 9. And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without: and there it is unto this day.¹⁰ There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

11. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place (for all the priests that were present had sanctified themselves, and did not keep their courses; 12. also the Levites who were the singers, all of them, even Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and their brethren, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets); 13. it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of

music, and praised Jehovah, saying, "For he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever;" that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah, 14. so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of God.

Chapter 6:1. Then spake Solomon, "Jehovah hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. 2. "But I have built thee a house of habitation, and a place for thee to dwell in for ever." 3. And the king turned his face, and blessed all the assembly of Israel: and all the assembly of Israel stood.

4. And he said, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, who spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hands fulfilled it, saying, 5. 'Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be prince over my people Israel: 6. but I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there, and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.' 7. "Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 8. "But Jehovah said unto David my father, 'Whereas it was in thy heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart: 9. 'nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.' 10. "And Jehovah hath performed his word that he spake; for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as Jehovah promised, and have built the house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 11. "And have I set the ark, wherein is the covenant of Jehovah, which he made with the children of Israel."

12. And he stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands. 13. (for Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, 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 assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven); 14. and he said, "O

Jehovah, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven, or on earth; who keepest covenant and lovingkindness with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; 15. who hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him: yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. 16. "Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him saying, 'There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk in my law as thou hast walked before me.' 17. "Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David.

18. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have builded! 19. "Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant; and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee; 20. that thine eyes may be open toward this house day and night, even toward the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray toward this place. 21. "And hearken thou to the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: yea, hear thou from thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

22. "If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and he come and swear before thine altar in this house; 23. then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, requiting the wicked, to bring his way upon his own head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

24. "And if thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; 25. then hear thou from heaven, and

forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

26. "When the heavens are shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them: 27. then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou teachest them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

28. "If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar; if their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities: whatsoever plague or whatsoever sickness there be; 29. what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, who shall know every man his own plague and his own sorrow, and shall spread forth his hands toward this house: 30. then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou knowest (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men); 31. that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

32. "Moreover concerning the foreigner, that is not of thy people Israel, when he shall come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thine outstretched arm; when they shall come and pray toward this house: 33. then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

34. "If thy people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatsoever way thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; 35. then hear thou from heaven their prayer and their supplication and maintain their cause.

36. "If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto a land far off or near; 37. yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done perversely, and have dealt wickedly;' 38. if they return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captive, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: 39. then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee.

40. "Now, O my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place. 41. "Now therefore arise, O Jehovah God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Jehovah God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. 42. "O Jehovah God; turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember thy loving-kindnesses to David thy servant.

Chapter 7:1. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house. 2. And the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah, because the glory of Jehovah filled Jehovah's house. 3. And all the children of Israel looked on, when the fire came down, and the glory of Jehovah was upon the house; and they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and gave thanks unto Jehovah, saying, "For he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever."

4. Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the Lord. 5. And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of

God. 6. And the priests stood, according to their offices; the Levites also with instruments of music of Jehovah, which David the king had made to give thanks unto Jehovah (for his lovingkindness endureth for ever), when David praised by their ministry: and the priests sounded trumpets before them; and all Israel stood. 7. Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of Jehovah; for there he offered the burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offering, and the meal-offering, and the fat.

8. So Solomon held the feast at that time seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from the entrance of Hammath unto the brook of Egypt. 9. And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and feast seven days. 10. And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away unto their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the goodness that Jehovah had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

11. Thus Solomon finished the house of Jehovah, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of Jehovah, and in his own house, he prosperously effected. 12. And Jehovah appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, 'I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. 13. "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14. if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 15. "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place. 16. "For now have I chosen and hallowed this house, that my name may be there for ever; and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. 17. "And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and mine

ordinances; 18. then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I covenanted with David thy father, saying, 'There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.'

19. "But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; 20. then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 21. "And this house, which is so high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall say, 'Why hath Jehovah done thus unto this land, and to this house?' 22. "And they shall answer, Because they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.' "

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:2. Solomon now summoned to Jerusalem all of the leaders of Israel—the heads of the tribes and clans—for the ceremony of transferring the Ark from the (Tabernacle in the) City of David, also known as Zion, (to its new home in the Temple). 3. This celebration took place in October at the annual Festival of Tabernacles.

4, 5. As the leaders of Israel watched, the Levites lifted the Ark and carried it out of the Tabernacle, along with all the other sacred vessels. 6. King Solomon and the others sacrificed sheep and oxen before the Ark in such numbers that no one tried to keep count! 7, 8. Then the priest carried the Ark into the inner room of the Temple—the Holy of Holies—and placed it beneath the angels' wings; their wings spread over the Ark and its carrying poles. 9. These carrying poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the outer room, but not from the outside doorway. The Ark is still there at the time of this writing. 10. Nothing was in the ark except the two stone tablets which Moses had put there at Mount Horeb, when the Lord

made a covenant with the people of Israel as they were leaving Egypt.

11, 12. When the priests had undergone the purification rites for themselves, they all took part in the ceremonies without regard to their normal duties. And how the Levites were praising the Lord as the priests came out of the Holy of Holies! The singers were Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and all their sons and brothers, dressed in finespun linen robes and standing at the east side of the altar. The choir was accompanied by 120 priests who were trumpeters, while others played the cymbals, lyres, and harps. 13, 14. The band and chorus united as one to praise and thank the Lord; their selections were interspersed with trumpet obligatos, the clashing of cymbals, and the loud playing of other musical instruments—all praising and thanking the Lord. Their theme was "He is so good! His lovingkindness lasts forever!" And at that moment the glory of the Lord, coming as a bright cloud, filled the Temple so that the priests could not continue their work.

Chapter 6:1. This the prayer prayed by Solomon on that occasion: "The Lord has said that he would live in the thick darkness, But I have made a Temple for you, O Lord, to live in forever!" 3. Then the king turned around to the people and they stood to receive his blessing:

4. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," he said to them, "—the God who talked personally to my father David and has now fulfilled the promise he made to him. For he told him, 5, 6. 'I have never before, since bringing my people from the land of Egypt, chosen a city anywhere in Israel as the location of my Temple where my name will be glorified; and never before have I chosen a king for my people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem as that city, and David as that king.' 7. "My father David wanted to build this Temple, 8. but the Lord said not to. It was good to have the desire, the Lord told him, 9. but he was not the one to build it: his son was chosen for that task. 10. And now the Lord has done what he promised, for I have become king in my father's place, and I have built the Temple for the Name of the Lord God of Israel, 11. and placed the Ark

there. And in the Ark is the Covenant between the Lord and his people Israel.”

12, 13. As he spoke, Solomon was standing before the people on a platform in the center of the outer court, in front of the altar of the Lord. The platform was made of bronze, 7½ feet square and 4½ feet high. Now, as all the people watched, he knelt down, reached out his arms toward heaven, and prayed this prayer: 14. “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven and earth. You are the God who keeps his kind promises to all those who obey you, and who are anxious to do your will. 15. And you have kept your promise to my father David, as is evident today. 16. And now, O God of Israel, carry out your further promise to him that ‘your descendants shall always reign over Israel if they will obey my laws as you have.’ 17. Yes, Lord God of Israel, please fulfill this promise too.

18. But will God really live upon the earth with men? Why, even the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you—how much less this Temple which I have built! 19. “How I pray that you will heed my prayers, O Lord my God! Listen to my prayer that I am praying to you now! 20, 21. Look down with favor day and night upon this Temple—upon this place where you have said that you would put your name. May you always hear and answer the prayers I will pray to you as I face toward this place. Listen to my prayers and to those of your people Israel when they pray toward this Temple; yes, hear us from heaven, and when you hear, forgive.

22. “Whenever someone commits a crime, and is required to swear to his innocence before this altar, 23. then hear from heaven and punish him if he is lying, or else declare him innocent.

24. “If your people Israel are destroyed before their enemies because they have sinned against you, and if they turn to you and call themselves your people, and pray to you here in this Temple. 25. then listen to them from heaven and forgive their sins and give them back this land you gave to their fathers.

26. “When the skies are shut and there is no rain because of our sins, and then we pray toward this Temple and claim you as

our God and turn from our sins because you have punished us, 27. then listen from heaven and forgive the sins of your people, and teach them what is right; and send rain upon this land which you have given to your people as their own property.

28. "If there is a famine in the land, or plagues, or crop disease, or attacks of locusts or caterpillars, or if your people's enemies are in the land besieging our cities—whatever the trouble is—29. listen to every individual's prayer concerning his private sorrow, as well as all the public prayers. 30. Hear from heaven where you live, and forgive, and give each one whatever he deserves, for you know the hearts of all mankind. 31. Then they will reverence you forever, and will continually walk where you tell them to go.

32. "And when foreigners hear of your power, and come from distant lands to worship your great name, and to pray toward this Temple, 33. hear them from heaven where you live, and do what they request of you. Then all the people of the earth will hear of your fame and will reverence you, just as your people Israel do; and they too will know that this Temple I have built is truly yours.

34. "If your people go out at your command to fight their enemies, and they pray toward this city of Jerusalem which you have chosen, and this Temple which I have built for your name, 35. then hear their prayers from heaven and give them success.

36. "If they sin against you (and who has never sinned?) and you become angry with them, and you let their enemies defeat them and take them away as captives to some foreign nation near or far, 37, 38. and if in that land of exile they turn to you again, and face toward this land you gave their fathers, and this city and your Temple I have built, and plead with you with all their hearts to forgive them, 39. then hear from heaven where you live and help them and forgive your people who have sinned against you.

40. "Yes, O my God, be wide awake and attentive to all the prayers made to you in this place. 41. And now, O Lord God, arise and enter this resting place of yours where the Ark of your strength has been placed. Let your priests, O Lord God, be

clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in your kind deeds. 42. O Lord God, do not ignore me—do not turn your face away from me, your anointed one. Oh, remember your love for David and your kindness to him.”

Chapter 7:1. As Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the sacrifices! And the glory of the Lord filled the Temple, so that the priests couldn't enter! 3. All the people had been watching and now they fell flat on the pavement, and worshipped and thanked the Lord. “How good he is!” they exclaimed. “He is always so loving and kind.”

4, 5. Then the king and all the people dedicated the Temple by sacrificing burnt offerings to the Lord. King Solomon's contribution for this purpose was 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. 6. The priests were standing at their posts of duty, and the Levites were playing their thanksgiving song, “His Loving-kindness Is Forever,” using the musical instruments that King David himself had made and had used to praise the Lord. Then, when the priests blew the trumpets, all the people stood again. 7. Solomon consecrated the inner court of the Temple for use that day as a place of sacrifices for the bronze altar to accommodate.

8. For the next seven days, they celebrated the Tabernacle Festival, with large crowds coming in from all over Israel; they arrived from as far away as Hamath at one end of the country to the brook of Egypt at the other. 9. A final religious service was held on the eighth day. 10. Then, on October 7, he sent the people home, joyful and happy because the Lord had been so good to David and Solomon and to his people Israel.

11. So Solomon finished building the Temple as well as his own palace. He completed what he had planned to do. 12. One night the Lord appeared to Solomon and told him, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place where I want you to sacrifice to me. 13. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust swarms to eat up all of your crops, or if I send an epidemic among you, 14. then if my people will humble themselves and pray, and search for me, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear

them from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land. 15. I will listen, wide awake, to every prayer made in this place. 16. For I have chosen this Temple and sanctified it to be my home forever; my eyes and my heart shall always be here. 17. "As for yourself, if you follow me as your father David did, 18. then I will see to it that you and your descendants will always be the kings of Israel;

19. but if you don't follow me, if you refuse the laws I have given you, and worship idols, 20. then I will destroy my people from this land of mine which I have given them, and this Temple shall be destroyed even though I have sanctified it for myself. Instead, I will make it a public horror and disgrace. 21. Instead of its being famous, all who pass by will be incredulous. " 'Why had the Lord done such a terrible thing to this land and to this Temple?' they will ask. 22. "And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the Lord God of their fathers, the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they worshipped other gods instead. That is why he has done all this to me.' "

COMMENTARY

This was one of those high moments in the history of God's people. Priests, Levites, musicians, singers all joined their voices in the praise of Jehovah. There were twenty-four courses of priests. All of these were represented on this occasion. All of the instrumentalists and the singers along with one hundred and twenty trumpeters shared in this glad service. They praised Jehovah for His goodness and lovingkindness (Psalm 136:1). He had done His religious duty toward Israel. The prospects for His continued blessings were wonderful. In some respects what happened here causes us to think about what was to take place in Jerusalem on another day when the people were all of one mind and the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2). Jehovah came down to His people when the Temple was finished and He filled the House with His glory. It was a day to be long remembered in Israel's history.

Solomon was equal to the circumstances of this grand

occasion. In chapter 6:1-11 he spoke to the people. He made reference to the "thick darkness" because the cloud filled the Temple. No man could look on the full glory of Jehovah and live. The darkness itself added to the mystery of the one true God. The king knew that no man could build a house which would contain Jehovah, yet he and Israel had built a House for their God. The time had arrived when an official presentation of this Temple to Jehovah should be made. So he blessed Jehovah, "the God of Israel." He reviewed the fact that Jehovah had been content to have the Tabernacle represent His habitation among His people. In the later revelation of His will Jehovah chose David to be king and chose Jerusalem to be the capital city. Solomon reminded the people of David's desire to build the Temple and of Jehovah's restraint in this matter. As David's son, by divine appointment, Solomon had "built the house" and set the ark in its proper place.

Solomon had built a platform and a pulpit near the great altar of brass in the court of the priests. In his address to the people and in his prayer to Jehovah he was fully motivated. "He spread forth his hands" or "kneeled down upon his knees" as the mood dictated. His prayer of dedication is a model prayer. His attitude toward the people, his humility in Jehovah's presence, his seriousness as he considered the implications of these relationships all deserve careful study. Solomon's God was incomparable. He was the covenant God. Jehovah's promise to David (II Samuel 7) was often on Solomon's mind. One of David's line was always to be on the throne of Israel. Jehovah could not be contained in any house. The whole universe is His House. Nevertheless, Solomon and Israel had built a beautiful Temple for their God. In putting Jehovah's name in that place, Solomon considered the total character of God. The Temple would represent to the Hebrews all that Jehovah had ever revealed concerning Himself as far as this could be made known through a building. The Temple would be the only Holy Place in all the world for God's people. Wherever His people might be when they "prayed toward this place," when they considered the power and mercy of their God and called on Him for help,

they could expect Him to hear and answer.

Various circumstances out of which Jehovah's people might need to call upon Him are now previewed. A man might have some goods left with him by a neighbor. When the neighbor returned to claim it, his friend might tell him the goods had been stolen. The neighbor could demand that his friend take an oath in Jehovah's name swearing that he was truthful. Solomon's prayer was that the wicked would be condemned and the righteous justified. If Israel should sin and for this reason suffer at the hands of enemies, Solomon prayed that Jehovah would intervene if the Israelites in question would repent. There would be times when Jehovah might send drought and famine because of sin. Solomon's prayer was that if there was recognition of sin, genuine sorrow for sin, and "prayer toward the House," Jehovah would hear and forgive. He realized that Jehovah could send pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts, many kinds of plagues. Solomon never asked Jehovah to cease being God. He only asked that in keeping with His mercy He would answer genuine repentance. One of the most remarkable aspects of Solomon's prayer has to do with the foreigners (verse 32). Solomon previewed the times when proselytes would join themselves to the Hebrew people. If the foreigner would be willing to come on Jehovah's terms, Solomon asks that Jehovah will receive him. This is the basic principle that provided the Apostle Paul his defense for his ministry. When Israel would go to war in Jehovah's name or when any Hebrew might be taken captive by an enemy because he had sinned, "if he prays toward this House," Solomon plead for God's help. So Solomon committed his trust and the confidence of his people to Jehovah, their God. The Temple, the ark, the king, the priests, the people all waited in Jehovah's presence.

Jehovah was ready with the answer to Solomon's prayer. While the king was praying, the sacrifices were burning on the altar. With regard to "fire coming down from heaven," we are reminded of the miraculous fire descending on the altar in the Tabernacle when the services were inaugurated (Leviticus

9:24).¹ We are also reminded of Jehovah's answer to Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:38).² The glory (or brightness) of Jehovah filled the Temple to such an extent that the priests had to withdraw. The priests stood in awe of the whole experience much as Israel had done at Mount Sinai. It was a day of worship never to be forgotten by those who saw Jehovah's glory. What could the people say in such circumstances? "Jehovah is good; for His lovingkindness endureth forever."

The dedication of the Temple coincided with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Under ordinary conditions more offerings were presented at this time than at any other time during the year. Since this was such a special occasion, all of the facilities for worship were taxed to the limit. Offerings of dedication included twenty two thousand oxen and one hundred twenty thousand sheep. The sacrificing and feasting continued throughout the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Since all of the offerings could not be accommodated at the altar of burnt offering, a special dispensation permitted "the hallowing of the middle of the court" so that many offerings could be made at one time. The priest directed the worship. Some worked with the animal sacrifices, while others directed the music and singing. There had never been a day like this in Jerusalem. The total time involved in the celebration covered fourteen days. Seven days had been required for "the dedication of the altar" and seven days for the Feast of Tabernacles. The great assembly of Israelites had come to Jerusalem from the length and breadth of the land. Hammath was on the Orontes River about two hundred and fifty miles north of Jerusalem. The brook of Egypt flowed into the Mediterranean Sea about forty miles south of Gaza. On the day following the two weeks of celebration there was one final holy convocation from which the people were sent on their way rejoicing. The Temple was finished when it became a house of sacrifice. Solomon was able to do every good thing he desired for the Temple and for the kingdom.

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 83

²Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary*, Chronicles, p. 178

The account of Jehovah's appearing to Solomon by night (verse 12) reminds us of His appearance to Solomon at Gibeon when the young king made his choice of wisdom. We are not told how long after the dedication of the Temple this appearance took place. Jehovah plainly declared that He was pleased with the Temple. The Temple was not a monument or a memorial. It was "a house of sacrifice" where Jehovah's people could give vital expression to their living faith in God. In direct answer to Solomon's prayer, Jehovah recognized that His people might sin and thus He would be forced to judge them by famine, locusts, or pestilence. Jehovah's character remained constant. Sin must be judged. However, He would temper judgment with mercy provided His people would confess their sin, repent, and commit themselves to do His will. The Temple was a house of prayer. The eyes of Jehovah would ever be upon the Temple and upon those who would "seek Jehovah's face" through worship at the Temple and the daily practice of the revealed religion. Jehovah renewed His promise to Solomon. If Solomon would be like David and if he obeyed Jehovah, his kingdom would be established and through him Jehovah would begin to keep His promise to David. However, if Solomon should forget God and turn to idols, both king and people would be "plucked up by the roots" (completely destroyed). Solomon was advised by direct revelation that the presence of the Temple in Jerusalem did not guarantee the safety of king and people. The Temple could be described as a "high house," but if Israel sinned, Jehovah would destroy Temple, city, king, and people. Instead of being a messenger of Jehovah to the nations, Israel would then become a by-word or a song of derision. The alternatives were laid very plainly before the king. If he should turn away from Jehovah, he had no excuse.

5. BUILDING, LABORERS AND SHIPS (8:1-18)

TEXT

Chapter 8:1. And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of Jehovah, and his

own house, 2. that the cities which Hiram had given to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

3. And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it. 4. And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. 5. Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fortified cities, with walls, gates, and bars; 6. and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

7. As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, that were not of Israel; 8. of their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, of them did Solomon raise a levy of bond-servants unto this day. 9. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains, and rulers of his chariots and of his horsemen. 10. And these were the chief officers of king Solomon, even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.

11. And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her; for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of Jehovah hath come."

12. Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto Jehovah on the altar of Jehovah, which he had built before the porch, 13. even as the duty of every day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the set feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

14. And he appointed, according to the ordinance of David his father, the courses of the priest to their service, and the

Levites to their offices, to praise, and to minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required; the doorkeepers also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded. 15. And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.

16. Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of Jehovah, and until it was finished. So the house of Jehovah was completed.

17. Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, on the seashore in the land of Edom. 18. And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they came with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and fetched from thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 8:1. It was now twenty years since Solomon had become king, and the great building projects of the Lord's Temple and his royal palace were completed. 2. He now turned his energies to rebuilding the cities which King Hiram of Tyre had given to him, and he relocated some of the people of Israel into them.

3. It was at this time, too, that Solomon fought against the city of Hamath-zobah and conquered it. 4. He built Tadmor in the desert, and built cities in Hamath as supply centers. 5. He fortified the cities of upper Beth-horon and lower Beth-horon, both being supply centers, building their walls and installing barred gates. 6. He also built Baalath and other supply centers at this time, and constructed cities where his chariots and horses were kept. He built to his heart's desire in Jerusalem and Lebanon and throughout the entire realm.

7, 8. He began the practice that still continues of conscripting as slave laborers the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—the descendants of those nations which the Israelis had not completely wiped out. 9. However, he didn't make slaves of any of the Israeli citizens, but used them

as soldiers, officers, charioteers, and cavalry-men; 10. also, two hundred fifty of them were government officials who administered all public affairs.

11. Solomon now moved his wife (she was Pharaoh's daughter) from the City of David sector of Jerusalem to the new palace he had built for her. For he said, "She must not live in King David's palace, for the Ark of the Lord was there and it is holy ground."

12. Then Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar he had built in front of the porch of the Temple. 13. The number of sacrifices differed from day to day in accordance with the instructions Moses had given; there were extra sacrifices on the Sabbaths, on new moon festivals and at the three annual festivals—the Passover celebration, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Tabernacles.

14. In assigning the priests to their posts of duty he followed the organizational chart prepared by his father David; he also assigned the Levites to their work of praise and of helping the priests in each day's duties; and he assigned the gatekeepers to their gates. 15. Solomon did not deviate in any way from David's instructions concerning these matters and concerning the treasury personnel.

16. Thus Solomon successfully completed the construction of the Temple.

17, 18. Then he went to the seaport towns of Ezion-geber and Eloth, in Edom, to launch a fleet presented to him by King Hiram. These ships, with King Hiram's experienced crews working alongside Solomon's men, went to Ophir and brought back \$13,000,000 worth of gold to him!

COMMENTARY

Solomon had spent seven years building the Temple and thirteen years building his own palaces. These palaces included the House of the Forest of Lebanon, a Porch of Pillars, his personal quarters, a Judgment Hall, a House for Pharaoh's Daughter (I Kings 7:1-8). All of these buildings were wonderfully constructed, ornately furnished, and they were situated in

proper relationship to the Temple.¹ According to I Kings 9:11-13, Solomon had given Hiram (Huram), king of Tyre, twenty cities in Galilee. These villages bordered the Phoenician country and were given to the Phoenicians as partial payment for their help in providing supplies for Solomon's building program. Hiram was not at all pleased with the transaction and showed his displeasure by calling these villages "Cabul," which means "good for nothing." Since the Phoenicians evidently did nothing with the villages, Solomon made some improvements which made the villages attractive to certain Israelites for settlement.

Hamath-zobah is the same city mentioned in 7:8. There may have been some uprising in this vicinity which Solomon was able to put down. He most likely established garrisons of soldiers in that district. Tadmor was west of Damascus about one hundred and forty miles about equi-distant from the Orontes and Euphrates rivers. The garrisons at Tadmor helped secure the northern borders of the kingdom. The villages of Beth-horon were in the territory of Ephraim, not far from Jerusalem in a north-westerly direction. Baalath was a village in the tribe of Dan. Solomon built whatever he pleased in any of these places either by way of military fortification or for his own personal satisfaction.

There were in Solomon's kingdom remnants of the native inhabitants of Palestine. Five of the seven native nations are named in verse 7. Girgashites and Canaanites are the others who are not named. All of these people were supposed to be utterly dispossessed in Joshua's day and the period of conflict that followed. The Hebrews failed in this matter. Instead of annihilating these people, they subjected them to taskwork. The free-born children of Israel were the chief military leaders. From among these Solomon selected two hundred and fifty men who were to have very responsible military positions.

In his complex of costly palaces Solomon built a house especially for the daughter of Pharaoh. Before his palaces were completed he had occupied the quarters of his father, David. At

¹Schultz, Samuel, J., *The Old Testament Speaks*, pp. 148, 149

this time he was able to move his queen into a palace more worthy of her dignity. In those months that followed the completion of the Temple Solomon was faithful in his service to Jehovah. He was careful to attend to the burnt offerings. By these he vowed his complete commitment to Jehovah. It is possible that he attended both morning and evening sacrifices at the altar. Special offerings were made on the sabbath day, to usher in a new month, and for the three great annual festivals. As long as the king was careful about these matters, he remained faithful to Jehovah. Solomon sought out carefully the appointments and schedule of service for the priests and Levites as these had been determined by David. He was faithful in administering this program. Once more, the chronicler emphasizes the fact that "the house of Jehovah was completed" when it functioned as a place of worship.

In Solomon's day Israel's wealth was greatly increased through the operation of two navies.¹ One of these, the Tarshish navy, was based at Tyre in Phoenicia. It was manned by Phoenician seamen and touched all of the main coastal cities on the whole perimeter of the Mediterranean as it went as far west as Spain (I Kings 10:22). The Ophir navy, also manned by Phoenicians, used Ezion-geber and Eloth at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba as home ports (I Kings 9:26-28). This navy moved through the entire length of the Red Sea touching the west coast of Arabia and the east coast of Africa. This navy visited ports in India and probably went as far east as China. Immense wealth was brought into Israel from these distant places. These navies also exported much merchandise from Israel. The four hundred and fifty talents of gold probably represents one deposit made upon the return of this Ophir navy. If the gold talent was worth thirty thousand dollars, this would amount to thirteen million five hundred thousand dollars.

¹Grosvenor, Melville, B., *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, pp. 246-248
Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 648

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON FIFTEEN 5-8

512. What were the dedicated things of 5:1?
513. When the Temple was finished what was the next important work to be done?
514. Locate the city of David as this is mentioned in 5:2.
515. When was the great feast held and why would it be appointed for this particular time?
516. Who actually moved the ark?
517. What was the "tent of meeting"?
518. As the ark was being moved, what was Solomon doing?
519. Exactly where was the ark finally placed?
520. What was in the ark at this time? What other materials had been in the ark previously?
521. Why were the priests not keeping their courses just at this time?
522. Identify Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun.
523. Where was the altar (5:12) located?
524. As the service of dedication proceeded why did the priests have to draw back from the Temple?
525. According to Solomon, for what purpose was the Temple built?
526. In Solomon's address to the people what did he say about Jerusalem and about David?
527. How did Solomon regard the ark?
528. How did Jehovah regard David's desire to build the Temple?
529. Describe the scaffold of 6:13.
530. What was Solomon's concept of Jehovah?
531. State the promise which Solomon calls upon Jehovah to fulfill.
532. Did Solomon believe that the Temple was worthy of God? Explain.

533. Explain the phrase, "to pray toward this place".
534. Was "oath taking" contrary to God's will? Explain.
535. What is the "turning again" of 6:24?
536. Why might terrible drought be experienced?
537. List the various problems which Solomon anticipates and indicate his plan for handling them.
538. What does Solomon say about the foreigners? Why is this so remarkable?
539. When Israel has sinned, what is the nature of her hope?
540. Describe the request the king made for the priests and the saints.
541. Who is the "anointed"?
542. By what means did Jehovah show His approval of Solomon's prayer?
543. What does "the glory of Jehovah" mean?
544. Describe Jehovah's lovingkindness.
545. How many oxen and sheep were sacrificed to Jehovah at the time of the dedication of the Temple?
546. How was the middle of the Temple court hallowed?
547. How long did the dedicatory service last?
548. Carefully locate "Hamath" and "the brook of Egypt".
549. In what attitude did the Israelites return to their homes?
550. When Jehovah appeared to Solomon at night summarize His word to Solomon.
551. Describe the wonderful promise in 7:14.
552. On what basis did Jehovah covenant to bless Solomon?
553. Under what circumstance might the Temple become a proverb?
554. How many years passed as Solomon built the Temple and his palaces?
555. Locate Tadmor.
556. Where was Beth-horon located?
557. What would be the kind of building which Solomon did in Lebanon?

558. How did Solomon handle the problems relating to the Amorites and Jebusites?
559. To what offices did Solomon appoint certain Israelites?
560. Identify the person who became Solomon's wife. What did he do for her?
561. Identify the great annual feasts of the Hebrews.
562. What did Solomon do with respect to the priests and Levites?
563. When would it be considered that the Temple was really finished?
564. Locate Ezion-geber.
565. Who manned Solomon's navy?
566. What valuable import did the navy bring back to Israel?

LESSON SIXTEEN 9—11

A QUEEN COMES TO JERUSALEM. REHOBAM AND THE KINGDOM.

6. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA AND SOLOMON'S GREATNESS (Chapter 9)

INTRODUCTION

The wisdom of Solomon brought the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem. Solomon's wealth could not be counted. His last years were filled with shame as he turned away from God. Rehoboam came to the throne in Judah and saw the kingdom divided.

TEXT

Chapter 9:1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great train, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 2. And Solomon told her all her questions; and there was not anything hid from Solomon which he told her not. 3. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 4. and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, his cupbearers also, and their apparel, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. 5. And she said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 6. "Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me; thou exceedest the fame that I heard. 7. "Happy are the men, and happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom. 8. "Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on his throne, to be king for Jehovah thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do

justice and righteousness.”

9. And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and spices in great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. 10. And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, that brought gold from Ophir, brought algum-trees and precious stones. 11. And the king made of the algum-trees terraces for the house of Jehovah, and for the king's house, and harps and psalteries for the singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah. 12. And king Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

13. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold. 14. besides that which the traders and merchants brought: and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15. And king Solomon made two hundred bucklers of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one buckler. 16. And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. 17. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with gold. 18. And there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays on either side by the place of the seat, and two lions standing beside the stays. 19. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. 20. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. 21. For the king had ships that went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram; once every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

22. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 23. And all the kings of the earth sought the

presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 24. And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. 25. And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. 26. And he rules over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. 27. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. 28. And they brought horses for Solomon out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

29. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? 30. And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:1. When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fabled wisdom, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. A very great retinue of aids and servants accompanied her, including camel-loads of spices, gold, and jewels. 2. And Solomon answered all her problems. Nothing was hidden from him; he could explain everything to her. 3. When she discovered how wise he really was, and how breathtaking the beauty of his palace, 4. and how wonderful the food at his tables, and how many servants and aides he had, and when she saw their spectacular uniforms and his stewards in full regalia, and saw the size of the men in his bodyguard, she could scarcely believe it! 5. Finally she exclaimed to the king. "Everything I heard about you in my own country is true! 6. I didn't believe it until I got here and saw it with my own eyes. Your wisdom is far greater than I could ever have imagined. 7. What a privilege

for these men of yours to stand here and listen to you talk! 8. Blessed be the Lord your God! How he must love Israel to give them a just king like you! He wants them to be a great, strong nation forever."

9. She gave the king a gift of over a million dollars in gold, and great quantities of spices of incomparable quality, and many, many jewels. 10. King Hiram's and King Solomon's crews brought gold from Ophir, also sandalwood and jewels. 11. The king used the sandalwood to make terraced steps for the Temple and the palace, and to construct harps and lyres for the choir. Never before had there been such beautiful instruments in all the land of Judah. 12. King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba gifts of the same value as she had brought to him, plus everything else she asked for! Then she and her retinue returned to their own land.

13, 14. Solomon received a billion dollars worth of gold each year from the kings of Arabia and many other lands that paid annual tribute to him. In addition, there was a trade balance from the exports of his merchants. 15. He used some of the gold to make 200 large shields, each worth \$280,000. 16. and 300 smaller shields, each worth \$140,000. The king placed these in the Forest of Lebanon Room in his palace. 17. He also made a huge ivory throne overlaid with pure gold. 18. It had six gold steps and a footstool of gold; also gold armrests, each flanked by a gold lion. 19. Gold lions also stood at each side of each step. No other throne in all the world could be compared with it! 20. All of King Solomon's cups were solid gold, as were all the furnishings in the Forest of Lebanon Room. Silver was too cheap to count for much in those days! 21. Every three years the king sent his ships to Tarshish, using sailors supplied by King Hiram, to bring back gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

22. So King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king in all the earth. 23. Kings from every nation came to visit him, and to hear the wisdom God had put into his heart. 24. Each brought him annual tribute of silver and gold bowls, clothing, armor, spices, horses, and mules. 25. In addition,

Solomon had 4,000 stalls of horses and chariots, and 12,000 cavalry-men stationed in the chariot cities, as well as in Jerusalem to protect the king. 26. He rules over all kings and kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and as far away as the border of Egypt. 27. He made silver become as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones in the road! And cedar was used as though it were common sycamore. 28. Horses were brought to him from Egypt and other countries.

29. The rest of Solomon's biography is written in the history of Nathan the prophet and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and also in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 30. So Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all of Israel for forty years. 31. Then he died and was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Rehoboam became the new king.

COMMENTARY

I Kings 10:1-13 recounts the remarkable visit of the Queen of Sheba as she came to Jerusalem in Solomon's day.¹ Sheba was located in Arabia some fifteen hundred miles south of Jerusalem. It was at the southern extremity of the Red Sea and north of the Indian Ocean. The kind of gifts that she brought would indicate that she had an abundance of wealth at her disposal. We are impressed by the fact that even though she lived so far from Jerusalem, she had "heard of the fame of Solomon." Her primary concern was to prove Solomon's wisdom. This is a good commentary on Jehovah's promise to give Solomon a wise and an understanding heart. The Arabians found pleasure in riddles, proverbs, in matters pertaining to natural history. The Queen was disposed to doubt that anyone could be as wise as Solomon was heralded to be. The caravan which accompanied the Queen was one of great splendor. Camels were loaded with spices, gold (120 talents), and precious stones. Spices were often more precious than gold itself. The gifts she brought were of inestimable value. Many attendants were in the company of this Queen. Solomon willingly received

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 106ff

the queen as an honored guest and they freely exchanged ideas. In all of the intellectual matters Solomon passed every test and the time came when the royal guest "had seen the wisdom of Solomon." While she was in Jerusalem, Solomon showed her his house (the Temple and the whole range of palaces). "The ascent" (verse 4) probably refers to the architectural device of winding stairs which provided access to the second and third stories of rooms built in the Temple wall. She paid particular attention to the banquet food, the servants and their dress. The Queen confessed that what she had heard about Solomon's wisdom was so unbelievable that she could not accept it unless she could personally confirm it. She was most complimentary in her evaluation. "Thou exceedest the fame that I heard." "The half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me." In the name of Solomon's God the Queen of Sheba blessed Solomon and his people. Prophetically she spoke of a reign of justice and righteousness and of Israel's being established forever.

She and Solomon exchanged gifts. He gave her "all her desire." When her delightful visit was complete she returned to her own land bearing lavish treasures from Israel. The chronicler records the fact that the Ophir navy also brought much gold, precious stones and alium trees into the land of Israel. The alium trees were native to India and were of excellent texture for exquisite woodwork, especially for making musical instruments. These were days of wonderful prosperity in Israel.

The Queen of Sheba gave Solomon one hundred and twenty shekels of gold. The gold paid into Solomon's treasuries by the nations subject to Israel amounted to more than five times that which the Queen presented as a gift. The annual tribute was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold. This cannot be accurately figured in terms of our currency, but may have amounted to as much as twenty five million dollars. In addition to this there were several other important sources of revenue in connection with commerce. The national income far exceeded expenditures. Solomon had the excess gold fashioned into shields which could be properly displayed in the great military museum in the house of the Forest of Lebanon. The "buckler" was a large

oblong shield designed to protect the entire body of a warrior. Two hundred of these shields were fashioned. Each shield contained six hundred shekels of gold. Three hundred shields were fashioned each of which contained three hundred shekels of gold. There were thirty six hundred shekels of gold in each talent of gold. These shields represented values from two thousand five hundred dollars to five thousand dollars. They remained in the great military house until they were carried away by Shishak, King of Egypt (I Kings 14:26), in the fifth year of king Rehoboam. Solomon's throne was a worthy seat for the great king.¹ Ivory was imported from Africa and India. This material was used in the basic construction. It was beautiful in its own right; however this beauty was enhanced by a gold overlay. The throne was elevated. It was fashioned with arms and was provided with a foot-rest of gold. The lion was the symbol of kingly power. This animal was the peculiar symbol that pertained to the tribe of Judah. The arm rests on the throne may have been fashioned like a lion. Whether there were twelve or twenty-four lions fashioned to guard the steps is difficult to determine. The number "twelve" or its double would represent all of the tribes of Israel. The uniqueness of the throne is emphasized by the chronicler. In these days of unrivaled prosperity all of the appointments for Solomon's personal quarters and for state ceremonies were made of gold. It is possible that this luxurious living had much to do in turning Solomon away from Jehovah.

"The kings of the earth" (verses 22, 23) were those who reigned in territories from Egypt to the Euphrates River. Jehovah had kept His promise. Solomon was the wisest of all and he had great wealth at his disposal. The kinds of goods considered valuable are listed in verse 24—silver, gold, raiment, armor, spices, horses and mules. Solomon was renowned for his chariotry installations. These were necessary from a military standpoint to protect various sections of Israel's territory. Four thousand stalls for horses and twelve thousand horsemen

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 648

composed this select service.¹ This was in sharp contrast with Israel's lack of such resources when Joshua first brought them into Canaan. Solomon procured the horses and chariots from Egypt. The prosperity of Israel is described proverbially in verse 27 when the writer indicates that silver was like stones and cedar trees were as plentiful as sycamores in Jerusalem.²

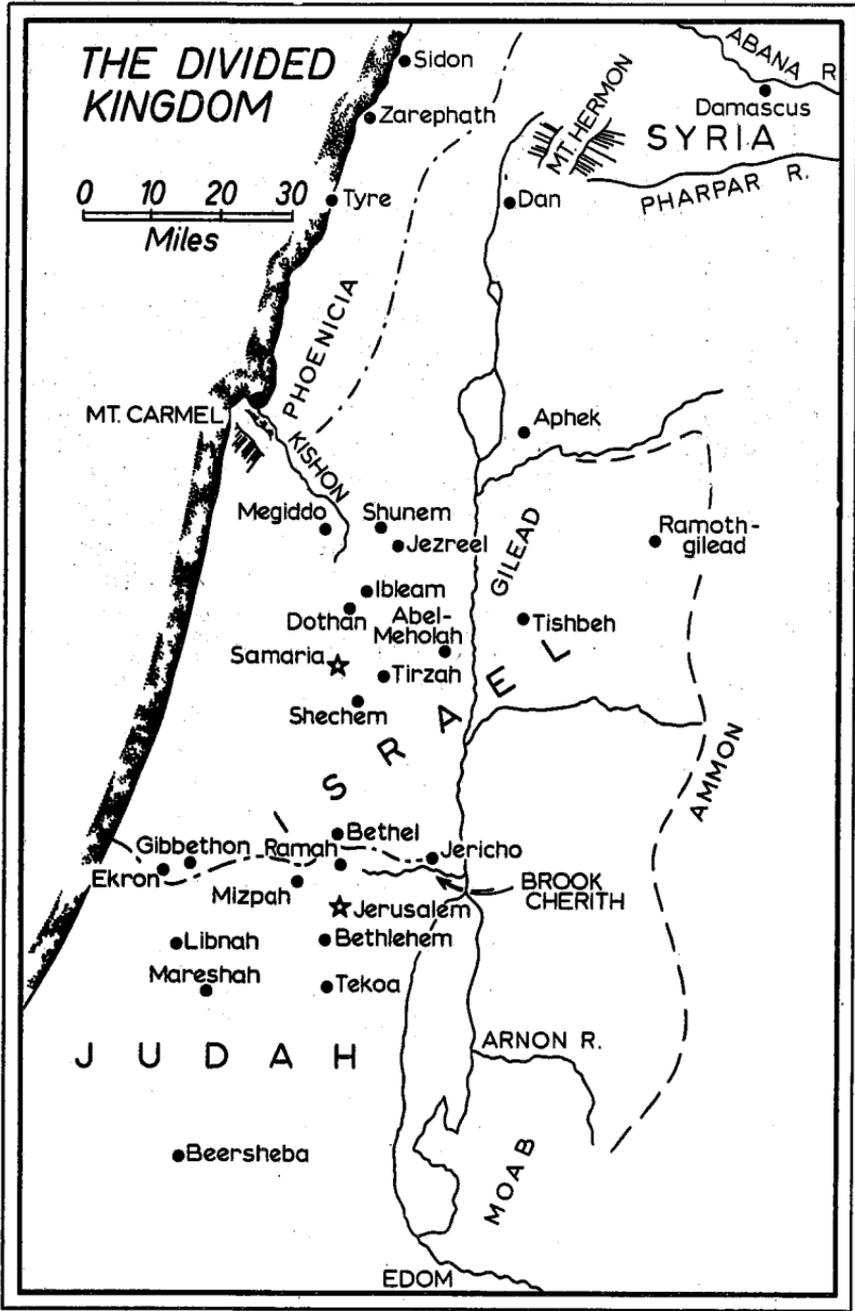
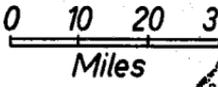
Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo are identified as persons who wrote histories of the life and times of Solomon. Nathan was the personal seer who charged David in his sin with Bathsheba. Ahijah the Shilonite (I Kings 11:28-40; 14:1-20) distinguished himself as Jehovah's herald in predicting the division of the kingdom to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Later Ahijah pronounced Jehovah's judgment on Jeroboam because of the king's wickedness. According to II Chronicles 12:15, Iddo the seer wrote a history of Rehoboam. The life and times of Abijah, king of Judah, were described "in the commentary of the prophet Iddo" (II Chronicles 13:22). The life and times of Solomon were said to have been written "in the visions of Iddo the seer." Iddo also was concerned about Jeroboam, king of Israel. These three men, Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo were important original sources for some of the materials in this record.

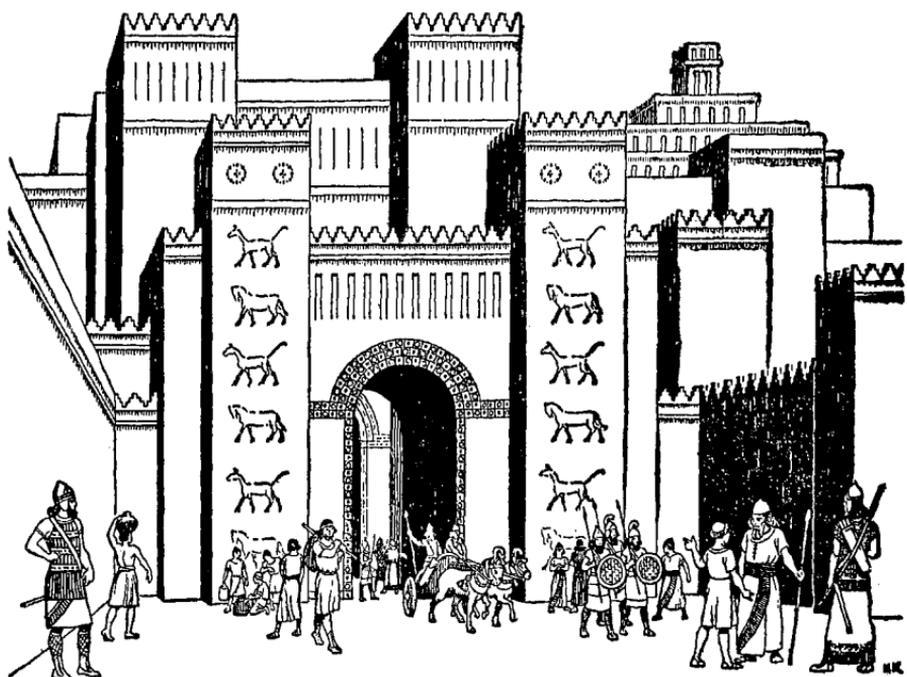
Like his father before him, Solomon's reign reached through forty years. While no adverse word is recorded here, the first twenty four years of Solomon's reign were productive of much good; but the last sixteen years found Solomon rebelling against Jehovah in every conceivable way. "And Solomon slept with his fathers," the Bible says. Certainly he was one of God's choice men; but he died. This experience awaits the wise man and the fool alike. It is of the utmost importance that every person be faithful to God until he dies. At the time of David's death a royal cemetery was established at Jerusalem. Solomon was buried with all of the honors that were due him as king of Israel. By Jehovah's grace, Solomon's successor to the throne was Rehoboam, the king's only son.

¹Archer, Gleason G., Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 394

²Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 469

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM





Babylon—The City of the Captivity



II. THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM (10:1-36:21)

1. JEROBOAM'S REVOLUTION (Chapter 10)

TEXT

Chapter 10:1. And Rehoboam went to Shechem; for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. 2. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Solomon), that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt. 3. And they sent and called him; and Jeroboam and all Israel came, and they spake to Rehoboam, saying, 4. "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." 5. And he said unto them, "Come again unto me after three days." And the people departed.

6. And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, "What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?" 7. And they spake unto him, saying, "If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." 8. But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. 9. And he said unto them, "What counsel give ye, that ye may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter?'" 10. And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, "Thus shalt thou say unto the people that spake unto thee, saying, 'Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. 11. 'And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.'"

12. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, "Come to me again the third day." 13. And the king answered them roughly; and king

Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, 14. and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." 15. So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was brought about of God, that Jehovah might establish his word, which he spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16. And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." So all Israel departed unto their tents. 17. But as the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. 18. Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was over the men subject to taskwork; and the children of Israel stoned him to death with stones. And king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 10:1. All the leaders of Israel came to Shechem for Rehoboam's coronation. 2, 3. Meanwhile, friends of Jeroboam (son of Nebat) sent word to him of Solomon's death. He was in Egypt at the time, where he had gone to escape from King Solomon. He now quickly returned, and was present at the coronation, and led the people's demands on Rehoboam: 4. "Your father was a hard master," they said. "Be easier on us than he was, and we will let you be our king!" 5. Rehoboam told them to return in three days for his decision.

6. He discussed their demand with the old men who had counseled his father Solomon. "What shall I tell them?" he asked. 7. "If you want to be their king," they replied, "you will have to give them a favorable reply and treat them with kindness." 8, 9. But he rejected their advice and asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him. "What

do you fellows think I should do?" he asked. "Shall I be easier on them than my father was?" 10. "No!" they replied. "Tell them, 'If you think my father was hard on you, just wait and see what I'll be like!' Tell them 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins! 11. I am going to be tougher on you, not easier! My father used whips on you, but I'll use scorpions!'"

12. So when Jeroboam and the people returned in three days to hear King Rehoboam's decision, 13. he spoke roughly to them; for he refused the advice of the old men, 14. and followed the counsel of the younger ones. "My father gave you heavy burdens but I will give you heavier!" he told them, "My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions!" 15. So the king turned down the people's demands. (God caused him to do it in order to fulfill his prediction spoken to Jeroboam by Ahijah, the Shilonite.)

16. When the people realized what the king was saying they turned around and deserted him. "Forget David and his dynasty!" they shouted angrily. "We'll get someone else to be our king. Let Rehoboam rule his own tribe of Judah! Let's go home!" So they did. 17. The People of the tribe of Judah, however, remained loyal to Rehoboam. 18. Afterwards, when King Rehoboam sent Hadoram to draft forced labor from the other tribes of Israel, the people stoned him to death. When this news reached King Rehoboam he jumped into his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. 19. And Israel has refused to be ruled by a descendant of David to this day.

COMMENTARY

Solomon's name meant "Peace" and described his character and the nature of his reign. Rehoboam's name meant "the people are enlarged" or "one who sets the people free." There was bound up in Rehoboam's name Solomon's hope for Israel. Rehoboam's actions contradicted the anticipation in his name. The selection of Shechem for the great national gathering was unusual. Jerusalem was the capital. The Temple was in Jerusalem. Shechem was in Ephraim about thirty miles north of Jerusalem. Whether Rehoboam went there by choice or was

advised by the people that this was where they would meet him is not clear. The people of Israel gathered there to make him king if he would meet their conditions.

When Ahijah had revealed to Jeroboam that Jehovah would give him ten parts of the kingdom (I Kings 11:31), Jeroboam conspired to take the throne from Solomon. The conspiracy failed. Jeroboam was able to find refuge in Egypt where he remained until Solomon's death. Jeroboam had friends in Ephraim and other northern tribes who looked to him for leadership. In the meeting at Shechem, Jeroboam is the champion of the ten tribes. He and the elders of these tribes presented themselves before Rehoboam with their requests. Solomon's demands upon Israel had become very galling especially in the latter half of his reign. There was much wealth; but the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. Social injustice was evident throughout the kingdom. The people were burdened with excessive taxation. They had been pushed to the point of rebellion. They asked that their "heavy yoke" be made lighter. They requested a readjustment of personal responsibilities with regard to the kingdom. From a human viewpoint, Rehoboam probably could have made the necessary adjustments and the kingdom would have remained united. From Jehovah's viewpoint His purpose was that the kingdom should now be divided (I Kings 12:15). Rehoboam would rule over Judah and Jeroboam would lead the ten northern tribes. Faced with this serious request, Rehoboam promised an answer within three days. Rehoboam used the time to seek the advice of counselors. He turned to "the old men," contemporaries of Solomon. They advised that he follow a policy of kindness and consideration for the people. Even here, Jehovah was at work as Rehoboam rejected good advice. Having decided what he wanted to do, his heart was hardened as was the case with Pharaoh in Moses' day. At this time Rehoboam was forty one years old (I Kings 14:21). He turned to younger men, those of his own generation for advice. They advised him to be stern, kingly, demanding. They fed Rehoboam's ego, reminded him of his authority, sent him to the people with a proverbial

expression—"my little finger is thicker than my father's loins." The people understood that if they had found Solomon's regime burdensome, Rehoboam's would be unbearable. They could not and would not "live with scorpions." The scorpion was a creature which was able to inflict a person with a very painful sting. The term was also used as a name for a whip made of rawhide thongs to which pieces of lead were attached. Rehoboam threatened to coerce Israel and rule as a despot. When the appointed time came, the king hatefully announced his policy to the people. Verse 15 reviews Jehovah's purpose in this matter. It must be understood that Jehovah did not use Rehoboam as a pawn. What the king decided to do was, first of all his own decision. When he would not do God's will, his heart was hardened. In these matters we cannot limit Jehovah's knowledge of the past, present and future. He is omniscient. At the same time, He allows personal choice and holds man responsible for that choice.

When the people heard Rehoboam's insulting speech, they lifted up the cry of rebellion and left the scene in an angry mood. Perhaps some of the people were glad for an occasion to rebel. Others among them were perplexed. "Israel," as a name, from this time specially identified the ten northern tribes. The rebel cry, "what portion have we in David? Every man to your tents," had been heard in Sheba's rebellion against David (II Samuel 20:1). The tribes of Judah, Simeon and a part of Benjamin submitted to Rehoboam's kingship. All of the other tribes of Israel turned to Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and made him king. This was a tragic day in Hebrew history. Rehoboam made a futile attempt to bring the northern tribes under his rule. Hadoram (Adoram—I Kings 12:18) was sent to organize some forced labor or to arrange for tribute to be paid to Rehoboam. The king, Rehoboam, kept himself at a safe distance. When Hadoram was stoned to death by the rebels, Rehoboam hurried to the safety of Jerusalem. The division between Judah in the south and Israel in the north continued until the time of the Babylonian captivity.

2. THE REIGN OF REHOBOAM (11-12)

TEXT

Chapter 11:1. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, that were warriors, to fight against Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam. 2. But the word of Jehovah came to Shemaiah the man of God saying, 3. "Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4. 'Thus saith Jehovah, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is of me." ' ' ' So they hearkened unto the words of Jehovah, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6. He built Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa. 7. and Beth-zur, and Soco, and Adullam, 8. and Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph, 9. and Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah, 10. and Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and in Benjamin, fortified cities. 11. And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of victuals, and oil and wine. 12. And in every city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong. And Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

13. And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their border. 14. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons cast them off, that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah; 15. and he appointed him priests for the high places, and for the he-goats, and for the calves which he had made. 16. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God Of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 17. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years; for they walked three years in the way of David and Solomon.

18. And Rehoboam took him a wife, Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse; 19. and she bare him sons: Jeush, and Shemariah, and Zaham. 20. And after her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom; and she bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith. 21. And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines (for he took eighteen wives and threescore concubines, and begat twenty and eight sons and threescore daughters). 22. And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah to be chief, even the prince among his brethren; for he was minded to make him king. 23. And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his sons throughout all the lands of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fortified city: and he gave them victuals in abundance. And he sought for them many wives.

Chapter 12:1. And it came to pass, when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established, and he was strong, that he forsook the law of Jehovah, and all Israel with him. 2. And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had trespassed against Jehovah, 3. with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen. And the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt: the Lubim, the Sukkiim, and the Ethiopians. 4. And he took the fortified cities which pertained to Judah, and came unto Jerusalem. 5. Now Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, "Thus saith Jehovah, 'Ye have forsaken me, therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.'" 6. Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "Jehovah is righteous." 7. And when Jehovah saw that they humbled themselves, the word of Jehovah came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves: I will not destroy them; but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8. 'Nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the

countries.”

9. So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all away: he took away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 10. And king Rehoboam made in their stead shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, that kept the door of the king's house. 11. And it was so, that, as oft-as the king entered into the house of Jehovah, the guard came and bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber. 12. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of Jehovah turned from him, so as not to destroy him altogether: and moreover in Judah there were good things found.

13. So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which Jehovah had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there: and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 14. And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah.

15. Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the histories of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, after the manner of genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. 16. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:1. Upon arrival at Jerusalem, Rehoboam mobilized the armies of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 strong, and declared war against the rest of Israel in an attempt to reunite the kingdom. 2. But the Lord told Shemaiah the prophet, 3. “Go and say to King Rehoboam of Judah, Solomon's son, and to the people of Judah and of Benjamin: 4. “The Lord says, ‘Do not fight against your brothers. Go home, for I am behind their rebellion.’” So they obeyed the Lord and refused to fight against Jeroboam.

5-10. Rehoboam stayed in Jerusalem and fortified these cities of Judah with walls and gates to protect himself: Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. 11. He also rebuilt and strengthened the forts, and manned them with companies of soldiers under their officers, and stored them with food, olive oil, and wine. 12. Shields and spears were placed in armories in every city as a further safety measure. For only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to him.

13, 14. However, the priests and Levites from the other tribes now abandoned their homes and moved to Judah and Jerusalem, for King Jeroboam had fired them, telling them to stop being priests of the Lord. 15. He had appointed other priests instead who encouraged the people to worship idols instead of God, and to sacrifice to carved statues of goats and calves which he placed on the hills. 16. Laymen, too, from all over Israel began moving to Jerusalem where they could freely worship the Lord God of their fathers, and sacrifice to him. 17. This strengthened the kingdom of Judah, so King Rehoboam survived for three years without difficulty; for during those years there was an earnest effort to obey the Lord as King David and King Solomon had done.

18. Rehoboam married his cousin Mahalath. She was the daughter of David's son, Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of David's brother Eliab. 19. Three sons were born from this marriage—Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. 20. Later he married Maacah, the daughter of Absalom. The children she bore him were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21. He loved Maacah more than any of his other wives and concubines (he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines—with twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters). 22. Maacah's son Abijah was his favorite, and he intended to make him the next king. 23. He very wisely scattered his other sons in the fortified cities throughout the land of Judah and Benjamin, and gave them large allowances and arranged for them to have several wives apiece.

Chapter 12:1. But just when Rehoboam was at the height of his popularity and power he abandoned the Lord, and the

people followed him in his sin. 2. As a result, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign, 3. with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand cavalymen and an unnumbered host of infantrymen—Egyptians, Libyans, Sukkiim, and Ethiopians. 4. He quickly conquered Judah's fortified cities and soon arrived at Jerusalem. 5. The prophet Shemaiah now met with Rehoboam and the Judean leaders from every part of the nation (they had fled to Jerusalem for safety), and told them, "The Lord says, 'You have forsaken me, so I have forsaken you and abandoned you to Shishak.' " 6. Then the king and the leaders of Israel confessed their sins and exclaimed, "The Lord is right in doing this to us!" 7. And when the Lord saw them humble themselves he sent Shemaiah to tell them, "Because you have humbled yourselves, I will not completely destroy you; some will escape. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger upon Jerusalem. 8. But you must pay annual tribute to him. Then you will realize how much better it is to serve me than to serve him!"

9. So King Shishak of Egypt conquered Jerusalem and took away all the treasures of the Temple and of the palace, also all of Solomon's gold shields. 10. King Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields and committed them to the care of the captain of his bodyguard. 11. Whenever the king went to the Temple, the guards would carry them, and afterwards return them to the armory. 12. When the king humbled himself, the Lord's anger was turned aside and he didn't send total destruction; in fact, even after Shishak's invasion, the economy of Judah remained strong.

13. King Rehoboam reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city God had chosen as his residence after considering all the other cities of Israel. He had become king at the age of forty-one, and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 14. But he was an evil king, for he never did decide really to please the Lord.

15. The complete biography of Rehoboam is recorded in the histories written by Shemaiah the prophet and by Iddo the seer, and in The Genealogical Register. There were continual

wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 16. When Rehoboam died he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Abijah became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Rehoboam decided to use military power against the northern tribes to bring them under subjection. The murder of Hadoram was a defiant rejection of Rehoboam's authority. One hundred and eighty thousand warriors out of the south were readied for this civil war between Judah and Israel. Jehovah had determined that the division between Judah and Israel should be accomplished at this time. Shemaiah is called a prophet and a "man of God." There are references to many false prophets in the Old Testament; but one never meets a false "man of God." In II^sChronicles 12:5 Shemaiah declared the word of Jehovah to Rehoboam concerning Shishak and the Egyptians. Shemaiah also is credited with writing the history of the life and times of Rehoboam (II Chronicles 12:15). When Rehoboam faced this crisis and was about to send this large army into Israel, Jehovah sent Shemaiah to the king of Judah and all the people who submitted to his reign. Jehovah's word was, "Dismiss this army." The statement, "This thing is of me," underscored the divine purpose. Rehoboam and his people obeyed Jehovah in this matter.

A brief summary of Rehoboam's reign follows. Probably because he feared threats against the security of Judah especially from Egypt, he fortified several villages in Judah and Benjamin. The relative locations of the villages which concerned the king are indicated here.

Bethlehem — About five miles south of Jerusalem, Etham — Ten miles west of Hebron, Tekoa — Seven miles south east of Bethlehem, Beth-zur — Five miles north of Hebron, Soco — Thirteen miles west of Bethlehem, Adullam — Fourteen miles north west of Hebron, Gath — Twenty miles north west of Hebron, Mareshah — Fifteen miles north west of Hebron, Ziph — Four miles south of Hebron, Adoraim — Five miles west of Hebron, Lachish — Twenty miles west of Hebron, Azekah —

Ten miles north west of Hebron, Hebron — Twenty miles south of Jerusalem, Zorah — Fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, Aijalon — Thirteen miles north west of Jerusalem. The distances stated here are not measured with absolute accuracy. The key cities were Jerusalem and Hebron. All of these villages were equipped with soldiers, weapons, and food supplies.

Verses 13-17 describe the migration of priests and Levites into the southern kingdom. The primary reason for this development was Jeroboam's rejection of Jehovah worship. Jeroboam was Jehovah's choice to be king of Israel. He certainly had the potential to become an effective leader. According to I Kings 11:26-28, Jeroboam had been a servant of Solomon. He had charge over the house of Joseph in the fortification of Jerusalem, working on the citadel of Millo. He was described as a very industrious person and as a mighty man of valor. He had the credentials to become a great king; but when the time came for his kingdom to be set up, he feared Rehoboam and his efforts to unify the kingdom. Jeroboam set up Baal worship in Bethel (southern border of his kingdom) and Dan (northern frontier of the kingdom). He determined to make religion convenient for his people. He did not want them to return to the Temple in Jerusalem. He made priests out of any who wanted to serve without regard to Levitical connection (I Kings 12:28-33). He changed the date for the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles from the seventh month and the fifteenth day to the eighth month and the fifteenth day. He set up idolatry throughout his kingdom. Reacting to these developments, priests and Levites and a remnant of representatives from the northern tribes moved into Judah and the southern kingdom. This influx of Hebrews with deep religious convictions provided a certain stability to Rehoboam's government for about three years. Even Rehoboam himself, ruled wisely through these fleeting months. "The way of David and Solomon" in this context refers to a genuine concern for Jehovah's will.

II Chronicles 12:1 reports Rehoboam's forsaking the law of Jehovah. His subjects made no attempt to put him off the

throne. They followed his leadership. Rehoboam married Mahalath who was the daughter of Jerimoth, son of David. In the lists of David's sons Jerimoth is not named. He could have been the son of one of David's concubines. "Jerimoth" could have been another name for Ithream who is listed among David's sons. Abihail was a second cousin to Mahalath and she was also Mahalath's mother. Eliab was Jesse's eldest son. The sons of Rehoboam through Mahalath were Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. Rehoboam also married Maacah who was Absalom's grand-daughter. Maacah's mother was Tamar, Absalom's daughter. The relationships of "son" and "daughter" are not always used as exactly as we use them. They do indicate a direct lineal descent. Absalom was David's rebel son. Rehoboam's sons through Maacah were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. Rehoboam broke Jehovah's law respecting Hebrew kings and the multiplication of wives (Deuteronomy 17:17). He went his own way. Eighteen wives, sixty concubines, twenty eight sons, and sixty daughters composed the king's harem and family. Of all the wives, he loved Maacah best. Her son, Abijah, was groomed by Rehoboam to be his successor of Judah's throne. Rehoboam demonstrated human wisdom in placing his sons in positions of trust throughout the kingdom and in making liberal material provisions for them. Rehoboam failed Jehovah and would have to suffer the consequences of his failures.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON SIXTEEN II Chronicles, Chapters 9-11

567. What was the basic reason for the visit of the queen of Sheba?
568. Carefully locate Sheba.
569. What did the queen bring with her?
570. How was she received by Solomon?
571. List the particulars which were carefully observed by the queen of Sheba.

572. Explain the reference to the "ascent" in 9:4.
573. How did the queen of Sheba express her evaluation of Solomon's world?
574. What did the queen say about Jehovah?
575. How was the material from the gum trees used?
576. What did Solomon do for the queen of Sheba?
577. How much gold annually was coming into Solomon's treasury?
578. What is a buckler?
579. Where was much of this gold placed?
580. Describe Solomon's throne.
581. Why were lions used?
582. What does this record say regarding the use of gold and silver?
583. Carefully locate Tarshish.
584. Why would apes and peacocks be imported?
585. Why did many kings seek an audience with Solomon?
586. What did Solomon do with horses?
587. How extensive was Solomon's kingdom?
588. Explain the reference to "silver as stones" and "cedars as sycamore trees"
589. Name the persons who wrote Solomon's history. Identify these persons carefully.
590. How long did Solomon reign?
591. Where was Solomon buried?
592. Who succeeded Solomon on the throne of Israel?
593. Locate Shechem and indicate why Rehoboam went to that place.
594. Who was Jeroboam?
595. Why was Jeroboam in Egypt?
596. What petition did the Israelites present to Rehoboam?
597. Why did Rehoboam request a three day interval?
598. Summarize the counsel of the young men.

599. Summarize the word of the experienced counselors.
600. Describe the proverbial expression in 10:10.
601. What is a scorpion?
602. What did Rehoboam tell the people at the appointed meeting?
603. Why did Rehoboam take this course of action?
604. Who was Ahijah?
605. Locate another incident when the question was asked, "What portion have we in David"?
606. Name the tribe over which Rehoboam retained control.
607. Identify Hadoram and explain what happened with regard to him.
608. Upon returning to Jerusalem what was Rehoboam's first action?
609. Carefully identify Shemaiah.
610. Explain the phrase in 11:4, "for this thing is of me".
611. Locate Bethlehem and Tekoa.
612. Locate Gath and Hebron.
613. Name the two tribes which were in the Southern Kingdom.
614. Why was there a mass movement of the Levites to the Southern Kingdom?
615. Who appointed priests for the high places?
616. What kind of influence did the Levites have on the Southern Kingdom?
617. How many wives and concubines belonged to Rehoboam?
618. Who was the mother of Abijah?
619. How did Rehoboam use his sons?

LESSON SEVENTEEN 12-14

EGYPT INVADES ISRAEL, JEROBOAM, AND THE NORTHERN KINGDOM ASA AND THE ETHIOPIANS.

2. THE REIGN OF REHOBOAM—Continued (11-12)

INTRODUCTION

The shields of gold were exchanged for shields of brass as Rehoboam had trouble with the Egyptians. Jeroboam set up the golden calves and led his people away from God. Asa, king of Judah, blessed by Jehovah, repulsed an Ethiopian attack.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Sixteen)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Sixteen)

COMMENTARY

Three chapters in this record describe the life and times of Rehoboam. His kingship covered a very critical period in Hebrew history. Solomon's sins and Rehoboam's foolishness brought Israel to a tragic turning point resulting in the division of the kingdom. In the early part of his reign Rehoboam showed some concern for the genuine Hebrew religion. The presence of the Temple in Jerusalem and the migration of priests and Levites into the borders of Judah were beneficial in this regard. Chapter 12:1 describes Rehoboam's course of action. He established his kingdom, fortified numerous villages, set up an extensive harem, made expensive provisions for his children and "forsook the law of Jehovah." If what he had done would have affected only himself, the results would not have been so serious. All of his people followed the leadership of the king. About 925 B.C. Jehovah allowed Shishak, king of Egypt, to come into Judah with a great army. Jeroboam, king of Israel, had found refuge in Egypt under Shishak (I Kings 11:40). As the Egyptians came into Rehoboam's territory at this time they

intended to take Jerusalem. Rehoboam and his people "Had trespassed against Jehovah" (verse 2). They had forsaken God (verse 5). Shishak brought allies with him. The Lubim were the Libyan people who lived on the northern coast of Africa. The Sukkiim probably were Arabs living in North Africa. The Ethiopians lived within the limits of Shishak's territory as Ethiopia bordered Egypt on the south. The enemy came with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and an army of foot soldiers that was not numbered. Without opposition Shishak took all of the villages in Judah (11:5-12) which had been fortified against such an invasion.

Again, the history of Judah was delicately balanced. Shemaiah, the prophet who had told Jeroboam that he would be a king, appeared before Rehoboam and his princes to charge them with forsaking Jehovah. God's great mercy was exercised once more. Rehoboam and his counselors were convicted of their sins and confessed the "righteousness" of Jehovah's judgment. Jehovah's decision not to bring Judah to a full end was communicated to Shemaiah who, most likely, made this known to the king. However, Rehoboam and his people would have to pay tribute to Egypt and through this they should know that they were being judged for their sins against Jehovah. God did not grant permanent immunity to Jerusalem, He said that Shishak would not destroy the city. When Jehovah's people humble themselves, He forgives (7:14).

In the days of David and Solomon the treasures of the nations poured into Jerusalem. This happy circumstance was reversed in the days of Rehoboam. Shishak would have taken Jerusalem at this time if Jehovah had allowed him to do so and if the Hebrew leaders had not been able to buy temporary freedom with the treasures. Some of the precious things were brought out of the Temple and some out of other buildings where they were housed. The diminishing glory of the kingdom is most graphically described in the exchange of shields of gold for shields of brass. Solomon had fashioned the golden shields (9:15, 16) to demonstrate the wealth and splendor of his kingdom. Those who knew this former glory surely were heart

broken when they had to look upon Rehoboam's shields of brass. The glory had departed. The self-humiliation of the king was the only redeeming consideration. There were still some people in Judah who loved God; but the spiritual climate was far from ideal.

Rehoboam was more concerned about making a name for himself as a king than he was about being a spiritual leader for his people. His reign of seventeen years offered many opportunities for him to strive for the ideal established in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. He was forty one years old when he became king. He had a remarkable heritage. In large measure Rehoboam failed. He did not "set his heart to seek Jehovah."

Shemaiah and Iddo prepared written accounts of Rehoboam's reign. There was constant civil strife between the southern and the northern kingdoms. Rehoboam was buried in the royal cemetery established in David's day. He was succeeded on the throne by his son, Abijah.

3. THE REIGN OF ABIJAH. (Chapter 13)

TEXT

Chapter 13:1. In the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. 2. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3. And Abijah joined battle with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: and Jeroboam set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, who were mighty men of valor. 4. And Abijah stood up upon Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill-country of Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, O Jeroboam and all Israel: 5. "Ought ye not to know that Jehovah, the God of Israel, gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? 6. "Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up, and rebelled against his lord. 7. And there were gathered unto him worthless men, base fellows, that strengthened themselves

against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. 8. "And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of Jehovah in the hand of the sons of David; and ye are a great multitude, and there are with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made you for gods. 9. "Have ye not driven out the priests of Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made you priests after the manner of the peoples of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. 10. "But as for us, Jehovah is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and we have priests ministering unto Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites in their work: 11. "and they burn unto Jehovah every morning and every evening burnt-offerings and sweet incense: the showbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of Jehovah our God; but ye have forsaken him. 12. "And, behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with the trumpets of alarm to sound an alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper."

13. But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them. 14. And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind them; and they cried unto Jehovah, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. 15. Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16. And the children of Israel fled before Judah; and God delivered them into their hand. 17. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. 18. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 19. And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Beth-el with the

towns thereof, and Jashanah with the towns thereof, and Ephron with the towns thereof. 20. Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again the days of Abijah: and Jehovah smote him, and he died. 21. But Abijah waxed mighty, and took unto himself fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters. 22. And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the commentary of the prophet Iddo.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 13:1. Abijah became the new king of Judah, in Jerusalem, in the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel. He lasted three years. His mother's name was Micaiah (daughter of Uriel of Gibeah). Early in his reign war broke out between Judah and Israel. 3. Judah, led by King Abijah, fielded 400,000 seasoned warriors against twice as many Israeli troops—strong, courageous men led by King Jeroboam. 4. When the army of Judah arrived at Mount Zemaraim, in the hill country of Ephraim, King Abijah shouted to King Jeroboam and the Israeli army: 5. "Listen! Don't you realize that the Lord God of Israel swore that David's descendants would always be the kings of Israel; 6. Your King Jeroboam is a mere servant of David's son, and was a traitor to his master. 7. Then a whole gang of worthless rebels joined him, defying Solomon's son Rehoboam, for he was young and frightened and couldn't stand up to them. 8. Do you really think you can defeat the kingdom of the Lord that is led by a descendant of David? Your army is twice as large as mine, but you are cursed with those gold calves you have with you, that Jeroboam made for you—he calls them your gods! 9. And you have driven away the priests of the Lord and the Levites, and have appointed heathen priests instead. Just like the people of other lands, you accept as priests anybody who comes along with a young bullock and seven rams for consecration. Anyone at all can be a priest of these no-gods of yours! 10. "But as for us, the Lord is our God and we have not forsaken him. Only the descendants of Aaron are our priests, and the Levites alone may help them in their work. 11. They burn sacrifices to the Lord every morning and evening—burnt offerings and sweet

incense; and they place the Bread of the Presence upon the holy table. The golden lampstand is lighted every night, for we are careful to follow the instructions of the Lord our God; but you have forsaken him. 12. So you see, God is with us; he is our Leader. His priests, trumpeting as they go, will lead us into battle against you. O people of Israel, do not fight against the Lord God of your fathers, for you will not succeed!"

13, 14. Meanwhile, Jeroboam had secretly sent part of his army around behind the men of Judah to ambush them; so Judah was surrounded, with the enemy before and behind them. Then they cried out to the Lord for mercy, and the priests blew the trumpets. 15, 16. The men of Judah began to shout. And as they shouted, God used King Abijah and the men of Judah to turn the tide of battle against King Jeroboam and the army of Israel, 17. and they slaughtered 500,000 elite troops of Israel that day. 18, 19. So Judah, depending upon the Lord God of their fathers, defeated Israel, and chased King Jeroboam's troops, and captured some of his cities—Bethel, Jeshanah, Ephron, and their suburbs. 20. King Jeroboam of Israel never regained his power during Abijah's lifetime, and eventually the Lord struck him and he died. 21. Meanwhile, King Abijah of Judah became very strong. He married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22. His complete biography and speeches are recorded in the prophet Iddo's History of Judah.

COMMENTARY

I Kings 15:1-8 records the brief reign of Abijah emphasizing his military conflict with Jeroboam, king of Israel. Twenty two verses in II Chronicles, chapter thirteen, give attention to Abijah's life and times. Jeroboam's reign continued through twenty two years. Three kings were to reign in Judah in Jeroboam's time. There were Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa. Late in Jeroboam's reign (the 18th year) Abijah began his reign in the sister kingdom. II Chronicles 11:22 names Maacah as Abijah's mother. Here his mother is named Micaiah. Uriel of Gibeah may be identified as the husband of Tamar, Absalom's

daughter. Absalom was grandfather of Abijah's mother.

The reasons for military conflict between Judah and Israel are not carefully traced in this record. Jeroboam was determined to guard his position as king and to prevent any effort to unify the two kingdoms. He may have attempted to enlarge his territory and move into areas occupied by the southern kingdom. Abijah was concerned to maintain his position in Judah and he had the assurance that from a religious viewpoint his military involvement was justified. Jeroboam drew up an army of eight hundred thousand men. Abijah countered the move by drawing up an army of four hundred thousand men. In the reign between Bethel and the Jordan river in the mountains of Ephraim at a place called Mount Zemaraim Abijah made a dramatic plea to Jeroboam and the representatives of the northern kingdom. Apparently he asked to be heard not because Judah was outnumbered, but because there were deep national and religious ties which civil strife would violate.

Jehovah's promise to David (II Samuel 7) was a basic consideration. "A covenant of salt" was one that could not be broken. Certainly, Jehovah would never break such a pact. Abijah reminded Jeroboam that he was a servant to Solomon, yet he had dared to try to take Solomon's throne. The king of Judah charged the king of Israel with folly in that he had gathered around him men who were empty headed and wicked. Abijah excused his father, Rehoboam, as being young and inexperienced in matters of government. Rehoboam was forty one years of age when he became king and he did not demonstrate gentleness in his dealings with the people at Shechem. Abijah was deeply concerned that Jeroboam would not recognize the sanctity of the Davidic line. "You withstand the kingdom of Jehovah in the hand of the sons of David." (Verse 8)

As if he were a prophet, Abijah, called attention to Israel's golden calves and to the general disregard for the priests and Levites. Like Elijah on Mount Carmel, Abijah affirmed Judah's confidence in Jehovah. He reminded Jeroboam and the Israelites that the priests and Levites were serving in Judah by

divine appointment and with government approval. All of the regular services were being observed in the Temple. The burning of the incense, the morning and evening sacrifices, the showbread (twelve loaves—all Israel) regularly placed on the table designed for this purpose, the golden candlesticks lighted every evening constituted Abijah's proof that Judah had not forsaken Jehovah. In righteous wrath Judah's king leveled this charge at the northern kingdom—"but ye have forsaken Him (Jehovah)" (verse 11). If there was to be civil war, Abijah said it would be a holy war. "The trumpets of alarm" may well have been the silver trumpets appointed to the priests at Sinai (Numbers 10:1). If Jeroboam dared to go to war under these conditions, he was warned that he would be fighting against Jehovah.

In spite of his eloquent appeal and of the basic spiritual considerations, Jeroboam lost no time in joining the battle. Probably while Abijah was speaking, Jeroboam planned the strategy of the attack. While Judah's attention was diverted, a large division of Israel's soldiers moved behind Abijah's army to set an ambush. Caught between the ranks of the enemy, all that Judah could do was to call upon Jehovah for help and then proceed to attack. The sounding of the trumpets and the soldiers' shouts remind us of the overthrow of Jericho (Joshua 6). Miraculously Jehovah gave Abijah and Judah a great military victory. Israel lost five hundred thousand warriors (verse 17). Admittedly, this was a very large number, but this is the record. On one occasion Shennacherib, king of Assyria, lost one hundred eighty five thousand warriors in one night (II Kings 19:35). There is no estimate as to how many Egyptian soldiers perished in the trap of the Red Sea when Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt. This was a serious defeat for Jeroboam. Not long after this event his reign ended in shame with Abijah's prediction of the extinction of Jeroboam's house. Certain villages in Ephraim were annexed to the southern kingdom. Abijah's accomplishments were attributed to his reliance on Jehovah. Jeroboam's death resulted from his having been smitten by Jehovah. Even though Abijah had made his

impassioned speech on Mount Zemaraim, he was not careful to follow Jehovah in every matter. Fourteen wives, twenty two sons, and sixteen daughters composed his household. The prophet, Iddo, wrote an account of Abijah's life and times.

4. THE REIGN OF ASA (14 - 16)

TEXT

Chapter 14:1. So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. 2. And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God: 3. for he took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and brake down the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, 4. and commanded Judah to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the sun-images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. 6. And he built fortified cities in Judah; for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Jehovah had given him rest. 7. For he said unto Judah, "Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars; the land is yet before us, because we have sought Jehovah our God; we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side," So they built and prospered. 8. And Asa had an army that bare bucklers and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valor.

9. And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and he came unto Mareshah. 10. Then Asa went out to meet him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11. And Asa cried unto Jehovah his God, and said, "Jehovah, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude. O Jehovah, thou art our God; let

not man prevail against thee." 12. So Jehovah smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. 13. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and there fell of the Ethiopians so many that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before Jehovah, and before his host; and they carried away very much booty. 14. And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of Jehovah came upon them: and they despoiled all the cities; for there was much spoil in them. 15. They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep in abundance, and camels, and returned to Jerusalem.

Chapter 15:1. And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2. and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, "Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3. "Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: 4. "but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5. "And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6. "And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. 7. "But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded."

And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominations out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill-country of Ephraim; and he renewed the altar of Jehovah, that was before the porch of Jehovah. 9. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw Jehovah his God was with him. 10. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11.

And they sacrificed unto Jehovah in that day, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. 12. And they entered into the covenant to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; 13. and that whosoever would not seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14. And they swore unto Jehovah with a loud voice, and with shouting and with trumpets, and with cornets. 15. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and Jehovah gave them rest round about.

16. And also Maacah, the mother of Asa the king, he removed from being queen, because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah and Asa cut down her image, and made dust of it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. 17. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. 18. And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. 19. And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

Chapter 16:1. In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2. Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of Jehovah and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, 3. "There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me." 4. And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store-cities of Naphtali. 5. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building Ramah, and let his work cease. 6. Then Asa the king took all

Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

7. And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, "Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and hast not relied on Jehovah thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand. 8. "Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with chariots and horsemen exceeding many? yet, because thou didst rely on Jehovah, he delivered them into thy hand. 9. "For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars." 10. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in the prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.

11. And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12. And in the thirty and ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet; his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to Jehovah, but to the physicians. 13. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. 14. And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had hewn out for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the perfumers' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 14:1. King Abijah was buried in Jerusalem. Then his son Asa became the new king of Judah, and there was peace in the land for the first ten years of his reign, 2. for Asa was careful to obey the Lord his God. 3. He demolished the heathen altars on the hills, and broke down the obelisks, and chopped down the shameful Asherim-idols, 4. and demanded that the entire nation obey the commandments of the Lord God of their

ancestors. 5. Also, he removed the sun-images from the hills, and the incense altars from every one of Judah's cities. That is why God gave his kingdom peace. 6. This made it possible for him to build walled cities throughout Judah. 7. "Now is the time to do it, while the Lord is blessing us with peace because of our obedience to him," he told his people. "Let us build and fortify cities now, with walls, towers, gates, and bars," So they went ahead with these projects very successfully. 8. King Asa's Judean army was 300,000 strong, equipped with light shields and spears. His army of Benjaminites numbered 280,000, armed with large shields and bows. Both armies were composed of well-trained, brave men.

9, 10. But now he was attacked by an army of 1,000,000 troops from Ethiopia with 300 chariots, under the leadership of General Zerah. They advanced to the city of Mareshah, in the valley of Zephathah, and king Asa sent his troops to meet them there. 11. "O Lord," he cried out to God, "no one else can help us! Here we are, powerless against this mighty army. Oh, help us, Lord our God! For we trust in you alone to rescue us, and in your name we attack this vast horde. Don't let mere men defeat you!" 12. Then the Lord defeated the Ethiopians, and Asa and the army of Judah triumphed as the Ethiopians fled. 13. They chased them as far as Gerar, and the entire Ethiopian army was wiped out so that not one man remained; for the Lord and his army destroyed them all. Then the army of Judah carried off vast quantities of plunder. 14. While they were at Gerar they attacked all the cities in that area, and terror from the Lord came upon the residents. As a result additional vast quantities of plunder were collected from these cities too. 15. They not only plundered the cities, but destroyed the cattle tents and captured great herds of sheep and camels before finally returning to Jerusalem.

Chapter 15:1. Then the spirit of God came upon Azariah (son of Oded), 2. and he went out to meet King Asa as he was returning from the battle. "Listen to me, Asa! Listen, armies of Judah and Benjamin!" he shouted. "The Lord will stay with you as long as you stay with him! Whenever you look for him,

you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you. 3. For a long time now, over in Israel, the people haven't worshiped the true God, and have not had a true priest to teach them. They have lived without God's laws. 4. But whenever they have turned again to the Lord God of Israel in their distress, and searched for him, he has helped them. 5. In their times of rebellion against God there was no peace. Problems troubled the nation on every hand. Crime was on the increase everywhere. 6. There were external wars, and internal fighting of city against city, for God was plaguing them with all sorts of trouble. 7. But you men of Judah, keep up the good work and don't get discouraged, for you will be rewarded."

8. When King Asa heard this message from God, he took courage and destroyed all the idols in the land of Judah and Benjamin, and in the cities he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim, and he rebuilt the altar of the Lord in front of the Temple. 9. Then he summoned all the people of Judah and Benjamin, and the immigrants from Israel (for many had come from the territories of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, in Israel, when they saw that the Lord God was with King Asa). 10. They all came to Jerusalem in June of the fifteenth year of King Asa's reign, 11. and sacrificed to the Lord seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep—it was part of the plunder they had captured in the battle. 12. Then they entered into a contract to worship only the Lord God of their fathers, 13. and agreed that anyone who refused to do this must die—whether old or young, man or woman. 14. They shouted out their oath of loyalty to God with trumpets blaring and horns sounding. 15. All were happy for this covenant with God, for they had entered into it with all their hearts and wills, and wanted him above everything else, and they found him! and he gave them peace throughout the nation.

16. King Asa even removed his mother Maacah from being the queen mother because she made an Asherah-idol; he cut down the idol and crushed and burned it at Kidron Brook. 17. Over in Israel the idol-temples were not removed. But here in Judah and Benjamin the heart of King Asa was perfect before

God throughout his lifetime. 18. He brought back into the Temple the silver and gold bowls which he and his father had dedicated to the Lord. 19. So there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of King Asa's reign.

Chapter 16:1. In the thirty-sixth year of King Asa's reign. King Baasha of Israel declared war on him and built the fortress of Ramah in order to control the road to Judah. 2. Asa's response was to take the silver and gold from the Temple and from the palace, and to send it to King Ben-hadad of Syria, at Damascus, with this message: 3. "Let us renew the mutual security pact that there was between your father and my father. See, here is silver and gold to induce you to break your alliance with King Baasha of Israel, so that he will leave me alone." 4. Ben-hadad agreed to King Asa's request and mobilized his armies to attack Israel. They destroyed the cities of Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all of the supply centers in Naphtali. 5. As soon as King Baasha of Israel heard what was happening, he discontinued building Ramah and gave up his plan to attack Judah. 6. Then King Asa and the people of Judah went out to Ramah and carried away the building stones and timbers and used them to build Geba and Mizpah instead.

7. About that time the prophet Hanani came to King Asa and told him, "Because you have put your trust in the king of Syria instead of in the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped from you. 8. Don't you remember what happened to the Ethiopians and Libyans and their vast army, with all of their chariots and cavalrymen? But you relied then on the Lord, and he delivered them all into your hand. 9. For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him, so that he can show his great power in helping them. What a fool you have been; From now on you shall have wars." 10. Asa was so angry with the prophet for saying this that he threw him into jail. And Asa oppressed all the people at that time.

11. The rest of the biography of Asa is written in The Annals of the Kings of Israel and Judah. 12. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became seriously diseased in his feet but

he didn't go to the Lord with the problem, but to the doctors. 13, 14. So he died in the forty-first year of his reign, and was buried in his own vault that he had hewn out for himself in Jerusalem. He was laid on a bed perfumed with sweet spices and ointments, and his people made a very great burning of incense for him at his funeral.

COMMENTARY

Asa, the son Abijah, succeeded his father on the throne in Judah. The military activity of Abijah in the civil strife with Jeroboam and the northern kingdom brought a brief period (ten years) of comparative peace to Judah. Certain alliances between the southern kingdom and Syria had been established (I Kings 15:19). It is possible that Asa became king when he was quite young. He reigned for forty one years. Verses 1-8 describe the first ten years of Asa's reign. He launched a religious reformation. Jehovah's will was the primary consideration. Strange gods had been carried into Judah along with all of the related idolatrous ritual. There was but one genuine altar for religious sacrifices. It was located in the Temple. "The foreign altars," by Asa's command, were to be destroyed. "The high places" were sometimes established on a natural elevation. On occasion devotees of a god would expend much labor to prepare a place suitable for the worship of the idol. The term "pillar" may mean an obelisk, a four sided post tapering as it rises and terminating in a pyramid. A "pillar" may simply refer to an image designed for worship. The Asherim were fashioned like poles or posts and sometimes were set up as groves of trees. The word is the plural for "Asherah" which was the female counterpart for Baal. Any reference to the Asherim immediately involved the Baalistic fertility cult. The "sun images" were made in the form of a pyramid and were often located in very prominent positions in the temples of Baal. They probably combined expressions of worship both of Baal and of the sun. In the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, shrines dedicated to sun worship were built in Jerusalem. These were equipped with priests, priestesses, horses and chariots (II Kings 21:3-6). Asa

indicated his intentions to be a worthy successor of David by clearing out all of the idolatrous establishments. When the land was well saturated with the furniture of paganism and when the people had so widely adopted heathen worship, a complete reformation was impossible. Asa "commanded Judah to seek Jehovah." He was urgent about the matter. Jehovah rewarded Asa's good faith. "The land was quiet; Jehovah had given him rest." The king busied himself with fortifying the villages in Judah. He encouraged his people as he said, "the land is yet before us." The tribe of Judah provided an army of three hundred thousand men trained to carry spears and shields. The tribe of Benjamin equipped two hundred eighty thousand archers. The raising of this large army indicated that the peaceful days would soon be past.

Asa was soon called upon to do battle with the Ethiopians.¹ This attack probably came about 900 B.C. Zerah was a Cushite who had a great army of about one million foot soldiers supported by three hundred chariots. He brought this army into the country of Judah to Mareshah which lay about twelve miles northwest of Hebrón. This is the same Mareshah of which Micah spoke (Micah 1:15). Asa's military forces were ill-equipped to engage this great host out of Ethiopia. Asa demonstrated his true metal when he "cried unto Jehovah his God." The king admitted Judah's helplessness apart from Jehovah. He confidently believed that Judah's God could scatter the enemy and he appealed for Jehovah to prove once more that no enemy of Jehovah could prevail as he contested Jehovah's righteous reign. The historian sets the record in proper perspective when he writes, "so Jehovah smote the Ethiopians."

Gerar lay some twenty miles south west of Mareshah. With the Ethiopians in full retreat, Asa's army took full advantage of the situation. The enemy was "broken before Jehovah." Asa's army was able to recapture much that the enemy had taken and the people of the southern kingdom returned loaded with the spoils of battle. The villages around Gerar were on the south west border of the Judah country. Asa took advantage of this

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel-Esther, p. 390

military exercise as he spoiled these border villages and took with him cattle, sheep, and camels. The victory march back to Jerusalem must have been one of the truly happy occasions of Asa's reign.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON SEVENTEEN 12-14

620. What did Rehoboam do about the law of Jehovah?
621. Who was Shishak and why did he appear in Jerusalem?
622. How numerous was the army that challenged Rehoboam?
623. Who was Shemaiah and what did he say?
624. What were the effects of the repentance of the leaders of Judah?
625. With regard to Jerusalem, what was Shishak able to do?
626. Explain the reference to Solomon's shields of gold.
627. Who was Rehoboam's mother?
628. How long did he reign over Judah?
629. Who wrote accounts of Rehoboam's reign?
630. What was the usual relationship between Rehoboam and Jeroboam?
631. Who succeeded Rehoboam as king?
632. Who was the mother of the new king?
633. How many men did Abijah assemble for battle and how many did Jeroboam bring together?
634. Locate Mount Zemaraim.
635. What is a covenant of salt?
636. How does Abijah account for some of his father's failures?
637. What is Abijah's concept of the Davidic kingdom?
638. How does Abijah describe Israel's gods?
639. Who could be a priest in the Northern kingdom?
640. What does Abijah say about Jehovah worship in Jerusalem?

641. What was the nature of Abijah's request?
642. Explain Jeroboam's military maneuver.
643. How many men did Jeroboam lose in the battle? Explain this great loss.
644. Where was Bethel located? Why had this place been so important to Jeroboam?
645. What finally happened to Jeroboam?
646. Who wrote the history of Abijah?
647. Describe the reforms instituted by Asa.
648. What advice did Asa give to the people?
649. Explain Asa's concern about building cities in Judah.
650. How many men were in Asa's army?
651. How many are a thousand thousand?
652. Locate Mareshah.
653. When Asa faced this great enemy what did he do?
654. Locate Gerar.
655. What were the results of this military engagement?

LESSON EIGHTEEN 15-17

ASA, THE REFORMER; HANANI, MAN OF GOD. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEHOSHAPHAT

4. THE REIGN OF ASA—Continued (14-16)

INTRODUCTION

King Asa worked a religious reformation among his people. Asa's alliance with Syria brought the prophet's rebuke. Jehoshaphat provided good leadership for Judah.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Seventeen)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Seventeen)

COMMENTARY

Azariah, son of Oded, appears on the scene to bring the word of Jehovah to Asa. There are twenty eight different persons in the Old Testament named Azariah. The name "Azariah" means "Jehovah is keeper." The prophet addressed his words specifically to Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom is called "Israel" in verse 3. Asa's only hope was to trust Jehovah. He must go with God. He must seek the Lord. The alternative carried with it some terrible consequences. If Jehovah's people are unfaithful, He will forsake them. Those Hebrews who had been a part of the northern kingdom had suffered anguish that could not be described. God had abandoned them. There was no priest to plead their cause. They did not even have the advantage of hearing the reading of the Law. There were some Israelites who in their extremity had turned to God in deep repentance. Azariah reminded Asa that Jehovah had heard their cry. The majority of the people in the northern kingdom had been carried into captivity and there they lost their identity. Azariah told Asa that these awful sorrows could be avoided if king and people would seek Jehovah. He charged the king to be courageous and promised

that Asa's good work would be rewarded.

Azariah's ministry moved Asa to destroy all of the idols he could find in his kingdom. Verse 8 speaks of "the prophecy of Oded". Oded is mentioned here only because he was Azariah's father. The king repaired the altar of burnt offering and set it where it was supposed to be in the court of priests just in front of the Temple. The good work that Asa accomplished was advertised throughout the kingdom. From scattered places in the land of Palestine the people came to Jerusalem. Seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep were offered to Jehovah on the altar. The third month corresponds nearly with our month of May.

Jehovah's word through Azariah produced good results. As the king provided good leadership, the people were encouraged to do God's will. Once again the covenant (as in Genesis 12:1-3) was renewed. This commitment to the Lord was complete as Moses had demanded in his day (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5). Asa was so certain that his reformation was what the Lord desired that he dared to pronounce the death penalty on anyone who would not cooperate. An idolatrous city, a false prophet, or a person who worshipped idols were to be destroyed or put to death according to the Law (Deuteronomy 13). In this matter there was to be no respect of persons. Verses 14 and 15 describe what happens when God's Spirit moves His people. Azariah had come clothed in the Spirit. He shared the Spirit with Asa. The king by his strong leadership and his fear of Jehovah shared the Spirit with all of the people. They pledged themselves to the Lord. They praised Him with song and musical instruments. Peace reigned in their hearts and in their land.

If a king deprived a queen mother of her authority in the kingdom, he had to have a very good reason for his action. From Bathsheba's time the queen mother had exercised considerable power in Jerusalem. Maacah, queen mother had set up an Asherah (a pole or an obelisk) which she used in her worship of Baal. Asa dared to ruin her place of worship and to remove her from the government of Judah. Making dust out of an image reminds us of the golden calf at Sinai. The Kidron

valley had already been desecrated by heathen worship, so it was a proper place to burn this idol. Asa did what he could to work a complete reformation. He was not able to remove all idolatry because so much of it remained in the hearts of the people. He did what he could to re-establish the Temple and make it the true center of worship for Jehovah's people. He could not live long enough nor could he exercise sufficient authority to completely cleanse the people and the land. "His heart was perfect all his days". This does not mean that he made no mistakes or that he did not sin. He conscientiously tried to do God's will.

Baasha was used by Jehovah to bring the dynasty of Jeroboam to an end. Nadab, Jeroboam's son, had sinned like his father. One day Nadab was in the village of Gibbethon about twenty miles north west of Jerusalem. Baasha killed Nadab and began to reign as Israel's king (I Kings 15:25-28). Late in the reign of Asa, Baasha fortified the southern boundary of his kingdom at Ramah (about eight miles north of Jerusalem). Baasha did not want his people to have any contact with the southern kingdom. Asa was alarmed at Baasha's military action and he made a counter move in buying protection from Benhadad and the Syrians. Such alliances were contrary to Jehovah's purpose; however, Asa's move was very effective in causing Baasha to discontinue his fortifying the southern border of Israel. Once more the Temple was robbed of its treasures in order to pay the Syrians. Ben-hadad was in an agreement with Baasha. He did not hesitate to break this pact. The Syrians attacked the northern border of Baasha's kingdom at Ijon, Dan, and Abel-maim. These places were located in Naphtali not far from Mount Hermon. When Baasha learned about these border attacks, he withdrew from Ramah. Asa took advantage of the situation and used stones and timbers out of Ramah to fortify Geba and Mizpah on the north border of the southern kingdom. Geba was about ten miles north of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. Mizpah was about three miles north west of Geba.

Hanani appeared at this time to rebuke Asa for trusting in Syria rather than in Jehovah. A "seer" was one who by

Jehovah's endowment had more knowledge and understanding than ordinary persons. Samuel was called a "seer" when Saul was hunting his father's lost asses (I Samuel 9:9). Hanani implied that the Syrians should have been defeated in battle instead of being paid money as allies. Asa was reminded of the great victory over the Ethiopians (14:9) which Jehovah granted because Asa and Judah trusted God. The prophet declared that nothing happens among men which is hidden from Jehovah's eyes. Wherever He finds one "whose heart is perfect", He provides whatever may be needed. The man with "the perfect heart" relies on the Lord and thinks His thoughts after Him. Asa was charged with foolishness and was informed that he would be involved in war for the remainder of his reign. Like other prophets who had spoken unpopular messages, Hanani was mistreated by Asa. He was thrown into a "house of stocks", a place of torture. Asa was so upset by the words of the seer that he turned his wrath upon some of the citizens of his kingdom. In these matters Asa showed himself to be unworthy of the high office which he filled.

Historians were a part of Asa's cabinet and they kept careful records of his reign. So Asa's life was recorded in "the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel". The king's last years were most difficult. He was involved in war and all of the attendant political problems. He also suffered from diseased feet. He could have been afflicted with gout.¹ In these extreme circumstances he failed to call on God. He forgot his manner of life when he was a great reformer. Asa turned only to physicians for healing and forgot to turn to Jehovah in prayer. He began his reign very well. He concluded his life in misery and shame. After a reign of forty one years he died. He was granted all of the honors of a kingly burial and his remains were placed in a grave which he had prepared for himself. The "great burning" had to do with spices and incense burned at the time of the king's death.

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 663

5. THE REIGN OF JEHO SHAPHAT (17 - 21:3)

TEXT

Chapter 17:1. And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel. 2. And he placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken. 3. And Jehovah was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto the Baalim, 4. but sought to the God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel. 5. Therefore Jehovah established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat tribute; and he had riches and honor in abundance. 6. And his heart was lifted up in the ways of Jehovah: and furthermore he took away the high places and the Asherim out of Judah.

7. Also in the third year of his reign he sent his princes, even Ben-hail, and Obadiah, and Zechariah, and Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; 8. and with them the Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. 9. And they taught in Judah, having the book of the law of Jehovah with them; and they went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught among the people.

10. And the fear of Jehovah fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat. 11. And some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and silver for tribute; the Arabians also brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he-goats. 12. And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles and cities of store. 13. And he had many works in the cities of Judah; and men of war, mighty men of valor, in Jerusalem. 14. And this was the numbering of them according to their fathers' houses: Of Judah, the captains of thousands:

Adnah the captain, and with him mighty men of valor three hundred thousand; 15. and next to him Jehohanan the captian, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand; 16. and next to him Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto Jehovah; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. 17. And of Benjamin: Eliada a mighty man of valor, and with him two hundred thousand armed with bow and shield; 18. and next to him Jehozabad, and with him a hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for war. 19. These were they that waited on the king, besides those whom the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

Chapter 18:1. Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and he joined affinity with Ahab. 2. And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that were with him, and moved him to go up with him to Ramoth-gilead. 3. And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah. "Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" And he answered him, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war."

4. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, "Inquire first, I pray thee, for the word of Jehovah. 5. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said unto them, "Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And they said, "Go up; for God will deliver it into the hand of the king." 6. But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah besides, that we may inquire of him?" 7. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Jehovah: but I hate him; for he never prophesieth good concerning me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so." 8. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, "Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla." 9. Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, and they were sitting in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. 10. And Zedekiah

the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron and said, "Thus saith Jehovah, 'With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until they be consumed.'" 11. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for Jehovah will deliver it into the hand of the king."

12. And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, "Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one mouth: let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good." 13. And Micaiah said, "As Jehovah liveth, what my God saith, that will I speak."

14. And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him,

"Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And he said, "Go ye up, and prosper; and they shall be delivered into your hand." 15. And the king said to him,

"How many times shall I adjure thee that thou speak unto me nothing but the truth in the name of Jehovah;" 16. And he said,

"I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and Jehovah said, 'These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace.'" 17. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat,

"Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" 18. And Micaiah said,

"Therefore hear ye the word of Jehovah: I saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. 19. "And Jehovah said,

'Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. 20. "And there came forth a spirit, and stood before Jehovah, and said, I will entice him. And Jehovah said unto him. 'Wherewith?'

21. "And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'Thou shalt entice him, and shalt prevail also: go forth, and do so.'

22. "Now therefore, behold, Jehovah hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets; and Jehovah hath spoken evil concerning thee."

23. Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, "Which way went the Spirit of Jehovah from me to speak unto thee?" 24. And

Micaiah said, "Behold, thou shalt see on that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself." 25. And the king of Israel said, "Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; 26. and say, 'Thus saith the king, "Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace." ' ' 27. And Micaiah said, "If thou return at all in peace, Jehovah hath not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, ye peoples, all of you."

28. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. 29. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and go into the battle; but put thou on thy robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went into the battle. 30. Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel." 31. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It is the king of Israel." Therefore they turned about to fight against him: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and Jehovah helped him; and God moved them to depart from him. 32. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 33. And a certain man drew his bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the armor: wherefore he said to the driver of the chariot, "Turn thy hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am sore wounded." 34. And the battle increased that day? howbeit the king of Israel stayed himself up in his chariot against the Syrians until the even; and about the time of the going down of the sun he died.

Chapter 19:1. And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. 2. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, "Shouldest thou help the wicked, and love them that hate Jehovah? for this thing wrath is upon thee from before Jehovah. 3. "Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast put away the Asheroth out of the land,

and hast set thy heart to seek God.”

4. And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again among the people from Beer-sheba to the hill-country of Ephraim, and brought them back unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 5. And he set judges in the land throughtout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6. and said to the judges, “Consider what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for Jehovah; and he is with you in the judgment. 7. “Now therefore let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes.”

8. Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites and the priests, and of the heads of the fathers’ houses of Israel, for the judgment of Jehovah, and for controversies. And they returned to Jerusalem. 9. And he charged them, saying, “Thus shall ye do in the fear of Jehovah, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. 10. “And whensoever any controversy shall come to you from your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, ye shall warn them, that they be not guilty towards Jehovah, and so wrath come upon you and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not be guilty. 11. “And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of Jehovah; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all the king’s matters: also the Levites shall be officers before you. Deal courageously, and Jehovah be with the good.”

Chapter 20:1. And it came to pass after this, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them some of the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. 2. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, “There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea from Syria; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar (the same is En-gedi).” 3. And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek unto Jehovah; and he proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4. And Judah gathered themselves together, to seek help of Jehovah: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek Jehovah.

5. And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of Jehovah, before the new court; 6. and he said, "O Jehovah, the God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and art not thou ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? and in thy hand is power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee. 7. "Didst not thou, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and give it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? 8. "And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, 9. 'If evil come upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house, and before thee (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, and thou wilt hear and save.' 10. "And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned aside from them, and destroyed them not; 11. behold, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. 12. "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." 13. And all Judah stood before Jehovah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

14. Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of Jehovah in the midst of the assembly; 15. and he said, "Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king of Jehoshaphat: Thus saith Jehovah unto you, 'Fear not ye, neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. 16. 'To-morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the ascent of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel. 17. 'Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of Jehovah with you, O Judah and Jerusalem;' fear not, nor be dismayed: to-morrow go out against them; for Jehovah is with you." 18. And Jehoshaphat bowed his head

with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before Jehovah, worshipping Jehovah. 19. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites, stood up to praise Jehovah, the God of Israel, with an exceeding loud voice.

20. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem: believe in Jehovah your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. 21. And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed them that should sing unto Jehovah, and give praise in holy array, as they went out before the army, and say, "Give thanks unto Jehovah; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever." 22. And when they began to sing and to praise, Jehovah set liers-in-wait against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, that were come against Judah; and they were smitten. 23. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

24. And when Judah came to the watch-tower of the wilderness, they looked upon the multitude; and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and there were none that escaped. 25. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches and dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much. 26. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in "the valley of Berach;" for there they blessed Jehovah: therefore the name of that place was called The valley of Berach unto this day. 27. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for Jehovah had made them to rejoice over their enemies. 28. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of Jehovah. 29. And the fear

of God was on all the kingdoms of the countries, when they heard that Jehovah fought against the enemies of Israel. 30. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about.

31. And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: he was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 32. And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. 33. Howbeit the high places were not taken away; neither as yet had the people set their hearts unto the God of their fathers. 34. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the kings of Israel.

35. And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel; the same did very wickedly: 36. and he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish; and they made the ships in Ezion-geber. 37. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, Jehovah hath destroyed thy works." And the ships were broken, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Chapter 21:1. And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. 2. And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3. And their father gave them great gifts, of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fortified cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 17:1. Then his son Jehoshaphat became the king and mobilized for war against Israel. 2. He placed garrisons in all of the fortified cities of Judah, in various other places through-

out the country, and in the cities of Ephraim that his father had conquered. 3. The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed in the good footsteps of his father's early years, and did not worship idols. 4. He obeyed the commandments of his father's God—quite unlike the people across the border in the land of Israel. 5. So the Lord strengthened his position as king of Judah. All the people of Judah cooperated by paying their taxes, so he became very wealthy as well as being very popular. 6. He boldly followed the paths of God—even knocking down the heathen altars on the hills, and destroying the Asherim idols.

7, 8, 9. In the third year of his reign he began a nationwide religious education program. He sent out top government officials as teachers in all the cities of Judah. These men included Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah. He also used the Levites for this purpose, including Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; also the priest Elishama and Jehoram. They took copies of The Book of the Law of the Lord to all the cities of Judah, to teach the Scriptures to the people.

10. The fear of the Lord fell upon all the surrounding kingdoms so that none of them declared war on King Jehoshaphat. 11. Even some of the Philistines brought him presents and annual tribute, and the Arabs donated 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats. 12. So Jehoshaphat became very strong, and built fortresses and supply cities throughout Judah. 13. His public works program was also extensive, and he had a huge army stationed at Jerusalem, his capital. 14, 15. Three hundred thousand Judean troops were there under General Adnah. Next in command was Jeho-hanan with an army of 280,000 men. 16. Next was Amasiah (son of Zichri), a man of unusual piety, with 200,000 troops. 17. Benjamin supplied 200,000 men equipped with bows and shields under the command of Eliada, a great general. 18. His second in command was Jehozabad, with 180,000 trained men. 19. These were the troops in Jerusalem in addition to those placed by the king in the fortified cities

throughout the nation.

Chapter 18:1. But rich, popular King Jehoshaphat of Judah made a marriage alliance (for his son) with (the daughter of) King Ahab of Israel. 2. A few years later he went down to Samaria to visit King Ahab, and King Ahab gave a great party for him and his aides, butchering great numbers of sheep and oxen for the feast. Then he asked King Jehoshaphat to join forces with him against Ramoth-gilead.

3, 4, 5. "Why, of course!" King Jehoshaphat replied. "I'm with you all the way. My troops are at your command! However, let's check with the Lord first." So King Ahab summoned 400 of his heathen prophets and asked them, "Shall we go to war with Ramoth-gilead or not?" And they replied, "Go ahead, for God will give you a great victory!" 6, 7. But Jehoshaphat wasn't satisfied. "Isn't there some prophet of the Lord around here too?" he asked. "I'd like to ask him the same question." "Well," Ahab told him, "there is one, but I hate him, for he never prophesies anything but evil! His name is Micaiah (son of Imlah)." "Oh, come now, don't talk like that!" Jehoshaphat exclaimed. "Let's hear what he has to say." 8. So the king of Israel called one of his aides. "Quick! Go and get Micaiah (son of Imlah)," he ordered. 9. The two kings were sitting on thrones in full regalia at an open place near the Samaria gate, and all the "prophets" were prophesying before them. 10. One of them, Zedekiah (son of Chenaanah), made some iron horns for the occasion and proclaimed, "The Lord says you will gore the Syrians to death with these!" 11. And all the others agreed. "Yes," they chorused, "go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper, for the Lord will cause you to conquer."

12. The man who went to Micaiah told him what was happening, and what all the prophets were saying—that the war would end in triumph for the king. "I hope you will agree with them and give the king a favorable reading," the man ventured. 13. But Micaiah replied, "I vow by God that whatever God says is what I will say." 14. When he arrived before the king, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth-gilead or not?" And Micaiah replied, "Sure, go ahead! It will be

a glorious victory!" 15. "Look here," the king said sharply, "how many times must I tell you to speak nothing except what the Lord tells you to?" 16. Then Micaiah told him, "In my vision I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountain as sheep without a shepherd. And the Lord said, 'Their master has been killed. Send them home.' " 17. "Didn't I tell you?" the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. "He does it every time. He never prophesies anything but evil against me." 18. "Listen to what else the Lord has told me," Micaiah continued, "I saw him upon his throne surrounded by vast throngs of angels. 19, 20. "And the Lord said, 'Who can get King Ahab to go to battle against Ramoth-gilead and be killed there?' " "There were many suggestions, but finally a spirit stepped forward before the Lord and said, 'I can do it!' " "How?" the Lord asked him. 21. "He replied, 'I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of the king's prophets!' " "It will work," the Lord said; 'go and do it.' 22. "So you see, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, when actually he has determined just the opposite of what they are telling you!"

23. Then Zedekiah (son of Chenaanah) walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. "You liar!" he yelled. "When did the Spirit of the Lord leave me and enter you?" 24. "You'll find out soon enough," Micaiah replied, "—when you are hiding in an inner room!" 25. "Arrest this man and take him back to Governor Amon and to my son Joash," the king of Israel ordered. 26. "Tell them, 'The king says to put this fellow in prison and feed him with bread and water until I return safely from the battle!' " 27. Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me." Then, turning to those around them, he remarked, "Take note of what I have said."

28. So the king of Israel and the king of Judah led their armies to Ramoth-gilead. 29. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I'll disguise myself so that no one will recognize me, but you put on your royal robes!" So that is what they did. 30. Now the king of Syria had issued these instructions to his charioteers: "Ignore everyone but the king of Israel!" 31. So

when the Syrian charioteers saw King Jehoshaphat of Judah in his royal robes, they went for him, supposing that he was the man they were after. But Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord to save him, and the Lord made the charioteers see their mistake and leave him. 32. For as soon as they realized he was not the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him. 33. But one of the Syrian soldiers shot an arrow haphazardly at the Israeli troops, and it struck the king of Israel at the opening where the lower armor and the breastplate meet. "Get me out of here," he groaned to the driver of his chariot, "for I am badly wounded." 34. The battle grew hotter and hotter all that day and King Ahab went back in, propped up in his chariot, to fight the Syrians, but just as the sun sank into the western skies, he died.

Chapter 19:1. As King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned home, uninjured. 2. the prophet Jehu (son of Hanani) went out to meet him. "Should you be helping the wicked, and loving those who hate the Lord?" he asked him. "Because of what you have done, God's wrath is upon you. 3. But there are some good things about you, in that you got rid of the shame-idols throughout the land, and you have tried to be faithful to God."

4. So Jehoshaphat made no more trips to Israel after that, but remained quietly at Jerusalem. Later he went out again among the people, traveling from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim to encourage them to worship the God of their ancestors. 5. He appointed judges throughout the nation in all the larger cities, 6. and instructed them: "Watch your step—I have not appointed you—God has; and he will stand beside you and help you give justice in each case that comes before you. 7. Be very much afraid to give any other decision than what God tells you to. For there must be no injustice among God's judges, no partiality, no taking of bribes."

8. Jehoshaphat set up courts in Jerusalem, too, with the Levites and priests and clan leaders and judges. 9. These were his instructions to them: "You are to act always in the fear of God, with honest hearts. 10. Whenever a case is referred to you by the judges out in the provinces, whether murder cases or other violations of the laws and ordinances of God, you are to

clarify the evidence for them and help them to decide justly, lest the wrath of God come down upon you and them; if you do this, you will discharge your responsibility." 11. Then he appointed Amariah, the High Priest, to be the court of final appeal in cases involving violation of sacred affairs; and Zebadiah (son of Ishmael), a ruler in Judah, as the court of final appeal in all civil cases; with the Levites as their assistants. "Be fearless in your stand for truth and honesty. And may God use you to defend the innocent," was his final word to them.

Chapter 20:1. Later on, the armies of the kings of Moab, Ammon, and of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah. 2. Word reached Jehoshaphat that "a vast army is marching against you from beyond the Salt Sea, from Syria. It is already at Hazazon-tamar" (also called Engedi). 3. Jehoshaphat was badly shaken by this news and determined to beg for help from the Lord; so he announced that all the people of Judah should go without food for a time, in penitence and intercession before God. 4. People from all across the nation came to Jerusalem to plead unitedly with him.

5. Jehoshaphat stood among them as they gathered at the new court of the Temple, and prayed this prayer: 6. "O Lord God of our fathers—the only God in all the heavens, the Ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth—you are so powerful, so mighty. Who can stand against you? 7. O our God, didn't you drive out the heathen who lived in this land when your people arrived? And didn't you give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? 8. Your people settled here and built this Temple for you, 9. truly believing that in a time like this—whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, disease, or famine—we can stand here before this Temple and before you—for you are here in this Temple—and cry out to you to save us; and that you will hear us and rescue us. 10. "And now see what the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir are doing. You wouldn't let our ancestors invade those nations when Israel left Egypt, so we went around and didn't destroy them. 11. Now see how they reward us! For they have come to throw us out of your land which you have given us. 12.

O our God, won't you stop them? We have no way to protect ourselves against this mighty army. We don't know what to do, but we are looking to you." 13. As the people from every part of Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, wives, and children,

14. the Spirit of the Lord came upon one of the men standing there—Jahaziel (son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Je-iel, son of Mattaniah the Levite, who was one of the sons of Asaph). 15. "Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem, and you, O king Jehoshaphat!" he exclaimed. "The Lord says, 'Don't be afraid! Don't be paralyzed by this mighty army! For the battle is not yours, but God's! 16. Tomorrow, go down and attack them! You will find them coming up the slopes of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. 17. But you will not need to fight! Take your places; stand quietly and see the incredible rescue operation God will perform for you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem! Don't be afraid or discouraged! Go out there tomorrow, for the Lord is with you!' " 18. Then king Jehoshaphat fell to the ground with his face to the earth, and all the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem did the same, worshiping the Lord. 19. Then the Levites of the Kohath clan and the Korah clan stood to praise the Lord God of Israel with songs of praise that rang out strong and clear.

20. Early the next morning the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat stopped and called them to attention. "Listen to me, O people of Judah and Jerusalem," he said. "Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall have success! Believe his prophets, and everything will be all right!" 21. After consultation with the leaders of the people, he determined that there should be a choir leading the march, clothed in sanctified garments and singing the song "His Lovingkindness Is Forever" as they walked along praising and thanking the Lord! 22. And at the moment they began to sing and to praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to begin fighting among themselves, and they destroyed each other! 23. For the Ammonites and Moabites

turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. And when they had finished that job, they turned against each other!

24. So, when the army of Judah arrived at the watchtower that looks out over the wilderness, as far as they could look there were dead bodies lying on the ground—not a single one of the enemy had escaped. 25. King Jehoshaphat and his people went out to plunder the bodies and came away loaded with money, garments, and jewels stripped from the corpses—so much that it took them three days to cart it all away! 26. On the fourth day they gathered in the Valley of Blessing, as it is called today, and how they praised the Lord! 27. Then they returned to Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat leading them, full of joy that the Lord had given them this marvelous rescue from their enemies. 28. They marched into Jerusalem accompanied by a band of harps, lyres, and trumpets and proceeded to the Temple. 29. And as had happened before, when the surrounding kingdoms heard that the Lord himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, the fear of God fell upon them. 30. So Jehoshaphat's kingdom was quiet, for his God had given him rest.

31. A thumbnail sketch of King Jehoshaphat: He became king of Judah when he was thirty-five years old, and reigned twenty-five years, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. 32. He was a good king, just as his father Asa was. He continually tried to follow the Lord, 33. with the exception that he did not destroy the idol shrines on the hills, nor had the people as yet really decided to follow the God of their ancestors. 34. The details of Jehoshaphat's reign from first to last are written in the history of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is inserted in The Annals of the Kings of Israel.

35. But at the close of his life, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went into partnership with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who was a very wicked man. 36. They made ships in Ezion-geber to sail to Tarshish. 37. Then Eliezer, son of Dodavahu from Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, telling him, "Because you have allied yourself with King Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your

work." So the ships met disaster and never arrived at Tarshish.

Chapter 21:1. When Jehoshaphat died, he was buried in the cemetery of the kings in Jerusalem, and his son Jehoram became the new ruler of Judah. 2. His brothers—other sons of Jehoshaphat—were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah. 3, 4. Their father had given each of them valuable gifts of money and jewels, also the ownership of some of the fortified cities of Judah. However, he gave the kingship to Jehoram because he was the oldest. But when Jehoram had become solidly established as king, he killed all of his brothers and many other leaders of Israel.

COMMENTARY

Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, sat on the throne in Judah. Jehoshaphat's name means "Jehovah is judge". He was one of the best kings of the southern kingdom.¹ A continual condition of civil strife persisted between Judah and Israel. Jehoshaphat concerned himself with necessary fortifications to protect the territory of Judah. This involved strengthening several villages in Judah and in the territory on the border of Ephraim. Judah's king opposed every form of Baalism. In every matter pertaining to the kingdom he sought Jehovah's counsel. Jehovah was with him. The southern kingdom enjoyed a period of prosperity and Jehoshaphat was held in high honor as king. The lifting up of the heart sometimes meant boastful and foolish pride; however, Jehoshaphat boasted in Jehovah and gave his people strong spiritual leadership.

Jehoshaphat was deeply concerned that his people be trained in the word of God. He appointed princes, Levites, and priests to travel throughout the borders of Judah to teach the people out of the "book of the law of Jehovah". He wanted all of his people to be involved in religious education. In this matter he approximated the ideal in Deuteronomy 17:18, 19 which stated that the king should rule by the law of God. This is the only mention in the Bible of these particular princes of the Levites. They filled an important place of service in the days

¹Oehler, Grustave F., *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 403

of Jehoshaphat.

This course of action chosen by Judah's king brought great blessings upon the king and the people. Judah enjoyed an era of comparative peace. The Philistines brought tribute. Arab tribes in the environs of Judah brought great numbers of rams and goats. Store cities were built throughout the kingdom and much attention was given to improving social conditions. In addition to all of his peaceful pursuits, Jehoshaphat maintained a standing army of considerable proportions. Seven hundred eighty thousand warriors were numbered in Judah and three hundred eighty thousand warriors were numbered in Benjamin. They manned the fortified cities and helped the king in any assigned tasks. We do not know anything else about the captains or mighty men who are named in connection with Jehoshaphat's army.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON EIGHTEEN 15-17

656. Who was Azariah? How was he moved to do his work?
657. What promise and warning are detailed in 15:2?
658. How does Azariah summarize Israel's history?
659. What charge is given in 15:7?
660. Who was Oded?
661. How would Asa have authority in Ephraim?
662. Describe the covenant entered into in Jerusalem.
663. What about the person who would not seek God?
664. How did Jehovah reward His people?
665. Who was Maacah and what was done with regard to her?
666. Locate Kidron.
667. How complete was Asa's reform?
668. Identify Baasha.
669. Why would Baasha fortify Ramah?
670. For what purpose did Asa pay a considerable amount of money?

671. Locate Ijon, Dan, and Abel-maim.
672. Where were Geba and Mizpah?
673. Who was Hanani?
674. Why does Asa now come under rebuke?
675. What had been Asa's experience with the Ethiopians?
676. How extensive is Jehovah's domain?
677. What did Asa do with Hanani?
678. Evaluate Asa as a king.
679. Describe Asa's illness.
680. Where did Asa go for help?
681. What is said about Asa's burial?
682. Describe Jehoshaphat's actions relating to Judah.
683. Explain Jehovah's attitude toward Jehoshaphat.
684. Explain the reference to Jehoshaphat's "heart being lifted up".
685. Why were princes sent out into Judah?
686. What special services did Levites render?
687. Why did the nations round about not make war on Judah?
688. What did the Arabians do for Jehoshaphat?
689. How many men of war were numbered out of Judah and Benjamin?

LESSON NINETEEN 18-20

JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAB WAR WITH MOAB AND AMMON

5. THE REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT—Continued (17-21:3)

INTRODUCTION

Judah's alliance with Ahab of Israel displeased Jehovah. The prophets were mistreated. Jehoshaphat worked diligently to bring his people back to God. He activated the priestly high court. The Moabites and Ammonites were defeated in Jehoshaphat's day.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Eighteen)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Eighteen)

COMMENTARY

Jehoshaphat's relation with the northern kingdom was not entered into with a view to weakening the southern kingdom. The king of Judah probably wanted to share some of the prosperity of his kingdom with Ahab. Jehoshaphat's reign extended over a period of twenty five years. His peaceful overtures toward the northern kingdom probably came during the first half of his reign. The "affinity" with Ahab was effected in the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, with Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. As there had been a Jezebel in Samaria, there would be an Athaliah in Jerusalem. There were state visits between the royal houses. On such an occasion Ahab made lavish provisions for Jehoshaphat. The Syrians had set a great army against Ramoth-gilead, a village thirty miles southeast of the southern tip of the Sea of Chinnereth. Ahab needed military assistance. Jehoshaphat agreed to bring Judah's army into this conflict. Certainly in these matters Judah's king failed to seek Jehovah's will.

Jehoshaphat knew that Ahab did not serve Jehovah. On the

occasion when Judah's king agreed to go to battle against Syria with Ahab's army, Jehoshaphat suggested that they determine Jehovah's will in this matter. Ahab proceeded to ask counsel of the four hundred heathen prophets of Israel.¹ They advised him to go to war and assured him of victory through God (Elohim). Jeroboam had set up calf worship in convenient places in the northern kingdom at the beginning of his reign. His successors to the throne maintained these centers of worship. Ahab had married Jezebel, the Phoenician princess. She had brought Baalism out of her country into the northern kingdom. Ahab had completely committed himself to this heathen worship and had forsaken Jehovah. We marvel that these heathen prophets would presume to speak for Israel's God. Jehoshaphat loved Jehovah. He was not satisfied with the word of Ahab's false prophets. Upon inquiring as to whether or not a prophet of Jehovah was available, the king of Judah was informed about a man named Micaiah. This true prophet had declared Jehovah's word to Ahab on previous occasion and had condemned Ahab for his heathenism. Ahab told Jehoshaphat that he hated Micaiah. The king of Judah urged Jehoshaphat to weigh his words. Micaiah's location wasn't exactly known. He may have been imprisoned at the time. While the officer was sent to bring Micaiah to the court, the two kings held court at the gate of Samaria. Ahab's prophets continued their formal worship and stoutly maintained that Ahab should go to battle. One of the false prophets, Zedekiah, put on a mask fashioned like the head of a bull and equipped with iron horns. He moved among his fellow prophets and before Ahab and Jehoshaphat like an attacking animal. Zedekiah claimed that Jehovah had told him that Israel would be victorious. Whenever Zedekiah spoke, he was fully supported by the four hundred Baalists.

The officer who was sent to bring Micaiah tried to condition the prophet to say an agreeable word when he stood before the kings. Micaiah asserted his independency in relation to other prophets and his dependency upon God. He said, "What my God saith, that will I speak". In the presence of the kings in a

¹Beecher, Willis, J., *The Prophets and the Promise*, p. 55

sarcastic manner Micaiah told Ahab to join the battle and anticipate victory. Ahab's own conscience convicted him in this matter. Micaiah's attitude and manner of expression revealed to Ahab that the prophet had a true message from Jehovah. Since Micaiah had bound himself by Jehovah's name to declare God's will and since Ahab bound Micaiah under oath to reveal the truth, Micaiah said that Israel was a scattered flock without a shepherd. Ahab's army should be dismissed. In wrath Ahab interrupted Micaiah and contended that Micaiah ought not to have been called for advice. Micaiah described his vision of Jehovah. Ahab had hardened his heart. A lying spirit from Jehovah moved the false prophets to advise Ahab to go to battle.

Zedekiah humiliated Micaiah by striking him in the face and challenging him to identify the spirit that had prompted this insulting gesture. Zedekiah was informed that his own life would be in jeopardy at the hands of Israel's enemies (most likely, the Syrians). Ahab consigned Micaiah to prison where he would be sustained only by bread and water. The king's order was that Micaiah should be imprisoned until he returned from the battle front in peace. He may have intended to kill the prophet at that time. Even though he was under this sentence, Micaiah insisted that Ahab would not return in peace. Ahab, himself, was under the sentence of death.

This would have been the proper time for Jehoshaphat to withdraw himself and his army from the northern kingdom. In spite of this demonstration of Jehovah's will, the two kings went to war with Syria at Ramoth-gilead. Ahab was so confident that he could win the battle that he had no hesitancy to join the ranks of the fighting men. He knew that as king of Israel, he would be a special prize to the enemy. So he disguised himself. Jehoshaphat was especially vulnerable because he wore robes identifying himself as a king. In the heat of the battle when the king of Judah was recognized by the enemy, he was miraculously spared. Somewhere on the battle-field a Syrian soldier shot an arrow toward the army of Israel.¹ He did not

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 216

aim at any particular Hebrew soldier. Jehovah guided that Syrian arrow in its flight and it penetrated Ahab's armor striking a vital organ in the king's body. In mortal pain Ahab withdrew from the battle and died at the close of the day.

After these tragic experiences with Ahab, Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem. His alliance with wicked Ahab did not go unrebuked. A prophet named Jehu stood in Jehoshaphat's presence and condemned him. Judah's king was also informed that Jehovah approved his efforts to rid his land of Baalism. With renewed determination Jehoshaphat visited all of his people from Beersheba in the south to Ephraim in the north encouraging them to worship Jehovah. He set up a system of judges and courts throughout his kingdom charging these officials to fear the Lord and not respect persons or accept bribes. He also re-established the high court at the Temple in Jerusalem in which the priests passed judgment on very serious matters which the lesser courts could not handle (Deuteronomy 17:8-13). Amariah, the high priest, was in charge of the Temple court and all of the matters of business that were associated with God's House. Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab had not completely turned him from Jehovah.

Later in Jehoshaphat's reign the Moabites, Ammonites, and some Edomites (Meunim) rebelled against the southern kingdom. Reports were brought to Judah's king to the effect that a great army was moving around the southern end of the Dead Sea and organizing for attack at Hazazon-tamar or Engedi on the west coast of the Dead Sea. In this crisis once more Jehoshaphat turned to Jehovah. He asked all of his people to fast and to pray for God's help. The people were called to Jerusalem. There in the court of the priests the king plead with Jehovah for mercy and deliverance. The content of Jehoshaphat's prayer is worth careful study. Jehovah is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is ruler over all kingdoms. He gave Palestine to Abraham's seed. The Temple is in Jerusalem. As Solomon had said in his prayer (I Kings 8), if the Hebrews would pray toward this house, Jehovah would hear. Jehoshaphat reminded God that Israel had been prohibited

from attacking Moab and Ammon when Moses brought Israel through that territory. Now, these very people who were spared rise up to attack Jehovah's people. Jehoshaphat said that he and his people were not able to defend themselves, so they cast themselves completely upon God's mercy—"our eyes are upon Thee".

When the king had prayed, Jahaziel, a Levite, was filled with the Spirit of Jehovah. He declared the word that the people longed to hear. "Don't be afraid of the enemy. The battle is not your concern; it is God's". The army of Jehoshaphat was to be drawn up against Moab, Ammon, and Edom. The place called Ziz is difficult to locate, but it is believed to have been in the vicinity of Engedi. The Hebrews were told that they would not have to fight. They were to come to the battle-field, stand still, and wait for Jehovah to act. Jehoshaphat and his people received the news gladly and they worshipped God.

The next morning the king of Judah moved his army toward Tekoa, southeast of Bethlehem about six miles. As the army moved, the king encouraged his people. "Believe in Jehovah. Believe His prophets." The soldiers sang as they marched, "Give thanks unto Jehovah" (Psalm 106:1; 136:1). The ancient strategy of ambush was used. Jehovah was in complete control. The result of the ambush was that the Ammonites and Moabites supposed that the Edomites had turned upon them. So the enemies of Israel fought among themselves. The complete overthrow of the enemy is described in verses 24-30. Somewhere beyond Tekoa in the vicinity of the Dead Sea the battlefield was covered with the corpses of the fallen enemy soldiers. Jehoshaphat's warriors stripped the dead and carried off much booty. They called the place "Beracah", which means "blessing". Jehoshaphat's people returned to Jerusalem praising Jehovah for this miraculous deliverance.

The total picture of Jehoshaphat's reign leaves a good impression. His reign extended through twenty five years. The leadership provided by this king is compared with that of his father, Asa. In the days of the Judges "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Judah's king

did "that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah" (verse 32). The reforms of Jehoshaphat were not complete, probably because idolatry had been rooted so deeply in the southern kingdom. In spite of the king's devotion to Jehovah, it was difficult to secure the same commitment on the part of his people. The prophet Jehu (I Kings 16:1) was used by Jehovah as a writer of history. An account of Jehoshaphat's reign was written by Jehu and incorporated in a larger book.

Sometime after Jehoshaphat had been humiliated in his alliance with Ahab he covenanted with Ahaziah, son of Ahab and king of Israel. This venture involved building and equipping ships like those used on the Mediterranean by the Phoenicians for the Tarshish trade. Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah intended to use Ezion-geber at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba for their home port. They would send the vessels to Ophir which was far to the South and from there extend their trade to the East. The project was disastrous because Jehovah sent a prophet named Eliezer to condemn Jehoshaphat for his renewed alliance with Israel. The ships were ruined by a terrible storm before they ever left the home port.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON NINETEEN (18-20)

690. What was Jehoshaphat's economic condition?
691. With whom did Jehoshaphat set up an alliance? What was the purpose of the alliance?
692. Carefully locate Ramoth-gilead.
693. With regard to proposed plans, whose word did Jehoshaphat want to hear?
694. Who were the four hundred prophets of 18:5?
695. Why did Ahab hate Micaiah?
696. Describe the scene as the kings awaited Micaiah's arrival.
697. Who is this Zedekiah?
698. What were the "horns of iron"?

699. How did the messenger try to condition Micaiah?
700. At first, how did Micaiah answer Ahab? Why did he so answer?
701. Did Ahab really want to hear the truth? Explain.
702. What illustration is used in 18:16?
703. Where was Jehovah when Micaiah saw Him?
704. How had the spirit worked to mislead Ahab?
705. Was Ahab responsible for his actions? Explain.
706. At this time what did Zedekiah do?
707. What did Micaiah predict with regard to Zedekiah?
708. Describe "the bread of affliction".
709. What did Micaiah say about Ahab's returning in peace?
710. As the kings prepared to go into the battle how could they be distinguished?
711. Explain the instruction of the king of Syria to his captains.
712. Which of the Hebrew kings was attacked first? Why was he not killed?
713. Describe the wound which Ahab received. How long did Ahab live after being wounded?
714. After the battle with Syria where did Jehoshaphat go?
715. Identify this Jehu. What did he say?
716. What would be the nature of Jehoshaphat's work as "he went out among the people"?
717. In appointing judges what did the king order?
718. Explain the phrase, "respect of persons".
719. Who served as judges in Jerusalem? Was such an arrangement within Jehovah's will?
720. Describe the attitude of one who acts under "the fear of Jehovah".
721. How could a judge keep himself from guilt?
722. Who was the high priest in these days?
723. Where were the territories of Moab and Ammon located?

724. From whom were Moab and Ammon descended?
725. When Jehoshaphat learned of the threat of military attack what did he do?
726. What great truths relating to Jehovah are mentioned in 20:6?
727. Who were the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan?
728. What kind of confidence did Jehoshaphat have?
729. Name the ancient people who lived in Mount Seir.
730. What did the king confess to Jehovah in 20:12?
731. Who was Jahaziel?
732. Explain the phrase, "the battle is not yours, but God's".
733. What was the plan for meeting this military crisis?
734. Upon hearing the word of Jehovah, what did the king and the people do?
735. As they prepared to execute the plan what did the king say to the people?
736. What was the word of praise in 20:21?
737. What actually happened to Israel's enemies this day?
738. How did Jehoshaphat and his people profit from this overthrow?
739. What happened in the valley of Beracah?
740. Describe the return to Jerusalem.
741. How long did Jehoshaphat reign?
742. In what respects was Jehoshaphat not altogether successful as a godly leader?
743. Who wrote this king's history?
744. Who was Ahaziah?
745. What happened to Jehoshaphat's navy?
746. Where was Ezion-geber?
747. Who was Eliezer?

LESSON TWENTY 21-23

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEHORAM THE REIGN OF AHAZIAH.

ATALIAH'S DEATH. THE CORONATION OF JOASH.

5. THE REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT—Continued (17-21:3)

INTRODUCTION

Jehoram's marriage to Athaliah brought serious trouble to Judah. Ahaziah's death at the hands of Jehu led Athaliah to murder all possible candidates for Judah's throne. Joash's rescue and Athaliah's death proved that Jehovah still directed affairs in Judah.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Eighteen)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Eighteen)

COMMENTARY

A brief summary note on Jehoshaphat's life is added in chapter 21:1-3. Upon his death he was accorded a very honorable burial in the royal cemetery in Jerusalem. The sons of Jehoshaphat were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah. Two of these sons were called by the same name, "Azariah". The Hebrew names show a slight variation. One son is called "Azarihu". In addition to these six sons, Jehoram is named as successor to his father's position. Jehoram is identified as the first-born son. These princes received splendid gifts from their father and held positions of authority in the kingdom.

6. THE REIGN OF JEHORAM (21:5-20)

TEXT

Chapter 21:5. Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. 7. Howbeit Jehovah would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a lamp to him and to his children alway.

8. In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. 9. Then Jehoram passed over with his captains, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites that compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots. 10. So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day: then did Libnah revolt at the same time from under his hand, because he had forsaken Jehovah, the God of his fathers.

11. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, and led Judah astray. 12. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, "Thus saith Jehovah, the 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, 13. but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, like as the house of Ahab did, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, who were better than thyself: 14. behold, Jehovah will smite with a great plague thy people and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy substance; 15. and thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness, day by day.' "

16. And Jehovah stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians that are beside the Ethiopians: 17. and they came up against 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.

18. And after all this Jehovah smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19. And it came to pass, in process of time,

at the end of two years, that his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness, and he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. 20. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years: and he departed without being desired; and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:5. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years, in Jerusalem. 6. But he was as wicked as the kings who were over in Israel. Yes, as wicked as Ahab, for Jehoram had married one of the daughters of Ahab, and his whole life was one constant binge of doing evil. 7. However, the Lord was unwilling to end the dynasty of David, for he had made a covenant with David always to have one of his descendants upon the throne.

8. At that time the king of Edom revolted, declaring his independence of Judah. 9. Jehoram attacked him with his full army and with all of his chariots, marching by night, and almost managed to subdue him. 10. But to this day Edom has been successful in throwing off the yoke of Judah. Libnah revolted too, because Jehoram had turned away from the Lord God of his fathers.

11. What's more, Jehoram constructed idol shrines in the mountains of Judah, and led the people of Jerusalem in worshiping idols; in fact, he compelled his people to worship them. 12. Then Elijah the prophet wrote him this letter: "The Lord God of your ancestor David says that because you have not followed in the good ways of your father Jehoshaphat, nor the good ways of King Asa, 13. but you have been as evil as the kings over in Israel, and have made the people of Jerusalem and Judah worship idols just as in the times of King Ahab, and because you have killed your brothers who were better than you. 14. now the Lord will destroy your nation with a great plague. You, your children, your wives, and all that you have will be struck down. 15. You will be stricken with an intestinal

disease and your bowels will rot away.”

16. Then the Lord stirred up the Philistines and the Arabs living next to the Ethiopians to attack Jehoram. 17. They marched against Judah, broke across the border, and carried away everything of value in the king's palace, including his sons and his wives; only his youngest son, Jehoahaz, escaped.

18. It was after this that Jehovah struck him down with the incurable bowel disease. 19. In the process of time, at the end of two years, his intestines came out and he died in terrible suffering. (The customary pomp and ceremony was omitted at his funeral.) 20. He was thirty two years old when he began to reign and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and died unmourned. He was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the royal cemetery.

COMMENTARY

In order to secure his position as king, Jehoram massacred all of his brothers. Along with them, many princes were put to death. The cruelties of Ahab and Jezebel were perpetuated in the new king of Judah. Jehovah was merciful to His people in that the reign of Jehoram extended only through eight years. The Bible record explains Jehoram's failures on the basis of his alliance with the northern kingdom which included his marriage with Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel. The king of Judah was charged with the sin of "walking the way of the kings of Israel". His manner of life and failure as a king were sufficient reasons for Jehovah to bring the kingdom of Judah to an end at that time. Jehoram's connection with the line of David caused God to be merciful to him and his subjects. The "lamp" of verse seven has to do with kingly leadership (see II Samuel 7). Jehoram had to contend with rebellion on the part of the Edomites and the people of Libnah. Libnah was a village in Judah about twenty five miles southwest of Jerusalem. Judah's relationship with Edom was regulated largely by the inner strength or weakness of the southern kingdom. On this occasion (verses 8-10) Jehoram was able to accomplish a military victory over Edom; however the Edomites continued in revolution

against the southern kingdom. Jehovah used Edom and Libnah in this manner to bring judgment on Jehoram because of his failure as a king.

In order to convince Jehoram that he was wicked, Jehovah directed Elijah to write a review of the king's sins. This is the only mention of Elijah in the Books of Chronicles. This Elijah is to be identified with the man of God who was called "troubler of Israel" by Ahab (I Kings 18:17). In setting up idol worship Jehoram was not content simply to provide materials and places for such worship. He "led Judah astray". He forced his people to become idolatrous. He rejected the good examples of Jehoshaphat and Asa. He found his models for leadership in the sinful kings of the northern kingdom. He massacred his brothers. Elijah told him that he was the least worthy of all his brothers to serve as king.¹ He could expect continuing crises in his government. His own family would be brought under Jehovah's judgment and he, himself, would be stricken with a mortal bowel disease. This "writing" of Elijah indicates that some of the prophet's prior to the eighth century B.C. reduced their messages to written form. The kind of accusation brought against Jehoram reminds us of Elijah's words against Ahab and Jezebel.

The king of Israel's troubles accumulated rapidly. Philistines along the coast of the Great Sea and Arabians who lived on the perimeter of the great desert revolted. They attacked Jerusalem and carried away much booty along with the wives and sons of Jehoram. Jehoahaz was the only remaining son of the king. Elsewhere he is named Ahaziah and Azariah. The curse in Elijah's writing was thus being fulfilled. Jehoram's final sickness and death proved beyond doubt that he was judged because of his sins. Jehoahaz probably reigned with his father during the last two years of Jehoram's life. Jehoram died in dishonor and was not buried in that plot reserved for the kings of Judah. The tragic epitaph for his life was, "he departed without being desired".²

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel-Esther, p. 401

²Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II., p. 675

7. THE REIGN OF AHAZIAH (22:1-9)

TEXT

Chapter 22:1. 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. 2. Forty and two 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. 3. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly. 4. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, as did the house of Ahab; for they were his counsellors after the death of his father, to his destruction. 5. 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 wounded Joram. 6. And he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which they had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

7. Now the destruction of Ahaziah was of God, in that he went unto Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom Jehovah had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. 8. And it came to pass, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, that he found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, ministering to Ahaziah, and slew them. 9. And he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (now he was hiding in Samaria), and they brought him to Jehu, and slew him; and they buried him, for they said, "He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought Jehovah with all his heart." And the house of Ahaziah had no power to hold the kingdom.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:1. Then the people of Jerusalem chose Ahaziah, his youngest son, as their new king (for the marauding bands of

Arabs had killed his older sons). 2. Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, granddaughter of Omri. 3. He, too, walked in the evil ways of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. 4. Yes, he was as evil as Ahab, for Ahab's family became his advisors after his father's death, and they led him on to ruin. 5. Following their evil advice, Ahaziah made an alliance with King Jehoram of Israel (the son of Ahab), who was at war with King Hazael of Syria at Ramoth-gilead. Ahaziah led his army there to join the battle. King Jehoram of Israel was wounded. 6. and returned to Jezreel to recover. Ahaziah went to visit him,

7. but this turned out to be a fatal mistake; for God had decided to punish Ahaziah for his alliance with Jehoram. It was during this visit that Ahaziah went out with Jehoram to challenge Jehu (son of Nimshi), whom the Lord had appointed to end the dynasty of Ahab. 8. While Jehu was hunting down and killing the family and friends of Ahab, he met King Ahaziah's nephews, the princes of Judah and killed them. 9. As he and his men were searching for Ahaziah, they found him hiding in the city of Samaria, and brought him to Jehu, who killed him. Even so, Ahaziah was given a royal burial because he was the grandson of King Jehoshaphat—a man who enthusiastically served the Lord. None of his sons, however, except for Joash, lived to succeed him as king.

COMMENTARY

Chapter 22:1 says that all of Jehoram's sons, except Jehoahaz, had been murdered by men who were associated with a band of Arabians. If the Davidic succession was to be followed, there was no alternative to setting Jehoahaz on the throne. Jehoahaz is called by the name of Ahaziah in chapter 22. He was Athaliah's son and she ruled Judah through him. Athaliah was Ahab's daughter and her grandfather was Omri. The chronicler emphasized the fact that the moral degeneracy of the northern kingdom had spilled over into Judah. Ahaziah's relationship to Athaliah brought him and Judah into alliance

with Jehoram, son of Ahab.¹ The Syrians under Hazael's kingship had fought with Jehoram and Israel at Ramoth-gilead. In this conflict Jehoram was wounded. He retreated from the battle field and remained at Jezreel while he recovered from his wound. Jezreel was about twenty miles southwest of the southern tip of the Sea of Chinnereth. Ahaziah (here called Azariah) came up from Jerusalem to visit Jehoram. This visit was another indication of the implications of Judah with the idolatrous northern kingdom. Ahaziah's death was the result of Jehovah's judgment on his wicked life. "Joram" is a shortened form of "Jehoram". Jehovah never approved Ahaziah's friendliness with this worshipper of Baal. The record in II Kings 9:21ff describes Ahaziah's ultimate tragedy. When Elijah met Jehovah at Horeb (Mount Sinai) as recorded in I Kings 19:15ff, the prophet was commissioned to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel. Jehu's assignment was to annihilate the houses of Omri and Ahab and to cleanse the northern kingdom of its Baalism. When Jehu had been anointed by one of the sons of the prophets at Ramoth-gilead, he hurried to Jezreel to execute judgment on Jehoram. At that time Ahaziah was visiting Jehoram. Both of the kings came out of the city to inquire about Jehu's mission and both of them were killed. Ahaziah had been able to avoid Jehu briefly while hiding in Samaria. Jehu hunted him and killed him. Even though he was the son of a righteous father, Jehoshaphat, his father's goodness could not save him. In connection with these events Jehu met "brethren of Ahaziah" who evidently were coming to Samaria to visit Jehoram and Jezebel (II Kings 10:12-14). He fell upon them and slew them.

8. THE TIMES OF ATHALIAH (22:10-23:15)

TEXT

Chapter 22:10. Now 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. 11. But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 502.

him away from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in the 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. 12. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

Chapter 23:1. And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroaham, 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. 2. And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3. And all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as Jehovah hath spoken concerning the sons of David. 4. "this is the thing that ye shall do: a third part of you, that come in on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the thresholds; 5. 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 Jehovah. 6. "But let none come into the house of Jehovah, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall come in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the charge of Jehovah. 7. "And the Levites shall compass the king around about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever cometh into the house, let him be slain: and be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out."

8. So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men, those that were to come in on the sabbath, with those that were to go out on the sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses. 9. And Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds the spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God. 10. And he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his

hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king around about. 11. Then they brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony, and made him king: and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him; and they said, "Long live the king."

12. And when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of Jehovah: 13. and she looked, and behold, the king stood by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets; the singers also played on instruments of music, and led the singing of praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, "Treason! treason!" 14. And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, "Have her forth between the ranks; and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword:" for the priest said, "Slay her not in the house of Jehovah." 15. So they made way for her; and she went to the entrance of the house gate to the king's house: and they slew her there.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:10. for their grandmother Athaliah killed them when she heard the news of her son Ahaziah's death. 11. Joash was rescued by his Aunt Jehosabeath, who was King Ahaziah's sister, and was hidden away in a storage room in the Temple. She was a daughter of King Jehoram, and the wife of Jehoiada the priest. 12. Joash remained hidden in the Temple for six years while Athaliah reigned as queen. He was cared for by his nurse and by his aunt and uncle.

Chapter 23:1. In the seventh year of the reign of Queen Athaliah, Jehoiada the priest got up his courage and took some of the army officers into his confidence: Azariah (son of Jeroham), Ishmael (son of Jehohanan), Azariah (son of Obed), Maaseiah (son of Adaiah), and Elishaphat (son of Zichri). 2, 3. These men traveled out across the nation secretly, to tell the

Levites and clan leaders about his plans and to summon them to Jerusalem. On arrival they swore allegiance to the young king, who was still in hiding at the Temple. "at last the time has come for the king's son to reign!" Jehoiada exclaimed. "The Lord's promise—that a descendant of King David shall be our king—will be true again. 4. This is how we'll proceed: a third of you priests and Levites who come off duty on the Sabbath will stay at the entrance as guards. 5, 6. Another third will go over to the palace, and a third will be at the Lower Gate. Everyone else must stay in the outer courts of the Temple, as required by God's laws. For only the priests and Levites on duty may enter the Temple itself, for they are sanctified. 7. You Levites, form a bodyguard for the king, weapons in hand, and kill any unauthorized person entering the Temple. Stay right beside the king."

8. So all the arrangements were made. Each of the three leaders led a third of the priests arriving for duty that Sabbath, and a third of those whose week's work was done and were going off duty—for Jehoiada the chief priest didn't release them to go home. 9. Then Jehoiada issued spears and shields to all the army officers. These had once belonged to King David and were stored in the Temple. 10. These officers, fully armed, formed a line from one side to the other in front of the Temple and around the altar in the outer court. 11. Then they brought out the little prince and placed the crown upon his head and handed him a copy of the law of God, and proclaimed him king. A great shout went up, "long live the king!" as Jehoiada and his sons anointed him.

12. When Queen Athaliah heard all the noise and commotion, and the shouts of praise to the king, she rushed over to the Temple to see what was going on—and there stood the king by his pillar at the entrance, with the army officers and trumpeters surrounding him, and people from all over the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers singing, accompanied by an orchestra leading the people in a great psalm of praise. Athaliah ripped her clothes and screamed, "Treason! Treason!" 13, 14. "Take her out and kill her," Jehoiada the

priest shouted to the army officers. "Don't do it here at the Temple. And kill anyone who tries to help her." 15, 16, 17. So the crowd opened up for them to take her out and they killed her at the palace stables. Then Jehoiada made a solemn contract that he and the king and the people would be the Lord's. And all the people rushed over to the temple of Baal and knocked it down, and broke up the altars and knocked down the idols, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before his altar.

COMMENTARY

The scene of action quickly transfers to Jerusalem where the queen mother, Athaliah, moved to make certain her claim to the throne.¹ Upon Ahaziah's death at the hands of Jehu, Athaliah set out to kill every person who through David's line might claim the throne. Jehoshabeath (Jehosheba) was the daughter of Jerhoram and the sister of Ahaziah. She acted quickly and wisely in taking Ahaziah's young son, Joash, and hiding him in a room in the Temple. Jehoshabeath was also the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. Jehoiada was destined to become the power behind the throne in Judah. Most likely, Athaliah feverishly hunted this little boy; however, his aunt was able to hide him for six years. During this difficult period, Athaliah reigned as queen over Judah. She did not fear Jehovah and she used her influence to establish Baalism in the southern kingdom.

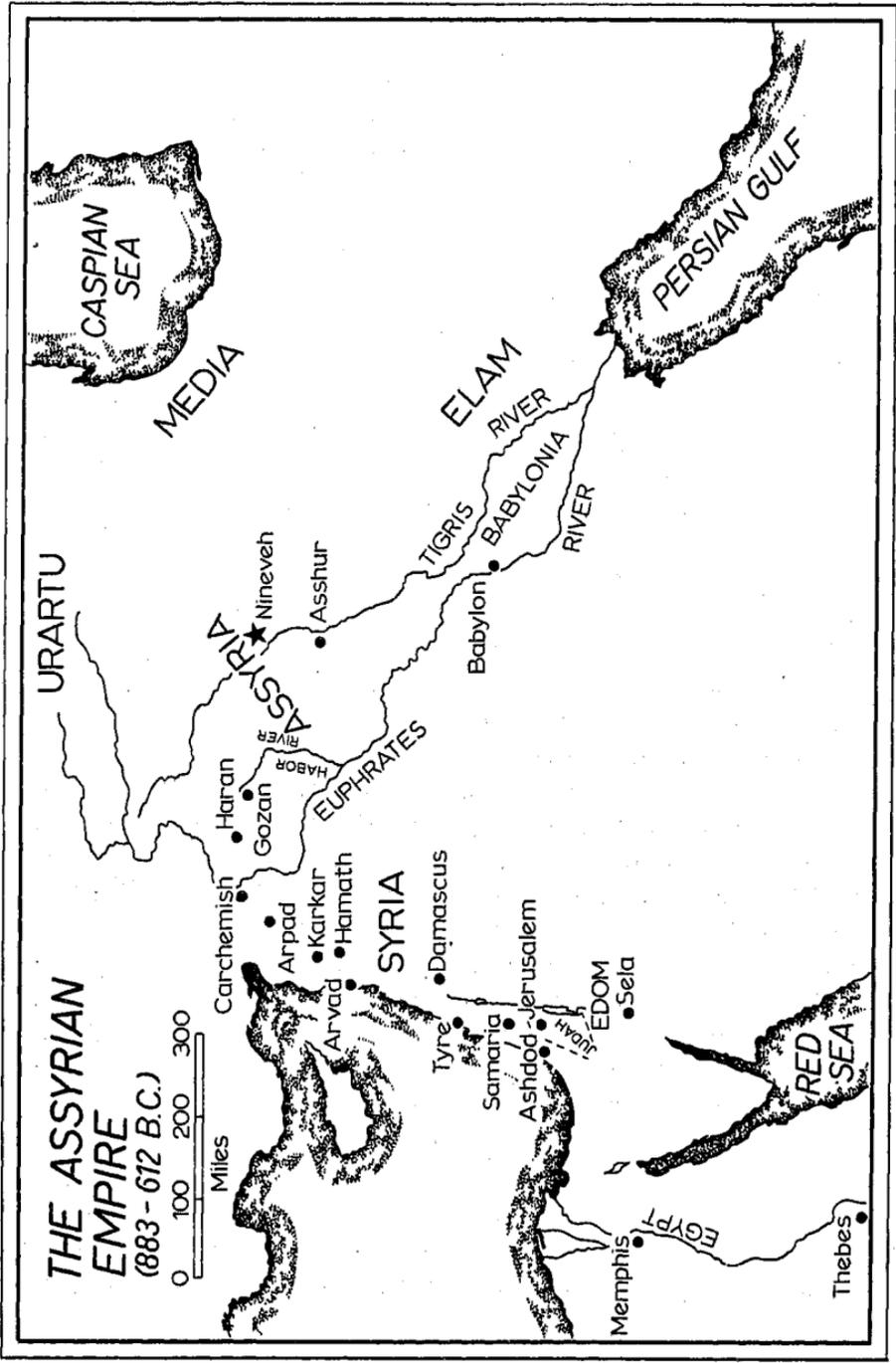
When Joash passed the sixth anniversary of his birth, the high priest, Jehoiada, made his move to depose Athaliah and put the true Davidic king on the throne of Judah. The five men named in this account are not named in II Kings 11:5-7. They are Azariah, Ishmael, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah, and Elishaphat. The whole group of soldiers over which they had charge probably numbered about five hundred. In addition to these soldiers, there was a representative group of Levites and elders who had agreed with Jehoiada to put Joash on the throne. All of this work was done without Athaliah's

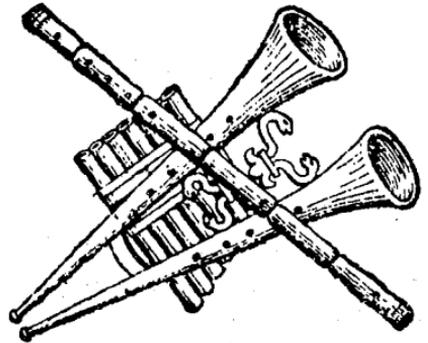
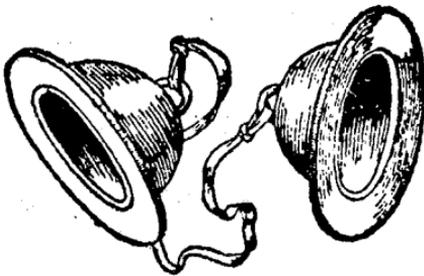
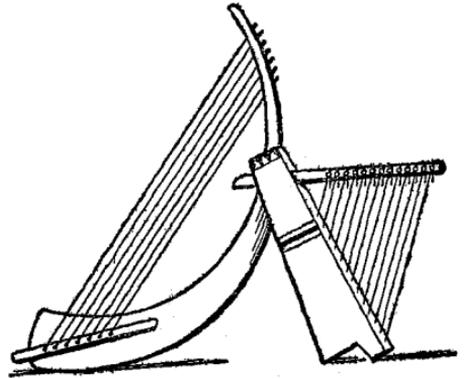
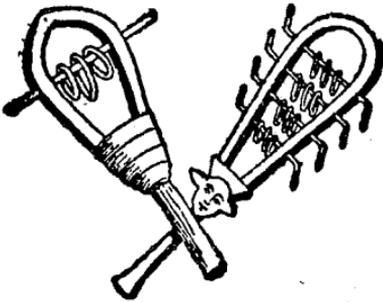
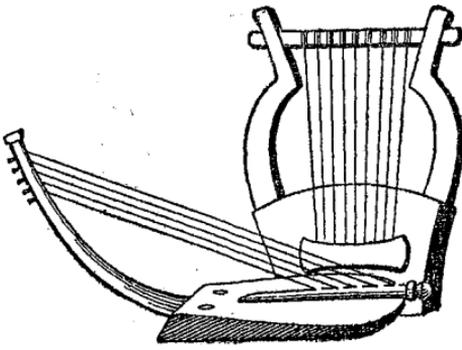
¹Pfeiffer, Charles H., *The Divided Kingdom* Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1967, p. 20.

knowledge. It is possible that many people were surprised to learn that Joash was alive, supposing that all the princes had been killed in Athaliah's purge. Jehoiada proceeded with great care to organize the men at his disposal. One third of the patriots would be priests and Levites who would be stationed at the doors of Jehovah's Temple. One third of the men would take up their positions at "the king's house", the place where Joash had been living. One third of the high priest's helpers were assigned to guard a particular gate in the vicinity of the Temple. The people would fill the courts to which they normally were allowed access. The Temple was not to be desecrated even for this important occasion. "The charge of Jehovah" concerning the sacredness of the Temple had to be observed. On this occasion the Levites were equipped with swords and at the proper time they were to form a protective shield around the boy, Joash. They were to guard this child with their own lives and they had orders to kill anybody who would attempt to harm him.

In order to carry out this very important project, Jehoiada kept all of the priests and Levites in service at the Temple. All of those who were responsible for groups of men were briefed concerning their assignments. Military equipment was taken out of the museum in the Temple and placed in the hands of Levites and others who were ready to put Joash on the throne. When all preparations had been completed, Joash was brought into the court of priests and stationed near the altar of burnt offering as Jehovah had instructed in Deuteronomy 17:18, when Joash was crowned. He was also presented a copy of the Law (the testimony) and the high priest anointed him to be king. The blessing, "Long live the king", was used when Saul was chosen for that office (I Samuel 10:24). It was also employed in the rebellion of Adonijah (I Kings 1:25).

No attempt was made to conceal the coronation. Athaliah had not been invited. From her quarters she heard the shouting of the congregation and the festival sounds of a free people. Upon leaving her house she hurried to Jehovah's Temple where she saw the boy king and the soldiers who blocked her access to





him. She tarried long enough to hear the sound of the trumpets and to hear a few words of the spirited singing. Not being able to contain herself, in a burst of emotion she ripped her queenly robes and charged the whole assembly with treason. Jehoiada answered this demonstration by ordering her to be led from the Temple. Careful attention was to be given to any who might come to Athaliah's defense. Such persons were to be put to death. The queen was not to be killed in the Temple, thus avoiding defiling the house of God. As she made her way back to her residence, she was slain. Her departure was as dramatic as that of her mother, Jezebel.

9. THE REIGN OF JOASH (23:16-24)

TEXT

Chapter 23:16. And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, and all the people, and the king, that they should be Jehovah's people. 17. And all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18. And Jehoiada appointed the officers of the house of Jehovah under the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of Jehovah, to offer the burnt-offerings of Jehovah, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David. 19. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of Jehovah, that none that was unclean in anything should enter in. 20. And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of Jehovah: and they came through the upper gate unto the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. 21. So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. And Athaliah they had slain with the sword.

Chapter 24:1. Joash was seven years old when he began to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Zibiah, of Beer-sheba. 2. And Joash did that which

was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3. And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

4. And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to restore the house of Jehovah. 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. 6. And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, "Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the tax of Moses the servant of Jehovah, and of the assembly of Israel, for the tent of the testimony?" 7. For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, hath broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of Jehovah did they bestow upon the Baalim.

8. So the king commanded, and they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of Jehovah. 9. And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in for Jehovah the tax that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness. 10. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. 11. And it was so, that, at what time the chest was brought unto the king's officers by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the chief priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to its place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. 12. And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of Jehovah; and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of Jehovah, and also such as wrought iron and brass to repair the house of Jehovah. 13. So the workmen wrought, and the work of repairing went forward in their hands, and they set up the house of God in its state, and strengthened it. 14. And when they had made an end, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of Jehovah, even vessels wherewith to

minister and to offer, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt-offerings in the house of Jehovah continually all the days of Jehoiada.

15. But Jehoiada waxed old and was full of days, and he died; a hundred and thirty years old was he when he died. 16. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house. 17. Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. 18. And they forsook the house of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guiltiness. 19. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto Jehovah; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

20. And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people, and said unto them, "Thus saith God, 'Why transgress ye the commandments of Jehovah, so that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken Jehovah, he hath also forsaken you' " 21. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of Jehovah. 22. 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, "Jehovah look upon it, and require it."

23. And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the army of the Syrians 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. 24. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; and Jehovah delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken Jehovah, the God of their fathers. So they executed judgment upon Joash.

25. And when they were departed from him (for they left him very sick), his 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. 26. And these are they that conspired against him: Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess. 27. Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the rebuilding of the house of God, behold, they are written in the commentary of the book of kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:18. Jehoiada now appointed the Levite priests as guards, and to sacrifice the burnt offering to the Lord as prescribed in the law of Moses. He made the identical assignments of the Levite clans that King David had. They sang with joy as they worked. 19. The guards at the Temple gates kept out everything that was not consecrated and all unauthorized personnel.

20. Then the army officers, nobles, governors, and all the people escorted the king from the Temple, wending their way from the Upper Gate to the palace, and seated the king upon his throne. 21. So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet and peaceful because Queen Athaliah was dead.

Chapter 24:1. Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah, from Beer-sheba. 2. Joash tried hard to please the Lord all during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. 3. Jehoiada arranged two marriages for him, and he had sons and daughters.

4. Later on, Joash decided to repair and recondition the Temple. 5. He summoned the priests and Levites and gave them these instructions: "Go to all the cities of Judah and collect offerings for the building fund, so that we can maintain the Temple in good repair. Get at it right away. Don't delay." But the Levites took their time.

6. So the king called for Jehoiada, the High Priest, and

asked him, "Why haven't you demanded that the Levites go out and collect the Temple taxes from the cities of Judah, and from Jerusalem? The tax law enacted by Moses the servant of the Lord must be enforced so that the Temple can be repaired."

7, 8. (The followers of wicked Athaliah had ravaged the Temple, and everything dedicated to the worship of God had been removed to the temple of Baalam.) So now the king instructed that a chest be made and set outside the Temple gate.

9. Then a proclamation was sent to all the cities of Judah and throughout Jerusalem telling the people to bring to the Lord the tax that Moses the servant of God had assessed upon Israel.

10. And all the leaders and the people were glad, and brought the money and placed it in the chest until it was full.

11. Then the Levites carried the chest to the king's accounting office where the recording secretary and the representative of the High Priest counted money, and took the chest back to the Temple again. This went on day after day, and money continued to pour in. 12. The king and Jehoiada gave the money to the building superintendents, who hired masons and carpenters to restore the Temple; and to foundrymen who made articles of iron and brass. 13. So the work went forward, and finally the Temple was in much better condition than before. 14. When all was finished, the remaining money was brought to the king and Jehoiada, and it was agreed to use it for making the gold and silver spoons and bowls used for incense, and for making the instruments used in the sacrifices and offerings.

Burnt offerings were sacrificed continually during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. 15. He lived to a very old age, finally dying at 130. 16. He was buried in the City of David among the kings, because he had done so much good for Israel, for God, and for the Temple.

17, 18. But after his death the leaders of Judah came to King Joash and induced him to abandon the Temple of the God of their ancestors, and to worship shame-idols instead! So the wrath of God came down upon Judah and Jerusalem again. 19.

God sent prophets to bring them back to the Lord, but the people wouldn't listen.

20. Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, Jehoiada's son. He called a meeting of all the people. Standing before them upon a platform, he said to them, "God wants to know why you are disobeying his commandments. For when you do, everything you try fails. You have forsaken the Lord, and now he has forsaken you."

21. Then the leaders plotted to kill Zechariah, and finally King Joash himself ordered him executed in the court of the Temple. 22. That was how King Joash repaid Jehoiada for his love and loyalty—by killing his son. Zechariah's last words as he died were "Lord, see what they are doing and pay them back."

23. A few months later the Syrian army arrived and conquered Judah and Jerusalem, killing all the leaders of the nation and sending back great quantities of booty to the king of Damascus. 24. It was a great triumph for the tiny Syrian army, but the Lord let the great army of Judah be conquered by them because they had forsaken the Lord God of their ancestors. In that way God executed judgment upon Joash. 25. When the Syrians left—leaving Joash severely wounded—his own officials decided to kill him for murdering the son of Jehoiada the priest. They assassinated him as he lay in bed, and buried him in the City of David, but not in the cemetery of the kings. 26. The conspirators were Zabad, whose mother was Shime-ath, a woman from Amon; and Jehozabad, whose mother was Shim-rith, a woman from Moab.

27. If you want to read about the sons of Joash, and the curses laid upon Joash, and about the restoration of the Temple, see *The Annals of the Kings*. When Joash died, his son Amaziah became the new king.

COMMENTARY

The high priestly office was a position of real authority among the Hebrew people. This had never been more manifest than it was in Jehoiada's day. The high priest at this time was

the real power behind the throne. Jehoiada led in the covenant renewal. His rage against the idols of Baal reminds the student of Paul's righteous wrath which he vented against Athens' idols (Acts 17). In a later day, John Knox turned his fury on idolatry in England. Athaliah had been the champion of Baalism. The whole Baalistic system was supported by her government. The Temple of Jehovah suffered because of the neglect of the queen and the people under her influence. With rare delight Jehoiada and the faithful Jehovah worshipers ruined the temple of Baal with all of its fixtures. Mattan, the priest of Baal was killed near the altars of his own temple.

The new government under Joash was committed to Jehovah worship. Priests were appointed for regular service. Offerings were to be presented to Jehovah according to directions in the Law. The singers and instrumentalists were assigned to their respective duties. The gatekeepers were charged with their peculiar responsibilities. Under heavy guard Joash was brought from the Temple to the throne room and installed as king over the southern kingdom. There had been bloodshed. It was a day of dramatic incidents. The stage had been set for a time of renewal and growth among Jehovah's people.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWENTY 21-23

748. Locate the royal cemetery.
749. Who followed Jehoshaphat as king?
750. Name the sons of Jehoshaphat.
751. What was one of Jehoram's first official acts? Evaluate this.
752. Jehoram ruled in Judah. Why would the record refer to "the way of the kings of Israel"?
753. Name Ahab's daughter. Name Ahab's wife.
754. Why was David's house secure?
755. How did Jehoram handle his problems with Edom?

756. Locate Libnah.
757. How did Jehoram use the high places?
758. Who is this Elijah and how did he communicate with Jehoram?
759. List the terrible calamities that were to come upon the king.
760. What did the Philistines and the Arabians do?
761. Which of Jehoram's sons escaped?
762. How did Jehoram die?
763. Explain the "burning" of 21:19.
764. How did Jehoram's burial differ from that of other kings?
765. Who succeeded Jehoram as king of Judah?
766. Who was Omri?
767. Who counselled Ahaziah?
768. Carefully locate Ramoth-gilead. What happened there at this time?
769. Who went to make a hospital visit and who was the patient?
770. Identify Jehu.
771. How was Ahaziah related to Jehoshaphat?
772. How did Ahaziah die?
773. Who was Athaliah? Explain her actions at the time of Ahaziah's death.
774. Identify Jehoshabeath.
775. Where was Joash hid?
776. Who was Jehoiada?
777. How long was Athaliah in power over Judah?
778. To what does "the seventh year" refer in 23:1?
779. Where did Jehoiada go to seek support for his plan?
780. Where was the covenant agreed upon?
781. Describe the three-fold organization set up by Jehoiada.
782. Who would be granted entrance to the Temple?
783. Why would the Levites be armed?

784. What special arrangement was set up for the courses of priests according to 23:8?
785. Where did Jehoiada's men obtain their military equipment?
786. Name the king who is now crowned.
787. What was "the testimony"?
788. Locate another reference to the cry, "Long live the king".
789. How did Athaliah react when she saw what had happened?
790. Why use the trumpets?
791. What happened to the queen mother, Athaliah?
792. What was the nature of Jehoiada's covenant?
793. Identify a special house which the people completely ruined that day.
794. In re-establishing Temple service what code did Jehoiada follow?
795. What kind of person was excluded from the Temple?
796. How old is Joash at this time? Who is the real power behind the throne?

LESSON TWENTY-ONE 24-26

THE REIGN OF JOASH, AMAZIAH'S RISE AND FALL. UZZIAH'S LIFE AND TIMES.

9. THE REIGN OF JOASH—Continued (23:16-24)

INTRODUCTION

Joash and Jehoiada led far-reaching reformation in Jerusalem. Amaziah sought revenge for his father's death. Later he challenged Joash of Israel to battle and finally died at the hands of conspirators. Uzziah accomplished many internal improvements in Judah. The king's leprosy ended an otherwise useful life.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Twenty)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Twenty)

COMMENTARY

Like Saul, David, and Solomon, each of whom reigned forty years, Joash attained to the same number of years for his reign. Some blessing from Jehovah is to be seen in Joash's ability to exercise authority through that many years. Nothing more is known about his mother except her name, Zibiah, and the place of her origin, Beersheba. As long as Jehoiada lived, the high priest exercised a good influence over Joash. Later in his reign, Joash turned away from Jehovah. The king regarded the high priest like a son would look to a father. Jehoiada's deep concern for the protection of the seed of David led him to a careful selection of two wives for Joash. Why he chose two wives we are not told. Perhaps he was suggesting that this should be the extent of Joash's harem. The record indicates that Joash was the father of several children. This, also, was another indication of Jehovah's blessing.

The Temple of Jehovah needed physical repairs. Athaliah had used all of her influence to promote Baalism. Joash's purpose at this time was to effect a complete renewal of the Temple. Jehoiada encouraged him in every way.¹ The priests and Levites were informed of Joash's purpose and were sent throughout the kingdom to tell the people of the king's plans and to collect money for the project. The official religious leaders failed to throw themselves fully into this good work even though they had been told that the matter was urgent. The king counseled with Jehoiada and inquired about the failure of the priests. A half shekel tax (Exodus 30:13-15; Numbers 1:30) was supposed to be paid each year by every male for the purpose of helping to support the work of Jehovah's House. This tax had not been collected for a long time. God's House had been completely impoverished by the Baalists. Joash was deeply concerned.

Since his first plan had failed, Joash devised the building of a box with a necessary opening in the cover. This box was most likely placed in the court of the priests near the altar of burnt-offering. People brought their gifts to the Temple, turned them over to the attending priests who deposited the gifts in the chest. Throughout the borders of Judah the people came with their Temple tax. The failure of the first program had to be laid upon the priests and Levites who would not go to the people with the king's request. Once Joash's country-men were told about the king's plan, with great rejoicing they came. Day after day they filled the money box. Perhaps there was a daily accounting of the funds by attendant priests at the Temple. Just as soon as the money was available, workmen began the task of renewing Jehovah's house. Whatever needed to be done to make the Temple substantial was accomplished by masons, carpenters, and workers in metals. When all of the necessary repairs were made and paid for, money remained in the building fund. This money was used to provide vessels of silver and gold for the service of the Temple. As long as Jehoiada lived, the people of the southern kingdom remained faithful to Jehovah.

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 283

Jehoiada was blessed with a long life of one hundred and thirty years. His being "full of days" (verse 15) suggests something of the satisfaction and the fulfillment of his life. He was accorded a state funeral and was honored in his burial in the royal cemetery. Jehoiada ranked with the best men who were leaders of Jehovah's people. He was a "good" man in relation to his people and his God. Evil forces, held in check in Jehoiada's day, were unleashed when he died. The princes of Judah approached Joash with subtle flattery. Their "obedience" probably caused Joash to think too highly of himself. The idea of "worship" is associated with the action of the princes. Joash was about thirty five years old. Considering all that Jehovah had done for him, it is difficult to understand that he could be influenced so easily to rebel against God. These counselors were like the men who advised Rehoboam to act so foolishly earlier in Israel's history. By this choice, Joash's destiny was sealed. All that a person has done for Jehovah in former days is of no value in personal salvation if one is not faithful until death. When "the house of Jehovah" is forsaken, men not only fail to go there to worship, but they abandon God's whole program. In this context Jesus said, "You should look for Me in My Father's house" (Luke 2:49). He was always totally involved in His Father's business. The historian in Chronicles was fully aware of the cycle of history in which the Hebrews moved. They forsook Jehovah. They gave themselves to "the Asherim" (Baalism). They suffered under the wrath of Jehovah. Their God, moved by great compassion, sent prophets to convict the people of sin and to urge repentance. These prophets were often scorned and were sometimes put to death.

Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, was among the prophets sent by Jehovah to Judah and Jerusalem. He was motivated by and clothed with the Holy Spirit. His message was clear and pointed. Considering all that Jehovah had done for His people and weighing the consequences of their actions, there was no excuse for the rebel attitude. Zechariah emphasized their transgression, reviewed their failures, and reminded his hearers that Jehovah had abandoned them. King Joash dared to order death by

stoning for the prophet. The law had said that idolaters were to be stoned (Leviticus 20:2). The law was completely ignored as this death sentence was decreed for Zechariah. In a remarkable statement in Matthew 23:29-36 our Lord condemned the scribes and Pharisees because of their rejection of Himself and the prophetic word. He summarized the history of the Hebrew people when He charged them with the blood of the prophets which had been shed from the time of Abel to the time of Zechariah. Genesis is the first book in the Hebrew Bible. Second Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew Bible. The expression, as Jesus used it, "from Abel to Zechariah", took in all history pertaining to God's people. Joash had begun his work in a very worthy manner. He suffered a moral and spiritual collapse. Jehoiada should most likely be regarded as the grandfather of Joash. As Zechariah was dying, he expressed confidence in Jehovah's judgment and predicted that Joash would come under that judgment.

The Syrians under their king, Hazael, came to Jerusalem and in battle humiliated Joash and his people. "At the revolution of the year" suggests that this Syrian attack took place in the spring-time. The Hebrews suffered heavy casualties. Many of their leaders were killed. Much goods was carried out of Jerusalem to Damascus. As Jehovah had used foreign powers on other occasions to chastise His own people, so He used the Syrians at this time. When the Hebrews were faithful to God, a small army of Israelites could ruin an empty equipped with legions of soldiers. On this occasion "a small company" of Syrians over-ran Judah and Jerusalem. The historian saw the hand of Jehovah in these events. Retribution for sin was God's purpose in this humiliating defeat. In due time the Syrians withdrew; however, Joash's burdens were not lightened. The king experienced failure in his personal health. Even this would be regarded as evidence of Jehovah's disapproval of his leadership. There were those who remembered how Joash had closed Zechariah's mouth by stoning him to death. These were troublous times. Servants named Zabad (Jozacar) and Jehozabad, whose parentage related them to the Ammonites

and Moabites, conspired and killed Joash in his bed. He had begun his reign in honor and with great promise. He died in shame. He was not buried in the royal cemetery.

Amaziah is the only known son of Joash. The specific nature of the burdens he placed on his "sons" is not described beyond the reference to the "rebuilding of the house of God". Political involvements with Syria and the general unsettled circumstances brought crises in internal affairs. Joash's successor would experience real trials. Other details concerning Joash were written in a "commentary of the book of the kings".

10. THE REIGN OF AMAZIAH (Chapter 25)

TEXT

Chapter 25:1. Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jehoaddan, of Jerusalem. 2. And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, but not with a perfect heart. 3. Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established unto him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father. 4. But he put not their children to death, but did according to that which is written in the law in the book of Moses, as Jehovah commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers; but every man shall die for his own sin."

5. Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and ordered them according to their fathers' houses, under captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, even all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and upward, and found them three hundred thousand chosen men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield. 6. He hired also a hundred thousand mighty men of valor out of Israel for a hundred talents of silver. 7. But there came a man of God to him, saying, "O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for Jehovah is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children

of Ephraim. 8. "But if thou wilt go, do valiantly, be strong for the battle: God will cast thee down before the enemy; for God hath power to help, and to cast down." 9. 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, "Jehovah is able to give thee much more than this." 10. 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 fierce anger. 11. And Amaziah took courage, and led forth his people, and went to the Valley of Salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand. 12. And other ten thousand did the children of Judah carry away alive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they were all broken in pieces. 13. But the men of the army whom Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote of them three thousand, and took much spoil.

14. 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. 15. Wherefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, who said unto him. "Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which have not delivered their own people out of thy hand?" 16. And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, "Have we made thee 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."

17. Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face." 18. And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying,

"The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son to wife:' and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle. 19. "Thou sayest, 'Lo, thou hast smitten Edom;' and thy heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?"

20. But Amaziah would not hear; for it was of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought after the gods of Edom. 21. So Joash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah. 22. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to his tent. 23. And Joash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. 24. And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

25. And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Joash son of Jehohaz king of Israel fifteen years. 26. Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27. Now from the time that Amaziah did turn away from following Jehovah they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. 28. And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:1. Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jeho-addan, a native of Jerusalem. 2. He did what was right, but sometimes resented it! 3. When he was well established as the new king, he executed the men who had

assassinated his father, 4. However, he didn't kill their children but followed the command of the Lord written in the law of Moses, that the fathers shall not die for the children's sins, nor the children for the father's sins. No, everyone must pay for his own sins.

5, 6. Another thing Amaziah did was to organize the army, assigning leaders to each clan from Judah and Benjamin. Then he took a census and found that he had an army of 300,000 men twenty years old and older, all trained and highly skilled in the use of spear and sword. He also paid \$200,000 to hire 100,000 experienced mercenaries from Israel. 7. But a prophet arrived with this message from the Lord: "sir, do not hire troops from Israel, for the Lord is not with them. 8. If you let them go with your troops to battle, you will be defeated no matter how well you fight; for God has power to help or to frustrate." 9. "But the money!" Amaziah whined. "What shall I do about that?" And the prophet replied, "The Lord is able to give you much more than this!" 10. So Amaziah sent them home again to Ephraim, which made them very angry and insulted. 11. Then Amaziah took courage and led his army to the Valley of Salt, and there killed 10,000 men from Seir. 12. Another 10,000 were taken alive to the top of a cliff and thrown over, so that they were crushed upon the rocks below. 13. Meanwhile, the army of Israel that had been sent home raided several of the cities of Judah in the vicinity of Beth-horon, toward Samaria, killing 3,000 people and carrying off great quantities of booty.

14. When King Amaziah returned from this slaughter of the Edomites, he brought with him idols taken from the people of Seir, and set them up as gods, and bowed before them, and burned incense to them! 15. This made the Lord very angry and he sent a prophet to demand, "Why have you worshiped gods who couldn't even save their own people from you. 16. "Since when have I asked your advice?" the king retorted. "Be quiet now, before I have you killed." The prophet left with this parting warning: "I know that God has determined to destroy you because you have worshiped these idols, and have not

accepted my counsel.”

17. King Amaziah of Judah now took the advice of his counselors and declared war on King Joash of Israel (son of Jehoahaz, grandson of Jehu). 18. King Joash replied with this parable: “out in the Lebanon mountains a thistle demanded of a cedar tree. ‘Give your daughter in marriage to my son.’ Just then a wild animal came by and stepped on the thistle, crushing it! 19. You are very proud about your conquest of Edom, but my advice is to stay home and don’t meddle with me, lest you and all Judah get badly hurt.”

20. But Amaziah wouldn’t listen, for God was arranging to destroy him for worshiping the gods of Edom. 21. The armies met at Beth-shemesh, in Judah, 22. and Judah was defeated, and its army fled home. 23. King Joash of Israel captured the defeated King Amaziah of Judah and took him as a prisoner to Jerusalem. Then King Joash ordered two hundred yards of the walls of Jerusalem dismantled, from the gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate. 24. He carried off all the treasures and golden bowls from the Temple, as well as the treasures from the palace; and he took hostages, including Obed-edom, and returned to Samaria.

25. However, King Amaziah of Judah lived on for fifteen years after the death of King Joash of Israel. 26. The complete biography of King Amaziah is written in The Annals of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 27. This account includes a report of Amaziah’s turning away from God, and how his people conspired against him in Jerusalem, and how he fled to Lachish—but they went after him and killed him there. 28. And they brought him back on horses to Jerusalem and buried him in the royal cemetery.

COMMENTARY

The parallel of this record is in II Kings 16:1-20. Amaziah came to the throne in Judah during the crisis which resulted in his father’s death. The new king was twenty five years old. He should have been very capable as Judah’s king. Jehoaddan, his mother, probably had been selected by Jehoiada as a wife for

Joash. She was always associated with Jerusalem. Amaziah was to reign over Judah for twenty nine years. The historian cannot altogether approve or disapprove Amaziah's kingship. The king could have done much better in approaching Jehovah's ideal. He concerned himself with avenging his father's death. He may have been fearful of his own safety as long as the conspirators, Zabad and Jehozabad, lived. The children of the murderers were spared because they posed no real threat to Amaziah. The chronicler reminds the reader that Moses (Deuteronomy 24:16) had said that children should not die for their fathers' sins. Amaziah, most likely, was not too concerned about Moses' instructions in this regard.

Military conflict too often was the order of the day. On numerous occasions the Edomites revolted against Judah. Amaziah organized his army and was able to mobilize three hundred thousand men out of Judah and Benjamin. To qualify for service, a man had to be twenty years of age and physically capable of doing all that would be expected of men in a walking army that used spears and shields. In addition to his own forces, Amaziah paid one hundred talents of silver (about two hundred thousand dollars) to hire the services of one hundred thousand men from the northern kingdom. There may have been other considerations in addition to the silver talents. Jehovah's will was not sought in these matters because it was necessary for "a man of God", a true prophet, to come to Amaziah. Jehovah's word was that Judah could go to war against Edom with the assurance of victory if Amaziah would obey God. In order to secure Jehovah's approval, Amaziah had to release the soldiers of the northern kingdom from their contract. Such a release would cost Amaziah a hundred talents of silver. The king of Judah was assured that "God had power to help" and that He was "able to give" much more than a hundred talents of silver. Against his better judgment, the king sent the hired soldiers home. He then led his army to the Valley of Salt at the extreme southern end of the Dead Sea. "The children of Seir", the Edomites, were defeated. They lost ten thousand men on the battlefield and another ten thousand were taken captive and

brought to Petra in Edom. When the Israelites (soldiers from the northern kingdom) were sent home at the prophet's word, they became very angry. They vented their wrath by attacking several cities in Judah while Amaziah was occupied with Edom. Beth-horon was about twelve miles northwest of Jerusalem. At least three thousand people of Judah were slain by their brethren from the north and much of their goods was taken.

Amaziah's idolatry cannot be excused. Jehovah had just given him a thorough victory over Edom. Judah's king sought out the gods of Edom, packed them up, brought them back to Jerusalem and worshipped them. We are amazed at Jehovah's mercy. Why would He even allow Amaziah to live? Jehovah sent a prophet (not otherwise identified) with a biting indictment. The gods of the Edomites (Baal, Molech, Chemosh and others) were powerless to prevent Edom's defeat in battle. Why would Amaziah concern himself with these idols? On a previous occasion the king had questioned Jehovah's word and then grudgingly obeyed. Now, he dared to insult the prophet by reminding him that he was not a member of the king's cabinet. In addition to the insult, he threatened the prophet's life. Bringing Edom's idols to Jerusalem sealed Amaziah's destiny. He would be destroyed.

Apparently encouraged by his military success against Edom, Amaziah planned to extend his conquests. He "took advice" from his counselors and challenged Joash, king of Israel, to war. To "look one another in the face" was the king of action described in II Samuel 2:13ff when Abner's men and Joab's men met for battle. To ask for a man's daughter in marriage meant that the intended groom counted himself at least equal in rank with the woman and her family. The "thistle" (Amaziah) had insulted the mighty "cedar" (Joash) and the thistle could well expect to be destroyed. The thistle represented that which was worthless, useless, and annoying. The cedar was renowned for its worth, usefulness, and pleasing odor. The advice of Joash to Amaziah was that he should forget this ill-advised war because he could very well lose his throne and the kingdom itself could be lost. Joash showed considerable

restraint and merited approval for his diplomacy. The prophet had said that "God had determined to destroy" Amaziah. That which followed "was of God." Amaziah's idolatry sealed his destiny. Bethshemesh was a village about fifteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. Here the battle was joined and Amaziah and his people were convincingly defeated. Once more Joash was very patient in that he did not put Amaziah to death. Amaziah was returned to Jerusalem. A considerable portion of the walls of Jerusalem was ruined. Much booty and spoil, along with prisoners of war (hostages), were taken back to Samaria. Obed-edom was the name of the person in charge of the treasures in the king's house. Once more, the Temple was robbed. So Amaziah's idol worship brought real trouble to Judah.

Joash, king of Israel, preceded Amaziah in death by fifteen years. Amaziah's tragic history was reduced to written form in the "books of the kings of Judah and Israel." The conspiracy that brought about Amaziah's death began to take shape when he brought the Edomite idols to Jerusalem. Lachish was about twenty five miles west of Hebron in the low lying foothills of Judah. This village was heavily fortified; nevertheless, the conspirators killed Amaziah as he sought refuge there. The dead king was brought back to "the city of Judah" (Jerusalem) where he was buried in the royal cemetery.

11. THE REIGN OF UZZIAH (Chapter 26)

TEXT

Chapter 26:1. And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. 2. He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. 3. Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jecholiah, of Jerusalem. 4. And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5. And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God: and as long as he

sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper.

6. 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 he built cities in the country of Ashdod, and among the Philistines. 7. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Meunim. 8. And the Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong. 9. 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. 10. And he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns for he had much cattle; in the lowland also, and in the plain: and he had husbandmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields; for he loved husbandry. 11. Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their reckoning made by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. 12. The whole number of the heads of fathers' houses, even the mighty men of valor, was two thousand and six hundred. 13. 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. 14. And Uzziah prepared for them, even for all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail, and bows, and stones for slinging. 15. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements, wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: 18. and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, "It pertaineth not unto thee Uzziah, to burn incense unto

Jehovah, 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 honor from Jehovah God." 19. Then Uzziah was wroth; and he a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense. 20. 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 quickly from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him. 21. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. 22. Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. 23. So Uzziah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, "He is a leper:" and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:1. The people of Judah now crowned sixteen-year-old Uzziah as their new king. 2. After his father's death, he rebuilt the city of Eloth and restored it to Judah. 3. In all, he reigned fifty-two years, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah, from Jerusalem. 4. He followed in the footsteps of his father Amaziah, and was, in general, a good king so far as the Lord's opinion of him was concerned. 5. While Zechariah was alive Uzziah was always eager to please God. Zechariah was a man who had special revelations from God. And as long as the king followed the paths of God, he prospered, for God blessed him.

6. He declared war on the Philistines and captured the city of Gath and broke down its walls, also those of Jabneh and Ashdob. Then he built new cities in the Ashdob area and in other parts of the Philistine country. 7. God helped him not only with wars against the Philistines but also in his battles with

the Arabs of Gurbaal and in his wars with the Meunites. 8. The Ammonites paid annual tribute to him, and his fame spread even to Egypt, for he was very powerful. 9. He built fortified towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, and the Valley Gate, and at the turning of the wall. 10. He also constructed forts in the Negeb, and made many water reservoirs, for he had great herds of cattle out in the valleys and on the plains. He was a man who loved the soil and had many farms and vineyards, both on the hillsides and in the fertile valleys. 11. He organized his army into regiments to which men were drafted under quotas set by Je-iel, the secretary of the army, and his assistant, Ma-aseiah. The commander-in-chief was General Hananiah. 12. Twenty-six hundred brave clan leaders commanded these regiments. 13. The army consisted of 307,500 men, all elite troops. 14. Uzziah issued to them shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and slingstones. 15. And he produced engines of war manufactured in Jerusalem, invented by brilliant men to shoot arrows and huge stones from the towers and battlements. So he became very famous, for the Lord helped him wonderfully until he was very powerful.

16. But at that point he became proud—and corrupt. He sinned against the Lord his God by entering the forbidden sanctuary of the Temple and personally burning incense upon the altar. 17, 18. Azariah the high Priest went in after him with eighty other priests, all brave men, and demanded that he get out. “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense,” they declared. “That is the work of the priests alone, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to this work. Get out, for you have trespassed, and the Lord is not going to honor you for this!” 19. Uzziah was furious, and refused to set down the incense burner he was holding. But look! Suddenly—leprosy appeared in his forehead! 20. When Azariah and the others saw it, they rushed him out; in fact, he himself was as anxious to get out as they were to get him out, because the Lord had struck him. 21. So King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death and lived in isolation, cut off from his people and from the Temple. His son Jotham became vice-regent, in charge of the king’s affairs and of the

judging of the people of the land. 22. The other details of Uzziah's reign from first to last are recorded by the prophet Isaiah (son of Amoz). 23. When Uzziah died, he was buried in the royal cemetery even though he was a leper, and his son Jotham became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Uzziah is also called Azariah (II Kings 14:21, Isaiah 6:1). When Amaziah was murdered, Uzziah, only sixteen years of age, was installed as king of Judah. There appeared to be no contest for the throne as there had been in the days of Joash. Eloth was located at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. It was a very strategic port. Solomon's Ophir navy used this as a home port. Jehoshaphat had attempted and failed to establish a navy at Eloth. Uzziah was concerned about the economic welfare of his people. He was granted a long reign of fifty two years. The queen mother's name was Jecholiah. From the time of Bathsheba, the queen mother exercised great authority in Jerusalem. Uzziah received a good report from the chronicler. The good in Amaziah's reign was remembered as a model for Uzziah's kingship. Amaziah's failures were not recalled. Zechariah appeared as a man of God. He "had understanding in the vision of God". He was a "seer" like Samuel had been (I Samuel 9:9). Zechariah's relationship to Uzziah is not detailed. The prophet most likely served as a counsellor to the king. The historian knew the full record of the king's life. "As long as Uzziah sought Jehovah" his government was stable, but the day came when "his heart was lifted up." A summary of Uzziah's achievements is given in verses 6-15. The Philistines were always insisting upon their right to control the coastal plain along the Mediterranean. Even Abraham and Isaac had encounters with this people in their day. More recently they had allied with the Arabians in conflict against Jehoram. Gath is renowned in Bible history as Goliath's home. It was about twenty five miles west of Bethlehem and about fifteen miles from the coast. Jabneh was about thirty miles northwest of Jerusalem and five miles from the coast. Ashdod was near the Great Sea about ten miles

south of Jabneh. Uzziah attacked these three villages and brought them under subjection. Certain Arabians had taken control of territory at Maon, a village about fifteen miles south of Hebron. The Meunim lived at Maon. Nothing more is known about Gur-baal. The historian recorded the fact that "God helped" Uzziah in his conflict with the Philistines. The Ammonites lived on the border of the desert. Their capital, Rabbath, was about twenty five miles east of the Jordan river. These descendants of Lot were forced to pay tribute to Judah. The fame of Uzziah spread even to Egypt in these good years of his reign. He fortified Jerusalem. The gates of a walled city were very necessary and they were also vulnerable to attack. Towers or forts were built at the corner gate on the west side of the city and at the valley gate which probably opened on the valley of Hinnom on the west or south side of the city. The walls of Jerusalem were often extended and strengthened by enterprising kings. Uzziah was very sympathetic with the farmers and herdsmen among his people. Towers were necessary to protect against raiding bands. The wilderness area in Judah was the region west of the Dead Sea, the area around Bethlehem and Tekoa. The lowland was the foothill region (Shephelah) in Judah between the mountains and the coastal plain. Those who kept vineyards, cultivated barley, wheat, flax, and tended olive trees were especially blessed because Uzziah "loved husbandry".

As Uzziah gave attention to the internal development of his kingdom, he did not neglect military provisions. He had an army of three hundred seven thousand five hundred men. Those were organized under twenty six hundred officers. Jeiel, Maazeiah, and Hananiah were responsible to the king for these military registrations. Uzziah is described as a strong military leader who had the respect of the soldiers. Not only did he provide for his men conventional weapons of war, such as spears, bows, and slings; he also produced machines designed to hurl great stones and propel arrows with super-human force.¹ He attained wide fame through the invention and use of these improved military tools. The chronicler leaves the impression

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 315

that Uzziah was "marvellously helped" by Jehovah.

The sin of the king and the judgment that followed is the subject of verses 16-21. The great military leader, the strong friend of his country-men, the king who trusted God became proud and took upon himself liberties that did not pertain to him. He dared to presume to fill the office of priest by going into the Temple (he entered the Holy Place) and standing by the altar of incense just at the door of the Oracle to burn incense on the sacred altar.¹ Azariah was "the chief priest" (verse 20). He, along with eighty regular priests, contested Uzziah's action and charged him with "trespass" against God. The historian observed that these were "valiant men". They dared to accuse the king. They predicted that Jehovah would dishonor Uzziah. Instead of repenting and retreating, the king was furious against his accusers. As he proceeded to burn the incense (the pot or pan was in his hand), the dread disease of leprosy erupted in his forehead. It "rose like the sun". His anger turned to mortal fear. With the priests behind him the king hurriedly left the Temple. Lepers were forced to live apart from the regular community and outside the cities and villages. Since Uzziah was a king, he lived in "a separate house". He was stricken by Jehovah. Very likely, leprosy caused his death. Never again could he go to the Temple. He was unclean. Jotham, Uzziah's son and prince regent, took over the official functions of government.

Uzziah had begun well. His life closed with the ex-king broken in body and spiritually bankrupt. In the very year of Uzziah's death Isaiah experienced his vision of God (Isaiah, chapter 6). The prophet Isaiah wrote an account of Uzziah's life. As he had to live apart from others in the latter years of his life, so in his death, even though buried in the royal cemetery, he was placed in a plot apart from the honored kings of Judah.

¹Schultz, Samuel J., *The Old Testament Speaks*, p. 207

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWENTY-ONE 24—26

797. Identify the mother of Joash.
798. Where did Joash send to get money to repair the Temple?
Why was this repair so urgent?
799. Who was assigned to collect the building fund? What happened?
800. For what purpose had Jehovah's Temple been plundered?
801. How was the chest used?
802. Explain the reference to "Moses' tax".
803. Who were the responsible persons in the use of the building funds?
804. What kinds of skilled workmen were employed?
805. Having repaired the Temple, how were surplus funds used?
806. When were burnt offerings usually offered at the Temple?
807. How old was Jehoiada at death and where did they bury him? How was he regarded among his people?
808. With regard to religion, what happened upon Jehoiada's death?
809. What does the record say about prophets?
810. Who was Zechariah? What did he say? What happened?
811. In connection with Zechariah, explain Jesus' words in Matthew 23:34, 35.
812. Who spoke these words in 24:22, "Jehovah look upon it"?
813. How could a small band of Syrians defeat a great army of Hebrews?
814. How did Joash pass? Why did it happen this way?
815. Where was Joash buried?
816. According to this account, where would one find the recorded events of Joash's life?
817. How long did Amaziah reign? What was his mother's

- name?
818. How many Hebrew soldiers did Amaziah number and assemble? Out of which tribes were these called up?
 819. Why did Amaziah not carry out a complete purge to secure his throne?
 820. How large was the army that he hired and identify this army?
 821. Underscore the great truth in the last part of 25:8.
 822. What word did the man of God speak to the king?
 823. What was Amaziah's concern and how did the man of God answer him?
 824. How did the mercenary army react?
 825. Against whom did Amaziah go to war?
 826. While Amaziah was engaged in battle what happened in Judah?
 827. What very foolish thing did Amaziah do?
 828. Describe Amaziah's attitude toward the prophet of Jehovah.
 829. Explain Amaziah's word, "Come, let us look one another in the face."
 830. Why would Joash refer to the thistle and the cedar?
 831. Why did Amaziah act so foolishly?
 832. Where did Joash and Amaziah meet? What were the results?
 833. In what records were Amaziah's acts written?
 834. Where did Amaziah die? How did this happen?
 835. By what other name was Uzziah known?
 836. Carefully locate Eloth.
 837. How long did Uzziah rule?
 838. Characterize Uaaizh's reign.
 839. Name other nations over which Uzziah won victories.
 840. Describe Uzziah's experiences in Philistia.
 841. What did this king do for Jerusalem?

842. Locate the wilderness of 26:10.
843. What kind of internal improvements did Uzziah accomplish?
844. What were the engines of 26:15?
845. Describe Uzziah's army. What are your impressions of Uzziah as a king?
846. How was this king "Marvellously helped"?
847. Describe Uzziah's sin.
848. Who tried to prevent the king from acting foolishly?
849. Describe Uzziah's attitude.
850. How did Jehovah pass judgment on the king?
851. How long was this affliction upon Uzziah? Where did he live?
852. Who followed him to the throne?
853. Who wrote an account of the acts of Uzziah?
854. Where was king Uzziah buried?

LESSON TWENTY-TWO 27-29

THE REIGN OF JOTHAM. AHAZ AND HIS ALLIES. HEZEKIAH, RELIGIOUS REFORMER.

12. THE REIGN OF JOTHAM. (Chapter 27)

INTRODUCTION

Jotham avoided God's house and failed as king in Judah. The door was opened for Ahaz' wicked reign and terrible idolatry. The Damascus altar had no place in Jerusalem. Times were ripe for Hezekiah, one of Judah's most respected kings.

TEXT

Chapter 27:1. Jotham was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. 2. And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that his father Uzziah had done: howbeit he entered not into the temple of Jehovah. And the people did yet corruptly. 3. He built the upper gate of the house of Jehovah, and on the wall of Ophel he built much. 4. Moreover he built cities in the hill-country of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers. 5. He fought also with the king of the children of Ammon, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year a hundred talents of silver and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon render unto him, in the second year also, and in the third. 6. So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before Jehovah his God. 7. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8. He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:1. Jotham was twenty-five years old at the time

he became king, and he reigned sixteen years, in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerushah, daughter of Zadok. 2. He followed the generally good example of his father Uzziah—who had, however, sinned by invading the Temple—but even so his people became very corrupt. 3. He built the Upper Gate of the Temple, and also did extensive rebuilding of the walls on the hill where the Temple was situated. 4. And he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and erected fortresses and towers on the wooded hills. 5. His war against the Ammonites was successful, so that for the next three years he received from them an annual tribute of \$200,000 in silver, 10,000 sacks of wheat, and 10,000 sacks of barley. 6. King Jotham became powerful because he was careful to follow the path of the Lord his God. 7. The remainder of his history, including his wars and other activities, is written in The Annals of the Kings of Israel and Judah. 8. In summary, then, he was twenty-five years old when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years, in Jerusalem. 9. When he died, he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Ahaz became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Because of Uzziah's leprosy, Jotham had considerable experience in government before he was installed as king of Judah. At age twenty-five he became king in his own right and he held this high office for sixteen years. Nothing more is known about his mother, Jerushah, or her family. In the latter years of Uzziah's reign the people of Judah forsook Jehovah. Jotham came to the throne at a time of spiritual crisis. He was able to provide responsible leadership within certain limits. Whereas Uzziah had entered the Temple to burn incense like a priest, Jotham did not enter "the temple of Jehovah." Even though he led his people back toward God, there was an alienation in that he did not frequent Jehovah's Temple. This should be contrasted with Solomon's early love for God's House. Generally, the people of Judah were in desperate need of a great spiritual revival.

Jotham concerned himself with certain building improve-

ments in Jerusalem such as "the upper gate". This has been described as a gate leading from the king's palace to the court of priests at the Temple. Ophel means "hill" or "mound" and was located in the southeast sector of Jerusalem below the Temple mount. In the regions of Judah he built other fortifications. The ancient rivalry between Judah and the Ammonites continued. Jotham was able to force the Ammonites to pay considerable tribute in the form of wheat and barley. The measure used here was the "cor" which amounted to about three and one-half quarts. Judah was able to collect ten thousand measures each of wheat and barley through each of three succeeding years. In addition, Judah collected one hundred talents of silver each year. The silver talent may be valued at about two thousand dollars. Having considered Jotham's achievements, the historian attributed his success to the fact that the king "ordered his ways before Jehovah". This brief account is a summary of Jotham's life and times. There were other failures, successes, wars. His biography became a part of the significant history of his people. He was accorded a burial with full honors and was succeeded on the throne by Ahaz, his son.

13. THE REIGN OF AHAZ (Chapter 28)

TEXT

Chapter 28:1. Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: and he did not that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, like David his father; 2. but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for the Baalim. 3. Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel. 4. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5. Wherefore Jehovah his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away of his a great multitude of 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. 6. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, all of them valiant men; because they had forsaken Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 7. And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the ruler of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king.

8. 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. 9. But a prophet of Jehovah was there, whose name was Oded: and he went out to meet the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, "Behold, because Jehovah, the God of your fathers, was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage which hath reached up unto heaven. 10. "And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not even with you trespasses of your own against Jehovah your God? 11. "Now hear me therefore, and send back the captives, that ye have taken captive of your brethren; for the fierce wrath of Jehovah is upon you." 12. 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, 13. and said unto them, "Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for ye purpose that which will bring upon us a trespass against Jehovah, to add unto our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel." 14. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the assembly. 15. And the men that have been mentioned 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, unto their

brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

16. At that time did King Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. 17. For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. 18. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland, and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Aijalon, and Gederoth, and Soco with the towns thereof, and Timnah with the towns thereof, Gimzo also and the towns thereof: and they dwelt there. 19. For Jehovah brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he had dealt wantonly in Judah, and trespassed sore against Jehovah. 20. And Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. 21. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of Jehovah, and out of the house of the king and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but it helped him not.

22. And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against Jehovah, this same king Ahaz. 23. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him; and he said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. 24. 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 Jehovah; and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25. And in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger Jehovah, the God of his fathers. 26. Now the rest of his acts, and all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27. And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem; for they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:1. Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king and he reigned sixteen years, in Jerusalem. But he was an evil king, unlike his ancestor King David. 2. For he followed the

example of the kings over in Israel and worshiped the idols of Baal. 3. He even went out to the Valley of Hinnom, and it was not just to burn incense to the idols, for he even sacrificed his own children in the fire, just like the heathen nations that were thrown out of the land by the Lord to make room for Israel. 4. Yes, he sacrificed and burned incense at the idol shrines on the hills and under every green tree.

5. That is why the Lord God allowed the king of Syria to defeat him and deport large numbers of his people to Damascus. The armies from Israel also slaughtered great numbers of his troops. 6. On a single day, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, killed 120,000 of his bravest soldiers because they had turned away from the Lord God of their fathers. 7. Then Zichri, a great warrior from Ephraim, killed the king's son Ma-aseiah and the king's administrator Azrikam, and the king's second-in-command Elkanah.

8. The armies from Israel also captured 200,000 Judean women and children, and tremendous amounts of booty which they took to Samaria. 9. But Oded, a prophet of the Lord, was there in Samaria and he went out to meet the returning army. "Look!" he exclaimed. "The Lord God of your fathers was angry with Judah and let you capture them, but you have butchered them without mercy, and all heaven is disturbed. 10. And now are you going to make slaves of these people from Judah and Jerusalem? What about your own sins against the Lord your God? 11. Listen to me and return these relatives of yours to their homes, for now the fierce anger of the Lord is upon you." 12. Some of the top leaders of Ephraim also added their opposition. These men were Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai. 13. "You must not bring the captives here!" they declared. "If you do, the Lord will be angry, and this sin will be added to our many others. We are in enough trouble with God as it is." 14. So the army officers turned over the captives and booty to the political leaders to decide what to do. 15. Then the four men already mentioned distributed captured stores of clothing to the women and

children who needed it, and gave them shoes, food, and wine, and put those who were sick and old on donkeys, and took them back to their families in Jericho, the City of Palm Trees. Then their escorts returned to Samaria.

16. About that time King Ahaz of Judah asked the king of Assyria to be his ally in his war against the armies of Edom. For Edom was invading Judah and capturing many people as slaves. 17, 18. Meanwhile, the Philistines had invaded the lowland cities and the Negeb and had already captured Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo with their surrounding villages, and were living there. 19. For the Lord brought Judah very low on account of the evil deeds of King Ahaz of Israel, for he had destroyed the spiritual fiber of Judah and had been faithless to the Lord. 20. But when Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, arrived, he caused trouble for King Ahaz instead of helping him. 21. So even though Ahaz had given him the Temple gold and the palace treasures, it did no good.

22. In this time of deep trial, King Ahaz collapsed spiritually. 23. He sacrificed to the gods of the people of Damascus who had defeated him, for he felt that since these gods had helped the kings of Syria, they would help him too if he sacrificed to them. But instead, they were his ruin, and that of all his people. 24. The king took the gold bowls from the Temple and slashed them to pieces, and nailed the door of the Temple shut so that no one could worship there, and made altars to the heathen gods in every corner of Jerusalem. 25. And he did the same in every city of Judah, thus angering the Lord God of his fathers. 26. The other details of his life and activities are recorded in The Annals of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 27. When King Ahaz died, he was buried in Jerusalem but not in the royal tombs, and his son Hezekiah became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Ahaz became king of Judah about 736 B.C. He was in office during the lifetime of Isaiah, the prophet. The great "Immanuel" prophecy which was so important in Isaiah's

ministry (Isaiah, chapter 7). was announced first of all to Ahaz. This king may also have known Hosea and Micah, although no direct reference is made to them. Ahaz was not a good king. He never followed the ideals of David. He turned, instead, to the Baalism that in his day ruined the northern kingdom. Jeroboam, son of Nebat, had set the pattern for the kings of Israel. He did as he pleased with regard to religion and he disregarded the law of Jehovah. Jeroboam set up calf worship (molten images) at Bethel and Dan. This was repetition of what Israel had done at Sinai in Moses' day. Ahab and Jezebel compounded the troubles of the northern kingdom by bringing in special kinds of Baalism from Phoenicia. There were no limits to Ahaz' idolatry. The valley of Hinnom bounded Jerusalem on the west and the south. Ahaz desecrated this valley with idol worship. "Burning children in the fire" describes Molech worship. Solomon, at an earlier time, (I Kings 11:7, 8), had sinned in the same way by the worship of Chemosh and Molech. The god, Molech, has been described as resembling an ox with outstretched human arms and with a built-in furnace. Whether or not a child placed in the arms of this heathen god perished depended on the control of the flames by the priests of Molech. How any man could so deal with his own children or the children of other parents is beyond our understanding. This king of inhuman conduct was one of the main reasons Jehovah drove the native Canaanites from their homeland. "High places" were special mounds constructed as places of worship. Usually idol worship was practiced in these places. Sometime Jehovah might be worshiped at the "high place". The worship of Baal was often practiced "on the hills" where the devotees could look out over fertile fields supposedly blessed by Baal. Certain features of the worship of Baal and the Asherah (female Baal) could most appropriately be shared "under green trees". Sexual intercourse and the employment of priestesses were characteristics of Canaanite worship from earliest times. Ahaz followed his own pleasure in all of these matters.

Jehovah has always judged His own people when they have despised His Word. His judgment may be delayed or it may come

quite suddenly. In Ahaz' day the Syrians attacked Judah and led great number of them away captive. Damascus, the capital of Syria, was about one hundred thirty miles north northeast of Jerusalem. The Israelites of the northern kingdom under their king, Pekah, came against Judah and killed one hundred and twenty thousand people "in one day". This was certainly a judgment for Judah. Judgment came even into the King's house with the death of Maaseiah, the king's son, at the hands of the Ephraimite warrior, Zichri. Azrikam and Elkanah, both of whom were very close to king Ahaz, were killed. Ahaz should have understood that Jehovah was not pleased with him.

Not only did Pekah and Israel kill many people in the southern kingdom, they also took two hundred thousand captives. They took whatever goods were available to them and brought prisoners of war and goods back to their main city. Samaria was about thirty five miles north of Jerusalem.

Since the days of Jeroboam I there had been much bitterness between the northern and southern kingdoms of the Hebrews. They often engaged in civil war. Jehovah used Israel at this time to chastise Ahaz; however, Pekah and his people did more than Jehovah intended. The pent-up fury of many years was turned loose. Jehovah intervened in behalf of Judah by sending the prophet, Oded. The slaughter of one hundred twenty thousand of Judah was within Jehovah's will. The captivity and cruel treatment of the two hundred thousand was excessive vengeance. So Oded charged Israel with trespass and warned them that Jehovah would turn His wrath upon them. Wise princes of the tribes of Ephraim, Azariah, Berechiah, Jehizkiah, and Amasa rescued the captives from Judah. Their spoil was restored to them. Their physical needs of food and clothing were provided. Their people who were weak and sick were given attention and the entire army of captives was returned to Jericho and released. Jericho was called "the city of palm trees" even in Moses' time (Deuteronomy 34:3). The city was located in the Jordan valley about seven miles above the Dead Sea and about fifteen miles from Jerusalem.

Isaiah urged Ahaz to trust Jehovah (Isaiah, chapter 7). Ahaz

stubbornly refused. He faced real trouble in Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria. He attempted an alliance with the Assyrians which failed miserably. Ahaz had to contend with the Edomites and the Philistines. Judah's people in the vicinity of Beersheba, Beth-shemesh, and Timnah suffered because of these enemies. Tiglath-pilneser, the Assyrian king, did not keep faith with Ahaz. He took the king's money, but he would not fight Ahaz's enemies. In order to pay the heathen king, Ahaz robbed Jehovah's Temple. Ahaz was a genuine outlaw in his relationship to Jehovah. He "dealt wantonly in Judah".

In the days of the Judges when Jehovah's people were terribly oppressed by their enemies because of their sins, the Hebrews finally would repent and Jehovah would send relief. As Ahaz' troubles increased he compounded his sins by adding to the list of gods he served. He observed that the Syrians had been successful in their military engagements. He reasoned that if he served their gods, his luck might change.¹ He saw a heathen altar in Damascus (II Kings 16:10). Urijah, the priest at Jehovah's Temple, was ordered to make a Damascus altar. This heathen altar replaced Jehovah's altar in the Temple. In due time Ahaz impoverished the Temple and closed the doors. Idolatrous altars "in every corner of Jerusalem" and high places "in every city of Judah" were Ahaz' most notable building projects. So he lived and so he died. He never repented. He was one of Judah's most wicked kings. His history was written not to honor the king or the people, but to describe his obstinate refusal to do Jehovah's will and to detail the judgment sent by God. Even in his funeral he was given a dishonorable discharge from life's duties. He was buried in Jerusalem, but not in that plot reserved for those who had served Jehovah well. Judah needed a strong and righteous king. By God's grace such a man was to sit in Ahaz' seat.

14. THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH (29-32)

TEXT

Chapter 29:1. Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 688

twenty years old; and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. 2. And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done. 3. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of Jehovah, and repaired them. 4. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the broad place on the east, 5. and said unto them, "Hear me, ye Levites; now sanctify yourselves, and sanctify the house of Jehovah, the God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. 6. "For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of Jehovah, and turned their backs. 7. "Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel. 8. "Wherefore the wrath of Jehovah was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to be tossed to and fro, to be an astonishment, and a hissing, as ye see with your eyes. 9. "For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. 10. "Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with Jehovah, the God of Israel, that his fierce anger may turn away from us. 11. "My sons, be not now negligent; for Jehovah hath chosen you to stand before him, to minister unto him, and that ye should be his ministers, and burn incense."

12. Then the Levites arose, Mahath, the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; and of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah; 13. and of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeuel; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; 14. and of the sons of Heman, Jehuel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel. 15. And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and went in, according to the commandment of the king by the words of

Jehovah, to cleanse the house of Jehovah. 16. And the priests went in unto the inner part of the house of Jehovah, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of Jehovah into the court of the house of Jehovah. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad to the brook Kidron. 17. Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of Jehovah; and they sanctified the house of Jehovah in eight days: and on the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end. 18. Then they went in to Hezekiah the king within the palace, and said, "We have cleansed all the house of Jehovah, and the altar of burnt-offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the table of showbread with all the vessels thereof. 19. "Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away when he trespassed, have we prepared and sanctified; and, behold, they are before the altar of Jehovah."

20. Then Hezekiah the king arose early, and gathered the princes of the city, and went up to the house of Jehovah. 21. And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for a sin-offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of Jehovah. 22. So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood; and sprinkled it on the altar: and they killed the rams, and sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and sprinkled the blood upon the altar. 23. And they brought near the he-goats for the sin-offering before the king and the assembly; and they laid their hands upon them: 24. and the priests killed them, and they made a sin-offering with their blood upon the altar; to make atonement for all Israel; for the king commanded that the burnt-offering and the sin-offering should be made for all Israel.

25. And he set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for the commandment was of Jehovah by his prophets. 26. And the Levites stood with the instruments of

David, and the priests with the trumpets. 27. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar. And when the burnt-offering began, the song of Jehovah began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David king of Israel. 28. And all the assembly worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished.

29. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped. 30. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto Jehovah with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

31. Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto Jehovah: come near and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of Jehovah." And the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings; and as many as were of a willing heart brought burnt-offerings. 32. And the number of the burnt-offerings which the assembly brought was threescore and ten bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these were for a burnt-offering to Jehovah. 33. And the consecrated things were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. 34. But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt-offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the priests had sanctified themselves; for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. 35. And also the burnt-offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace-offerings, and with the drink-offerings for every burnt-offering. So the service of the house of Jehovah was set in order. 36. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, because of that which God had prepared for the people: for the thing was done suddenly.

Chapter 30:1. And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 2. For the king had

taken counsel, and his princes, and all the assembly in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month. 3. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. 4. And the thing was right in the eyes of the king and of all the assembly. 5. So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem: for they had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written. 6. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, "Ye children of Israel, turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7. "And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, who trespassed against Jehovah, the God of their fathers, so that he gave them up to desolation, as ye see. 8. "Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were; but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve Jehovah your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. 9. "For if ye turn again unto Jehovah, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, and shall come again into this land: for Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him."

10. So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. 11. Nevertheless certain men of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. 12. Also upon Judah came the hand of God to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the princes by the word of Jehovah.

13. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly. 14. And they arose and took away the altars that

were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron. 15. Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought burnt-offerings into the house of Jehovah. 16. And they stood in their place after their order, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood which they received of the hand of the Levites. 17. For there were many in the assembly that had not sanctified themselves: therefore the Levites had the charge of assembly that had not sanctified themselves: therefore the Levites had the charge of killing passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto Jehovah. 18. For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it is written. For Hezekiah had prayed for them, saying, "The good Jehovah pardon every one 19. that setteth his heart to seek God, Jehovah, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." 20. And Jehovah hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people. 21. And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites 22. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that had good understanding in the 22. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that had good understanding in the service of Jehovah. So they did eat throughout the feast for the seven days, offering sacrifices of peace-offerings, and making confession to Jehovah, the God of their fathers.

23. And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days; and they kept other seven days with gladness. 24. For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the assembly for offerings a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the assembly a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. 25. And all the assembly of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the assembly that came out of Israel,

and the sojourners that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. 26. So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. 27. Then the priests, the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy habitation, even unto heaven.

Chapter 31:1. Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake in pieces the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, and brake down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

2. And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, both the priests and the Levites, for burnt-offerings and for peace-offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp of Jehovah. 3. He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt-offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt-offerings, and the burnt-offering for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of Jehovah. 4. Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to the law of Jehovah. 5. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel gave in abundance the first-fruits of grain, new wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. 6. And the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of dedicated things which were consecrated unto Jehovah their God, and laid them by heaps. 7. In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month. 8. And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed Jehovah, and his people Israel. 9. Then

Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10. And Azariah the chief priest, of the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since the people began to bring the oblations into the house of Jehovah, we have eaten and had enough, and have left plenty; for Jehovah hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store."

11. Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of Jehovah; and they prepared them; 12. and they brought in the oblations and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully. And over them Conaniah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was second; 13. and Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, were overseers under the hand of Conaniah and Shimei his brother, by the appointment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God. 14. And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter at the east gate, was over the freewill-offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of Jehovah, and the most holy things. 15. And under him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in their office of trust, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small: 16. besides them that were reckoned by genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, even every one entered into the house of Jehovah, as the duty of every day required, for their service in their offices according to their courses; 17. and them that were reckoned by genealogy of the priests by their fathers' houses, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their offices by their courses; 18. and them that were reckoned by genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation: for in their office of trust they sanctified themselves in holiness. 19. Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, that were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every city, there were men that were mentioned by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogy among the Levites.

20. And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah; and he

wrought that which was good and right and faithful before Jehovah his God. 21. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.

Chapter 32:1. After these things, and this faithfulness, Sennacherib, king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fortified cities, and thought to win them for himself. 2. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, 3. 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. 4. 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?" 5. And he took courage, and built up all the wall that was broken down, and raised it up to the towers, and the other wall without, and strengthened Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. 6. And he set captains of war over the people and gathered them together to him in the broad place at the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, 7. "Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there is a greater with us than with him: 8. "with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is Jehovah our God to help us, and to fight our battles." And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9. After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem (now he was before Lachish, and all his power with him), unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto Judah that were at Jerusalem, saying, 10. "Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, 'Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide the siege in Jerusalem? 11. 'Doth not Hezekiah persuade you, to give you over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, "Jehovah our God will deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" 12. '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 upon it shall ye burn incense?" 13. 'Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the peoples of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands in any wise able to deliver their land out of my hand? 14. 'Who was there among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of my hand? 15. 'Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you after this manner, neither believe ye him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of my hand?' "

16. And his servants spake yet more against Jehovah God, and against his servant Hezekiah. 17. He wrote also letters, to rail on Jehovah, the God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of the lands, which have not delivered their people out of my hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of my hand." 18. And they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language unto the people of Jerusalem that were on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city. 19. And they spake of the God of Jerusalem, as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands.

20. And Hezekiah the king, and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, prayed because of this, and cried to heaven. 21. And Jehovah sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty men of valor, 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 from his own bowels slew him there with the sword. 22. Thus Jehovah saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side. 23. And many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem, and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah; so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

24. In those days Hezekiah was sick even unto death: and he prayed unto Jehovah; and he spake unto him, and gave him a sign. 25. 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. 26. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of Jehovah came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

27. And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honor: and he provided him treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of goodly vessels; 28. store-houses also for the increase of grain and new wine and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and flocks in folds. 29. Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much substance. 30. 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. 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.

32. Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his good deeds; behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 33. And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the ascent of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:1. Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became the king of Judah, and he reigned twenty-nine years, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. 2. His reign was a good one in the Lord's opinion, just as his ancestor David's had been. 3. In the very first month

of the first year of his reign, he reopened the doors of the Temple and repaired them. 4, 5. He summoned the priests and Levites to meet him at the open space east of the Temple, and addressed them thus: "Listen to me, you Levites. Sanctify yourselves and sanctify the Temple of the Lord God of your ancestors—clean all the debris from the holy place. 6. For our fathers have committed a deep sin before the Lord our God; they abandoned the Lord and his Temple and turned their backs on it. 7. The doors have been shut tight, the perpetual flame has been put out, and the incense and burnt offerings have not been offered. 8. Therefore the wrath of the Lord has been upon Judah and Jerusalem. He has caused us to be objects of horror, amazement, and contempt, as you see us today. 9. Our fathers have been killed in war, and our sons and daughters and wives are in captivity because of this. 10. "But now I want to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. 11. My children, don't neglect your duties any longer, for the Lord has chosen you to minister to him and to burn incense."

12, 13, 14. Then the Levites went into action: From the Kohath clan, Mahath (son of Amasai) and Joel (son of Azariah); From the Merari clan, Kish (son of Abdi) and Azariah (son of Jehallelel); From the Gershon clan, Joah (son of Zimmah) and Eden (son of Joah). From the Elizaphan clan, Shimri and Jeuel; From the Asaph clan, Zechariah and Mattaniah; From the Hamanite clan, Jehuel and Shime-i; From the Jeduthun clan, Shemaiah and Uzziel. 15. They in turn summoned their fellow Levites and sanctified themselves, and began to clean up and sanctify the Temple, as the king (who was speaking for the Lord) had commanded them. 16. The priests cleaned up the inner room of the Temple, and brought out into the court all the filth and decay they found there. The Levites then carted it out to the brook Kidron. 17. This all began on the first day of April, and by the eighth day they had reached the outer court, which took eight days to clean up, so the entire job was completed in sixteen days. 18. Then they went back to the palace and reported to King Hezekiah, "We have completed the

cleansing of the Temple and of the altar of burnt offerings and of its accessories, also the table of the Bread of the Presence and its equipment. 19. What's more, we have recovered and sanctified all the utensils thrown away by King Ahaz when he closed the Temple. They are beside the altar of the Lord."

20. Early the next morning, King Hezekiah went to the Temple with the city officials, 21. taking seven young bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the nations and for the Temple. He instructed the priests, the sons of Aaron, to sacrifice them on the altar of the Lord. 22. So they killed the young bulls, and the priests took the blood and sprinkled it on the altar, and they killed the rams and sprinkled their blood upon the altar, and did the same with the lambs. 23. The male goats for the sin offering were then brought before the king and his officials, who laid their hands upon them. 24. Then the priests killed the animals and made a sin offering with their blood upon the altar, to make atonement for all Israel as the king had commanded—for the king had specified that the burnt offering and sin offering must be sacrificed for the entire nation.

25, 26. He organized Levites at the Temple into an orchestral group, using cymbals, psalteries, and harps. This was in accordance with the directions of David and the prophets Gad and Nathan—who had received their instructions from the Lord. The priests formed a trumpet corps. 27. Then Hezekiah ordered the burnt offerings to be placed upon the altar, and as the sacrifice began, the instruments of music began to play the songs of the Lord, accompanied by the trumpets. 28. Throughout the entire ceremony everyone worshiped the Lord as the singers sang and the trumpets blew. 29. Afterwards the king and his aides bowed low before the Lord in worship. 30. Then King Hezekiah ordered the Levites to sing before the Lord some of the psalms of David and of the prophet Asaph, which they gladly did, and bowed their heads and worshiped.

31. "The consecration ceremony is now ended," Hezekiah said. "Now bring your sacrifices and thank offerings." So the people from every part of the nation brought their sacrifices

and thank offerings, and those who wished to, brought burnt offerings too. 32, 33. In all, there were 70 young bulls for burnt offerings, 100 rams, and 200 lambs. In addition, 600 oxen and 3,000 sheep were brought as holy gifts. 34. But there were too few priests to prepare the burnt offerings so their brothers the Levites helped them until the work was finished—and until more priests had reported to work—for the Levites were much more ready to sanctify themselves than the priests were. 35. There was an abundance of burnt offerings, and the usual drink offering with each, and many peace offerings. So it was that the Temple was restored to service, and the sacrifices offered again. 36. And Hezekiah and all the people were very happy because of what God had accomplished so quickly.

Chapter 30:1. King Hezekiah now sent letters throughout all of Israel, Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh, inviting everyone to come to the Temple at Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration. 2, 3. The king, his aides, and all the assembly of Jerusalem had voted to celebrate the Passover in May this time, rather than at the normal time in April, because not enough priests were sanctified at the earlier date, and there wasn't enough time to get notices out. 4. The king and his advisors were in complete agreement in this matter, 5. so they sent a Passover proclamation throughout Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, inviting everyone. They had not kept it in great numbers as prescribed. 6. "Come back to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel," the king's letter said, "so that he will return to us who have escaped from the power of the kings of Assyria. 7. Do not be like your fathers and brothers who sinned against the Lord God of their fathers and were destroyed. 8. Do not be stubborn, as they were, but yield yourselves to the Lord and come to his Temple which he has sanctified forever, and worship the Lord your God so that his fierce anger will turn away from you. 9. For if you turn to the Lord again, your brothers and your children will be treated mercifully by their captors, and they will be able to return to this land. For the Lord your God is full of kindness and mercy and will not continue to turn away his face from you if you return to him."

10. So the messengers went from city to city throughout Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as Zebulun. But for the most part they were received with laughter and scorn; 11. However, some from the tribes of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun turned to God and came to Jerusalem. 12. But in Judah the entire nation felt a strong, God-given desire to obey the Lord's direction as commanded by the king and his officers.

13. And so it was that a very large crowd assembled at Jerusalem in the month of May for the Passover celebration. 14. They set to work and destroyed the heathen altars in Jerusalem, and knocked down all the incense altars, and threw them into Kidron Brook. 15. On the first day of May the people killed their Passover lambs. Then the priests and Levites became ashamed of themselves for not taking a more active part, so they sanctified themselves and brought burnt offerings into the Temple. 16. They stood at their posts as instructed by the law of Moses the man of God; and the priests sprinkled the blood received from the Levites. 17, 18, 19. Since many of the people arriving from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun were ceremonially impure because they had not undergone the purification rites, the Levites killed their Passover lambs for them, to sanctify them. Then King Hezekiah prayed for them and they were permitted to eat the Passover anyway, even though this was contrary to God's rules. But Hezekiah said, "May the good Lord pardon everyone who determines to follow the Lord God of his fathers, even though he is not properly sanctified for the ceremony." 20. And the Lord listened to Hezekiah's prayer and did not destroy them. 21. So the people of Israel celebrated the Passover at Jerusalem for seven days with great joy. Meanwhile the Levites and priests praised the Lord with music and cymbals day after day. 22. (King Hezekiah spoke very appreciatively to the Levites of their excellent music.) So, for seven days the observance continued, and peace offerings were sacrificed, and the people confessed their sins to the Lord God of their fathers.

23. The enthusiasm continued, so it was unanimously decided to continue the observance for another seven days. 24.

King Hezekiah gave the people 1,000 young bulls for offerings, and 7,000 sheep; and the princes donated 1,000 young bulls and 10,000 sheep. And at this time another large group of priests stepped forward and sanctified themselves. 25. Then the people of Judah, together with the priests, the Levites, the foreign residents, and the visitors from Israel, were filled with deep joy. 26. For Jerusalem hadn't seen a celebration like this one since the days of King David's son Solomon. 27. Then the priests and Levites stood and blessed the people, and the Lord heard their prayers from his holy temple in heaven.

Chapter 31:1. Afterwards a massive campaign against idol worship was begun. Those who were at Jerusalem for the Passover went out to the cities of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh and tore down idol altars, the obelisks, shame-images, and other heathen centers of worship. Then the people who had come to the Passover from the northern tribes returned again to their own homes.

2. Hezekiah now organized the priests and Levites into service corps to offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings, and to worship and give thanks and praise to the Lord. 3. He also made a personal contribution of animals for the daily morning and evening burnt offerings, as well as for the weekly Sabbath and monthly new moon festivals, and for the other annual feasts as required in the law of God. 4. In addition, he required the people in Jerusalem to bring their tithes to the priests and Levites, so that they wouldn't need other employment but could apply themselves fully to their duties as required in the law of God. 5, 6. The people responded immediately and generously with the first of their crops and grain, new wine, olive oil, money, and everything else—a tithe of all they owned, as required by law to be given to the Lord their God. Everything was laid out in great piles. The people who had moved to Judah from the northern tribes and the people of Judah living in the provinces also brought in the tithes of their cattle and sheep, and brought a tithe of the dedicated things to give to the Lord and piled them up in great heaps. 7, 8. The first of these tithes arrived in June, and the piles continued to grow

until October. When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw these huge piles, how they blessed the Lord and praised his people! 9. "Where did all this come from?" Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites. 10. And Azariah the High Priest from the clan of Zadok replied, "These are tithes! We have been eating from these stores of food for many weeks, but all this is left over, for the Lord has blessed his people."

11. Hezekiah decided to prepare storerooms in the Temple. 12, 13. All the dedicated supplies were brought into the Lord's house. Conaniah, the Levite, was put in charge, assisted by his brother Shime-i and the following aides: Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, Benaiah. These appointments were made by King Hezekiah and Azariah the High Priest. 14, 15. Kore (son of Imnah, the Levite), who was the gatekeeper at the East Gate, was put in charge of distributing the offerings to the priests. His faithful assistants were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah. They distributed the gifts to the clans of priests in their cities, dividing it to young and old alike. 16. However, the priests on duty at the Temple and their families were supplied directly from there, so they were not included in this distribution. 17, 18. The priests were listed in the genealogical register by clans, and the Levites twenty years old and older were listed under the names of their work corps. A regular food allotment was given to all families of properly registered priests, for they had no other source of income because their time and energies were devoted to the service of the Temple. 19. One of the priests was appointed in each of the cities of the priests to issue food and other supplies to all priests in the area, and to all registered Levites.

20. In this way King Hezekiah handled the distribution throughout all Judah, doing what was just and fair in the sight of the Lord his God. 21. He worked very hard to encourage respect for the Temple, the law, and godly living, and was very successful.

Chapter 32:1. Some time later, after this good work of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah and laid

siege to the fortified cities, planning to place them under tribute. 2. When it was clear that Sennacherib was intending to attack Jerusalem, 3. Hezekiah summoned his princes and officers for a council of war, and it was decided to plug the springs outside the city. 4. They organized a huge work crew to block them, and to cut off the brook running through the fields. "Why should the king of Assyria come and find water?" they asked. 5. Then Hezekiah further strengthened his defenses by repairing the wall wherever it was broken down and by adding to the fortifications, and constructing a second wall outside it. He also reinforced Fort Millo in the City of David, and manufactured large numbers of weapons and shields. 6. He recruited an army and appointed officers and summoned them to the plains before the city, and encouraged them with this address: 7. "Be strong, be brave, and do not be afraid of the king of Assyria or his mighty army, for there is someone with us who is far greater than he is! 8. He has a great army, but they are all mere men, while we have the Lord our God to fight our battles for us!" This greatly encouraged them.

9. Then King Sennacherib of Assyria, while still besieging the city of Lachish, sent ambassadors with this message to King Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem: 10. "King Sennacherib of Assyria asks, 'Do you think you can survive my siege of Jerusalem?' 11. King Hezekiah is trying to persuade you to commit suicide by staying there—to die by famine and thirst—while he promises that "the Lord our God will deliver us from the king of Assyria"! 12. Don't you realize that Hezekiah is the very person who destroyed all the idols, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem to use only the one altar at the Temple, and to burn incense upon it alone? 13. Don't you realize that I and the other kings of Assyria before me have never yet failed to conquer a nation we attacked? The gods of those nations weren't able to do a thing to save their land! 14. Name just one time when anyone, anywhere, was able to resist us successfully. What makes you think your God can do any better? 15. Don't let Hezekiah fool you! Don't believe him. I say it again—no god of any nation has ever yet been able to rescue his people from

me or my ancestors; how much less your God!"

16. Thus the ambassador mocked the Lord God and God's servant Hezekiah, heaping up insults. 17. King Sennacherib also sent letters scorning the Lord God of Israel. "The gods of all the other nations failed to save their people from my hand, and the God of Hezekiah will fail, too," he wrote. 18. The messengers who brought the letters shouted threats in the Jewish language to the people gathered on the walls of the city, trying to frighten and dishearten them. 19. These messengers talked about the God of Jerusalem just as though he were one of the heathen gods—a handmade idol!

20. Then King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet (son of Amoz) cried out in prayer to God in heaven, 21. and the Lord sent an angel who destroyed the Assyrian army with all its officers and generals! So Sennacherib returned home in deep shame to his own land. And when he arrived at the temple of his god, some of his own sons killed him there. 22. That is how the Lord saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem. And now there was peace at last throughout his realm. 23. From then on King Hezekiah became immensely respected among the surrounding nations, and many gifts for the Lord arrived at Jerusalem, with valuable presents for King Hezekiah, too.

24. But about that time Hezekiah became deathly sick, and he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord replied with a miracle. 25. However, Hezekiah didn't respond with true thanksgiving and praise, for he had become proud, and so the anger of God was upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. 26. But finally Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem humbled themselves, so the wrath of the Lord did not fall upon them during Hezekiah's lifetime.

27. So Hezekiah became very wealthy and was highly honored. He had to construct special treasury buildings for his silver, gold, precious stones, and for his shields and gold bowls. 28, 29. He also built many storehouses for his grain, new wine, and olive oil, with many stalls for his animals, and folds for the great flocks of sheep and goats he purchased; and he acquired

many towns, for God had given him great wealth. 30. He dammed up the Upper Spring of Gihon and brought the water down through an aqueduct to the west side of the City of David sector in Jerusalem. He prospered in everything he did. 31. However, when ambassadors arrived from Babylon to find out about the miracle of his being healed, God left him to himself in order to test him and to see what he was really like. 32. The rest of the story of Hezekiah and all of the good things he did are written in The Book of Isaiah (the prophet, the son of Amoz), and in The Annals of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 33. When Hezekiah died he was buried in the royal hillside cemetery among the other kings, and all Judah and Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then his son Manasseh became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Hezekiah's appearance in Judah's history was indeed timely and by divine appointment.¹ How could a man as corrupt as Ahaz be the father of a son who was as godly as Hezekiah? "Hezekiah" means "Jehovah has strengthened". We wonder who it was that named him. Whatever good he accomplished, he had no spiritual heritage from his father upon which to build. Again in history here is God's man for the hour. He began his reign at the age of twenty five and led Judah through twenty nine years. The "Zechariah" named in 29:1 cannot be identified with certainty. The name Abijah means "Jehovah is my father". This woman was Ahaz' wife and Hezekiah's mother. A wife with such a godly name apparently had no good influence on Ahaz. Perhaps she influenced Hezekiah in his godly disposition. The Davidic pattern of righteousness was Hezekiah's ideal. David is called "father" in the sense that the new king was his direct lineal descendant. Ahaz had shut the doors to the Temple. One of the first official acts of Hezekiah was to "open the doors of the house of Jehovah". If religious reformation was to be realized, the king knew that the religious leaders (priests and Levites) had to set the example. In the presence of the Temple the king met these men and told them to concern

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 519

themselves with sanctification (genuine holiness), "sanctify yourselves and sanctify the house of Jehovah" (verse 5). The term "filthiness" has to do with everything associated with Ahaz' idolatries. Hezekiah showed his awareness of Judah's crisis as he reviewed the recent history of his people. God's people had trespassed (disregarded Jehovah's rights), forsaken God, turned their backs upon the Lord, put out the lamps in His Temple. Jehovah had permitted His people to be tossed about like a ball. Even Judah's enemies were "astonished" at the sufferings to which Jehovah's people had been subjected. Judah had become as a "hissing" in that they were regarded as shameful even by the nations. As Moses had predicted (Deuteronomy 28:28, 32, 36, 37), the sword and captivity had been experienced in some measure already. Hezekiah enlisted the support of the priests and Levites in the renewal of the covenant with Jehovah.

A very hearty response was made by the ministering priests and Levites. (The student is reminded that every serving priest was a Levite. All Levites could not serve as priests. To serve at the altar and to burn incense, one had to be a Kohathite Levite within certain age limits, and physically perfect. The Merarite and Gershonite Levites could do other tasks related to Temple service if they met certain requirements.) Since all three Levitical families are named here, Kohath, Merari, and Gershon; it is evident that all of the Levites supported Hezekiah's reformation.¹ Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were Levites who had special responsibility for music and singing in the Temple services in David's day. In Hezekiah's time their descendants joined the great program of religious renewal in Judah. It should be observed that the priests and Levites, first of all, sanctified themselves. They certified their own ceremonial cleanness. They washed their bodies and changed their garments. They committed themselves to God. Next in order, they proceeded with a general house cleaning of the Temple. They began in the "inner part of the house" and they continued through the court removing every suggestion of idolatry, every foreign object with

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 360

which Ahaz had defiled the Temple. All of this "filthiness" and "uncleanness" was dumped in the valley of the Kidron to the East of the Temple. The work just described required a total of sixteen days. Sanctifying the house of Jehovah also meant that all of the sacred furniture and vessels had to be washed. The holy vessels which Ahaz had removed had to be brought out of store rooms and cleansed and replaced in the Temple proper.

If this was the first month of the religious year, it was Abib or Nisan. The Passover was to be kept on the fourteenth day of that month. The keeping of the Passover is not mentioned in this account. This would not mean that it was not observed. The overriding consideration at this time was the cleansing of the Temple and opening the doors to the house of Jehovah. When the priests and Levites reported that all preparations had been made, Hezekiah gathered the princes about him and they met at the Temple. The burnt offering was the basis of all offerings made at the altar (verse 24). It signified complete devotion to Jehovah in that the entire animal was consumed in the fire. The sin offering was made "for the kingdom and the sanctuary and for Judah" (verse 21). The king and the princes (the kingdom), the priests and Levites (the sanctuary), and all of the people (Judah) were included in these offerings. The sin offering was a confession of guilt and a sincere request for pardon. When the blood of the animals was sprinkled on the altar it was displayed before Jehovah and those who offered the sacrifices. The blood was the symbol of life, but it could not be so displayed until there had been death. When the king and other responsible leaders "laid their hands" (verse 23) on the animals, they designated these particular animals for the blood atonement and recognized that the animals were their substitutes. So "atonement for all Israel" was made according to the prescriptions recorded in the book of Leviticus.

The historian is careful to note that all of Hezekiah's actions were according to the best Hebrew tradition. He had named the ancient Levitical families. He had mentioned the chief musicians of David's day. He now refers to the commandment of David, of Gad, and of Nathan (verse 25). Sacred music was very

important in this religious reformation. Percussion instruments (cymbals), strings (harps, psaltery), wind instruments (trumpets), and the great Levitical choir were all used in the praise of Jehovah. The burnt offering would smoulder on the altar throughout the day. Through this period the choir and orchestra sang and played. At twilight another lamb would be placed on the altar to burn slowly through the night (Exodus 29:38, 39). Hezekiah and all of the princes joined in humble worship of Jehovah.

When the priests had sanctified themselves and the king and princes had given themselves completely to the Lord, then the congregation was charged to do likewise. The thank offering was a variation of the peace offering. It usually followed the burnt and sin offerings and meant that the offerer was in a happy covenant relationship with Jehovah. Because of the great number of persons who wanted to share in the religious services and the correspondingly large number of sacrifices, the priests needed more help. So Levites who were not priests were allowed to help in these services on this particular day. To "flay" an animal meant to kill it, catch the blood, remove the animal's hide, cut the animal into proper portions and lay it out on the altar. Some of the persons who were qualified by birth and family to serve as priests were hesitant to sanctify themselves for this work. Drink offerings (verse 35) were brought with the burnt offerings. They consisted of wine which was poured out as a libation at the base of the altar of burnt offering. This was one of the truly memorable days in Judah's history because Jehovah's house "was set in order". By God's grace and through Hezekiah's leadership the doors of the Temple once more were opened.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWENTY-TWO (27-29)

855. How could Jotham be a good king and not enter into the Temple?
856. What was the length of Jotham's reign?

857. Carefully identify and locate Ophel.
858. Why would Jotham build castles in the forests?
859. Over what enemy did Jotham prevail and what tribute did he receive?
860. How does the Bible record account for the might of Jotham?
861. How old was Jotham at his death?
862. Whose reign is mentioned as a standard of righteousness for the kings of Judah?
863. List the charges brought against Ahaz.
864. Locate the valley of Hinnom.
865. Why is mention made of "green trees"?
866. Carefully identify two powerful kings who caused Ahaz much trouble.
867. Why was there such terrible loss of life in Judah?
868. Who was Zichri?
869. What did the children of Israel do to Judah at this time?
870. Who was Oded? What was the nature of his work?
871. What were the Israelites told to do?
872. Why would the Israelites show compassion to the people of Judah?
873. To what place were the captives returned and what provisions were made for them?
874. To whom did Ahaz appeal for military help?
875. What other enemies did Ahaz and Judah now have to face?
876. Locate Bethshemesh.
877. Explain the phrase, "to deal wantonly".
878. Who was Tiglath-pilneser?
879. Where did Ahaz get monies to buy help?
880. Why did Ahaz worship the Syrian gods?
881. What does the record say about Ahaz and altars?
882. What were the "high places"?

883. Where is the rest of Ahaz' history written?
884. What do you learn in II Kings 16 about the altar from Damascus?
885. How long did Hezekiah reign?
886. Why was Hezekiah not wicked like his father?
887. When did Hezekiah begin to repair the Temple?
888. What instruction did Hezekiah bring to the Levites?
889. Explain the reference to "putting out the lamps".
890. Why should Judah and Jerusalem be "tossed to and fro"?
891. How did Hezekiah describe the condition of his people in 29:9?
892. What was the importance of burning incense?
893. Name the major Levitical families mentioned in 29:12.
894. What was involved in "cleansing the house of Jehovah"?
895. To what place were the unclean things removed? Locate this place
896. How long did it take to cleanse the Temple?
897. To whom was the report of the cleansing brought?
898. What kind of an offering was made according to 29:21? Why was this most appropriate?
899. Explain the importance of sprinkling the blood.
900. Why would the king and other leaders put their hands on the he-goats?
901. For whom were these offerings made?
902. Why are Gad and Nathan mentioned at this time?
903. Explain the meaning of the burnt-offering.
904. What other exercise accompanied the service of the burnt offering?
905. Who were the persons engaging in worship?
906. What other kind of offering did the king tell the people to bring?
907. Distinguish between Levites and priests as in v. 34.
908. What other kinds of offerings are named in v. 35?

909. How many offerings were made according to 29:32, 33?
910. What is the meaning of "flaying" and offering?
911. Why was there so much rejoicing on this occasion?

LESSON TWENTY-THREE 30-33

HEZEKIAH AND THE PASSOVER REORGANIZATION OF TEMPLE PROCEDURES ASSYRIAN INVASION THE REIGNS OF MANASSEH AND AMON

14. THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH—Continued (29-32)

INTRODUCTION

The passover was kept and Hezekiah led in a genuine religious reformation. The Temple became the real house of God again. Priests served and worshipers brought their tithes. God delivered Hezekiah and his people from the Assyrians. Manasseh destroyed much of the good his father had accomplished.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Twenty-two)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Twenty-two)

COMMENTARY

The celebration of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread received Hezekiah's immediate attention. That which was attempted by the king had not been done among Jehovah's people since Solomon's day. He dared to hope that all of the Hebrews, both southern and northern kingdoms, would gather in Jerusalem for the Passover and the week of worship and feasting that followed. One of the main concerns of Jeroboam I was to keep the people of the northern kingdom from attending these celebrations at the Temple. So he had made idolatrous worship convenient and readily available for his people. The summons to the feast were sent out through the length and breadth of the land. "From Beersheba to Dan" (verse 5) covered all of Canaan from south to north, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. The "posts" (swift runners) carried the

good news calling for genuine repentance, for faithfulness to "Jehovah", the God of the Hebrew patriarchs. In the invitation was expressed the hope that the northern kingdom might not be completely lost to the Assyrians who at that time had led many northern Hebrews captive. The king's appeal was that these northern brethren remember their relationship in the common parentage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Hezekiah urged them not to be stiffnecked (recklessly stubborn); but rather to return (to repent) to Jehovah. Hezekiah's runners remind us of the men sent out by Jesus to the villages of the Jews to tell them He was coming. The posts were as far north as Asher which bordered Phoenicia. Their brethren in the north subjected them to ridicule. A few of the northern Israelites accepted the invitation. The people of Judah showed a willingness to follow Hezekiah's leadership.

The time of the keeping of the Passover as this was done by Hezekiah is a matter of interest. This feast was supposed to be kept during the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, Abib (Exodus 12:18). When the Hebrews were preparing to leave Mount Sinai the time came for the Passover to be observed. Some of the people were ceremonially unclean and could not share in the feast. For such persons an appointment was made whereby they could keep the Passover one month later on the same day of the month (Numbers 9:11). In Hezekiah's day the decision was made, apparently with Jehovah's approval, that the Passover be kept in the second month, Iyar, because there was a need for more sanctified priests and because a general announcement of the celebration needed to be published.

Many of the priests did what was necessary to qualify themselves to serve in God's House. By special dispensation they were assisted in the preparation of the offerings by the Levites. God's Word required that one be ceremonially clean in order to keep the Passover. Due to the special circumstances of this Passover, some of the ceremonial requirements were relaxed. Hezekiah personally prayed for the whole assembly. He asked Jehovah's forgiveness. The Lord heard the king's prayer;

“He healed the people” (verse 20). The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed immediately upon the Passover and lasted seven days (Exodus 12:15). These were days of worship and of unrestrained joy in the offering of sacrifices to Jehovah. The joyful spirit of the whole assembly is well demonstrated in their request that the usual seven day period be doubled. Many sacrifices were presented to Jehovah and it was truly a religious holiday in Jerusalem.

There had been a concerted effort to destroy every suggestion of idolatry in the city of Jerusalem. When the feast days had passed, attention was given to the destruction of images throughout Judah and even in Ephraim and Manasseh to the North.

Due to Ahaz' utter disregard of the Temple and of Jehovah worship the priesthood was seriously disorganized. David, in his time, had carefully set up the courses of priests and Levites. Hezekiah determined to follow David's example in this matter. Priests were appointed and the king made certain that they were well acquainted with every part of their work. He made all provisions for the daily sacrifices. There was to be an offering on the altar day and night. The people were taught to bring their tithes to the Temple and thus provide for their ministers, the priests and Levites, so the ministers could “give themselves to the law of Jehovah”. Grain, wine, oil, honey, sheep and oxen were brought to the Temple. By the third month, Sivan, the harvest of barley and wheat was completed. By the seventh month, Tisri, the vintage, flax, and olive harvest had been gathered. Out of these materials the “heaps” were fashioned. Hezekiah was well pleased with the popular acceptance of his leadership. Azariah, the chief priest, made a good report on the people's “oblations” (offerings). The priests and Levites had all necessary provisions and the people's lives were blessed.

Rooms were provided at the Temple for the storage of the material of the tithes. The Levites who were specially appointed to attend to the storage and use of the tithes are named in this account. Kore had the special assignment of administering the free will offerings. These were associated with the peace

offering and were the only offerings for which an imperfect animal would be accepted. In Joshua's day forty eight Levitical cities were appointed throughout Palestine. With the division of the kingdom, the number of these cities was greatly reduced. Kore and his associates were to fair and were not to respect persons in administering the tithe. All of the Levitical families were to share in the Temple provisions. The serving priests and Levites at this time began their ministries at the age of twenty years. The sons of Aaron were those priests who were of high priestly lineage. The "suburbs" were the pasture lands surrounding each Levitical city. The chronicler commends Hezekiah. His work was good, right, faithful. He sought God with his whole heart.

A more complete record of Hezekiah's encounter with Sennacherib is given in II Kings 18:13 through II Kings 19:37 and in Isaiah, chapters 36 and 37. We have here a summary of these experiences. In Isaiah's day the Assyrians under Tiglath-pileser and Sargon had captured Samaria (722-721 B.C.) and had over-run the northern kingdom. Jerusalem and Judah were to feel the threat of Assyrian dominion when Sennacherib led a powerful army into Judah and camped in the Philistine plain. Sennacherib had already taken several Judean villages and was busy marshaling his forces for an attack on Jerusalem. Hezekiah reasoned that his captial would soon be under siege. He cut off the water supply that might aid the enemy and very skillfully diverted the water so as to bring it into reservoirs within the city.¹ He strengthened the walls of the city, provided his army with necessary weapons, and called them to trust in Jehovah.

As Sennacherib planned his assault on Jerusalem his army was at Lachish about thirty five miles southwest of the capital. He sent a captain named Rabshakeh² to threaten Hezekiah and his people and to offer the opportunity of surrender. Rabshakeh said they would besiege the city. He said that Hezekiah had deceived the Hebrew people. He made his fatal

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 384

²A Babylonian title meaning "Chief Prince".

mistake when he defied Jehovah by challenging His power to deliver Jerusalem and Judah from the Assyrians. This defiance of Jehovah had proved to be Goliath's ruin in David's day. Sennacherib would have come against the city at once, but he had to meet an attack by the Ethiopians under Tirhakah, their king. So Rabshakeh had come and without respect for king or people heaped his insults on his hearers in their own language. Letters were brought from the Assyrian field headquarters which were just as insolent as Rabshakeh's words. Hezekiah spread these scrolls before Jehovah and prayed for guidance. Jehovah answered through Isaiah, the prophet, and predicted that the Assyrians would not build a mound against Jerusalem or shoot an arrow at a Hebrew soldier. In one night one hundred eighty five thousand Assyrian soldiers died in their camp at the hands of "an angel" (verse 21). Sennacherib hurriedly fled to Nineveh, his capital. While he worshiped his god, Nisroch, his two sons killed him and fled to the region of Ararat. Jehovah vindicated His holy name and spared His people.

Hezekiah's boil (cancer) threatened his life. He heard God's word, "Set your house in order. You are to die". He asked the Lord for some more time to complete his reformation and to father a son. Jehovah told him He would add fifteen years to his life and confirmed the same by causing the shadow to reverse on the sun dial (two sun-rises in one day). Hezekiah was a great and good king; but he did not perfectly follow Jehovah. Terrible times were in store for Jerusalem and Judah; but Jehovah was merciful in sparing Hezekiah from the sorrow of those days.

Many internal improvements were made in the kingdom during Hezekiah's time. He added to the national treasury. He built cities. He promoted agriculture. He employed his engineering genius in providing water for Jerusalem. When the visitors came from Babylon, Hezekiah failed to ask Jehovah's will. He treated them like brethren. Jehovah sent Isaiah to condemn Hezekiah in this matter and to tell him that these very people would come at a later day and ruin Jerusalem. "God left

him" in this matter because the king did not seek His counsel. Even in this instance, however, Hezekiah graciously resigned himself to Jehovah's will. He accepted the judgment of the Lord.

Isaiah was well qualified by character and personal knowledge to write about the life and times of Hezekiah. This king was honored in his death. He had been one of Judah's strongest leaders since David's reign.

15. THE REIGN OF MANASSEH. (33:1-19)

TEXT

Chapter 33:1. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. 2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel. 3. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; and he reared up altars for the Baalim, and made Asheroth, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4. And he built altars in the house of Jehovah, whereof Jehovah said, "In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever." 5. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Jehovah. 6. He also made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; and he practised augury, and used enchantments, and practised sorcery, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. 7. And he set the graven image of the idol, which he had made, in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: 8. neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from off the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them, even all the law and the statutes and the ordinances given by Moses." 9. And Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that they did evil more

than did the nations whom Jehovah destroyed before the children of Israel.

10. And Jehovah spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they gave no heed. 11. Wherefore Jehovah brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. 12. And when he was in distress, he besought Jehovah his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13. And he 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 Jehovah he was God.

14. Now after this he built an outer wall to the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance at the fish gate; and he compassed Ophel about with it, and raised it up to a very great height: and he put valiant captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15. And he took away the foreign gods, and the idol out of the house of Jehovah, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of Jehovah, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. 16. And he built up the altar of Jehovah, and offered thereon sacrifices of peace-offerings and of thanksgiving, and commanded Judah to serve Jehovah, the God of Israel. 17. Nevertheless the people sacrificed still in the high places, but only unto Jehovah their God.

18. 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 Jehovah, the God of Israel, behold, they are written among the acts of the kings of Israel. 19. His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him, and all his sin and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up the Asherim and the graven images, before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the history of Hozai.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:1. Manasseh was only twelve years old when he

became king, and he reigned fifty-five years, in Jerusalem. 2. But it was an evil reign, for he encouraged his people to worship the idols of the heathen nations destroyed by the Lord when the people of Israel entered the land. 3. He rebuilt the heathen altars his father Hezekiah had destroyed—the altars of Baal, and of the shame-images, and of the sun, moon, and stars. 4, 5. He even constructed heathen altars in both courts of the Temple of the Lord, for worshiping the sun, moon, and stars—in the very place where the Lord had said that he would be honored forever. 6. And Manasseh sacrificed his own children as burnt offerings in the Valley of Hinnom. He consulted spirit-mediums, too, and fortune-tellers and sorcerers, and encouraged every sort of evil, making the Lord very angry. 7. Think of it! He placed an idol in the very Temple of God, where God had told David and his son Solomon, “I will be honored here in this Temple, and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen to be honored forever above all the other cities of Israel. 8. And if you will obey my commands—all the laws and instructions given to you by Moses—I won’t ever again exile Israel from this land which I gave your ancestors.” 9. But Manasseh encouraged the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do even more evil than the nations the Lord destroyed when Israel entered the land.

10. Warnings from the Lord were ignored by both Manasseh and his people. 11. So God sent the Assyrian armies, and they seized him with hooks and bound him with bronze chains and carted him away to Babylon. 12. Then at last he came to his senses and cried out humbly to God for help. 13. And the Lord listened, and answered his plea by returning him to Jerusalem and to his kingdom! At that point Manasseh finally realized that the Lord was really God!

14. It was after this that he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David and the wall from west of the Spring of Gihon in the Kidron Valley, and then to the Fish Gate, and around Citadel Hill, where it was built very high. And he stationed his army generals in all of the fortified cities of Judah. 15. He also removed the foreign gods from the hills and took his idol from the Temple and tore down the altars he had built on the

mountain where the Temple stood, and the altars that were in Jerusalem, and dumped them outside the city. 16. Then he rebuilt the altar of the Lord and offered sacrifices upon it—peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings—and demanded that the people of Judah worship the Lord God of Israel. 17. However, the people still sacrificed upon the altars on the hills, but only to the Lord their God.

18. The rest of Manasseh's deeds, and his prayer to God, and God's reply through the prophets—this is all written in The Annals of the Kings of Israel. 19. His prayer, and the way God answered, and a frank account of his sins and errors, including a list of the locations where he built idols on the hills and set up shame-idols and graven images (this of course was before the great change in his attitude) is recorded in The Annals of the Prophets.

COMMENTARY

Hezekiah had a wicked father; even so, he served God well. The son born late in Hezekiah's life-time proved to be as wicked as his grandfather, Ahaz.¹ A father's wickedness or righteousness does not guarantee the same character in his offspring. Manasseh began to reign at the age of twelve and he was to have the responsibility of the longest reign (55 years) among the kings of Judah. After Hezekiah there was to be only one more good king in Judah, namely, Josiah. Manasseh hurried the kingdom toward its ultimate destiny. Without restraint Manasseh brought in the gods of the nations. High places, heathen altars, Baalim, Asheroth, passing children through the fire were fully sanctioned by the king. Altars to gods were once more set up in Jehovah's Temple.² The host of heaven", the sun, moon, and stars and worshiped as deities. Fortune-telling, astrology, contact with the dead (familiar spirits) were all practiced openly with the government's consent. Instead of leading Judah toward God, Manasseh "seduced" his people and

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 533.

²Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary, Chronicles*, p. 262.

they became more wicked than the native Canaanites with whom Joshua had contended in his day.

“Jehovah spake to Manasseh” most likely through prophets. There was no inclination to hear God. The Assyrians came and took Manasseh captive. They bound him like a criminal and he was utterly humiliated. In captivity the king came to his senses, repented of his sins and Jehovah mercifully restored him to the throne in Jerusalem. After returning to Jerusalem Manasseh attempted to fill his office honorably. The walls of Jerusalem were strengthened. Gihon was in the Kidron valley just east of Ophel. The fish gate was in the south-east sector of the wall of the city. The king began to cleanse the city of its idols and he also removed gods and altars from Jehovah’s Temple. He worshiped Jehovah at the altar designated for this devotion. He was not able to centralize all Jehovah worship at the Temple. Some Jehovah worship was conducted at “high places” in the city and the country. The prayer of Manasseh was regarded as very important. Careful records of this prayer were kept in the annals of his reign. “Hozai” may be a proper name. It also means “seers”. A seer was a prophet, one who spoke for God to man. These persons also kept written records about important events. Manasseh’s wickedness was also a part of the record of his life. The good he accomplished did not erase the evil he had done. He probably was not granted the highest burial honors in that he was “buried” in his own house”.

16. THE REIGN OF AMON (33:20-25)

TEXT

Chapter 33:20. So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

21. Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, as did Manasseh his father; and Amon sacrificed unto all the graven images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them. 23. And he

humbled not himself before Jehovah, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but this same Amon trespassed more and more. 24. And his servants conspired against him, and put him to death in his own house. 25. But 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.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:20, 21. When Manasseh died he was buried beneath his own palace, and his son Amon became the new king. Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to reign in Jerusalem, but he lasted for only two years. 22. It was an evil reign like the early years of his father Manasseh; for Amon sacrificed to all the idols just as his father had. 23. But he didn't change as his father did; instead he sinned more and more. 24. At last his own officers assassinated him in his palace. 25. But some public-spirited citizens killed all of those who assassinated him, and declared his son Josiah to be the new king.

COMMENTARY

Amon, Manasseh's son, reigned only two years. The principal feature of his reign was the re-installation of the images and idolatries which Manasseh had brought to Jerusalem. He was a very irresponsible prince and king. A conspiracy resulting in his death cut his reign short. He made no significant contribution to the lives of his people.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWENTY-THREE (30-33)

912. Who was invited to share in the Passover?
913. When did they decide to observe the Passover? Was this the appointed time as in Exodus?
914. How extensive was the territory from which people were invited to come to the celebration?
915. What are "posts" as in 30:6?
916. Why name Abraham, Isaac, and Israel?

917. How might the people hope to have Jehovah's wrath removed?
918. What is the promise in 30:9?
919. Where was Zebulun?
920. How were the messengers received?
921. Locate Asher's territory.
922. What was the feast of unleavened bread?
923. Just when was this passover kept?
924. Why were priests and Levites ashamed?
925. How would an ordinary worshiper in the assembly sanctify himself?
926. Who were the responsible persons in killing the passover lambs?
927. What prayer did Hezekiah offer especially for those of the northern regions of Canaan relative to the passover?
928. Explain the "healing of the people" as in 30:20.
929. How long did the feast of unleavened bread last?
930. How were the days of unleavened bread spent? What did the people do?
931. Explain the reference to "other seven days".
932. How was the joy in Jerusalem described?
933. After this great passover what happened in Judah?
934. What were these pillars?
935. Describe the responsibility assumed by Hezekiah relative to the Temple.
936. What were the morning and evening offerings?
937. Explain the reference to the portion of the priests in 31:4.
938. List the material things brought to the Temple by the Hebrews.
939. What happened from the third to the seventh month?
940. What was the content of Azariah's report?
941. For what purpose were chambers prepared in the Temple?

942. What was Kore's assignment?
943. From what age did they number the Levites?
944. From what age did they number the priests?
945. What were the suburbs?
946. How is the work of Hezekiah evaluated in the conclusion of chapter 31?
947. Explain the phrase, "this faithfulness" in 32:1.
948. Name the capital of Assyria and locate it.
949. Why would Hezekiah be concerned about the fountains?
950. What was Millo?
951. Explain the last statement in 32:7.
952. Evaluate Hezekiah's leadership.
953. Carefully locate Lachish.
954. Why did Sennacherib's servants come to Jerusalem?
955. What charge did the enemy bring against Hezekiah regarding altars and high places?
956. What charge did the Assyrians bring against the gods of other nations?
957. Explain the fatal mistake that the Assyrians make at this time?
958. What language did the Assyrian envoys use?
959. In the critical hour what great man of God came to Hezekiah's aid?
960. How was it that Assyria suffered heavy defeat?
961. How did Sennacherib die and where did his death occur?
962. Trace the reference in II Kings and state how many soldiers Assyria lost in one night.
963. When it appeared that Hezekiah would die, how many years were added to his life? What was the sign?
964. Was Hezekiah perfect? Explain.
965. Describe the wealth and material provisions of Hezekiah.
966. Explain the reference to the waters of Gihon.
967. How did Hezekiah deal with the Babylonian ambassa-

- dors? Look in II Kings for Isaiah's word to the king.
968. Who wrote a history of Hezekiah?
 969. How did Jerusalem respond to Hezekiah at his death?
 970. How long did Manasseh reign?
 971. Who set the pattern for Manasseh's religion?
 972. Make a list of the sinful acts of Manasseh.
 973. Explain the reference to children passed through fire.
 974. What is augury?
 975. How did he desecrate the Temple?
 976. Just how wicked did Manasseh and his people become?
 977. How was Manasseh removed from the throne?
 978. How did Manasseh accomplish his re-instatement as king?
 979. Carefully locate Gihon and Ophel.
 980. Identify the "mount of the house of Jehovah".
 981. How were the high places used at this time?
 982. Where are the accounts of Manasseh's life recorded?
 983. How is the reign of Amon described?
 984. How long did Amon reign and what caused his death?
 985. What happened to the conspirators?

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR 34—36

JOSIAH'S REFORMATION THE LAST DAYS OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY. THE DECREE OF CYRUS

17. THE REIGN OF JOSIAH (Chapter 34—35)

INTRODUCTION

Josiah and Hilkiah led Judah in a wonderful revival of faith in God. The passover was a time of great rejoicing. Josiah's untimely death shortened Judah's time as a kingdom. Babylon came. Jerusalem was ruined. Captivity followed. At the end of the captivity Cyrus released the Jews for their return to Jerusalem.

TEXT

Chapter 34:1. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. 2. And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, and walked in the ways of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left. 3. 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 Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images. 4. And they brake down the altars of the Baalim in his presence; and the sun-images that were on high above them he hewed down; and the Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. 5. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and purged Judah and Jerusalem. 6. And so did he in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their ruins round about. 7. And he brake down the altars, and beat the Asherim and the graven images into powder, and hewed down all the sun-images throughout all the land of Israel, and returned to Jerusalem.

8. 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 Jehovah his God. 9. And they came to Hilkiyah the high priest, and delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin, and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10. And they delivered it into the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of Jehovah; and the workmen that wrought in the house of Jehovah gave it to mend and repair the house: 11. even to the carpenters and to the builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 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 others of the Levites, all that were skilful with instruments of music. 13. Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and set forward all that did the work in every manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.

14. And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah, Hilkiyah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah given by Moses. 15. And Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah." And Hilkiyah delivered the book to Shaphan. 16. And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and moreover brought back word to the king, saying, "All that was committed to thy servants, they are doing. 17. "And they have emptied out the money that was found in the house of Jehovah, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and into the hand of the workmen." 18. And Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book." And Shaphan read therein before the king. 19. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the

words of the law, that he rent his clothes. 20. And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, 21. "Go ye, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of Jehovah that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of Jehovah, to do according unto all that is written in this book."

22. So Hilkiah, and they whom the king had commanded, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the second quarter); and they spake to her to that effect. 23. And she said unto them, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: 'Tell ye the man that sent you unto me,' 24. Thus saith Jehovah, 'Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah. 25. 'Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore is my wrath poured out upon this place, and it shall not be quenched.' 26. "But unto the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of Jehovah, thus shall ye say to him 'Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: As touching the words which thou hast heard, 27. "because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and hast humbled thyself before me, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah. 28. "Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof.' " " And they brought back word to the king.

29. Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30. And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of

Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, both great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of Jehovah. 31. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, 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 covenant that were written in this book. 32. And he caused all that were found 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. 33. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were found in Israel to serve, even to serve Jehovah their God. All his days they departed not from following Jehovah, the God of their fathers.

Chapter 35:1. And Josiah kept a passover unto Jehovah in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2. And he set the priests in their offices, and encouraged them to the service of the house of Jehovah. 3. And he said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, that were holy unto Jehovah, "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; there shall no more be a burden upon your shoulders. Now serve Jehovah your God, and his people Israel; 4. "and prepare yourselves after your fathers' houses by your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. 5. "And stand in the holy place according to the divisions of the father's houses of your brethren the children of the people, and let there be for each a portion of a fathers' house of the Levites. 6. "And kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare for your brethren, to do according to the word of Jehovah by Moses."

7. And Josiah gave to the children of the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all of them for the passover-offerings, unto all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks; these were of the king's substance. 8. And his princes gave for a freewill-offering unto the people,

to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, the 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. 9. Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave unto the Levites, for the passover-offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen.

So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites by their courses, according to the king's commandment. 11. And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood which they received of their hand, and the Levites flayed them. 12. And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give them according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the children of the people, to offer unto Jehovah, as it is written in the book of Moses. And so did they with the oxen. 13. And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: and the holy offerings boiled they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the children of the people. 14. And afterward they prepared for themselves, and for the priests, because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering the burnt-offerings and the fat until night: therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. 15. And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters were at every gate: they needed not to depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

16. So all the service of Jehovah was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of Jehovah, according to the commandment of king Josiah. 17. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. 18. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did any of 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. 19. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

20. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21. 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; and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22. 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 Neco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. 23. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Have me away; for I am sore wounded." 24. So his servants took him out of the chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day; and they made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations. 26. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his good deeds, according to that which is written in the law of Jehovah, 27. and his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 34:1. Josiah was only eight years old when he became king. He reigned thirty-one years, in Jerusalem. 2. His was a good reign, as he carefully followed the good example of his ancestor King David. 3. For when he was sixteen years old, in the eighth year of his reign, he began to search for the God of his ancestor David; and four years later he began to clean up Judah and Jerusalem, destroying the heathen altars and the shame-idols on the hills. 4. He went out personally to watch as

the altars of Baal were knocked apart, the obelisks above the altars chopped down, and the shame-idols ground into dust and scattered over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5. Then he burned the bones of the heathen priests upon their own altars, feeling that this action would clear the people of Judah and Jerusalem from the guilt of their sin of idol-worship. 6. Then he went to the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, even to distant Naphtali, and did the same thing there. 7. He broke down the heathen altars, ground to powder the shame-idols, and chopped down the obelisks. He did this everywhere throughout the whole land of Israel before returning to Jerusalem.

8. During the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purged the land and cleaned up the situation at the Temple, he appointed Shaphan (son of Azaliah) and Ma-aseiah, governor of Jerusalem, and Joah (son of Joahaz), the city treasurer, to repair the Temple. 9. They set up a collection system for gifts for the Temple. The money was collected at the Temple gates by the Levites on guard duty there. Gifts were brought by the people coming from Manasseh, Ephraim, and other parts of the remnant of Israel; as well as from the people of Jerusalem. The money was taken to Hilkiyah the High Priest for accounting, 10, 11. and then used by the Levites to pay the carpenters and stonemasons, and to purchase building materials—stone building blocks, timber, lumber, and beams. He now rebuilt what earlier kings of Judah had torn down. 12. The workmen were energetic under the leadership of Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the subclan of Merari. Zechariah and Meshullam, of the subclan of Kohath, were the building superintendents. The Levites who were skilled musicians played background music while the work progressed. 13. Other Levites superintended the unskilled laborers who carried in the materials to the workmen. Still others assisted as accountants, supervisors, and carriers.

14. One day when Hilkiyah, the High Priest, was at the Temple recording the money collected at the gates, he found an old scroll which turned out to be the laws of God as given to Moses! 15, 16. "Look!" Hilkiyah exclaimed to Shaphan, the

king's secretary. "See what I have found in the Temple! These are the laws of God!" Hilkiyah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and Shaphan took it to the king, along with his report that there was good progress being made in the reconstruction of the Temple. 17. "The money chests have been opened and counted, and the money has been put into the hand of the overseers and workmen," he said to the king. 19. Then he mentioned the scroll, and how Hilkiyah had discovered it. So he read it to the king. 19. When the king heard what these laws required of God's people, he ripped his clothing in despair, 20. and summoned Hilkiyah, Ahikam (son of Shaphan), Abdon (son of Micah), Shaphan the treasurer, and Asaiah, the king's personal aide. 21. "Go to the Temple and plead with the Lord for me!" the king told them. "Pray for all the remnant of Israel and Judah! For this scroll says that the reason the Lord's great anger has been poured out upon us is that our ancestors have not obeyed these laws that are written here."

22. So the men went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum (son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah). (Shallum was the king's tailor, living in the second ward.) When they told her of the king's trouble, 23. she replied, "The Lord God of Israel says, 'Tell the man who sent you, 24. " 'Yes, the Lord will destroy this city and its people. All the curses written in the scroll will come true. 25. For my people have forsaken me and have worshiped heathen gods, and I am very angry with them for their deeds. Therefore, my unquenchable wrath is poured out upon this place.' 26. "But the Lord also says this to the king of Judah who sent you to ask me about this: Tell him, the Lord God of Israel says, 27. 'Because you are sorry and have humbled yourself before God when you heard my words against this city and its people, and have ripped your clothing in despair and wept before me—I have heard you, says the Lord, 28. and I will not send the promised evil upon this city and its people until after your death.' " So they brought back to the king this word from the Lord.

29. Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, 30. and the priests and Levites and all the people

great and small, to accompany him to the Temple. There the king read the scroll to them—the covenant of God that was found in the Temple. 31. As the king stood before them, he made a pledge to the Lord to follow his commandments with all his heart and soul, and to do what was written in the scroll. 32. And he required everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin to subscribe to this pact with God, and all of them did. 33. So Josiah removed all idols from the areas occupied by the Jews, and required all of them to worship Jehovah their God. And throughout the remainder of his lifetime they continued serving Jehovah, the God of their ancestors.

Chapter 35:1. Then Josiah announced that the Passover would be celebrated on the first day of April, in Jerusalem. The Passover lambs were slain that evening. 2. He also re-established the priests in their duties, and encouraged them to begin their work at the Temple again. 3. He issued this order to the sanctified Levites, the religious teachers in Israel: “Since the Ark is now in Solomon’s Temple and you don’t need to carry it back and forth upon your shoulders, spend your time ministering to the Lord and to his people. 4, 5. Form yourselves into the traditional service corps of your ancestors, as first organized by King David of Israel and by his son Solomon. Each corps will assist particular clans of the people who bring in their offerings to the Temple. 6. Kill the Passover lambs and sanctify yourselves and prepare to assist the people who come. Follow all of the instructions of the Lord through Moses.”

7. Then the king contributed 30,000 lambs and young goats for the people’s Passover offerings, and 3,000 young bulls. 8. The king’s officials made willing contributions to the priests and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the overseers of the Temple, gave the priests 2,600 sheep and goats, and 300 oxen as Passover offerings. 9. The Levite leaders—Conaniah, Shemaiah, and Nethanel, and his brothers Hashabiah, Je-iel, and Jozabad—gave 5,000 sheep and goats and 500 oxen to the Levites for their Passover offerings.

10. When everything was organized, and the priests were standing in their places, and the Levites were formed into

service corps as the king had instructed, 11. then the Levites killed the Passover lambs and presented the blood to the priests, who sprinkled it upon the altar as the Levites removed the skins. 12. They piled up the carcasses for each tribe to present its own burnt sacrifices to the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses. They did the same with the oxen. 13. Then, as directed by the laws of Moses, they roasted the Passover lambs and boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans, and hurried them out to the people to eat. 14. Afterwards the Levites prepared a meal for themselves and for the priests, for they had been busy from morning till night offering the fat of the burnt offerings. 15. The singers (the sons of Asaph) were in their places, following directions issued centuries earlier by King David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's prophet. The gatekeepers guarded the gates, and didn't need to leave their posts of duty, for their meals were brought to them by their Levite brothers.

16. The entire Passover ceremony was completed in that one day. All the burnt offerings were sacrificed upon the altar of the Lord, as Josiah had instructed. 17. Everyone present in Jerusalem took part in the Passover observance, and this was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread for the next seven days. 18. Never since the time of Samuel the prophet had there been such a Passover—not one of the kings of Israel could vie with King Josiah in this respect, involving so many of the priests, Levites, and people from Jerusalem and from all parts of Judah, and from over in Israel. 19. This all happened in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah.

20. Afterwards King Neco of Egypt led his army (against the Assyrians) at Carchemish on the Euphrates River, and Josiah declared war on him. 21. But King Neco sent ambassadors to Josiah with this message: "I don't want a fight with you, O king of Judah! I have come only to fight the king of Assyria! Leave me alone! God has told me to hurry! Don't meddle with God or he will destroy you, for he is with me." 22. But Josiah refused to turn back. Instead he led his army into the battle at the Valley of Megiddo. (He laid aside his royal

robes so that the enemy wouldn't recognize him.) Josiah refused to believe that Neco's message was from God. 23. The enemy archers struck King Josiah with their arrows and fatally wounded him. "Take me out of the battle," he exclaimed to his aides. 24, 25. So they lifted him out of his chariot and placed him in his second chariot and brought him back to Jerusalem where he died. He was buried there, in the royal cemetery. And all Judah and Jerusalem, including even Jeremiah the prophet, mourned for him, as did the Temple choirs. To this day they still sing sad songs about his death, for these songs of sorrow were recorded among the official lamentations. 26. The other activities of Josiah, and his good deeds, and how he followed the laws of the Lord, 27. all are written in The Annals of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

COMMENTARY

In the history of the northern kingdom one last strong king, Jeroboam II, reigned from about 782 to 753 B.C. This period may be called "the Indian Summer of Israel". Jeroboam did not fear Jehovah; but he managed the government wisely so as to extend the borders of his kingdom and raise the living standards of the people. Within thirty years of the end of his reign Samaria was under Assyrian siege. Jeroboam was Israel's last hope. In like manner, Josiah was Judah's last hope.¹ He was only eight years old when he was placed on the throne. Like Joash who had the able assistance of the priest, Jehoiada, Josiah had the strong support of the priest, Hilkiah. This great high priest must share any commendation Josiah received for being a good king. Josiah's father and grandfather provided no real spiritual heritage. From the very beginning of his reign he sought Jehovah's will. Much idolatrous rubbish had been brought back into Jerusalem by Amon. This was destroyed under the new king. When Jeroboam I set up calf worship at Bethel, a prophet out of Judah predicted that one day Josiah would desecrate the heathen altars (I Kings 13:2). Josiah fulfilled this prediction (verses 5 and 6). The destruction of

¹Schultz, Samuel J., *The Old Testament Speaks*, p. 220

idolatry was widespread under Josiah.

The Temple needed repairing. Money was collected from the people in Judah and Benjamin and from certain sections out of the northern kingdom. Responsible persons such as Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Joah turned the money over to the high priest, Hilkiah, who administered the funds for Temple renewal. Carpenters, stone-masons, and other skilled artisans worked faithfully. The priests and Levites had the responsibility of over-seeing the work. At this time musicians were appointed. Door-keepers, Temple officers, and scribes (students of God's Law) were designated for service.

In the year 620 B.C., when the Temple renewal project was making good progress, "the book of the Law" was found in one of the storage rooms of the Temple. This was a most significant discovery. All evidence points to the complete Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) as "the book of the Law". This book was found at this time because it had been lost through carelessness and disuse. It was more than just the Book of Deuteronomy which liberal critics say had been written by some enterprising priests about thirty years before. This liberal theory supposes that the priests "planted" the book and conveniently "found" it at this time.¹ This theory denies the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the sincere faithfulness of Hilkiah and his associates. Such "explanation" of these events must be unalterably opposed by the honest student of God's Word.

The discovery of the book of the Law laid the foundation for a genuine revival of true religion in the days of Hilkiah and Josiah. Shaphan was a careful student of Jehovah's written Word. It was he who carried the "book" to the king. When Josiah heard God's Word he immediately became a mourner. "He rent his clothes". The king commanded Hilkiah and the other chief officers to get more information about what he had learned from the "book". "Inquire of Jehovah", the king

¹Harrison, Ronald K., *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 43-46
Larue, Gerald A., *Old Testament Life and Literature*, pp. 246, 247
Oehler, Gustave F., *Old Testament Theology*, p. 414

ordered. He knew that God's will and purpose had been totally disregarded. How could he and his people once more experience the grace and forgiveness of Jehovah? Huldah was a prophetess who was in Jerusalem. She had been called by God to speak for Him. Through her Jehovah revealed to Josiah that judgment was soon to come upon the southern kingdom "because they have forsaken me" (verse 25). Wrath like fire would be poured out upon Judah and it would not be quenched until it had accomplished its work. Josiah would be spared all of the troubles that were to come because he loved God and sought His will.

When Huldah's prophetic word was brought to the king he called a great convocation at the Temple. The whole populace out of Judah and Jerusalem was gathered to hear the reading of Jehovah's Word. This Word was "the book of the covenant" because it told about Jehovah's agreement with His people and their pledge to serve the one true God. The covenant which Jehovah entered into with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was renewed and the king caused the people "to stand to it". Josiah remained true to Jehovah throughout his life-time.

The original details of the Passover are recorded in Exodus, chapter 12. This book must have been a part of the "book" discovered by Hilkiyah because Josiah was careful to keep the feast just as it was written".¹ Once more the priests were respected leaders among the Hebrews. They were to serve according to their courses and they were to be careful to follow God's Word in all matters. The king provided thirty thousand lambs and kids for this passover. In addition to these, the princes brought in hundreds of other animals for "passover-offerings". The Passover animals were killed. Their blood was properly applied. The animals were "roasted" according to the original directions. All of the congregation shared in this wonderful memorial of the day when Israel became a free people. After all of the people were served in respect to the Passover, the priests and Levites served themselves. The priests and Levites also attended the Passover ritual in behalf of the musicians and the gate-keepers.

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 428

Concerning this celebration the historian observed that "there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet" (verse 18). It was a religious exercise long remembered among the Hebrew people. "No king of Israel ever kept such a passover as Josiah kept" (verse 18).

The city of Carchemish was on the Euphrates River far to the north of Canaan (about three hundred and seventy five miles from Jerusalem). Neco came up out of Egypt to go to war against Babylon in the regions far to the north and east. Josiah thought he had a responsibility with regard to these eastern allies, so he attempted to intercept the king of Egypt. Neco tried to move along the coastal plain and through the valley of Megiddo near Mount Carmel without any delay in relation to Josiah or Judah. The battlefield of Megiddo is one of the world's most famous military arenas. The "Armageddon" of Revelation is named after this well known plain resulting from a break in the Lebanon mountain chain near Mount Carmel. Neco claimed that God had sent him on his mission and said that if Josiah would fight against him, Josiah would be "meddling with God". Josiah's action here was ill-advised. He was mortally wounded in the battle. His reformation ended with his untimely death. He was accorded a very honorable burial and all of his people deeply mourned his departure. Josiah died in 609 B.C. Jeremiah, the prophet, began his ministry about 626 B.C. and was able to share many of the joys the people knew under Josiah's good reign. Jeremiah was renowned for his "lamentations" in which "the weeping prophet" poured out his sorrow for his people.

18. THE REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ (36:1-3)

TEXT

Chapter 36:1. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. 2. Joahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3. And the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem, and fined the

land a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 36:1. Josiah's son Jehoahaz was selected as the new king. 2. He was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, but lasted only three months. 3. Then he was deposed by the king of Egypt, who demanded an annual tribute from Judah of \$250,000.

COMMENTARY

Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, was put on Judah's throne during the crisis of Josiah's death. His name meant "Jehovah hath grasped", or "He has taken hold of me". The Egyptians asserted power over Jerusalem and took Jehoahaz (Joahaz) captive into Egypt. Eliakim (Jehoiakim) was Jehoahaz' brother. After Jehoahaz had reigned only three months, the Egyptians put Eliakim on the throne.

19. THE REIGN OF ELIAKIM (JEHOIAKIM) (36:4-8)

TEXT

Chapter 36:4. And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Neco took Joahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.

5. Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God. 6. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. 7. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of Jehovah to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. 8. 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 the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 36:4. The king of Egypt now appointed Aliakim, the brother of Jehoahaz, as the new king of Judah. (Eliakim's name was changed to Jehoiakim.) Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt as a prisoner.

5. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years, in Jerusalem; but his reign was an evil one. 6. Finally Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon conquered Jerusalem, and took away the king in chains to Babylon. 7. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the golden bowls and other items from the Temple, placing them in his own temple in Babylon. 8. The rest of the deeds of Jehoiakim, and all the evil he did, are written in The Annals of the Kings of Judah; and his son Jehoiachin became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Jehoiakim became king at the age of twenty-five and ruled uneasily through eleven difficult years. In his time Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians came and took him captive along with other Hebrews (such as Daniel and his brethren). Jehoiakim made no attempt to serve Jehovah. The Babylonians robbed the Temple of many of its treasures in his time. Judah's light dimmed quickly during Jehoiakim's reign.

20. THE REIGN OF JEHOIACHIN (36:9, 10)

TEXT

Chapter 36:9. 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 Jehovah. 10. And at the return of the year king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of Jehovah, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 36:9. Jehoiachin was eight years old when he

ascended the throne. But he lasted only three months and ten days, and it was an evil reign as far as the Lord was concerned. 10. The following spring he was summoned to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. Many treasures from the Temple were taken away to Babylon at that time, and King Nebuchadnezzar appointed Jehoiachin's brother Zedekiah as the new king of Judah and Jerusalem.

COMMENTARY

Whether Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, was eight or eighteen years of age (II Kings 34:8) when he became king, he reigned only three months and served no good purpose while he was on the throne. Once more the Babylonians came "at the return of the year" (in the springtime) and robbed the Temple taking more captives (like those among whom Ezekiel lived). Jehoiachin was deported to Babylon. Jehovah's predictions through Moses in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, were being literally fulfilled.

21. THE REIGN OF ZEDEKIAH (36:11-17)

TEXT

Chapter 36:11. Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: 12. and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God; he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of Jehovah. 13. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart against turning unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 14. Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. 15. And Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: 16. but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah

arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or virgin, old man or hoary-headed: he gave them all into his hand.

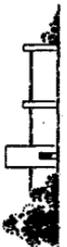
PARAPHRASE

Chapter 37:11. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king and he reigned eleven years, in Jerusalem. 12. His reign, too, was evil so far as the Lord was concerned, for he refused to take the counsel of Jeremiah the prophet, who gave him messages from the Lord. 13. He rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath of loyalty. Zedekiah was a hard and stubborn man so far as obeying the Lord God of Israel was concerned, for he refused to follow him. 14. All the important people of the nation, including the High Priests, worshiped the heathen idols of the surrounding nations, thus polluting the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. 15. Jehovah the God of their fathers sent his prophets again and again to warn them, for he had compassion on his people and on his Temple. 16. But the people mocked these messengers of God and despised their words, scoffing at the prophets until the anger of the Lord could no longer be restrained, and there was no longer any remedy.

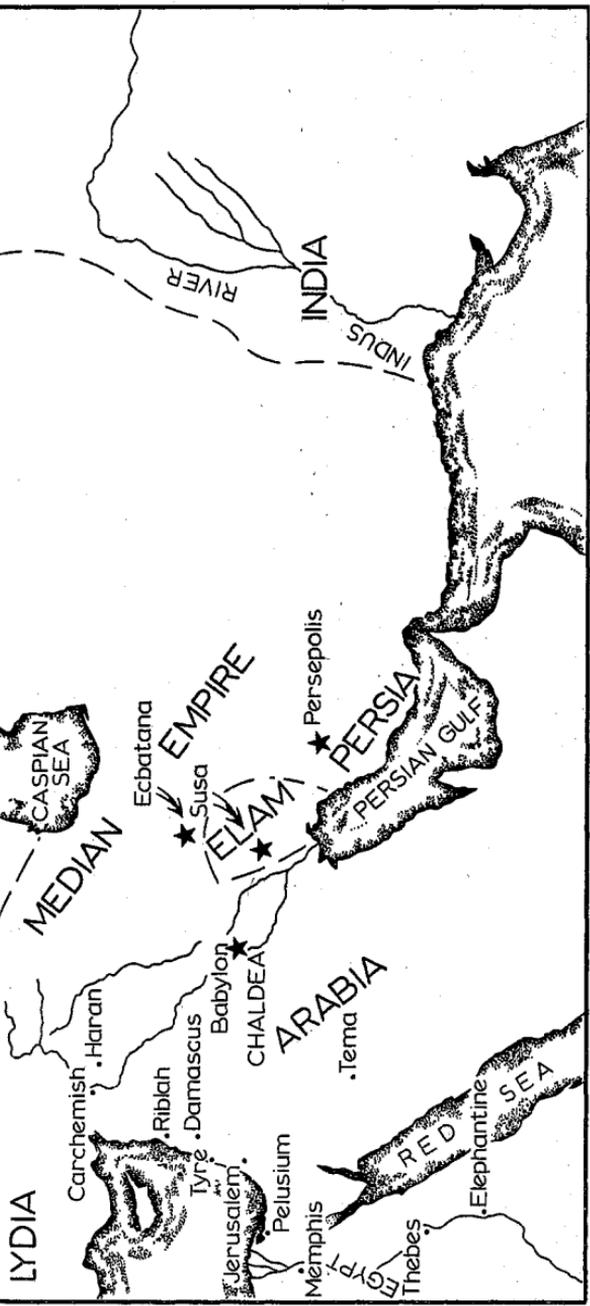
17. Then the Lord brought the king of Babylon against them and killed their young men, even going after them right into the Temple, and had no pity upon them, killing even young girls and old men. The Lord used the king of Babylon to destroy them completely.

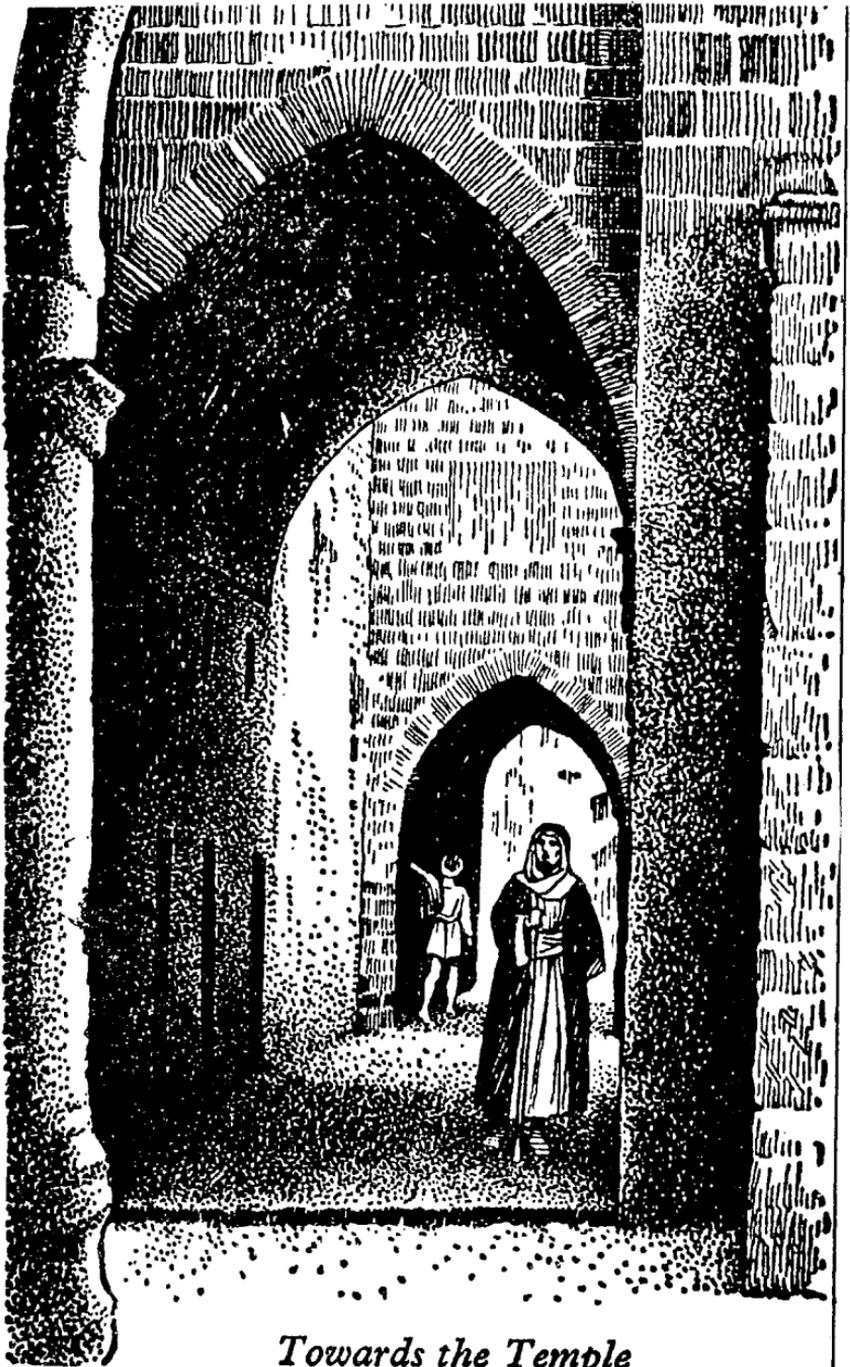
COMMENTARY

Jehoiachin's brother, Zedekiah, was put on the throne in Judah. Whatever he did was subject to Babylonian approval. The twenty-one year old king was to reign over Judah for the last eleven years of her history prior to the Babylonian captivity. Even though the time of judgment was so near,



**PLACES IN THE
BABYLONIAN (625 - 539)
AND PERSIAN (539 - 325)
EMPIRES**





Towards the Temple

Zedekiah made no real effort to do Jehovah's will. Jeremiah worked with the king. He tried to strengthen him in the Lord, but Zedekiah's goodness was anemic. Idolatries increased in Jerusalem and Judah. God's Temple was desecrated even by the priests who should have consecrated it. Prophets, such as Jeremiah, were ridiculed and thrown into dungeons and cisterns. All hope was gone. "There was no remedy" (verse 16).

22. JERUSALEM OVERTHROWN (36:18-21)

TEXT

Chapter 36:18. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon. 19. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. 20. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 21. to fulfill the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths: for as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 36:18. He also took home with him all the items, great and small, used in the Temple, and treasures from both the Temple and the palace, and took with him all the royal princes. 19. Then his army burned the Temple and broke down the walls of Jerusalem and burned all the palaces and destroyed all the valuable Temple utensils. 20. Those who survived were taken away to Babylon as slaves to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia conquered Babylon.

21. Thus the word of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah came true, that the land must rest for seventy years to make up for the years when the people refused to observe the Sabbath.

COMMENTARY

Does God mean what he says? Would He really allow the city of David to be destroyed? Certainly He would protect that "building of all buildings", Solomon's Temple!¹ It could never be removed! So, many had reasoned. In 587 B.C. the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar came for the third time against Jerusalem. They besieged the city for eighteen dreary months. During those terrible days the Hebrews were reduced to cannibalism to try to keep a remnant alive. Finally, in desperation, Zedekiah tried to escape. The Babylonians captured him and took him to Riblah far to the north on the Orontes River. There they killed his sons in his presence, gouged out the king's eyes and led him to Babylon. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard for Babylon, was specifically assigned the detail of the destruction of the Temple. When they had carried out everything of value in that marvelous building, they burnt the Temple. Jerusalem was left in complete desolation. It was now ready for the jackals, owls, and scorpions of the desert. Many Hebrews died in the siege of Jerusalem. Others of them died at the hands of the Babylonians. A remnant was taken captive and deported to Babylon a thousand miles to the east by way of Damascus and Haran and the Euphrates River. Seventy years were to be spent in this captivity to compensate for the Sabbatical years which God's people had neglected to keep. For a period of five hundred years the Hebrews disregarded the seventh year. Through many of those years they also treated the Sabbath day as if it were a common day. Jeremiah had predicted that the captivity would extend through seventy years (Jeremiah 29:10). The writer of Chronicles knew that the Persian empire would incorporate and follow the Babylonian empire. So the Hebrews were taken captive by Babylon and those who were born in captivity were given their freedom by Persia.

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 708

23. THE EDICT OF CYRUS (36:22, 23)

TEXT

Chapter 36:22. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23. "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, 'All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people. Jehovah his God be with him, and let him go up.' "

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 36:22, 23. But in the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to make this proclamation throughout his kingdom, putting it into writing: "All the kingdoms of the earth have been given to me by the Lord God of heaven, and he has instructed me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in the land of Judah. All among you who are the Lord's people, return to Israel for this task, and the Lord be with you." This also fulfilled the prediction of Jeremiah the prophet.

COMMENTARY

Isaiah had predicted that Cyrus, king of Persia, would be a deliverer for the Hebrew people (Isaiah 44:28). Two hundred years before Cyrus appeared he was named by Isaiah as a shepherd for Jehovah. In the year 536 B.C. Cyrus came upon the stage of world history.¹ He was a shepherd king. His origin is obscure. All of the evidence in God's Word points to Cyrus' coming as an act of God. Daniel continued until the third year of the reign of Cyrus (Daniel 10:1). Daniel could very well have been Jehovah's agent who acquainted Cyrus with God's purpose for His people. The seventy years were fulfilled. The time had

¹Grosvenor, Melville, B., *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, pp. 278-286

Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 440

come for the Hebrews to be released. Cyrus published his decree and all of the Hebrews who desired to do so were free to go back to Palestine to build Jehovah's House. Ezra and Nehemiah tell how fifty thousand Jews (most likely a name given in derision of Judah) came back under the leadership of the Davidic prince, Zerubbabel and the priest, Jeshua, and how they finished Zerubbabel's Temple (the second Temple) about 516 B.C.¹

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR 34-36

986. How old was Josiah when he became king?
987. Why refer to David as Josiah's father?
988. Describe Josiah's reformation.
989. Explain the reference to the house of the priests.
990. How far to the north did Josiah's reform reach?
991. What were the Asherim?
992. According to 34:8 what very important project did Josiah undertake?
993. Carefully identify Hilkiah.
994. Who contributed to Josiah's program?
995. What kind of materials had to be provided?
996. Which of the tribes had special oversight of the work?
997. Describe the remarkable discovery made by Hilkiah.
998. Who was Shaphan?
999. Why did Josiah tear his garments?
1000. Who was Huldah?
1001. Concerning Jerusalem, what does Jehovah intend to do?
1002. How will Jehovah deal with Josiah?
1003. Explain the phrase, "to be gathered to one's fathers".
1004. For what purpose was a meeting called at the Temple?
1005. How long did Josiah serve Jehovah?

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel—Esther, pp. 432-433

1006. When was the passover kept by Josiah? Relate to the record in Exodus.
1007. Where was the ark to be housed?
1008. How would a priest sanctify himself?
1009. Who supplied the materials for the great passover?
1010. How was the passover lamb actually prepared?
1011. What is a caldron?
1012. Explain the nature of the ministry of the sons of Asaph.
1013. Relate the feast of unleavened bread to the passover.
1014. How is this passover compared with other passovers?
1015. Who was Neco?
1016. Carefully locate Carchemish.
1017. Locate Megiddo.
1018. How did Josiah go into battle?
1019. Who is this Jeremiah of 35:25?
1020. Who followed Josiah to the throne?
1021. What finally happened to Joahaz?
1022. Who was Jehoiakim and what finally happened to him?
1023. Who followed Jehoiakim to the throne and what happened to this king?
1024. Name Judah's last king.
1025. What was the nature of the oath which Nebuchadnezzar required of Judah's last king?
1026. Describe religion in Jerusalem at this time.
1027. Explain the attitude of the people toward the prophets.
1028. Who were the Chaldeans?
1029. What happened to the Temple?
1030. Describe the overthrow of Jerusalem.
1031. Name the empire that was to follow Babylon in world leadership.
1032. How long did the Babylon captivity last?
1033. How did this captivity relate to the sabbaths?

1034. What was the content of the declaration made by Cyrus, King of Persia?
1035. How did this decree affect the Hebrew people?
1036. What is the date of Cyrus' decree?

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