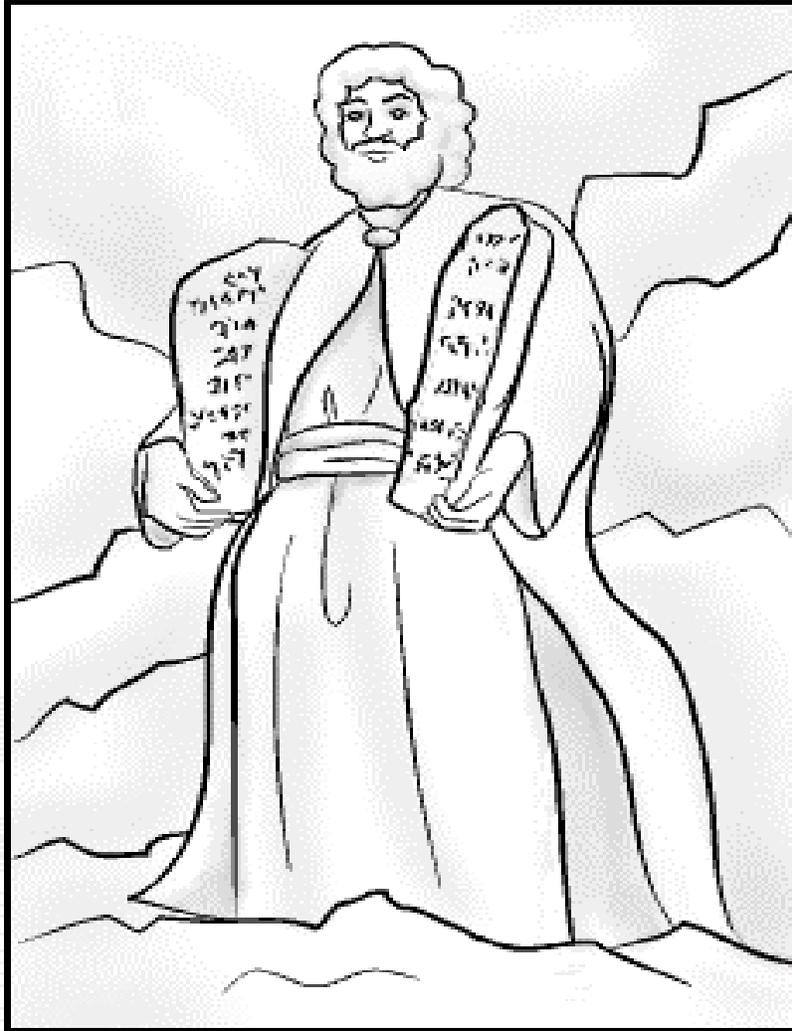


THY KINGDOM COME

A SKETCH OF CHRIST'S CHURCH IN HISTORY



Book I : Christ's Church in its Formation and Jewish Dispensation

Compiled and edited by J. Parnell McCarter

“our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” – I Corinthians 10:1-4

Dedicated to the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. As one branch of Christ’s Church here on Earth, she has sought to faithfully proclaim the historic reformed and Biblical faith.

Compiled and edited by J. Parnell McCarter

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The Puritans’ Home School Curriculum

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TIME LINE OF CHURCH HISTORY

Book I: Christ's Church in its Formation and Jewish Dispensation

4004 B.C. Creation of the world and the first man, Adam

3874 Seth born

3382 Enoch born

2948 Noah born

2348 World-wide flood

2247 Peleg born and the peoples were scattered during construction of the Tower of Babel

2126 Terah born

1996 Abraham born

1897 God makes covenant with Abraham

1896 Isaac born

1836 Jacob born

1726 Joseph born

1491 Exodus from Egypt of the Israelites

1012 Foundation of King Solomon's Temple

588 Destruction of the Temple

536 First return from Captivity

445 Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt by Nehemiah

330 Alexander the Great conquers Persia

203 Judea conquered by Antiochus

165 Judas Maccabaeus expels the Syrians and purifies the Temple

44 Julius Caesar assassinated

4 BC Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem (Jesus' birth was meant to be O B.C., but the original calendar seems to have wrongly calculated the year of His birth.)

30 A.D. Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection

CHAPTER ONE : THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

Everything that God makes is made for an end and a purpose. There are no accidents with God, because God is perfect, almighty and all-knowing. God is quite unlike man, who sometimes produces that which he did not intend.

One of God's great works is history itself. God writes the plan of history and he brings it to fruition. He "*works all things after the counsel of his own will.*" There is no part of history that God did not plan and then bring to pass.

The end and purpose of the history which God has planned and brings to pass is His own glory. Only God himself is worthy of the honor that history brings. Only God is holy, undefiled, sinless, just, infinite, eternal, almighty, all knowing and all wise. So it would be wrong if history had any other end than to bring glory to God. Only God deserves such an honor. "*To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.*"

There is one chief instrument by which God receives glory in this world and in history: man. Man was created on the last day of God's creation week before the Sabbath. Of man it was said, "*Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things under his feet.*" Unlike the beasts of the fields or the fish of the seas, man was made to praise God with his mind and body. Man was made to say, "*O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*"

But not just any man has this exalted status as God's chief instrument for bringing him glory. It must be a holy man. It must be a man who is sinless and undefiled who can come into God's presence and sing his praises. Which man can come? Not Adam. Adam sinned, and all of those in Adam- all of his posterity- sinned as well and fell into sin and moral corruption. And so there was another and a better Adam provided by God. This second Adam not only was perfect, holy and sinless, but he was all powerful and infinite, so he could come into the presence of God and he could atone for a whole company of fallen men to come along with him. This second Adam, this God-man, is none other than Jesus Christ. And this company of men whom God has appointed to come along with Christ, those who Christ redeemed from sin and moral corruption, is Christ's church. We- the church of Christ - were predestinated by God to be "*to the praise of his glory.*"

So the study of the history *of the church* is no peripheral historical matter. It is not just a field of academic study which some scholars may choose to investigate. No! It is the whole focus of the world's history. It is the chief instrument to bring God glory, and God's glory is the end of all history. The history of the world is the history of how God is progressively redeeming men from the sin into which they fell in Adam and building his church made up of the redeemed in Christ.

Christ's church is God's kingdom. It is a kingdom of redeemed men and women whose king is the Lord Jesus Christ. The redeemed in Christ live with this end in view: to serve God by obedience to his moral laws (summarized in the Ten Commandments) in gratitude for their salvation accomplished and applied by Jesus Christ. This kingdom of redeemed humanity

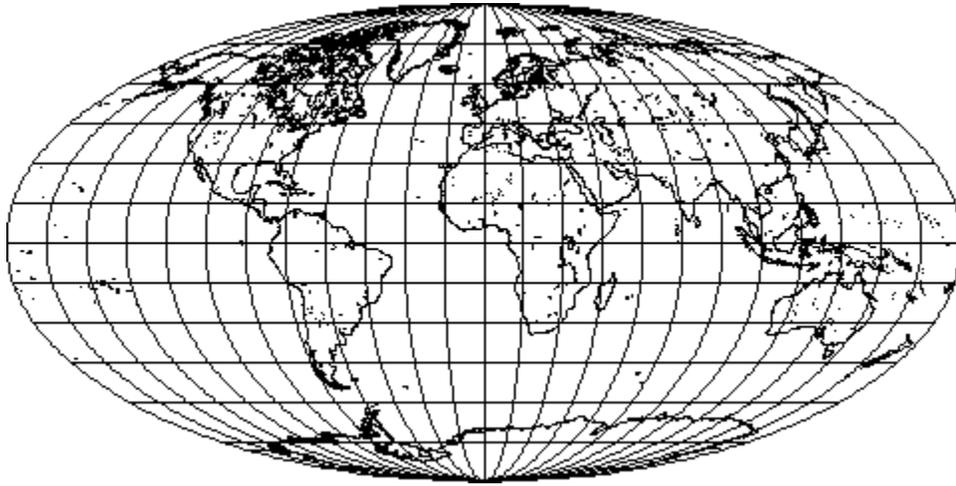
longs for the spread of his kingdom on the earth. It longs to see the nations praising God in Christ. It longs to see every man and institution of man serving King Jesus as King Jesus has prescribed in his word. And its mandate is to make disciples of the nations. *“Thy kingdom come!”*

As we study the history of Christ’s church, we must keep in mind certain important distinctions. The term ‘church’ as it is used in scripture, can have a variety of meanings, depending upon its context. The Presbyterian theologian James Bannerman rightly pointed out at least five different meanings it can have in scripture:

- Sometimes it refers to the “whole body of the faithful, whether in heaven or on earth, who have been or shall be spiritually united to Christ as their Savior.” In these cases it is referring to the elect, sometimes called Christ’s invisible church, all of whom will go to heaven. Within this body there are no hypocrites. An example of this sense of the term ‘church’ is found in Ephesians 5:25.
- Sometimes it refers to the “whole body throughout the world of those that outwardly profess the faith of Christ.” Within this body of professors there are many true believers in Jesus Christ, but there are some hypocrites. This body of professing Christians is commonly referred to as Christ’s visible church. An example of this sense of the term ‘church’ is found in Matthew 13:47-49.
- Sometimes it refers to the “body of believers in any particular place, associated together in the worship of God.” An example of this sense of the term ‘church’ is found in Philemon 2.
- Sometimes it refers to a “number of congregations associated together under a common government”. An example of this sense of the term ‘church’ is found in Acts 2:41-47.
- Sometimes it refers to the “body of professing believers in any place, as represented by their rulers and office-bearers.” An example of this sense of the term ‘church’ is found in Matthew 18:17.

It is the second sense of the term, Christ’s visible church, which we shall concern ourselves with in this historical account. We cannot with certainty always identify the elect, because hypocrisy is a matter we cannot generally identify by outward appearances. But we can know those who outwardly profess Christ.

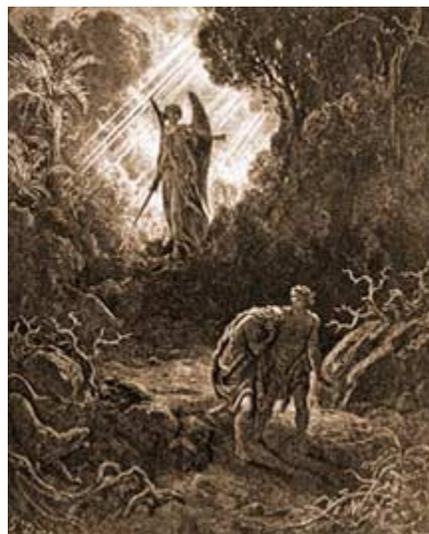
The history of Christ’s visible church is a glorious one, though often mixed with the moral corruptions so prevalent with man. Starting with a small kingdom in the Middle East- which is our focus in Book I- God is building a kingdom around the world. God is using His church to achieve His appointed end: the glory of God through the redemption of sinful men around the world.



“Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.”

CHAPTER TWO : THE PROMISE TO THE FAITHFUL

When the earth first came from the hand of God, it was very good. Man, the best and highest of all the created beings in the world, was subjected to a trial of obedience. The fallen angel, Satan, gained the ear of the woman, and led her to disobey, and to persuade her husband to do the same. That failure gave Satan power over the world, and over all Adam's children, bringing sin and death upon the earth, and upon all, whether man or brute, who dwelt therein. The man and the woman would have the Paradise they knew in Eden.



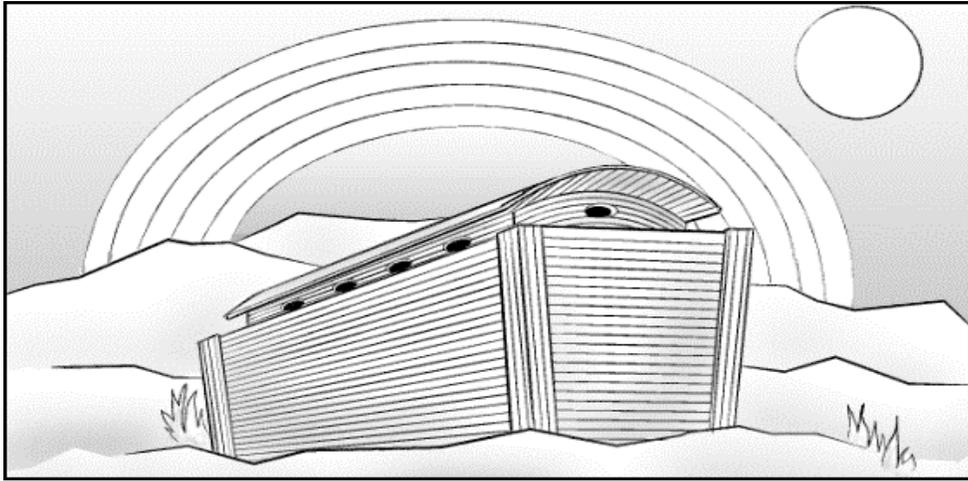
Yet the merciful God would not give up all the creatures whom He had made to eternal destruction without a ray of hope. Even while sentencing them to the punishment they had drawn on themselves, He held out the promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, the Devil. And the man and the woman were taught by the sight of sacrifices of animals, that the death of the innocent might yet atone for the sin of the guilty. The sacrifice of these creatures was not of worth enough really to bear the punishment for man, but it did teach man a lesson to prepare him for the time when Christ would make the real sacrifice for sin. God mercifully gave the woman sons: Abel, Cain, and Seth. Out of the line of Seth would come the Seed promised who would crush the Devil's head.

Abel's offering of the lamb proved his faith, and thus was more worthy than Cain's gift of the fruits of the earth. When wicked Cain in his envy slew his brother Abel, he and his children were cast off by God. But God did not cast off Seth and his children. But many of Seth's posterity joined themselves to the ungodly daughters of Cain. Such sin prevailed then that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of judgment at hand. God rewarded Enoch's faithfulness by taking him up alive into Heaven. When eight hundred and nine hundred years were the usual term of men's lives, and the race was in full strength and freshness, there was time for mind and body to come to great force. We find that the chief inventions of man belong to these sons of Cain-the dwelling in tents, workmanship in brass and iron, and the use of musical instruments. On the other hand, the more holy of the line of Seth handed on from one to the other the history of the blessed days of Eden, and of God's promise, and lived upon hope and faith.

Noah, whose father had been alive in the latter years of Adam's life, was chosen from among the descendants of Seth, to be saved out of the general ruin of the corrupt earth, and to carry on the promise. His faith was first tried by the command to build the ark, though for one hundred and twenty years all seemed secure, without any token of judgment. The disobedient of Noah's day refused to listen to his preaching. When the time came, his own family of eight persons were alone found faithful to be spared from the destruction, together with all the animals with them preserved in the ark. There were two of each kind of animal in the ark, and a sevenfold number of those milder and purer animals which part the hoof and chew the cud, and were already marked out as fit for sacrifice.



It was the year 2348 B.C. that Noah spent in floating upon the waste of waters while every living thing was perishing round him. But the flood waters returned to their beds in oceans, lakes, and rivers, which they shall never again overpass. The ark first came aground on the mountain of Ararat, in Armenia. It was here that God made His covenant with Noah. God also renewed His first blessing to Adam, permitting the use of animal food. God promised that the course of nature should never be disturbed again till the end of all things, and he made the glorious tints of the rainbow, which are produced by sunlight upon water, stand as the pledge of this assurance. Of man He required abstinence from eating the blood of animals, and from shedding the blood of man, putting, as it were, a mark of sacredness upon life-blood, so as to lead the mind on to the Blood hereafter to be shed.



Soon a choice was made among the sons of Noah. Ham mocked at his father's infirmity, while his two brothers veiled it. Noah was therefore inspired to prophesy that Canaan, the son of the undutiful Ham, should be accursed, and a servant of servants; that Shem should especially belong to the Lord God; and that Japhet's posterity should be enlarged, and should dwell in the tents of Shem.

Thus Shem was marked as the chosen, yet with hope that others should share in his blessings. It seems as if Ham had brought away some of the arts and habits of the giant sons of Cain, for in all worldly prosperity his sons had the advantage.

In 2247 B. C. the sons of men banded themselves together to build the Tower of Babel on the plain of Shinar, just below the hills of Armenia, where the two great rivers Euphrates and Tigris make the flats rich and fertile. For their presumption, God confounded their speech, and the nations first were divided.



Ham's children got all the best regions. Nimrod, the child of his son Cush, kept Babel, built the first city, and became the first king. Canaan's sons settled themselves in that goodliest of all lands which bore his name. And Mizraim's children obtained the rich and beautiful valley of the Nile, called Egypt. All these were keen clever people, builders of cities, cultivators of

the land, weavers and embroiderers, earnest after comfort and riches, and utterly forgetting, or grievously corrupting, the worship of God.

Shem's sons continued to live in tents and watch their cattle, scattered about in the same plains, called Mesopotamia, meaning 'the land of rivers'. Some travelled westwards, and settled in China and India. These became a rich and wealthy people, but constantly losing more and more the recollection of the truth. And some went on in time from isle to isle to the western hemisphere-lands where no other foot should tread until many years later.

Japhet's children seemed at first the least favored, for no place, save the cold dreary north, was found for most of them. Some few, the children of Javan, found a home in the fair isles of the Mediterranean, but the greater part were wild horsemen in Northern Asia and Europe. This was a dark and dismal training, but it braced them so that in future generations they proved to have more force and spirit than was to be found among the dwellers in milder climates.

Even during the darkest of these days, God maintained some who yet had faith in Him.

CHAPTER 3 : THE PATRIARCHS

“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.”-Acts 7:2

Among the sons of Shem (called Hebrews after his descendant Heber, who dwelt in Mesopotamia) was Abram. Abram was a good and faithful man. He was chosen by God to be the father of the people in whom He was going to set His Light and be the father of many nations. In the year 1921 BC, God tried Abram's faith by calling on him to leave his home, and go into a land which he knew not, but which should belong to his children after him. This was at a time when Abram had no child at all. Yet he obeyed and believed, and was led into the beautiful hilly land then held by the sons of Canaan, where he was a stranger, wandering with his flocks and herds and servants from one green pasture to another, without a foot of land to call his own.

For showing his faith by thus doing as he was commanded, Abram was rewarded by the covenant promise that in his Seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. Abram's name was changed to Abraham, which means a father of a great multitude. And as a sign of his covenant with God and his faith towards God, Abraham was to be circumcised. This sign of circumcision was also to be administered to his children, for an emblem of their separation to God as part of the visible church of God, along with Abraham. One son, Ishmael, had by this time been born to him of the bondmaid Hagar, so Abraham circumcised Ishmael according to God's command.



But the child of promise, Isaac, the son of his wife Sarah, was not given till he was a hundred years old. Ishmael was cast out for mocking at his half-brother, the heir of the promises. Nevertheless, in answer to his father's prayers, he too became the father of a great nation, namely the Arabs, many of whom still live in the desert, with their tents, their flocks, herds, and fine horses, much as Ishmael himself must have lived. They are still circumcised, and honor Abraham as their father. With them are joined the Midianites and other tribes descended from Abraham's last wife, Keturah.

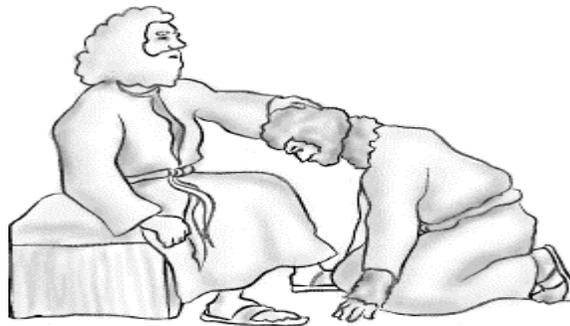
Isaac alone was to inherit the promise. This promise was renewed to Isaac and to his father, when their faith had been proved by their submission to God's command, that Isaac should be offered as a burnt-offering upon Mount Moriah, a sign of the Great Sacrifice long afterwards, when God did indeed provide Himself a Lamb. When Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah for a burial-place, it was in the full certainty that though he was now a stranger in the land, it would be his children's home. And it was there that he and the other patriarchs were buried after their long and faithful pilgrimage.

Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was fetched from Abraham's former home, in Mesopotamia, that he might not be corrupted by marrying a Canaanite. Abraham's servant found Rebekah dutifully gathering water at a well, and offering the servant water. The servant brought her back to Isaac with the consent and permission of her guardian.



Between Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, there was again a choice. God had planned and foretold that the elder should serve the younger, making Jacob God's chosen seed. Esau and Jacob grew up to be very different young men, though they were twins.

In time Esau, the elder brother, did not value the birthright which would have made him heir to no lands that would enrich himself, and to a far-off honor that he did not understand. So despising the promises of God, he made his right over to his brother for a little food, when he was hungry, and though he repented with tears when it was too late, he could not win back what he had once thrown away. Jacob received all the blessings from his father Isaac.



Esau's revengeful anger when he found how he had been supplanted, made Jacob flee to his mother's family in Mesopotamia, and there dwell for many years, before returning to Canaan with his large household. Jacob returned to live in the manner that had been ordained for the first heirs of the promise.

But Esau went away to Mount Seir, to the south of the Promised Land, and his descendants were called the Edomites, from his name, meaning the Red. And so, too, the sea which washed their shores, took the name of the Sea of Edom, or the Red Sea. They were also named Kenites from his son Kenaz. Their country, afterwards called Idumea, was full of rocks and precipices, and in these the Edomites hollowed out caves for themselves, making them most beautiful, with pillars supporting the roof within, and finely-carved entrances, cut with borders, flowers, and scrolls, so lasting that the cities of Bosra and Petra are still a wonder to travellers, though they have been empty and deserted for centuries past.

The Edomites did not at once lose the knowledge of the true God.

Indeed, as many believe, of them was born the prophet Job, whom Satan was permitted to try with every trouble he could conjure up, so that his friends believed that such sufferings could only be brought on him for some great sin; whereas he still maintained that the ways of God were hidden, and gave utterance to one of the clearest ancient prophecies of the Redeemer and the Resurrection. At length God answered him from the whirlwind, and proclaimed His greatness through His unsearchable works. Job, for his patience in the time of adversity, was restored to far more than his former prosperity.



Jacob's name was changed to Israel, which meant a prince before God. And Jacob's whole family were taken into the covenant, though the three elder sons, for their crimes, forfeited the foremost places, which passed to Judah and Joseph. And Levi was afterwards chosen as the tribe set apart for the priesthood, the number twelve being made up by reckoning Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, as heads of tribes, like their uncles.

CHAPTER 4 : THE YEARS IN EGYPT

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”-Hosea 11:1

Long ago, Abraham had been told that his seed should sojourn in Egypt. This came to pass when the envious sons of Israel sold their innocent brother Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Although this was a wicked deed on the brothers’ part, it was all designed by God to bring about His high purpose for the church.



In Egypt Joseph was inspired to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, which foretold the famine. Joseph was made a great leader in Egypt, and saved many people since he had them prepare for the long years of famine. When by-and-by Joseph’s brothers came to buy the corn that he had laid up in Egypt, Joseph made himself known to them. Joseph also forgave them with all his heart, and sent them to fetch his father to see him once more. Then the whole family of Israel, seventy in number, besides their wives, came and settled in the land of Goshen, about the year 1707 B.C.

The church in Egypt were there known by the name of Hebrews, after Heber, the great-grandson of Shem. There in Goshen, Jacob ended the days of his pilgrimage, desiring his sons to carry his corpse back to the Cave of Machpelah, there to be buried, and await their return when the time of promise should come. He gave his blessing to all his sons, and was inspired to mark out Joseph among them as the one whose children should have the choicest temporal inheritance. But of the fourth son, he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Shiloh meant ‘Him that should be sent’, and Judah was thus marked out to be the princely tribe and the tribe from which the Messiah, the very Prince of Peace, should come. This Messiah was the Seed previously promised, that would crush Satan’s head. It is none other than Jesus the Messiah and Head of the Church, which was to be revealed many years later.

The country where the Israelites had taken up their abode, was the valley watered by the great river Nile. There is nothing but desert, wherever this river does not spread itself, for it never rains. There would be dreadful drought, if every year, when the snow melts upon the mountains far south, where is the source of the stream, it did not become so much swelled as to spread far beyond its banks, and overflow all the flat space round it. Then as soon as the water subsides, the hot sun upon the mud that it has left brings up most beautiful grass, and

fine crops of corn with seven or nine ears to one stalk; grand fruits of all kinds, melons, pumpkins, and cucumbers, flax for weaving linen, and everything that a people can desire. Indeed, the water of the river is so delicious, that it is said that those who have once tasted it are always longing to drink it again. The sons of Mizraim, son of Ham, who first found this fertile country, were a very clever race. They made the most of the riches of the place. They made dykes and ditches to guide the floods into their fields and meadows. They cultivated the soil till it was one beautiful garden. They wove their flax into fine linen. And they made bricks of their soft clay, and hewed stone from the hills higher up the river, so that their buildings have been the wonder of all ages since. They had kings to rule them, and priests to guide their worship.

But the Egyptian priests had very wrong and corrupt religious notions, and let the poor ignorant people believe even greater folly than they did themselves. They thought that the great God lived among them in the shape of a bull with one spot on his back like an eagle, and one on his tongue like a beetle. This false god they called Apis, and tended with the utmost care. When he died they all went into mourning, and lamented till a calf like him was found, and was brought home with the greatest honor; and for his sake all cattle were sacred, and no one allowed to kill them. Besides the good Power, they thought there was an evil one as strong as the good, and they worshipped him likewise, to beg him to do them no harm. So the dangerous crocodiles of the Nile were sacred, and it was forbidden to put them to death. They had a dog-god and a cat-goddess. They honored the beetle because they saw it rolling a ball of earth in which to lay its eggs, and fancied it an emblem of eternity. Thus all these creatures were consecrated, and when they died were rolled up in fine linen and spices, just as the Egyptians embalmed their own dead. Mummies, as we call these embalmed Egyptian corpses, are often found now, laid up in beautiful tombs, cut out in the rock, and painted in colors still fresh with picture writing, called hieroglyphics, telling in tokens all the history of the person whose body they contained.

The kings built tombs for themselves, like mountains, square at the bottom, but each course of stones built within the last till they taper to a point at the top. These are called pyramids, and have within them very small narrow passages, leading to a small chamber, just large enough to hold a king's coffin. They had enormous idols hewn out of stone. The head of one is far taller than the tallest man, and yet the face is really handsome, and there are multitudes more, both of them and of their temples, still remaining on the banks of the Nile.



The children of Israel, being chiefly shepherds, kept apart from the Egyptians at first. But as time went on they learned some of their habits, and many of them had begun to worship their idols and forget the truth, when their time of affliction came.

The King of Egypt, becoming afraid of having so numerous and rich a people settled in his dominions, tried to keep them down by hard bondage and heavy labor. He made them toil at his great buildings, and oppressed them in every possible manner. When he found that they still thrived and increased, he made the cruel decree, that every son who was born to them should be cast into the river. But man can do nothing against the will of God, and this

murderous ordinance proved the very means of causing one of these persecuted Hebrew infants to be brought up in the palace of Pharaoh, and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. This infant was Moses.



Moses' mother had him floated in the water near the Egyptian princess, and Moses was adopted by the princess and raised among Egyptian royalty. But even in his early life, Moses seems to have been aware that he was to be sent to put an end to the bondage of his people. Moses chose rather to suffer with them than to live in prosperity with their oppressors. He went out among them and tried to defend them, and to set them at peace with one another. But the time was not yet come, and they thrust him from them, so that he was forced to fly for shelter to the desert, among the Midianite descendants of Abraham.

After Moses had spent forty years there as a shepherd, God appeared to him in a burning bush. It was there that God first revealed Himself as JEHOVAH, the Name proclaiming His eternal self-existence, I AM THAT I AM.



Moses was then sent to Egypt to lead out the Israelites on their way back to the land so long promised to their forefathers. When Pharaoh obstinately refused to let them go, the dreadful plagues and wonders that were sent on the country were such as to show that their gods were no gods. Since their river, the glory of their land, became a loathsome stream of blood, creeping things came and went at the bidding of the Lord. Even their adored cattle perished before their eyes. At last, on the night of the Passover, in each of the houses unmarked by the

blood of the Lamb, there was a great cry over the death of the first-born son. But where the sign of faith was seen, there was a mysterious obedient festival held by families prepared for a strange new journey.

Then the hard heart of the Egyptian Pharaoh yielded to terror, and Israel went out of Egypt as a nation. They had come in in 1707 BC as seventy men; they went out in 1491 BC as six hundred thousand. Their Egyptian enemies, following after them, sank like lead in the mighty waters of that arm of the Red Sea, which had divided to let God's chosen church pass through.



“By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry [land]: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”- Hebrews 11:29

CHAPTER 5 : THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and [with] our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us”-
Acts 7:38

When Moses had led the 600,000 men- with their wives, children, and cattle- beyond the reach of the Egyptians, they were in a small peninsula. The peninsula was between the arms of the Red Sea, with the wild desolate peaks of Mount Horeb towering in the midst, and all around grim stony crags, with hardly a spring of water. And though there were here and there slopes of grass, and bushes of hoary-leaved camel-thorn, and long-spined shittim or acacia, there was nothing bearing fruit for human beings. There were strange howlings and crackings in the mountains, the sun glared back from the arid stones and rocks, and the change seemed frightful after the green meadows and broad river of Egypt. Frightened and faithless, the Israelites cried out reproachfully to Moses to ask how they should live in this desert place, forgetting that the Pillar of cloud and fire proved that they were under the care of Him who had brought them safely out of the hands of their enemies.



In His mercy God bore with their murmurs, fed them with manna from Heaven, and water out of the flinty rock. God also gave them the victory over the Edomite tribe of robber Amalekites at Rephidim, where Joshua fought, and Moses, upheld by Aaron and Hur, stretched forth his hands the whole day.

Then, fifty days after their coming out of Egypt, He called them round the peak of Sinai to hear His own Voice proclaim the terms of the Covenant. The Covenant with Abraham had circumcision for the token, faith as the condition, and the blessing to all nations in Christ as the promise. This Covenant remained in full force, but in the course of the last four hundred years, sin had grown so much that the old standard, handed down from the patriarchs, had been forgotten, and men would



not have known what was right, nor how far they fell from it, without a written revelation and Law from God.

This Law, in Ten Commandments, all meeting together in teaching love to God and man, revealed the standard of God's perfection, without which no man could be fit to stand in the sight of God. He spoke it with His own Mouth, from amid cloud, flame, thunder, and sounding trumpets, on Mount Sinai, while the Israelites watched around in awe and terror, unable to endure the dread of that Presence. The people were to realize from this Law how sinful they were, how much they depended upon the promised Savior to save them, and how they should serve God in grateful obedience. If they would heed this lesson, they should dwell prosperously in the Promised Land, and be a royal priesthood and peculiar treasure unto God. They answered with one voice, "All the words the Lord hath said will we do."

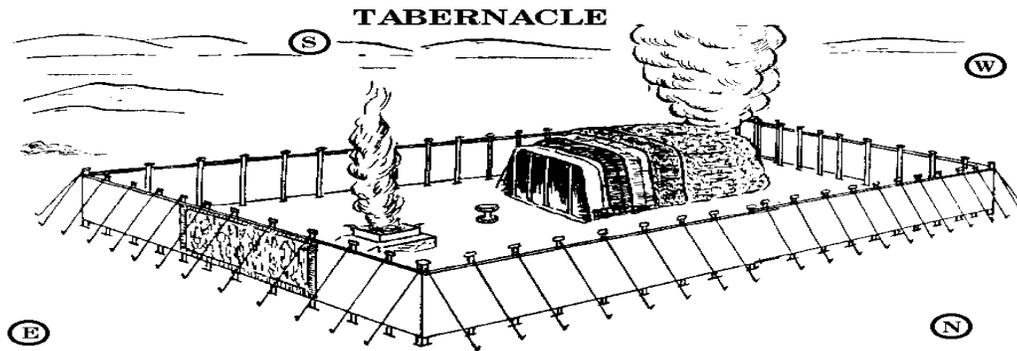


Moses then made a sacrifice, and sprinkled them with the blood, to consecrate them and confirm their oath. It was the blood of the Old Testament. Then he went up into the darkness of the cloud on the mountain top, there fasting, to talk with God, and to receive the two Tables of Stone written by the Finger of God, with its Ten Commandments. But man showed once again he could not obey God in his fallen state. The Israelites lost faith, and set up a golden calf, corrupting the right worship which God had not long before commanded them, and inventing worship of their own imagination.

When Moses discovered their sin, he destroyed the precious tables with the Ten Commandments, the token of God's covenant with His people. And God threatened to sweep them off in a moment and to fulfill His oaths to their forefathers in the children of Moses alone. Then Moses, having purified the camp by slaying the worst offenders, stood between the rest and the wrath of God, mediating for them until he obtained mercy for them, and a renewal of the Covenant.

Twice Moses spent forty days in God's Presence, where glorious visions were revealed to him. The Courts of Heaven itself were to be copied by him, by Divine guidance. It was the design for the Ark and Tabernacle. In the Tabernacle Moses' brother Aaron, and his seed after him, were to minister as priests, setting forth to the eye how there was a Holy Place, whence men were separated by sin, and how it could only be entered by a High Priest, after a

sacrifice of atonement. Every ordinance of this service was a shadow of good things to come in Christ Jesus.



The ceremonial laws were strictly enjoined on Israel, as part of the conditions of the Covenant, guiding their faith onwards by this acted prophecy. God, as King of His people, put forth other commands, some relating to their daily habits, others to their government as a nation, all tending to keep them separate from other nations. While some of these ordinances were meant to be temporary until Christ should come, the Ten Commandments reflected God's moral character and were to be an abiding moral law for the people of God. The animal sacrifices and ceremonial law simply foreshadowed a day when there would be an expiation for sin by a perfect and infinite sacrifice- God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.



Also during this time God providentially established civil and church governments for the people, and a weekly Sabbath assembly. It appears He established a civil council, or Sanhedrin, to adjudicate civil cases in the nation. And He established an ecclesiastical council of Levites to adjudicate church issues among all the visible church. This same model passed to the Christian church centuries later in the form of a presbyterian synod of elders, and it has served as the political model for parliamentary government for generations. The

assembly that met each Sabbath for worship came to be called the local synagogue or church, which endures to this day. *“For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach Him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.”* God’s prescribed government, as well as His prescribed law, was a great mercy and blessing.

But despite God’s mercies extended to the Israelites, they could not even be roused to look for the present temporal promise, and hankered after the fine soil and rich fruits of Egypt, rather than the beautiful land of hill and valley that lay before them. When their spies reported the land where they were to dwell to be full of hill forts, held by Canaanites of giant stature, a cowardly cry of despair broke out. They complained that they should return to Egypt. Only two of the whole host, besides Moses, were ready to trust to Him who had delivered them from Pharaoh, and had led them through the sea. Therefore those two alone of the grown-up men were allowed to set foot in the Promised Land.

Till all the rest of Christ’s visible church at that time should have fallen in the wilderness, and a better race have been trained up, God would not help them to take possession. In their willfulness they tried to advance, and were defeated, and thus were obliged to endure their forty years’ desert wandering.



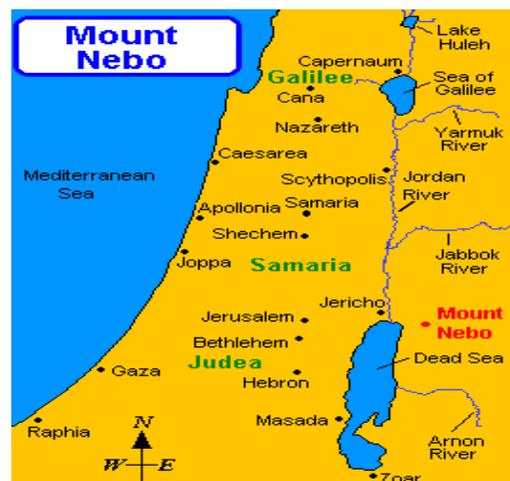
Even Moses had his patience worn out by their fretful faithlessness, and committed an act of disobedience. Because of this he was sentenced not to enter the Promised Land, but to die on the borders after one sight of the promise of his fathers. Under him, however, began the work of conquest. The rich pasture lands of Gilead and Basan were subdued, and the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, were permitted to take these as their inheritance, though beyond the proper boundary, the Jordan River.

The Moabites took alarm, though these, as descended from Abraham's nephew Lot, were to be left unharmed. The Moabite king, Balak, sent, as it appears, even to Mesopotamia for Balaam, a true prophet, though a guilty man, in hopes that he would bring down the curse of God on Christ’s visible church. Balaam, greedy of reward, forced, as it were, consent from God to go to Balak, though warned that his words would not be in his own power. As he stood on the hill top with Balak, vainly endeavoring to curse, a glorious stream of blessing flowed from Balaam’s lips. Balaam actually blessed Israel instead of cursed it like he wanted. Balaam’s prophecy revealed not only the fate of all the tribes around, even for a thousand years, but proclaimed the Scepter and Star- Jesus Christ- that should rise out of Jacob to execute vengeance on his foes. But finding himself unable to curse Israel, the miserable prophet Balaam devised a surer means of harming them. Balaam sent tempters among the

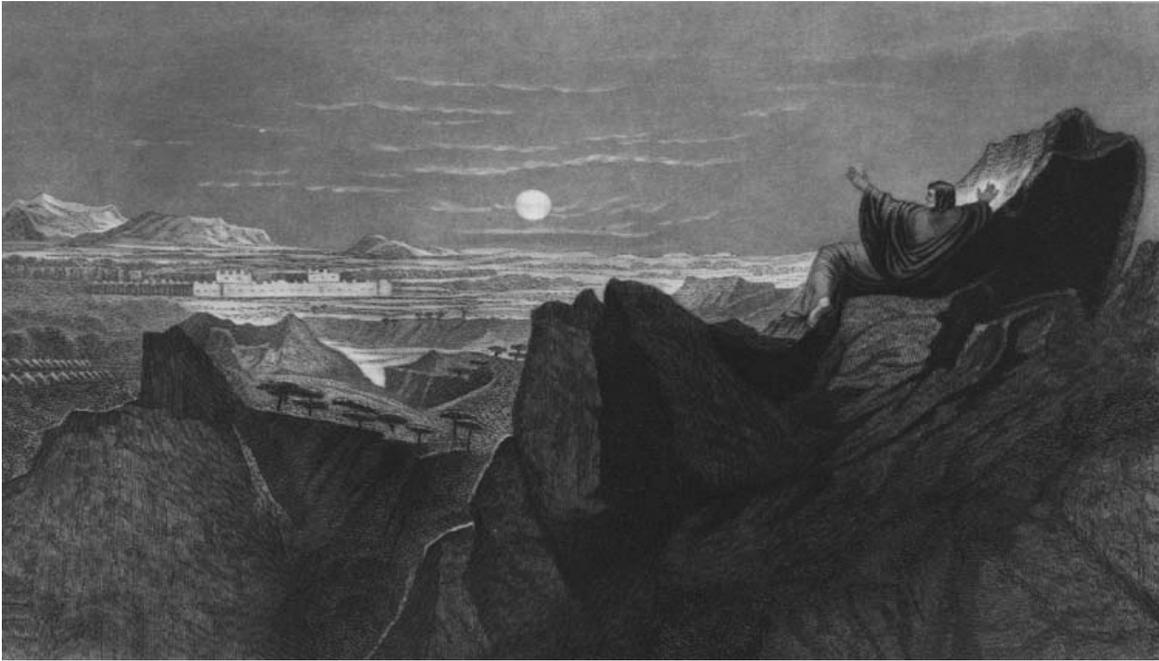
Israelites to cause them to corrupt themselves. So effectual was this invention, that the greater part of the tribe of Simeon were ensnared, and a great plague was sent in chastisement.

The wickedness among the tribe of Simeon was checked by the zeal of the young priest, Phineas, under whose avenging hand so many of the guilty tribe fell, that their numbers never recovered the blow. But by this good and heroic deed of Phineas much of the church was saved even more severe punishment. This surely teaches us this lesson even today: in order to protect our own human interests, we must be willing first to protect God's interests. God judges wickedness in societies, and the only solution is repentance and reformation that removes the evil from society.

After a prayer of atonement, a great battle was fought, and the wretched Balaam was among the slain. The forty years were over, Moses' time was come, and he gave his last summing up of the Covenant, and sang his prophetic song. Moses' authority was to pass to his servant, the faithful spy, bearing the prophetic name of Joshua.



Moses was led by God to the top of Mount Nebo, whence he might see in its length and breadth, the pleasant land, the free hills, the green valleys watered by streams, the wooded banks of Jordan, the pale blue expanse of the Mediterranean Sea joining with the sky to the west. And to the north, the snowy hills of Hermon, which sent their rain and dew on all the goodly mountain land. It had been the hope of that old man's hundred and twenty years, and he looked forth on it with his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated.

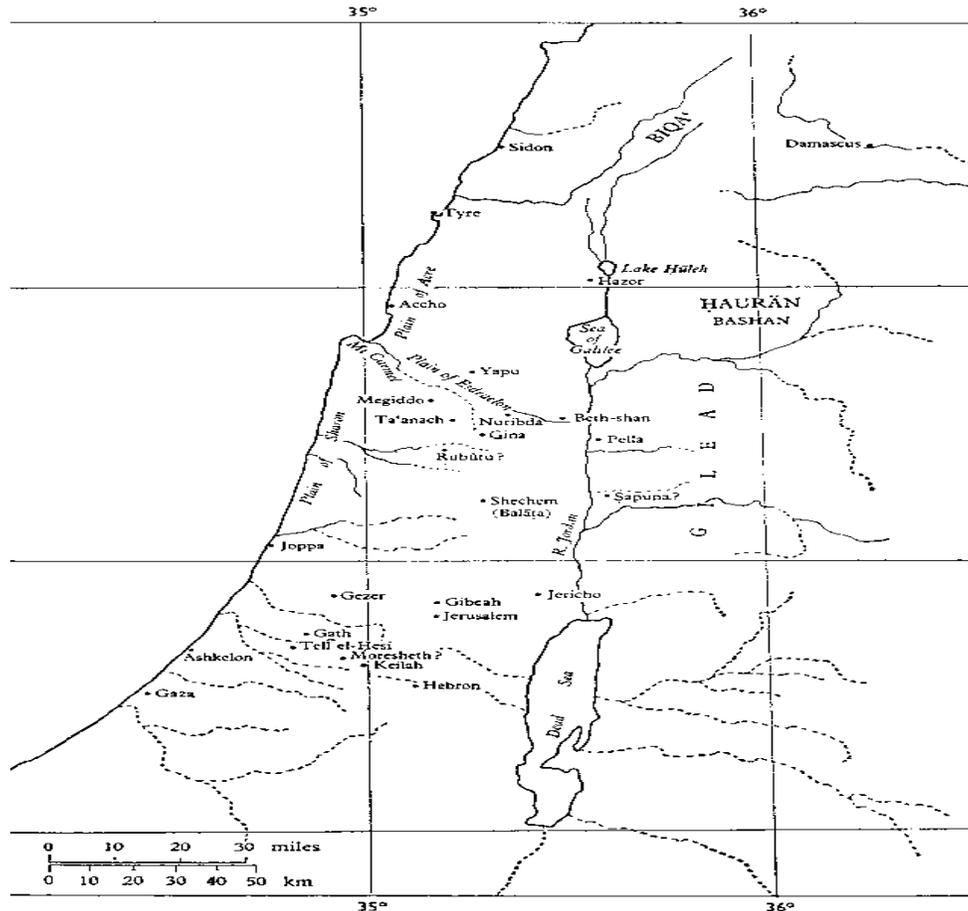


But God had better things for him in Heaven, and there upon the mountain top he died alone, and God buried him in the sepulcher whereof no man knows. None was like to him in the Old Covenant, who stood between God and the Israelites, but he left a promise that a Prophet should be raised up like unto himself. Moses had been a faithful servant and prophet of God in God's household, and a servant and prophet of such stature in the household was not to arise again until the Lord Jesus Christ. Before Moses had passed away, he prophesied of this coming even more excellent Prophet.

CHAPTER 6 : THE CHURCH IN CANAAN LED BY JUDGES

"But He was so merciful, that He forgave their misdeeds and destroyed them not."-
Psalm 78:38

In the year 1451 BC, Joshua led the tribes of Israel through the divided waters of the Jordan River, and received strength and skill to scatter the heathen before them, conquer the cities, and settle them in their inheritance. The Land of Canaan was very unlike Egypt, with its flat soil, dry climate, and single river. Canaan was a narrow strip, enclosed between the Mediterranean Sea and the river Jordan. The Jordan River runs due south down a steep wooded cleft into the Dead Sea, the lowest water in the world, in a sort of pit of its own, with barren desolation all round it, so as to keep in memory the ruin of the cities of the plain. In the north, rise the high mountains of Lebanon, a spur from which goes the whole length of the land, and forms two slopes, whence the rivers flow, either westward into the Great Sea, or eastward into the Jordan. Many of these hills are too dry and stony to be cultivated; but the slopes of some have fine grassy pastures, and the soil of the valleys is exceedingly rich, bearing figs, vines, olive trees, and corn in plenty, wherever it is properly tilled. With such



hills, rivers, valleys, and pastures, it was truly a goodly land, and when God's blessing was on it, it was the fairest spot where man could live. When the Israelites entered it, every hill was crowned by a strongly walled and fortified town, the abode of some little king of one of the seven Canaanite nations who were given into their hands to be utterly destroyed.

Though they were commanded to make a complete end of all the people in each place they took, they were forbidden to seize more than they could fill, lest the empty ruins should serve as a harbor for wild beasts. They had their several lots marked out where they might spread when their numbers should need room. As Jacob had promised to Joseph, Ephraim and half Manasseh had the richest portion, nearly in the middle. Also, Shiloh- where the Tabernacle was set up- was in their territory. Judah and Benjamin were in a very wild rocky part to the southwards, between the two seas, with only Simeon beyond them. Then came, north of Manasseh, the fine pasture lands of Issachar and Zebulon, and a small border for Asher between Lebanon and the sea. Reuben, Gad, and the rest of Manasseh, were to the east of the Jordan, where they had begged to settle themselves in the meadows of Bashan and the balmy thickets of Gilead. Many a fortified town was still held by the Canaanites, especially Jebus, on Mount Moriah, between Judah and Benjamin.

Also, the Canaanites held the two great merchant cities of the Sidonians upon the sea-shore. These were called Tyre and Sidon, and their inhabitants were named Phoenicians, and were the chief sailors and traders of the Old World. From seeing a dog's mouth stained purple after eating a certain shell-fish on their coast, they had learned how to dye woolen garments of a fine purple or scarlet, which was thought the only color fit for kings, and these were sent out to all the countries round, in exchange for many commodities. So they received in trade balm and spices from Gilead; corn and linen from Egypt; ivory, pearls, and rubies from India; gold from the beds of rivers in Chittim or Asia Minor; and silver from Spain, then called Tarshish. Thus they grew very rich and powerful, and were skilful in all they undertook. The art of writing, which they seem to have caught from the Hebrews, went from them to the Greeks, sons of Japhet, who lived more to the north, in what were called the Isles of the Gentiles.

The Canaanites had a still fouler worship than the other sons of Ham in Egypt. They had many gods, whom they called altogether Baalim, or lords; and goddesses, whom they called Ashtoreth. They thought that each 'god' had some city or people to defend; and that the Lord Jehovah of the Israelites was such another as these, instead of being the only God of Heaven and earth. Among these there was one great Baal to whom the Phoenicians were devoted, and an especial Ashtoreth, the moon, or Queen of Heaven, who was thought to have a lover named Tammuz, who died with the flowers in the autumn and revived in the spring, and the women took delight in wailing and bemoaning his death, and then dancing and offering cakes in honor of his revival. Besides these, there was the planet Saturn, or as they called him, Moloch or Remphan, of whom they had a huge brazen statue with the hands held a little apart, set up over a furnace. They put poor little children between these brazen hands, and left them to drop into the flames below as an offering to this dreadful god. Well might such worship be called abomination, and the Israelites be forbidden to hold any dealings with those who followed it.

As long as the generation lived who had been bred up in the wilderness, they obeyed, and felt themselves under the rule of God their King, Who made His Will known at Shiloh by the signs on the breastplate of the High Priest, while judges and elders governed in the cities. But afterwards they began to be tempted to make friends with their heathen neighbors, and thus learnt to believe in their false deities, and to hanker after the service of some god who made no such laws of goodness as those by which the church of Israel was bound.

As certainly as they fell away, so surely the punishment came, and God stirred up some of these dangerous friends to attack them. Sometimes it was a Canaanite tribe with iron chariots who mightily oppressed them; sometimes the robber shepherds, the Midianites, would burst in and carry off their cattle and their crops, until distress brought the Israelites back to a better mind, and they cried out to the Lord. Then He would raise up a mighty warrior, and give him the victory, so that he became ruler and judge over Israel. But no sooner was he dead, than they would fall back again into idolatry, and receive another chastisement, repent, and be again delivered.

Two mighty warriors for the Hebrews during this period of the judges were Gideon and Samson. In Gideon's case, God destroyed multitudes of Midianite oppressors with but a small number of Israelites under Gideon. This powerfully illustrated to His church that God is mighty in salvation.

In Samson's case, God revealed how he could use a very flawed leader to achieve his ends. Samson sinned often, but loved Christ's church much. Samson unwisely revealed the secret of his strength, and was blinded by the Philistines. But even when blind, God used Samson to destroy many of the enemy.



This pattern went on for about 400 years, the Israelites growing constantly worse. In the latter part of this time, their chief enemies were the Philistines, in the borders of Simeon and Judah, near the sea. These were not Canaanites, but had once dwelt in Egypt, and then, after living for a time in Cyprus, had come and settled in Gaza and Ashkelon, and three other very strong cities on the coast, where they worshipped a fish-god, called Dagon. They had no king, but were ruled by lords of their five cities, and made terrible inroads upon all the country round.

At last the Israelites, in their self-will, fancied they could turn the Philistines to flight by causing the Ark to be carried out to battle by the two corrupt young priests, sons of Eli, whose doom had already been pronounced—that they should both die in one day. They were slain, when the Ark was taken by the enemies, and their aged father fell back and broke his neck in the shock of the tidings. The glory had departed; and though God proved His might by shattering Dagon's image before the Ark, and plaguing the Philistines wherever they carried it, till they were forced to send it home in a manner which again showed the Divine Hand, yet it never returned to Shiloh. God deserted the place where His Name had not been kept holy. The token of the Covenant seemed to be lost. The Philistines ruled over the broken and miserable Israelites, and there was only one promise to comfort them—that the Lord would raise up unto Himself a faithful Prophet, Priest, and King one day.

Already there was growing up at Shiloh the young Levite, Samuel, dedicated by his mother, and bred up by Eli. He is counted as first of the prophets, that long stream of inspired men, who constantly preached righteousness, and to whom occasionally future events were made known. He was also the last of the Judges, or heaven-sent deliverers. As soon as he grew up, he rallied the Israelites, restored the true worship, as far as could be with the Ark in concealment, and sent them out to battle. They defeated the Philistines, and under Samuel, again became a free nation.



CHAPTER 7 : THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

“there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”- Isaiah 11:1

When Samuel grew old, the Israelites would not trust to God to choose a fresh guardian for them, but cried out for a king to keep them together and lead them to war like other nations. The Israelites manifested they were too wicked to be run simply by a council of judges and elders; they wanted the strong hand and rule of an earthly king. Their entreaty was granted, and in 1094 B.C. Saul the son of Kish, of the small but fierce tribe of Benjamin, was appointed by God. Saul was anointed by Samuel, on the understanding that he was not to rule by his own will, like the princes around, but as God's chief officer, to enforce His laws and carry out His bidding. Time would reveal though that Saul would not obey God and enforce His commands.

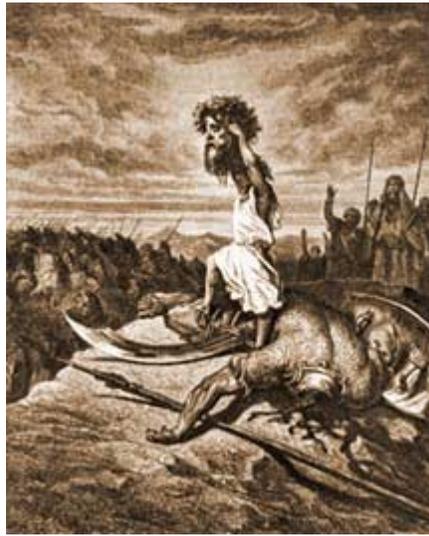
But the overall condition of the Israelites did gradually improve under Saul. Saul's son Jonathan and uncle Abner were able generals, and they successfully fought back many of Israel's enemies. But Saul became proud, and he fancied he could go his own way. He took it upon himself to offer sacrifice to God, even though this role was reserved for the priests. God showed his hot displeasure with Saul over this, forever teaching God's people the lesson that the church and civil government are two separate institutions, and the officials in the one should not assume the functions of the other.

Saul disobeyed God yet more. One day when sent forth by God to destroy all belonging to the Amalekites, Saul spared the king and the choicest of the spoil. For this he was sentenced not to be the founder of a line of kings. The doom filled Saul with wrath against the priesthood, while an evil spirit was permitted to trouble his soul.

Samuel's last great act was to anoint the youngest son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, the great grandchild of the loving Moabitess, Ruth, the same whom God had marked beside his sheepfolds as the man after His own Heart. This same David was to be the future father of the sceptered line of Judah, and of the "Root and Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star" for the church. He was, in other words, appointed the one from whom the future Messiah of the church would descend, even though this future Messiah was also to be "David's Lord", as David himself prophesied in song.

Fair and young, full of inspired song, and of gallant courage, the youth David was favored as the minstrel able to drive the evil spirit from Saul.

David was also the champion who had slain the giant Goliath of Gath who had so distressed the Israelites. He killed the giant Philistine with no weapon but his sling.



David was the king's son-in-law by marriage to Saul's daughter, and the prince Jonathan's bosom friend. But as the hopes of Israel became set on him, Saul began to hate David as if he were a supplanter, though Jonathan submitted to the Will that deprived himself of a throne, and loved his friend as faithfully as ever. At last, by Jonathan's counsel, David fled from court, and Saul in his rage at thinking him aided by the priests, slew all who fell into his hands, thus cutting off his own last link with Heaven.

A trusty band of brave men gathered round David, but he remained a loyal outlaw, and always abstained from any act against his sovereign, even though Saul twice lay at his mercy. Patiently he tarried the Lord's leisure, and the time came at last. The Philistines overran the country, and chased Saul even to the mountain fastnesses of Gilboa, where the miserable man, deserted by God, tried to learn his fate through evil spirits, and only met the certainty of his doom. In the next day's battle his true-hearted son met a soldier's death. But Saul, when wounded by the archers, tried in vain to put an end to his own life, and was, after a reign of forty years, at last slain by an Amalekite, who brought his crown to David, and was executed by him for having profanely slain the Lord's anointed.

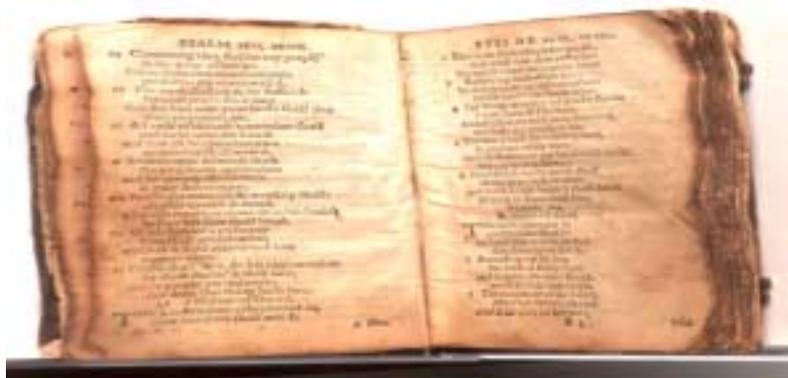
For seven years David reigned only in his own tribe of Judah, while the brave Abner kept the rest of the kingdom for Saul's son, Ishbosheth. But this condition ended when Abner- the skillful general so necessary to Ishbosheth's reign- took offence because Ishbosheth refused to give him one of Saul's widows to wife. Abner offered to come to terms with David, but in leaving the place of meeting, he was treacherously killed by David's overbearing nephew, Joab, in revenge for the death of a Joab's brother whom Abner had slain in single combat.

Ishbosheth was soon after murdered by two of his own servants, and David became sole king of all Israel. David ruled prudently with all his power, and with anxious heed to the will of his true King. He was a great conqueror, and was the first to win for Israel her great city on Mount Moriah. It had once been called Salem, or peace, when the mysterious priest-king, Melchizedek, reigned there in Abraham's time. David was inspired to prophecy that the

Messiah who was to descend from him would be a priest-king after the order of Melchizedek. It was there too that Abraham had sought to sacrifice Isaac at God's command, foreshadowing the day that God the Son would be sacrificed in Jerusalem. Great things were indeed planned for Jerusalem. But for many years up until the time of David it had been held by the Jebusites, and called Jebus.

When David took Jebus, he named it Jerusalem, or 'the vision of peace'. David fortified Jerusalem, built a palace there, and fetched thither with songs and solemn dances, the long-hidden Ark, so that it might be the place where God's Name was set, the center of worship. Well was the spot fitted for the purpose. It was a hill girdled round by other hills, and so strong by nature, that when built round with towers and walls, an enemy could hardly have taken it.

David longed to raise a solid home for the Ark, but this was not a work permitted to a man of war and bloodshed. David did collect materials though for the later construction of the Temple, and he restored the priests to their offices. He also gave the Priests his own glorious Book of Psalms, full of praise, prayer, and entreaty, to be sung before the Lord in the Temple by the Levites, accompanied by musical instruments. This Book of Psalms also became the 'hymn book' for the synagogues of the people's weekly Sabbath worship. These spiritual songs were sung in the synagogues and later the Christian churches without accompaniment of musical instruments or choirs, like they were in the Temple. And this same Book of Psalms remains today the church's hymn book of Spirit-inspired songs. God therefore provided a text for the scripture reading in His public worship as well as a hymn book for singing there.



David likewise made the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites pay him tribute, and became the most powerful king in the East, receiving the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham.

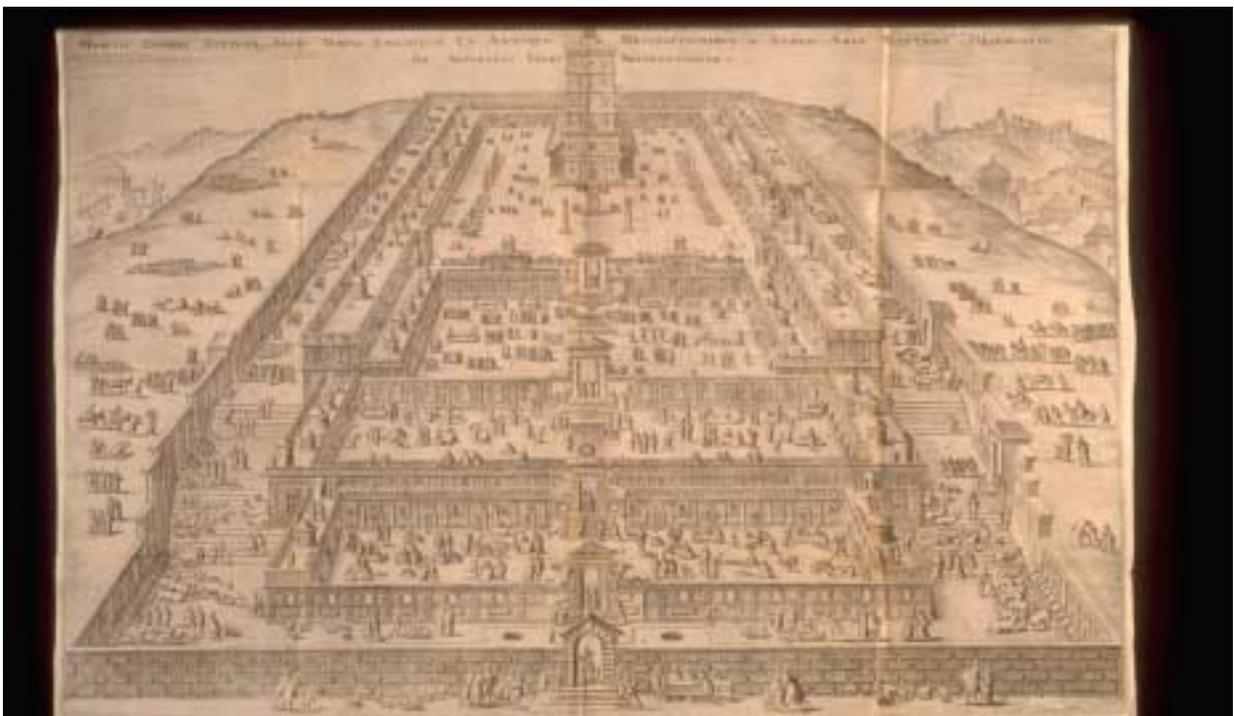
But even David was far from guiltless. He was a man of strong passions, though of a tender heart, and erred greatly, both from hastiness and weakness, but never without repentance. And David's Psalms of contrition have ever since been the treasure of the penitent. Chastisement visited his sins, and was meekly borne, but bereavement and rebellion, care, sorrow, and disappointment, severely tried the Sweet Psalmist of Israel, shepherd, prophet, soldier, and king. In 1016 BC, in his seventieth year, David went to his rest, after having

been king for forty years. He was assured that his seed should endure for ever as kings, because he knew one Seed was to be none other than Christ the King.

All promises of temporal splendor were accomplished in David's peaceful son, Solomon. Solomon asked to be the wisest, and therefore was likewise made the richest, most prosperous, and most peaceful of kings.

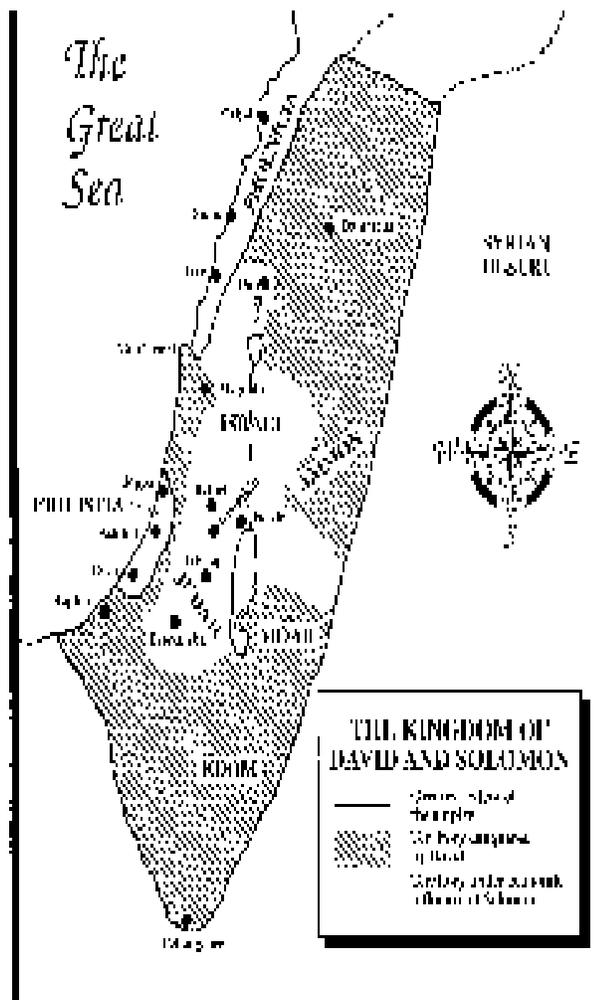


No enemy rose against Solomon, but all the nations sought his friendship. Sidon for once had her merchandise hallowed by its being offered to build and adorn the Temple, Solomon's great work. The spot chosen for it was that of Isaac's sacrifice, where was the threshing-floor bought by David from Araunah. But to give more room, he leveled the head of the mountain, throwing it into the valley. He thus formed an even space where, silently built of huge stone, quarried at a distance, arose the courts, for strangers, women, men, and priests, surrounded by cloisters, supporting galleries of rooms for the lodging of the priests and Levites, many hundreds in number. The main building was of white marble, and the Holy of Holies was overlaid even to the roof outside with plates of gold, flashing back the sunshine. Even this was but a poor token of the Shechinah, that glorious light which descended at Solomon's prayer of consecration, and filled the Sanctuary with the visible token of God's Presence on the Mercy Seat, to be seen by the High Priest once a year.



That consecration of the Temple was the happiest moment of the history of Israel, but what followed was mournful. Even David had been like the kings of other eastern nations in the multitude of his wives, and Solomon went far beyond him, bringing in heathen women, who won him into paying homage to their idols, and outraging God by building temples to Moloch and Ashtoreth. Though as a prophet he had been inspired to speak in his Proverbs, nevertheless he shamed himself in his conduct with foreign wives. A warning was sent that the power which had corrupted him should not continue in his family, and that the kingdom should be divided. Sadly, Solomon only grew more tyrannical. When the Ephraimite warrior, Jeroboam, was marked by the prophet Ahijah as the destined chief of the new kingdom, Solomon persecuted him, and drove him to take refuge with the great Shishak, King of Egypt, where he seems to have learned the idolatries from which Israel had been so slowly weaned.

Sick at heart, Solomon in his old age wrote the saddest book in the Bible; and though his first writing, the Canticles, had been a joyful prophetic song of the love between the Lord and His Church, his last was a mournful lamentation over the vanity and emptiness of the world, and full of scorn of all that earth can give. He discloses in the book of Ecclesiastes what he should have heeded throughout his life: life must be governed by the fear of God and obedience to His commandments. Any other life is full of vanity.



CHAPTER 8 : THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

"But if his children forsake My Law, and walk not in My judgments: if they break My statutes, and keep not My Commandments, I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges." —Ps. 89:31, 32.

Reheboam, the son of Solomon, brought about, by his own harshness and folly, the punishment that God had decreed. By the advice of his hasty young counselors. He made so violent a reply to the petition brought to him by his subjects, that they took offence, and the ten northern tribes broke away from him, setting up as their king, Jeroboam, who had been already marked out by the prophet. So the kingdom of Israel split into the Kingdom of Judah in the south and the Kingdom of Samaria (or sometimes called the Kingdom of Israel) in the north:



The lesson of meekness seems to have been the one chiefly appointed for Rehoboam, for when he assembled the fighting men of Judah and Benjamin to subdue the revolt, Shemaiah the prophet was sent to forbid him, and he submitted at once. When again Jeroboam's fiend Shishak invaded his kingdom, Shemaiah told him it was as a punishment sent him by God, against which he must not struggle. So Rehoboam gathered all the riches left him by his father, paid the tribute that the Egyptians required; and for being thus patient and submissive, he was again blessed by God, and Judah prospered.

No doubt Rehoboam's obedience saved him from sharing the fate of the other kings whom Shishak conquered and dragged back to Egypt, where he yoked them to his chariot, four abreast, and made them draw him about. Shishak was a great conqueror, and in nine years overran all Asia, as far as the river Ganges. All his victories were recorded in hieroglyphics, and the learned have made out the picture of a people with the features of Jews, bringing their

gifts to his feet, no doubt the messengers of Rehoboam. He lost his sight in his old age, and is said to have killed himself.

In 955 B.C. Abijah came to the throne of Rehoboam in Judah. Abijah was permitted to gain a great victory over Jeroboam, but he died at the end of three years, and was succeeded by his son Asa.

The great temptation of the men of Judah seems to have been at this time the resorting to hill tops and groves of trees as places of worship, instead of going steadily to the Temple at Jerusalem as God appointed. And the kings, though obedient in other respects, did not dare to put down this forbidden custom. Throughout the history of Christ's church men have been sinfully reluctant to worship God just as He has appointed, without adding rites and elements He has not. But God has always been displeased when His followers have not faithfully followed His regulative principle of worship, which says man should just worship as God has commanded.

Asa's mother, Maachah, a daughter of Absalom, even had an idol in a grove, in violation of the second of the Ten Commandments. But after the king had been strengthened to gain a great victory over the Ethiopians, he destroyed the idol, and put her down from being queen. His end was less good than his beginning. He made a league with the Syrians instead of trusting to God; and threw the prophet Hanani into prison for having rebuked him. In his latter years Asa was cruel and oppressive. He died in 891 BC.

Asa's son Jehoshaphat was a very good and gentle prince. But his very gentleness seemed to have led him into error, for he became too friendly with the idolatrous House of Ahab in Samaria, and allowed his son Jehoram to take to wife the child of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah, who proved even more wicked than her mother. Jehoshaphat was in alliance with Ahab, and went out with him to his last battle at Ramoth-Gilead, where Ahab tried to put his friend into danger instead of himself, by making him appear as the only king present, but entirely failed to deceive the hand appointed to bring death. Afterwards, when the Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites came up against Judah, Jehoshaphat was commanded to have no fears, but to go out to meet them, with the Levites singing before him, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever!" So the battle should be his without fighting. The three banded nations fought among themselves, and made such a slaughter of one another, that the Jews had nothing to do but to gather the spoil, which was in such heaps, that they spent three days in collecting it. And again, when Jehoshaphat went out with Jehoram, King of Israel, against the Moabites, with Jehoshaphat's tributary, the King of Edom, another miraculous deliverance was granted by the hand of Elisha, and the water which was sent to relieve the thirsty hosts of Israel and Judah, seemed to the Moabites as blood. Thinking the three armies had quarreled and slain each other, the Moabites made an unguarded attack, and suffered a total rout.

Jehoshaphat was succeeded in 891 B.C. by his son Jehoram, who, though he had seen such signal proofs of God's power, chose rather to follow the will of his wicked wife Athaliah, than to obey the commands of God. To strengthen his dominion, he followed the example of the worst heathen tyrants, and killed his seven brethren. Jehoram also permitted and encouraged idolatry in the most open manner. He was first punished by the loss of the

Edomites, who rose against him, and set up a free kingdom according to the prophecy of Isaac. Next Arabians and Philistines ravaged his very house, and killed all his children except the youngest, Ahaziah. And lastly, by a loathsome and deadly disease, Jehoram's life was ended in the fortieth year of his age.

Ahaziah was only twenty-two, and was ruled by his mother Athaliah for the one year before, going to visit his uncle Jehoram, of Israel, he was slain with him in Jehu's massacre of the House of Ahab. Athaliah herself fulfilled the rest of the decree which she did not acknowledge. She was bent on reigning, and savagely murdered all her grandsons who fell into her hands. But as the House of David was never to fail, one tender branch, the infant Joash, was hidden from her fury by his aunt, the wife of the High Priest Jehoiada. When the fitting time was come, the Levites were armed, and the people were shown their little king. They acknowledged him with shouts of joy, and Athaliah coming to see the cause of the outcry, was dragged out of the Temple and put to death. Jerusalem was cleansed from the worship of Baal, and all prospered as long as the good Jehoiada lived.

After Jehoiada's death, however, Joash fell away grievously, and promoted idol worship. Joash even slew the son of his preserver, Jehoiada, for bringing him a Divine rebuke. And for this iniquity his troops suffered a great defeat from the Syrians, and his servants slew him as he lay sick on his bed.

Joash's son Amaziah began well, obeying the Lord by dismissing the Ephraimites whom he had hired to aid him against the Edomites. Amaziah was therefore rewarded with a great victory. But so strangely blind was Amaziah, that he brought home the vain gods of Edom and worshipped them. He too was slain by rebels in the flower of his age, leaving his son Uzziah, also called Azariah, to succeed him at sixteen years old.

Uzziah met with such success at first, that his heart was lifted up, and in his pride he endeavored to intrude into the priest's office, and burn incense on the Altar. This was the very sin which had gotten Saul in such trouble with God, but Uzziah did not heed the lesson of history. So even while striving with the High Priest, the leprosy broke out white on his brow, setting him apart, to live as an outcast from religious services forever.

Uzziah's son Jotham became the governor of the kingdom during his lifetime, and afterwards reigned alone till the year 759, when he was succeeded by his son Ahaz, one of the worst and most idolatrous of the Kings of Judah. The Syrians made alliance with Israel, and terribly ravaged Judea, till Jerusalem stood alone in the midst of desolation; and Ahaz, instead of turning to the Lord, tried to strengthen himself by fresh heathen alliances, though the prophet Isaiah brought him certain messages that his foes should be destroyed, and promised him, for a sign, that great blessing of the House of David, that the Virgin's Son should be born, and should be God present with us.



CHAPTER 9 : THE KINGDOM OF SAMARIA

"As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water."- Hosea 10:7

Many promises had marked out Ephraim for greatness, and at first the new kingdom seemed quite to overshadow the little rocky Judah. But the founder of the dominion of the ten tribes sowed the seeds of decay, because, like Saul, he would not trust to the God who had given him his crown. Jeroboam was afraid his subjects would return to the kings of the House of David, if he let them go to worship at Jerusalem, and therefore revived the old symbol of a calf, which he must have seen in Egypt in his exile, setting up two shrines at Bethel and at Dan, the two ends of his kingdom, bidding his people go thither to offer sacrifice. Thus he made Israel to sin, worshipping God in a way God had not appointed.

While hoping to strengthen his power, Jeroboam's sin was the cause of its ruin, as it has been for so many after him. Prophets warned Jeroboam in vain, that his line should not remain on the throne. And in the reign of his son Nadab, the rebel Baasha arose and slew the whole family of this first king of the idolatrous realm, in the year 952 B.C.

Baasha was not warned by the fate of Nadab, but followed the same course. Baasha's his son Elah and all his house were destroyed in 928 B.C., when after the slaughter of two short-lived usurpers, the captain of the army, Omri, became king.

Omri belonged to the city of Jezreel, in the inheritance of Issachar. But he built Samaria in the midst of Ephraim, between the two hills of blessing and of cursing. This town Samaria becoming the capital, gave its name to the whole kingdom.

In 918, Omri left his crown to his son Ahab, who allied himself with the rich Phoenicians, and took the Sidonian princess Jezebel for his wife. This was the most unfortunate marriage in the whole Israelitish history. Sinful as had been the calf-worship, it was still meant for adoration of the true God but Jezebel brought her foul Phoenician faith with her, and tried to force on the Israelites the worship of Baal as a separate god, in the stead of the Lord Jehovah. So a false god was added to false worship, and the Kingdom of Samaria now violated the first as well as the Second Commandment openly, defiantly, and shamelessly.

King Ahab was weak, and yielded. The greater number of the nation were so much corrupted by the breach of the Second Commandment, that they were not slow to break the First, although God had sent the most glorious of all His prophets to prove to them that "the Lord, He is the God." Three years of drought showed who commands the clouds, and then came Elijah's challenge to the four hundred prophets of Baal, to prove who was the God who could send fire from Heaven! All day did the four hundred cry wildly on their idol, while Elijah mocked them. At evening his offering was made, and drenched with water to increase the wonder of the miracle. Elijah prayed and the fire fell at once from Heaven. The people then shouted "The Lord He is the God!" and gave their deceivers up to punishment. When this partial purification was made, the prophet Elijah prayed upon Mount Carmel, and the little cloud arose and grew into a mighty storm, bringing abundance of rain on the thirsty land.



Who could withstand such wonders? Yet they only hardened Jezebel into greater cruelty, and Elijah was forced to flee into the utmost desert, where he communed with God on Mount Sinai, even like Moses. Only once more did Elijah appear again to Ahab, and that was to rebuke him for having permitted the murder of a poor subject whose property he had coveted, and to foretell the horrors in which his line should end. Ahab was not wholly hardened, and often had gleams of good which brought favor upon him.

A new enemy- the Syrians- had risen up since the Canaanites had been destroyed, and the Philistines repressed by David. Syria was a powerful nation, whose capital was at Damascus, a city which is said to be a perfect paradise. Damascus was so known because of its delicious climate and its lovely rivers. Of its two rivers, one made the circuit of the walls of the city, and the other flowed through the middle of the town. These Syrians were appointed to bring punishment upon Samaria. But at first, two great victories were vouchsafed to Ahab, because Benhadad, King of Syria, fancied that the Israelites only won because their gods were gods of the hills. Afterwards, when Ahab went out to recover Ramoth Gilead, willfully trusting to lying prophets, and silencing the true one, not all his disguise could avail to protect him. He was slain in the battle, and when his chariot was washed, the dogs licked his blood, as they had licked that of his victim Naboth.

Ahaziah, Ahab's son, soon died of a fall from the top of his palace. And the next brother Jehoram reigned, trying to make an agreement between the worship of God and of Baal. It was now that Elijah was taken away into Heaven by a whirlwind, leaving behind him Elisha to carry on his mission of prophecy and to execute the will of the Lord.

It was Elisha who sent a messenger to anoint Jehu, the warrior who performed the vengeance of the Lord upon the House of Ahab. In the year 884 B.C. Jehoram was slain in his chariot. Jezebel, thrown out of window by her own slaves, perished miserably among the ravenous flocks of street dogs. And all the princes of the line were slaughtered by the rulers of Samaria. Also, the worshippers of Baal were massacred, and the land purified from this idolatry.



Still Jehu would not part with the calves of Dan and Bethel. Jehu was thus warned that his family should likewise pass away after the fourth generation. Elisha had already wept at the fore-knowledge of the miseries which Hazael of Syria should bring upon Israel. And Hazael, murdering his master Benhadad by stifling him with a wet cloth as he lay sick on his bed, became a dreadful enemy to Samaria. So much broken was the force of Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, that at one time he had only one thousand foot, fifty horse, and ten chariots. But after this, prosperity began to return to the Israelites.

Joash, his son, was a mighty king, and would have been still greater, if he would have believed that obeying the simple words of the prophet Elisha on his death-bed would bring him victory. Yet so much greater was his force than that of Judah, that when Amaziah sent him a challenge, he replied by the insulting parable of the thistle and the cedar.

Jeroboam II., his son, was likewise prosperous. But neither blessings nor warnings would induce these kings to forsake their golden calves. Amos, the herdsman-prophet of Tekoa, was warned to say nothing against the king's chapel at Bethel; and Hosea in vain declared that Ephraim was feeding on wind, and following after the east-wind, namely, putting his trust in mere empty air. So in the time of Zechariah, son to Jeroboam, came the doom of the House of Jehu, and in 773 B.C. the king was murdered by Shallum, who only reigned a month, being killed by his general, Menahem.

Again, Menahem's son, Pekahiah, was killed by his captain Pekah, a great warrior, who made an attack upon Ahaz of Judah, and slew one hundred and twenty thousand Jews in one day. Many more with all their spoil were brought captives to Samaria. But there was some good yet left in Israel, and at the rebuke of the prophet Oded, the Ephraimites remembered that they were brethren, gave back to the prisoners all their spoil, fed them, clothed them, and mounted them on asses to carry them safely back to their own land. But Pekah, and his ally, Rezin of

Damascus, were sore foes to Ahaz, and cruelly ravaged his domains. And though God encouraged him, by the words of Isaiah, to trust in Him alone, and see their destruction, Ahaz obstinately resolved to turn to a new power for protection.

CHAPTER 10 : NINEVEH

"Where is the dwelling-place of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions?"-
Nahum 2:11

When the confusion of tongues took place at Babel, and men were dispersed, the sons of Ham's grandson, Cush, remained in Mesopotamia, which took the name of Assyria, from Assur, the officer of Nimrod, the first king. This Assur began building, on the banks of the Tigris, the great city of Nineveh. Nineveh became one of the mightiest cities in all the world, and the first to be ruined. It was enclosed by a huge wall, so wide that three chariots could drive side by side on the top, and built of bricks made of the clay of the country, dried in the sun and cemented with bitumen, guarded at the base by a plinth fifty feet in height, and with immense ditches round it, about sixty miles in circumference. Within were huge palaces, built of the same bricks, faced with alabaster, and the rooms decked with cedar, gilding, and ivory, and raised upon terraces whence broad flights of steps led down to courts guarded by giant stone figures of bulls and lions, with eagles' wings and human faces, as if some notion of the mysterious Cherubim around the Throne in Heaven had floated to these Assyrians. The slabs against the walls were carved with representations of battles, hunts, sacrifices, triumphs, and all the scenes in the kings' histories, nay, in the building of the city. And there were explanations in the wedge-shaped letters of the old Assyrian alphabet.



The Ninevites had numerous idols, but their honor for the Lord had not quite faded away. About the year 830 BC, around the time of Amaziah in Judah, and Jeroboam II in Israel, the prophet Jonah was sent to rebuke them for their many iniquities. In trying to avoid the command, by sailing to Tarshish in a Phoenician ship, he underwent that strange punishment which was a prophetic sign of our Lord's Burial and Resurrection. Thus warned, he went to Nineveh and startled the people by the cry, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed!" At that cry, the whole place repented as one man. From the king to the beggar all fasted and wept, till God had mercy on their repentance and ready faith, and turned away His wrath, in pity to the 120,000 innocent children who knew not yet to do good or evil.

The prophet Nahum afterwards prophesied against the bloody city, and foretold that her men should become like women, and that in the midst of her feasting and drunkenness an overflowing flood should make an end of her. But first God had a work for the Ninevites to do. Namely, God had appointed Nineveh to punish His own chosen, who would not have Him for their God. Therefore, He strengthened the great King Tiglath Pileser, who already held in subjection the other great Assyrian city of Babylon, and the brave Median mountaineers, to come out against the Syrians and Israelites.

Ahaz, King of Judah, hoping to be delivered from his distresses, sent messengers to Triglath Pileser, to say, "I am thy servant and thy son," and to beg him to protect him from his two

enemies, promising to pay him tribute. Tiglath Pileser did indeed take Damascus, and put the king to death, destroying the old Syrian kingdom for ever, and he carried away the calf of Dan, and severely chastised Samaria, where Pekah was shortly after murdered by his servant Hoshea. So Isaiah's prophecy of the ruin of "these two tails of smoking firebrands," Pekah and Rezin, was fulfilled. But as Ahaz had tried to bring it about in his own way, he gained nothing. Though he went to pay his service to the conqueror at Damascus, Tiglath Pileser did not help him, but only distressed him. And instead of learning who was his true Guardian, Ahaz only came home delighted with the Syrian temples, and profanely altered the arrangements in the Temple, which Moses and Solomon had ordained by God's command, as patterns of the greater and more perfect Tabernacle revealed to Moses in Heaven.

Ahaz soon died in the year 725 B.C. when only thirty-six years old, leaving his crown to Hezekiah. Hezekiah at this time was only sixteen years old, but he was to prove a king whose heart was more whole with God than had been that of any king since his father David. Hezekiah's first thought was to purify the Temple and to destroy all corrupt worship, breaking down idols, and destroying the high places and groves, which had stood ever since Solomon's time. Hezekiah realized what is still true to this day: it is the duty of government to enforce both tables of the Ten Commandments. To this end, Hezekiah had his people covenant to Christ to be an obedient people, as an excellent example of Christian civil government for future generations.

Hoshea, too, was the best King of Samaria that had yet reigned, for he encouraged his subjects to go to worship at Jerusalem, whither Hezekiah invited them to keep the Passover, and that feast had not been held so fully since Solomon's time. They came back full of zeal, and destroyed many of the idols. But the reformation came too late, for the measure of Israel's sin was full. Hoshea offended Shalmaneser, who had succeeded Tiglath Pileser, by making friends with So, King of Egypt, and the Assyrian army came down upon Israel in the year 722 B.C.

They killed Hoshea and carried off all the people as captives, settling them in the cities of the Medes, never more to dwell in their own land. Sargon seems to have dethroned Shalmaneser about this time, and to have completed the conquest of Israel, of which he boasted on the tablets of a great palace near Nineveh.



The remnant that was left, the small realm of Judah, took warning, and turned to God with all their heart, and therefore were protected. But they had much to suffer. Sargon's son, Sennacherib, was a proud and ambitious monarch, who used his Israelite captives in building up the walls of Nineveh, and making the most magnificent of all the palaces there, eight acres in size, and covered with inscriptions. He invaded Judea, took forty-six cities, and besieged Jerusalem, raising a mound, to overtop the walls. But on receiving large gifts from Hezekiah, he returned to his own land.

At Babylon a prince named Merodach Baladan had set himself up against Senuacherib, and sought the friendship of Hezekiah. When the good King of Judah recovered from his illness by a miracle, the sign of which was, that the sun seemed to retreat in his course, it probably won the attention of the Chaldeans, who were great star-gazers. And Merodach Baladan sent messengers to compliment the king, whose favor with Heaven had thus been shown to all the earth. For once Hezekiah erred, and was so much uplifted, as to display his treasure and his new-born son in ostentation. Isaiah rebuked him, telling him that his children should be slaves in the hands of the very nation who had heard his boast. He meekly submitted, thankful that there should be peace and truth in his days. Soon after, Babylon was reduced by Sennacherib, and Merodach Baladan driven into exile.

In the latter years of his reign, Sennacherib undertook an expedition into Egypt, and on his way sent a blasphemous message by his servant, Rabshakeh, to summon Hezekiah to submit, and warning him and his people, that their God could no more protect them than the gods of the conquered nations had saved their worshippers. In answer to the prayer of Hezekiah, came, by the mouth of Isaiah, an assurance that the boaster who insulted the living God, was only an instrument in His Hands, unable to go one step against His will. Not one arrow should he shoot against the holy city, but he should hear a rumor, a blast should be sent on him, and he should fall by the sword in his own land. Accordingly, on the report that Tirhakah, the great King of Ethiopia, was coming to the aid of the Egyptians, he hurried on to

reinforce the army he had sent against him, intending to take Jerusalem on his way back. But on the night when the two armies were in sight of each other, ere the battle, the blast of death passed over the Assyrians. In early morning the host lay dead, not by the sword, but by the breath of the Lord, and Sennacherib was left to return without the men in whom he had trusted! Even heathens recorded this deliverance, but they strangely altered the story. They said that it was the prayer of the Egyptian king that prevailed on his gods to send a multitude of mice into the enemy's camp, to gnaw all the bow-strings, so that they could not fight. They thus showed a statue of the king with a mouse in his hand, which was, they said, a memorial of the wonder.

Sennacherib, in rage and fury, cruelly persecuted the Israelites at Nineveh for their connection with the Jews. Then it was that the pious Tobit buried the corpses that were cast in the street until he lost his sight, afterwards so wonderfully restored. Sennacherib was murdered in the year 720 B.C. by two of his sons, while worshipping his god Nisroch; and another son, Esarhaddon, became king.

Esarhaddon, who is known by many different names, soon after came out and marauded all over the adjacent country. It is believed that it was about this time that Bethulia was so bravely defended, and the Ninevite general slain by the craft and courage of Judith. Esarhaddon took away all the remaining Israelites from their country, and filled it up with Phoenicians and Medes from cities which had been conquered. These, bringing their idols into the land of the Lord, were chastised with lions. Begging to be taught to worship the God of the land, they had priests sent them, who taught them some of the truth, though very imperfectly. These new inhabitants were called Samaritans.

In the time of Hezekiah, many more of the Psalms than had been before collected, were written down and applied to the Temple Service. The latter part of the Proverbs of Solomon were first copied out, and the inspired words of the prophets began to be added to the Scriptures. Joel's date is unfixed, but Hosea, Amos, and Jonah, had recently been prophesying, and the glorious evangelical predictions of Isaiah and Micah were poured out throughout this reign, those of Isaiah ranging from the humiliation and Passion of the Redeemer, to the ingathering of the nations to His Kingdom, and Micah marking out the little Bethlehem as the birth-place of "Him whose goings are from everlasting."

Manasseh, the son of the good Hezekiah, began to reign in 699. He was in his first years savagely wicked, and very idolatrous. It is believed that he caused the great evangelical prophet, Isaiah, to be put to death by being sawn asunder, and he set an image in the Temple itself. He soon brought down his punishment on his head, for the Assyrian captains invaded Judea, and took him captive, dragging him in chains to Babylon. There he repented, and humbled himself with so contrite a heart, that God had mercy on him, and caused his enemies to restore him to his throne. But the free days of Judah were over, and they were thenceforth subjects, paying tribute to the King of Assyria, and Manasseh was only a tributary for the many remaining years of his reign, while he strove in vain to undo the evil he had done by bringing in idolatry. Meantime the greatness of Nineveh came to an end. The Babylonians and Medes revolted against it, and it was ruined in the year 612 B.C.

The ruin of Nineveh happened in this wise. Sardanapalus succeeded his father at Nineveh, but was weak and luxurious. His brother, Saracus, was so like him, that what seems really to have been the end of Saracus, is generally told of Sardanapalus. He was so weary of all amusement and delight, that, by way of change, he would dress like his wives, and spin and embroider with them, and he even offered huge rewards to anyone who would invent a new pleasure. He said his epitaph should be, that he carried with him that which he had eaten, which, said wise men, was a fit motto only for a pig, not a man. At last his carelessness and violence provoked the Babylonians and Medes to rise against him, and they besieged his city. But he took no notice, and feasted on, putting his trust in an old prophecy, (perhaps Nahum's,) that nothing should harm Nineveh till the river became her enemy. At last he heard that the Tigris had overflowed, and broken down a part of the wall. So giving himself up, he shut himself up in his palace, and setting fire to it, burnt himself with all his wives, slaves, and treasures, rather than be taken by the enemy. So ended Nineveh, in the year 612 B.C.

No one ever lived there again. The river was made partly a swamp, and the rest was covered with sand brought by the desert winds. It was all ruin and desolation, just as had been prophesied. Nineveh's end stands as a testimony of the dealings of God with His people's foes.

CHAPTER 11 : THE CAPTIVITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

"Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" –
Lam. 2:15

Manasseh's son, Amon, undid all the reformation of his latter years, and brought back idolatry. Indeed, the whole Jewish people had become so corrupt, that even when Amon was murdered in 642 B.C., after only reigning two years, and better days came back with the good Josiah, it was with almost all of them only a change of the outside, and not of the heart.

Josiah was but eight years old when he came to the throne, and at sixteen he began to rule, seeking the Lord earnestly with his whole heart, as David and Hezekiah alone had done before him. One of his first acts was to purify the Temple, and in so doing, the book of the Law of Moses was found. They realized that in previous years it had been cast aside, and forgotten by all. Josiah bade the scribes read it aloud, and then for the first time he heard what blessings Judah had forfeited, what curses she had deserved, and how black was her disobedience in the sight of God. Well might he rend his clothes, weep aloud, and send to the prophetess Huldah, to ask whether the anger of the Lord could yet be turned aside. She made answer by the word of the God of Justice, that the doom must come on the guilty nation, but that in His mercy, He would spare Josiah the sight of the ruin, and that he should be gathered into his grave in peace. At the same time Zephaniah likewise spoke of judgment, and Jeremiah, the priest of Anathoth, was foretelling that treacherous Judah should soon suffer like backsliding Israel.

Yet even this hopeless forecast did not daunt Josiah's loving heart from doing his best. He collected his people, and renewed the Covenant. He rooted out every trace of idolatry, even more thoroughly than Hezekiah had done, overthrowing even Solomon's idol temples. And he went to Bethel, which he seems to have held under the King of Assyria, and defiled the old altar there by burning bones on it, as the disobedient prophet had foretold of him by name, when that altar was first set up. He likewise caused copies of the Law to be made, so that it might never be lost again. And the Jews have a story, that knowing the Temple was to be destroyed, he saved the Ark of the Covenant, Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna, from sacrilege, by hiding them away in the hollow of Mount Nebo, where they have never since been found; but this is quite uncertain.

Josiah lived between two mighty powers: the King of Babylon, who had newly taken Nineveh, and Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, a very bold and able man, who hired Phoenician ships to sail round Africa, and then did not believe the crews when they came back, because they said they had seen the sun to the north at noon, and wool growing on trees. He tried to cut a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea; and wishing to check the power of Babylon, he brought an army by sea to make war upon Assyria, landing at Acre under Mount Carmel, and intending to march through Gilead. Josiah, being a tributary of Babylon, thought it his duty to endeavor to stop him, and going out to battle with him at Megiddo, was there mortally wounded, and died on his way home, in the year 611 BC. The mourning of the Jews over their good king was so bitter, that it was a proverb long after; and they had indeed reason to lament, for he was the last who stood between them and their sin and their punishment.

Jehoahaz, or Shallum, his third son, a wicked young man, only reigned while Necho was fighting a battle with the Babylonians on the Euphrates, and then was carried off in chains to Egypt, while Necho set up Eliakim, or Jehoiakim, another brother, in his stead. Jehoiakim was idolatrous, cruel, and violent. He persecuted the prophets, and did everything to draw on himself the punishment of Christ. Christ is jealous for His church, and will not long suffer such wickedness.

Necho, making another invasion, was defeated by the great Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and hunted back by him into Egypt. On his way Nebuchadnezzar seized Jerusalem, in the year 606 B.C., and carried off some of the treasures of the Temple, and many of the royal family, to Babylon. Among these taken were four holy children, but he let Jehoiakim continue to reign as his vassal. Jeremiah prophesied that the time of captivity and desolation should last seventy years from this time, but the worst was not yet come.



Jehoiakim was bent on trusting for help to the Egyptians, who had made him king, and treated Jeremiah as a traitor for counseling him to be loyal to the Assyrians. He threw Jeremiah into prison, and when Baruch read the roll of his prophecies in the Temple, he caused it to be cut to pieces and destroyed. At last he rebelled, relying on help from Egypt, but it did not come, for Necho was dying. So in the year 606, Nebuchadnezzar himself came up against Jerusalem, and besieged it. Jehoiakim died in the midst of the war, and his equally wicked son, Jehoiachin, Coniah, or Jeconiah, was soon forced to count out, and surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, who dishonored his father's corpse, and carried him away to Babylon, with the chief treasures of the Temple, and a great multitude of warriors and mechanics. Among them was the prophet Ezekiel, who, on the banks of the Chebar, saw mighty visions of the chariot of God borne up by the Cherubim. And he rebuked the present Jews for their crimes,

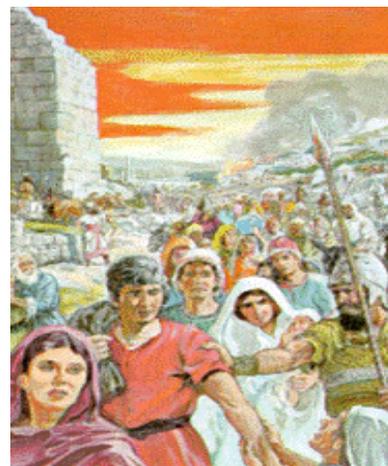
promised restoration, and beheld the new and more perfect Building of God measured out by the angel. A marble cylinder with most of this prophecy engraved on it in Assyrian characters, has been found in the ruins near the Tigris.

The last son of Josiah, Mattanias, or Zedekiah, was set up as king, and reigned for eleven years. Like his brothers, wavering and sinning, and trusting to false prophets, instead of Jeremiah, who gave him hopes of rest, if he would only bear his present fallen state meekly, and not trust to Egypt. The counselors who loved Egypt, however, persuaded him to rebel, as Pharaoh Hophra was actually coming out to his assistance. Zedekiah put Jeremiah into prison for prophesying that he would bring ruin on himself. Nebuchadnezzar soon marched upon him, and besieged Jerusalem; and his friend, Pharaoh Hophra, left him to his fate, showing himself the broken reed that Jeremiah had said he would prove.

The siege of Jerusalem lasted a year, and no one suffered more than the prophet, who was thrown into a noisome prison, and afterwards lowered into a pit, where he nearly died. But not for all this did he cease to denounce the judgments of God on the rebellious city. Horrible famine prevailed, and the streets were full of dead. But Jeremiah told the king, that if he would go out and make terms with Nebuchadnezzar all might yet be saved. But Zedekiah would not listen, and at last broke out with his men of war to cut his way through the enemy. His self-will met its deserts. He was taken by Nebuzaradan, the captain who had been left to carry on the siege, and brought a prisoner to Babylon, after his sons had been slain in his very sight, and his eyes then put out, according to a prophecy of Ezekiel, which he is said to have thought impossible; namely, that he should die at Babylon, and yet never see it. The Temple was stripped of the last remains of its glory, and utterly overthrown, the walls were broken down, and the place left desolate.

The Edomites who were in the conqueror's army savagely exulted in the fall of their kindred nation. But both Psalm cxxxvii and the Prophet Obadiah spoke of vengeance in store for them likewise.

All the Jews of high rank were carried away, and none left but the poorer sort, who were to till the ground under a ruler named Gedaliah.



Jeremiah, who was offered his choice of going to Babylon or remaining in Judea, preferred to continue near the once glorious city, whose solitude and ruin he bewailed in the mournful Book of Lamentations. He did his utmost to persuade the remaining Jews to rest quietly under

the dominion of Assyria. Had they done so, there would yet have been peace. But Ishmael, a prince of the seed royal, who had fled to the Ammonites during the invasion, came back, and in the hope of making himself king murdered Gedaliah at a harvest feast, with many Jews and Chaldeans, and was on his way to his friend, the King of Ammon, when Johanan, a friend of Gedaliah, came upon him and slew many of his party, so that he escaped with only eight men to the Ammonites. So shocked were the Jews at this murder of Gedaliah, that they ever after kept a fast on the anniversary.

Johanan now asked counsel from Jeremiah, who still enjoined him to submit to the Assyrians, but assured him that if he went to Egypt it would only be to share the ruin of that country; but Johanan and his friends would not listen, and carried all the remnant of Judah, and Jeremiah himself, off by force into Egypt. All this happened in the miserable year 588, and Jerusalem remained utterly waste, the land enjoying a long sabbath of desolation.

What became of Jeremiah afterwards is not known. He is said to have been stoned in Egypt, but this is not at all certain. He left behind him the promise that a Deliverer should come—the Lord our Righteousness— and that the former redemption out of bondage in Egypt should be as nothing in comparison with the ingathering of the New Covenant from the north country and from all countries. He also prophesied that in the New Covenant God’s law would be more thoroughly written upon the hearts and minds of the faithful by God’s Spirit, foretelling then the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the later and ultimate glory of perfection in the New Heavens and New Earth. But for now, it was a sad day in the life of God’s visible church, for Israel had been taken captive.



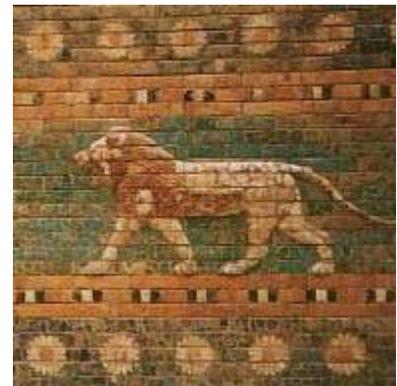
CHAPTER 12 : BABYLON

"By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion."-
Psalm 137:1

Babylon, the city which was to be the place of captivity of the Jews, was the home of the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans are believed not to have been the sons of Cush, like the Assyrians whom they had conquered at Nineveh. Rather, it is believed the Chaldeans were first a wandering tribe of the north, and to have descended from Japhet. They had nearly the same gods as the Ninevites, but they thought the special protector of their city was Bel-Merodach, the name by which they called the planet Jupiter. They were such great observers of the courses of the stars, that astronomy is said to have begun with them. But this was chiefly because they fancied that the heavenly bodies would help them to foretell coming events, for they put great faith in soothsayers. They settled upon the bank of the Euphrates, near the ruins of the Tower of Babel, round which a city arose, sometimes free, sometimes under the power of the King of Nineveh.

In the time of the weak and luxurious Saracus, Nabopolassar was governor of Babylon. He joined himself to the Medes, giving his son, Nebuchadnezzar, in marriage to the Median Princess Amytis. As has already been said, the two nations together destroyed Nineveh, after which, Babylon became the head of the Assyrian Empire, and Nebuchadnezzar was the king.

Nebuchadnezzar made the city exceedingly grand and beautiful. It was fifty five miles in circuit, square, surrounded by a wall eighty-seven feet thick, and three hundred and fifty high, with houses and a street on the top, and an enormous ditch filled with water all round, another lesser wall some way within. There were one hundred brazen gates in the wall, besides two larger gateways upon the Euphrates, which ran through the middle, dividing the city into two parts. It was full of streets and houses, with such fields and vineyards, that it was like a whole country walled in; and the soil was exceedingly rich, being all brought down from the Armenian hills by the Euphrates. As this river rose in the mountains of Armenia, it used to overflow in the spring, when the snows melted and swelled the stream; but to prevent mischief, the country was covered with a network of canals, to draw off the water in safety. The pride of the city was the Temple of Bel, which is thought to have been built on a fragment of the Tower of Babel. It was a pile of enormous height, with seven stages in honor of the seven planets then known, and with a winding ascent leading from one to the other. On the top was the shrine, where stood Bel's golden image, twelve cubits high, and before it a golden table where meats and wine were served up to him. On either side of the river were two palaces, joined together by a bridge, and the nearer one, four miles round, with wonderful grounds, containing what were called the hanging gardens, namely, a hill which Nebuchadnezzar had caused to be raised by heaping up earth, and planted with trees, to please his Median queen, whose eye pined for her native mountains in the flats of Babylon.



There must have been other eyes at Babylon wearying for their own faraway heights, for there the captives of Judah bore the punishment of their fathers' sins and their own, and repented so

completely, that they never returned to their idolatry. When in 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar carried to Babylon Jehoiachin and the nobles of Judah, he commanded that some of the royal children should be brought up as slaves to serve in his palace, and gave them new names after his gods. Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, gave their first proof of their obedience to the Law of their God in their exile and slavery, by denying themselves the choice meats set before them, lest they should eat of some forbidden thing, and lived only on dry beans and water. So blessed was their abstinence, that they excelled all the other youths both in beauty and in wisdom, and were soon promoted above them.

Soon after, Daniel was shown to be a prophet, for God inspired him, not merely with the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's perplexing dream, but revealed to him the dream itself. That dream was the emblematic history of the world. It was an image with a head of gold, shoulders of silver, thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet partly of iron, partly of clay, all overthrown together by a stone cut out without hands from a mountain. Great Babylon was the head, soon to give way to the less splendid Persian power, then again to the Greek dominion, and lastly to the iron rule of Rome, which would grow weak and mixed with miry clay, till at last all would be overthrown and subdued by the Stone which the builders rejected- Jesus Christ. Daniel prophesied that His *“kingdom shall never be destroyed.”*



After this wonderful interpretation, Daniel became a chief ruler under Nebuchadnezzar, and even in his youth, his name was a very proverb for wisdom and holiness. He judged among the Jews, and confuted the two wicked elders who sought to bring about the death of Susanna. He probably stood too high to be accused, when, soon after the taking of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar threw the three other princes into the fiery furnace, for refusing to bow down to the golden image on the plains of Dura.

The fiery blast of the furnace was to these three saints of God as a moist whistling wind. Even the tyrant beheld the Form like the Son of God, walking with them in the midst of the flame, while they sung that hymn which calls every created thing to praise the Lord. The miracle seems not to have been witnessed by a heart hardened against belief. Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed the glory of the God who could work such miracles, and whose instrument of vengeance he himself was.

Edom was soon after conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, thus fulfilling many prophecies. Another great work which was set for him to do, was to give the first great overthrow to the Phoenicians, and fulfill the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, by destroying Tyre. The siege lasted thirteen years, and the besiegers suffered as much as the besieged, till, as Ezekiel had foretold, every head was bald, every shoulder peeled with the burdens that were carried. But at last it was taken in the year 573 BC, and so utterly destroyed, that not a trace was left of it. It had been said by Isaiah, that after seventy years Tyre should take her harp and sing again, and return for a time to her former splendor and corruption. Thus it happened, for a new Tyre arose upon a little island at some little distance from the shore.

Ezekiel had promised the Chaldeans that the toils of Tyre should be repaid by the spoil of Egypt, the land that was henceforth to be a slave forever. In 574 BC, Nebuchadnezzar

marched thither, and conquered it with the utmost ease. There had been at that time a quarrel among the Egyptians, which weakened their hands. Hophra, the last of the Pharaohs, was slain by a rebel, and Egypt has never more been free, or under native rulers.

The Ammonites too, were put down forever by Nebuchadnezzar, and he came home puffed up with the pride of conquest. Then came another warning dream, of a tree, great and spreading, the rest and stay of bird and beast, till a watcher and a holy one came down and bade that it should be cut down, and only a stump to be left, to be wet with the dew of Heaven until it should recover. It was no wonder that Daniel was astonished for one hour ere he explained the vision, which bore that the great conqueror should lose his reason, be chased from the haunts of men, and live like the beasts, with hair like eagle's feathers, and nails like eagle's claws. Nebuchadnezzar does not seem to have punished him for thus revealing the will of God.

Time went on, while the city grew more magnificent under the builder's hand, till at last, in the pride of his heart, the king made his boast, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, and for the honor of my majesty?" That moment, the watcher cried from Heaven, and sense and strength fled from the mighty Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from men, and lived seven years among the beasts of the field, till for one year, reason was mercifully restored to him, and he made the best use of it in publishing to all the world the story of his pride and of his fall, and with all his heart honoring the King of Heaven, whose works are truth, and His ways are judgment.

This humbled conqueror died in 563 BC, and was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach, who released the captive Jehoiachin, and made him eat at his own table until his death. Two more kings succeeded, each reigning but a few years.

Then came Belshazzar, in the first year of whose reign Daniel had a vision, where the like events as were shown by the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, were foreshadowed under the form of animals, typifying the several empires. Four beasts came from the sea: the lion with eagle's wings was his own Assyria, but was set aside by the devouring bear of Persia; then followed the flying four-headed leopard of Greece; and lastly, the dreadful and terrible destroying creature, meaning Rome, which ground with iron teeth, and brake all in pieces. This last creature had ten horns, which are the kingdoms into which Rome was divided in later times, and one little horn which destroyed some of the others, and became blasphemous, till all was lost in an awful manifestation of the Ancient of Days coming to judgment. This little horn is the Romish Antichrist, the Papacy. The Papacy took up its kingdom in Rome in place of the ancient Roman Empire, and has sought deceitfully to establish its own laws in lieu of the laws of God. This prophecy then predicted the great failing away occurring in the latter days, but concludes with the kingdom being given to "*the saints of the Most High*", "*an everlasting kingdom*" in which "*all dominions shall serve and obey*" God. .

Another vision was sent two years after, likewise of emblematic beasts, and was likewise explained by an angel. A ram, pushing west, north, and southwards, was Persia, whose victory was already nigh, even at the door. But in his full power came from the west the Grecian he-goat, who overthrew the ram, and stamped on him, and waxed great. But then his one great horn was broken, and four others rose up, four lesser kings instead of one great conqueror; and one of these produced a lesser horn, which wrought woe and ruin to the pleasant land.

All these visions teach us that all God's visible dealings with His people in history are founded, flourish, and decay at His will. God is the sovereign who has all of history mapped out, and will bring it all to pass according to His plan. He alone is sovereign, and He will receive the glory.



CHAPTER 13 : CYRUS

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, then were we like unto them that dream."-
Psalm 126:1

The Persian power, prefigured by the silver shoulders, the bear and the ram, was indeed nigh. The ram had two horns, because two nations were joined together, the Medes, who had revolted from Nineveh, and the Persians. The Medes lived in the slopes towards the Tigris, and had learned to be luxurious and indolent from their Assyrian neighbors. But the Persians, who lived in the mountains to the eastward, were much more spirited and simpler, and purer in life. They are thought to be sons of Japhet, and their religion had not lost all remains of truth, for they believed in but one God, and had no idols, except that they adored the sun as the emblem of divine power, and kept horses in his honor, because they thought he drove his car of light round the sky. They worshipped fire likewise as the sign of the light-giving and consuming Godhead. This notion is not entirely gone yet, so that there are many Parsees, or fire worshippers, still in the East. Their priests were called Magi, and their faith was therefore termed Magian. Though it went astray in adoring these created things, yet it did not teach wickedness, as did the religions of the sons of Ham. And the Persians were a brave race, who loved hardy, simple ways, and said the chief things their sons ought to learn were, to ride, to draw the bow, and speak the truth.



Cyrus was the son of a Persian king and Median princess, and had been so well brought up at home, that when as a little boy he visited his grandfather at Ecbatana, in Media, he was very much shocked to see the court drinking to intoxication. Cyrus said wine must be poison, since it made people lose their senses. He was much puzzled by the hosts of slaves who would not let people do anything for themselves. He thought only those who were old and helpless could like being waited on, and he kept these hardy, simple ways, even after he was a great king.

When he was about forty years old one of the kings in Asia Minor made war on him, and he not only overthrew this monarch, but won that whole country, which was kept by the Persians for many years.



Afterwards, in the year 540 BC, Cyrus marched against Assyria, which had insulted him in the time of Evil-Merodach. He beat Belshazzar in battle, and then besieged him in his city. But the Babylonians had no fears, for they trusted to their walls and brazen gates, and knew that he could not starve them out, as they had so much corn growing within the walls. For two years they remained in security, and laughed at the Persian army outside. But at last Cyrus devised a new plan, and set his men to dig trenches to draw off the water of the Euphrates, and leave the bed of the river dry. Still there were the great gates upon the river, which he expected to have to break down. But on the very day his trenches were ready, Belshazzar was giving a great feast in his palace, and drinking wine out of the golden vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the Temple. Full in the midst of his revelry appeared a strange sight. Near the seven-branched Candlestick that once had burnt in the Holy Place, came forth a bodiless hand, and the fingers wrote upon the wall in characters such as no man knew. The hearts of the revelers failed them for fear, and the king's knees smote together! Then Nitocris, his mother, a brave and wise woman, bethought her of all that Daniel had done in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and at her advice he was called for. He knew the words, for they were in the Hebrew tongue, the language of his own Scriptures, the same in which the Finger of God revealed the Ten Commandments. Daniel read them, and they signified, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians!" At that moment Cyrus and his Persians were entering by the river gates, which had been left open in that time of careless festivity. One end of the city knew not that the other was taken; and ere the night was past Belshazzar lay dead in his palace, and the Assyrian empire was over forever.

It was 170 years since, by the mouth of Isaiah, God had called Cyrus by name, and had said He would give the nations as dust to his sword, and stubble to his bow. Isaiah had said of him that he was God's anointed and God's shepherd, and that he would build up the Holy City and Temple, and let the captives go free without money or price. Moreover, it was seventy years since Daniel himself had been carried away from the pleasant land, and well had he counted the weary days prophesied of by Jeremiah. Till now Daniel hoped the time was come, and most earnestly did he pray, looking towards Jerusalem, as Solomon had entreated, when his people should turn to God in the land of their captivity, pleading God's goodness and mercy, though owning that Judah had done wickedly. Even while he was yet speaking came the answer by the mouth of the Angel Gabriel. And not only was it the present deliverance that it announced, but that from the building of the street and wall in troublous

times, seventy weeks of years were appointed to bring the Anointed, so long promised, the real Deliverer. Daniel's prayers had won, and in the first year of Cyrus, 536, forth went the joyful decree that Judah should return, build up the city and Temple, and receive back their sacred vessels and treasure from the king, to aid them in their work. Daniel being nearly ninety years old, did not go with them, but remained to protect them at the court of Babylon. Cyrus set up his uncle, who is commonly called Darius, to be king in Babylon, while he returned to Persia. And Daniel, though so old a man, was made one of the chief rulers under him, one of the three presidents over the hundred and twenty satraps or princes over the provinces of the great Persian empire.

The envy of the Medes caused them to persuade Darius by foolish flattery to say that whoever for a month should make request of god or man, save of the king, should be cast into a den of lions. Daniel, who was not likely in his old age to cease from prayer to his God for any terror of man, endured the penalty, much against the king's will. But this all happened that again God's power might be known among the heathen, and His glory proclaimed by the shutting the mouths of the hungry lions. Those who had thought to have Daniel killed utterly failed, and were themselves destroyed.



About the same time he seems to have shown Darius, who, though not an idolater himself, was puzzled by seeing that the food daily spread on Bel's golden table always disappeared, that after all, the idol was not the consumer. He spread ashes on the floor at night, and in the morning showed the king the tell-tale footmarks of men, women, and children, the priests and their families, the true devourers of the feast. No wonder that after this, the Persians ruined the Temple of Bel, while decay began in Babylon, and the river never being turned back into its proper bed, spread into unwholesome marshes.

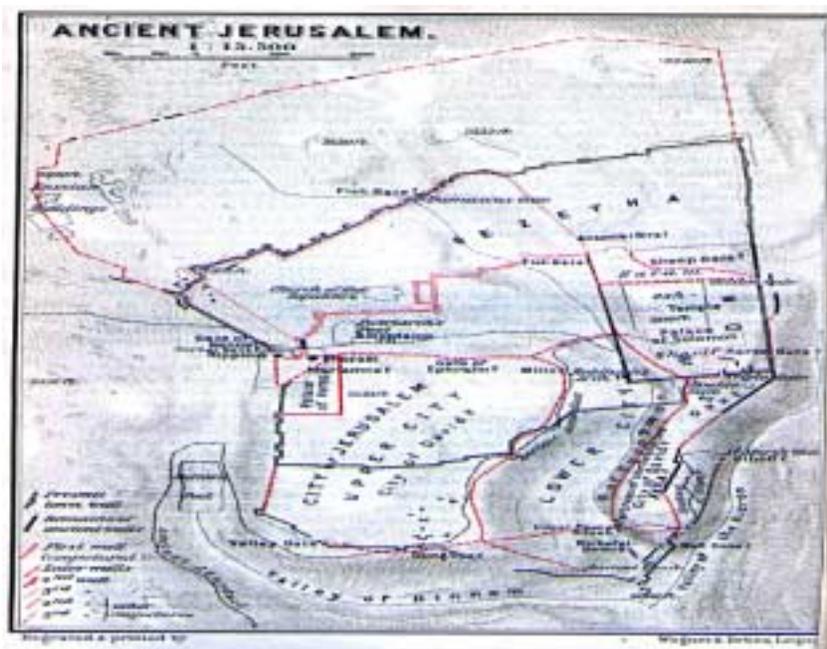
Daniel, when at Susa, a Median city on the river Ulai, beheld his last vision, when the Angel Gabriel prophesied to him in detail all the wars of the Persians, and afterwards of the Greek kings of Egypt and Syria, who should make Judea the battlefield, and the afflictions of the Jews under the great Syrian persecutor. He ended with a sure promise to Daniel himself, that he should "stand in his lot" when the end of all things should come. Daniel also prophesied the coming Michael- who is none other than Jesus Christ- who would deliver His people from calamity. And Daniel even prophesied the Great Day of Judgment in which all mankind will be resurrected, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting punishment.

Some time after this blessed assurance, died this "man greatly beloved," a prince, a slave, an exile, and a statesman. Cyrus died about seven years after Daniel, much loved by his people too, who, for many years, would not believe him dead, but trusted he would yet return to rule over them.

CHAPTER 14 : THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

"The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, and gather together the outcasts of Israel."-Psalm 177:2

42,360 was the number of Jews who returned to their own land by the permission of Cyrus. They were under the keeping of Joshua the High Priest, and of Zerubbabel, son of Salathiel, who was either by birth, son of King Jehoiachin, or else had been adopted by him from the line of Nathan, son of David. In either way, he was head of the house of David, and would have been king, had not the crown been taken away because of the sin of his fathers. He had, it is said, won favor at the court of Darius the Mede by his cleverness in a contention of wits, where each man was asked what was the strongest thing in existence. One said it was wine, because it made men lose their senses. Another said it was the king, because of his great power. But Zerubbabel said it was woman, and so ingeniously proved how women could sway the minds of men, that the king was delighted, and promised to give him whatever he would ask. What Zerubbabel requested was, that the decree of Cyrus might at once be put in force, so that his people might go home to their own country. Darius consented, and put into his hands orders that the vessels of the Temple, and all the other sacred things, together with a large sum of money, should be given to him; and thus he went forth, praising and blessing God.



Some of the dispersed of Israel joined the returning Jews, and were thenceforth counted among them. But so many of Judah itself had become settled in the place of their exile, that they never returned, though they sent gifts to assist in rebuilding Jerusalem. It used to be said that only the bran, or coarse sort of people, returned, the fine flour remained. But it must have in truth been in general the lovers of ease who stayed, the faithful who loved poverty in the Promised Land better than wealth at Babylon.

Zerubbabel was called Tirshatha, or governor. His kingdom was gone, but his right remained to the fields of Boaz and Jesse at Bethlehem. Thence should "He come forth Whose goings are from everlasting." The true birthright was not lost by this son of Solomon, whom God

blessed by the lips of Zechariah for having laid the foundation of His Temple, and not having despised the day of small things. The blessings to the Priest, Joshua, were foreshadowings of Him Whose Name he bore, and Whose office he represented. All was ruin and desolation in Jerusalem. Heaps of stones lay where beautiful buildings had been, and the fields and vineyards lay waste. Nevertheless, glad promises came by the mouth of Zechariah, that these empty streets should yet be filled with merry children at play, and with aged men leaning on their staves, at peace and at ease.

The first thing done by these faithful men, was to set up an Altar among the ruins, where they might offer the daily sacrifice once more. Then they began the Temple, in the second year after their return the trumpeters blew with silver trumpets, the Levites sang, and the people shouted. But what was joy to the young, whose hope was fulfilled, was grief to the old, who had seen Solomon's Temple in its glory. Where was the Ark? where the manna? where the Urim and Thummim? where the Light upon the Mercy-seat?

Gone for ever, and heaps of ruins around! The old men wept as the youths cried out for joy, and the shout of rejoicing could barely be heard for the sound of wailing. But Haggai was sent to console them with the promise, that though this House was as nothing in their eyes, its glory should exceed that of the former one, for the Desire of all nations should come and fill this House with glory. Haggai had likewise to rebuke the people for their slackness in the work, and for building their own houses instead of the Temple, and soon they fell into trouble.

The men of Samaria, children of those whom Esarhaddon had planted there, came, saying that they worshipped the God of the Jews, and wished to be one with them. But these half idolaters would soon have corrupted the Jews, so Zerubbabel and Joshua refused their offers. This made them bitter foes to the Jewish nation, and they wrote to the Persian court, saying that these newly-returned exiles were no better than a set of rebels, who would destroy the king's power, if they were allowed to rebuild their city.

Cyrus was dead, and his son, Cambyses, (called also Ahasuerus,) who was a cruel selfish tyrant, at once forbade the work to go on, so that it was at a stand-still for many years. The wealth and luxury of Babylon were fast spoiling the Persians, who were losing their hardy ways, and with them their honor, mercy, and truth. Cambyses was a very savage wretch, almost mad. He made war on Egypt, where he gained a battle by putting a number of cows, dogs, and cats, in front of his army, and as the Egyptians thought these creatures sacred, they dared not throw their darts at them, and so fled away. He won the whole country. He afterwards marched into Ethiopia, where he nearly lost his whole army by thirst in a desert. The Egyptians hated him because he struck his sword into their sacred bull Apis, in his anger at their feasting in honor of this creature, when he himself had just met with such misfortunes. He had but one brother, named Smerdis, whom he caused to be secretly put to death. When Smerdis' sister wept for him, he kicked her so that she died.

No one grieved when Cambyses was killed by a chance wound from his own sword, in the year 522 BC; but a young Magian priest, pretending to be Smerdis, whose death was not generally known, became king. However, some of the nobles suspected the deceit. One of them, whose daughter was among the many wives of the king, sent word to her to find out whether the king were the real Smerdis. She could not tell, having never seen the Prince

Smerdis; but her father, who knew that the young Magian had had his ears cut off for some offence, told her to examine. She answered that the king was earless; and the fraud being thus detected, seven of the great lords combined and slew him.

One daughter of Cyrus still remained and the seven agreed that one of them should marry her and reign. The rest should have the right of visiting him whenever they pleased, and wearing the same sort of tiara, or high cap, with the point upright, instead of having it turned back like the rest of the Persians. The choice was to be settled by Heaven, as they thought; namely, by seeing whose horse would first neigh at the rise of their god, the sun.

Darius Hystaspes, who thus became king in 521, was a good and upright man, in whose reign the Jews ventured to go on with the Temple. When the Samaritans came and stopped them, they wrote to beg that search might be made among the records of the kingdom for Cyrus's decree in their favor, which no one could change, because the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be altered. The decree was found, and Darius gave the Jews further help, and forbade anyone to molest them. But the Jews in Israel were very poor, and the restoration went on but feebly.

In Darius's reign Babylon revolted, and he laid siege to it. So determined were the inhabitants to hold out, that they killed their wives and children in order that the provisions might last longer, and thus they fulfilled what Isaiah had foretold—that in one day the loss of children and widowhood would come on them. The place was at last betrayed by a friend of Darius, who cut off his own nose and ears, and showed himself bleeding, at the gates, pretending the king had done him this cruel injury. The Babylonians received and trusted him, and he soon opened the gates to his master, who terribly punished the rebels, destroyed as much as he could of the Temple of Bel, and left the city to go to decay, so that she never again was the Lady of Kingdoms.

Darius was a great King, and records of his history are still to be read, cut out in the face of the rocks. But he tried two conquests that were far beyond his strength. He led an army into the bare and dreary country of the Scythians, the wild sons of Japhet, near the mouth of the Danube, and there would have been almost starved to death, but that a faithful camel loaded with provisions kept close to hill. He also sent a large fleet and army to subdue the brave and wise Greeks, who lived in the isles and peninsulas opposite to Asia Minor, thinking he should easily bring them under his dominion, but they met his troops at Marathon, and gained a great victory, driving the Persians home with great loss.

Darius died in 485 BC, and his son, Xerxes, who Daniel had said should stir up all the east against Grecia, led a huge army to conquer that brave little country. All the nations of the east were there, and Xerxes made a bridge of boats chained together over the Hellespont, or them to cross over. So proud and hasty was he, that when a storm destroyed his works, he caused the waves to be scourged, and fetters to be thrown into the sea, to punish it for having dared to resist him.

He sat on his throne to see the army pass over the bridge, and as he saw the multitudes, he wept to think how soon they must all be dead, but he did not cease from sending them to their death. Though they were so many, the Greeks were much braver, and though they overran all

the north part of the country, after they had killed the few brave defenders of the little pass of Thermopylae, they could not keep what they had taken. They were beaten both by land and sea, and a very small remnant came home to Persia in a wretched state. Xerxes was a weak vain boaster, and was very angry. He wanted to make another attempt, but never did so. He stayed at home feasting with his wives and living in luxury, till he was murdered, in the year 464 BC.

CHAPTER 15 : THE WALL REBUILT

"They that be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach."-Isaiah 58:12

There is great difficulty as to what the Persian kings were called. Their real names were very hard to pronounce, and they are commonly known by words that mean a king, instead of by their real names. This makes people uncertain whether the king who is called Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther is the same with him whom the Greeks call Xerxes, or with Artaxerxes the Long-armed, his son. It was one or other of these kings who made a great banquet at his palace at Shushan or Susa, where the remains of the pillars that supported the many-colored hangings of his palace are still to be seen.

After seven days' feasting, he sent for Vashti, his queen. But Vashti refused this command of the king. He was persuaded by the satraps that her example would teach all other ladies to be equally rebellious. So Vashti was set aside as queen. The king then sent for every beautiful girl from her home, to be brought to his palace on trial, and if she did not become queen, to be a slave for ever. Thus the young Benjamite orphan, Esther, whom her kinsman, Mordecai, had tenderly trained in the right way, was taken away, never to see his face again, but to live in the multitude of heathen women.

It was for no vain purpose that the noble beauty of the family of Saul had come down to Esther, and though she alone demanded no ornaments to set her off to advantage, she was the only maiden who took the king's fancy. The king selected Esther as his new queen. Mordecai, her cousin, soon after found out a plot against the king's life, and sending her warning, Esther told the king, and the king was thus saved.

Mordecai daily sat at the palace gate to hear of his beloved cousin, and there daily saw the king's new counselor pass by —Haman, an Agagite, descended from that hateful Amalekite nation, whom Saul ought to have totally destroyed. Mordecai would not bow before the man whom his law had taught him to loathe. Haman, taking offence, and remembering the old enmity between the two nations, that had begun at the battle of Rephidim, promised the king 10,000 talents of silver for permission to let their enemies loose upon the Jews in their still un-walled city, and destroy them everywhere by a general slaughter. The king actually granted this horrible request, though without taking the bribe. Haman, setting the royal seal to his decree, made it one of the unalterable Persian laws. The day was fixed for the massacre, and Haman prepared an enormous gallows on which to hang Mordecai, or as is supposed, to nail him up alive.

But Mordecai contrived to warn Esther, and order her to persuade the king to save their lives. She was in a great strait, for it was death to enter the king's presence unbidden, unless he were in the mood to show mercy, and should hold out his golden scepter. But in her extremity she took courage, arrayed herself royally, and came before him, fainting with fear. The Power above stirred his heart, and he held out the scepter. But she dared not accuse his favorite official, and only asked him and Haman together to a banquet in her apartments. Twice she received them before she took courage to speak. But at last she told the king that she and her people were sold to utter destruction. He demanded in anger who had dared to do this. "The

adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman," she said. And when the king found how horrible a decree had been surprised from him, and that the gallows had been made ready for the queen's cousin, the man who had saved his life, he flew into such a rage, that he caused Haman to be hung on his own gallows at once, and all his sons to be slain with him.

Still the order to destroy the Jews had gone forth, and could not be repealed, but Mordecai obtained that the Jews should be allowed to arm themselves. Having due notice, they defended themselves so well that they killed 800 of their enemies at Susa, and 75,000 of the spiteful Samaritans and other foes who had come upon them at Jerusalem.

Esther's power with the king seems to have done more for the Jews, and a new gift was sent from the treasury to Jerusalem, under the care of Ezra, a man of the seed of Aaron, and very learned in the Law. He gave himself up to the work, which had sadly languished since Zerubbabel's time. He began in the right way, for ere entering the Glorious Land, he halted all the companions of his pilgrimage, and fasted three days, entreating the Lord for forgiveness, and protection from their enemies.

Another great helper soon followed Ezra, namely Nehemiah. Nehemiah was one of the palace slaves, who, hearing of the miserable state of Jerusalem, prayed with all his heart, weeping so bitterly that when he went to wait upon the king and Queen Esther at their meal, they remarked his trouble. On their asking the cause, he told them, with secret prayers, how his heart was grieved that his city and his fathers' sepulchers lay waste, and begged for permission to go with authority to Jerusalem, to assist in the rebuilding. His request was granted, authority was given to him, and he set off with a train of servants and guards, for he was a very rich man.

But when Nehemiah came near, he left them all, and rode on by night to examine the state of the city. Most sad was the sight. The gates were broken and burnt, the walls were lying in ruins, and the streets were blocked up so that no one could pass! Nehemiah at once encouraged the Jews to set to work, and build up the breaches.

They heartily began, while Nehemiah kept open house at his own expense for all his poor brethren. Down upon them came the Samaritans again, scoffing at those "feeble Jews." They said that a fox could break down their wall. They even tried attacking them. So Nehemiah was forced to set a constant watch, and the workmen built with their swords ever ready for use. When the walls once more girded around the city of Jerusalem built upon the hill, the inhabitants were no longer easily molested by their foes.

A great assembly of public worship to God was held. The account of this assembly in scripture reveals God's appointed pattern for public worship outside the Temple, in which all participate, and not just the Levites. Among its ordinances is the reading from scripture, preaching and teaching from scripture, and prayer. Accordingly, Ezra read and explained the Law for seven days, at the feast of the Tabernacles, after which there was a great fast and confession of sin, and the Covenant was solemnly renewed.

Still a great purification was needed. The Sabbath had become ill observed, many of the people, even priests and Levites, had married heathen wives, and one of the sons of the High

Priest was son-in-law to Sanballat, the worst enemy of the Jews. Ezra and Nehemiah brought many to a sense of their sin. No burdens were allowed to be touched on the Sabbath, and the heathen wives were put away. Nehemiah serves as an enduring example of the duty of the civil magistrate to execute Biblical law.

But not surprisingly, Nehemiah encountered much opposition along the way. For example, one priest refusing to part with his wife, was thrust out from the priesthood, and was received by the Samaritans, who afterwards built a schismatical temple upon Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing.



At this time lived Malachi, the last of the prophets, who left the promise of a coming prophet Elijah, as the forerunner of the Messiah, and of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. This office of Elijah was to be fulfilled by John the Baptist centuries later, who prepared the way for Jesus Christ.

Ezra is believed to have composed the Books of Kings from older writings under the guidance of inspiration, to have collected the latter part of the book of Psalms, and to have been taught to discern which histories, and which books of the Prophets to keep, and which to cast aside. The Scriptures were all put under the keeping of scribes, who wrote the copies out with the utmost care, and were held guilty if the smallest point or mark failed. Also, a roll was placed under the care of the priests, besides many others which were dispersed through the country, that they might never be forgotten again. Only confirmed Levites were allowed to serve as Levitical priests in the Temple service, which is but one reason that a Temple service could never be legitimately set up today, because no Jew today could authenticate their qualification to serve there.

Ezra likewise promoted the formation of more synagogues, the existence of which really dates back to the time of Moses. In the synagogue worship services on the Sabbath of each week there was scripture reading, teaching and preaching, but no sacrifices, choirs or musical instruments. The worship there was quite simple compared to the Temple worship.

In their exile, the Jews had forgotten their Hebrew tongue, and learned to speak Chaldean, so that after the Law was read in their own language, a scribe stood up to translate and explain it, and thus they were saved from forgetting the Scripture, as they had done in the time of Josiah, and from resorting to groves and high places for worship. Idolatry was so thoroughly purged out of them, that they never returned to it in its most obvious manifestations. And their hope of the Messiah was kept alive, though they had no new prophets.

They enjoyed quiet and peace for many years. Most of the Jews who were settled in other countries-in Persia, Babylon, and Egypt- came from time to time to keep the feasts, and make offerings. Those Jews settled near enough kept the three yearly pilgrimages to Jerusalem, singing, as it is believed, the beautiful psalms called in the Bible the Songs of Degrees, as the parties from towns and villages went up together in procession towards the Hill of Sion.

In the meantime, their masters, the Persian kings, grew worse and worse. Brother killed brother, son rose against father, and the women even committed horrible crimes. They invented tortures too horrid to mention, and lived between savage cruelty and vain luxury, till there was no strength nor courage in them, and in less than 200 years from the time that Cyrus had conquered Babylon, their realm was rotten, and their time of ruin was come. All through this time, the Jews were chiefly ruled by the Sanhedrins, though paying tribute to the Persian king, and sometimes visited by the Satrap of the Province of Syria, to which Palestine belonged.

CHAPTER 16 : ALEXANDER

"Ships shall come from Chittim, and shall afflict Eber, and shall afflict Assur." —Num-
xxiv. 24

Mountain lands, small islets, and peninsulas broken into by deep bays and gulfs, rise to the northward of the east end of the Mediterranean, and were known to the Jews as the Isles of the Gentiles. The people who dwelt in them have been named Greeks. They were sons of Japhet, and were the race whom God endowed, above all 7 others, with gifts of the body and mind, though without bestowing on them the light of His truth.

The Greeks had many idols, of whom Zeus, the thunderer, was the chief. But they did not worship them with cruel rites like the Phoenicians, and some of their beautiful stories about them were full of traces of better things. Their best and wisest men were always straining their minds to feel after more satisfying knowledge of Him, Who, they felt sure, must rule and govern all things. These thinkers were known as philosophers by them.

The workmanship of the Greeks was well done, whether poems, history, speeches, buildings, statues, or painting; and the remains have served for patterns ever since. At first there were many separate little states, but all held together as one nation, and used to meet for great feasts, especially for games. There were the Olympian games, by which they reckoned the years, and the Isthmean, which were held at the Isthmus of Corinth. Everyone came to see the wrestling, boxing, racing, and throwing heavy weights, and to hear the poems sung or recited. And the men who excelled all the rest were carried high in air with shouts of joy, and crowned with wreaths of laurel, bay, oak, or parsley, one of the greatest honors a Greek could obtain.

Of all the cities, Athens had the ablest men, and Sparta the most hardy. These two had been the foremost in beating and turning back the great Persian armies of Darius and Xerxes. But since that time there had been quarrels between these two powers, and they grew weak.

Philip, King of Macedon, who had a kingdom to the north of them, and was but half a real Greek, contrived to conquer them all, and make them his subjects. The ensign of Macedon was a he-goat, the rough goat that Daniel had seen in his vision; and the time was come for the fall of the Ram of Persia.

Philip's son, Alexander, set his heart on conquering the old enemy of Greece. So as soon as he came to the crown, in the year 333 BC, though he was but twenty years of age, he led his army across the Hellespont into Asia Minor. His army was very brave, and excellently trained by his father, and he himself was one of the most highly-gifted men who ever lived, brave and prudent, seldom cruel, and trying to do good to all who fell under his power. The poor weak luxurious Persian King, Darius, could do little against such a man, and indeed did not come out to battle in the way to conquer; for he carried with him all the luxuries of his palace, his mother, and all his wives and slaves. Before his army marched a number of men carrying silver altars, on which burned the sacred fire. Then came three hundred and sixty-five youths in scarlet dresses, to represent the days of the year; then the Magi, and the gilded chariot and white horses of the Sun; and next, the king's favorite soldiers, called the Immortal Band,

whose robes were white, their breastplates set with jewels, and the handles of their spears golden.



They had small chance with the bold active Greeks, and at the Battle of the Issus they were routed, and Darius fled away, leaving all his women to the mercy of the conqueror. The poor old Persian Queen, his mother, had never met with such gentle respect and courtesy as Alexander showed to her old age. He always called her mother, never sat down before her but at her request, and never grieved her but once, and that was by showing her a robe that his mother and sisters had spun, woven, and embroidered for him, and offering to have her grandchildren taught the like works. She fancied this meant that he was treating them like slaves, and he could hardly make her understand that the Greeks deemed such works an honor to the highest ladies, and indeed thought their goddess of wisdom presided over them.

While Darius fled away, Alexander came south to Palestine, and laid siege to Tyre upon the little isle, to which he began to build a causeway across the water. The Tyrians had an image of the Greek god Apollo, which they had stolen from a temple in Greece, and they chained this up to the statue of Moloch, their own god, to hinder Apollo from going over to help the Greeks. But neither this precaution nor their bravery could prevent them from being overcome, as the prophet Zechariah had foretold, "The Lord will cast her out, and will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire." "Gaza also shall see it, and shall be very sorrowful." Alexander took this brave Philistine city after a siege of two months, and behaved more cruelly there than was his wont.



It was the turn of Jerusalem next, but the Lord had promised to "encamp about His House, because of him that passeth by;" and in answer to the prayers and sacrifices offered up by the

Jews, God appeared to the High Priest, Jaddua, in a dream, and bade him adorn the city, and go out to meet the conqueror in his beautiful garments, with all his priests in their ephods. They obeyed, and as Alexander came up the hill Sapha, in front of the city, he beheld the long ranks of priests and Levites in their white array, headed by the High Priest with his robes bordered with bells and pomegranates, and the fair mitre on his head, inscribed with the words " Holiness unto the Lord." One moment, and Alexander was down from his horse, adoring upon his knees. His friends were amazed, but he told them he adored not the man, but Him who had given him the priesthood, and that just before he had left home, the same figure had stood by his bed, and told him that he should cross the sea, and win all the chief lands of Asia.

Alexander then took Jaddua by the hand, and was led by him into the Temple, where he attended a sacrifice, and was shown Daniel's prophecies of him as the brazen thighs, the he-goat and the leopard. He was much pleased, and promised all Jaddua asked, that the Jews might follow their own laws, and pay no tribute on the Sabbath years, when the land lay fallow. Alexander next passed on to Egypt, where he built, at the mouth of the Nile, the famous city that still is called by his name, Alexandria. Indeed he founded cities everywhere, and made more lasting changes than ever did conqueror in the short space of twelve years.

Alexander then hunted Darius into the mountain parts of the north of Persia, and after two more victories, the Greeks found the poor Persian king dying on the ground, from wounds given him by his own subjects. So the soft silver of Persia yielded to the brazen might of Greece.

After this, Alexander called himself King of Persia, and wore the tiara like an eastern king. He took his men on to the borders of India, but they thought they were getting beyond the end of the world, and grew so frightened that he had to turn back. All that the Medes and Persians had possessed now belonged to him, and he wanted to make Babylon his capital. He made his court there, and received messengers who paid him honor from all quarters; but he was hurt by so much success. He grew proud and passionate. He feasted and drank too much, and did violent and hasty things. But worst of all, he fancied himself a god, and insisted that at home, in Greece, sacrifices should be offered to him.

He tried to restore Babylon to what it had been, and set multitudes to work to clear away the rubbish, and build up the Temple of Bei. But when he ordered the Jews to share in the work, they answered that it was contrary to their Law to labor at an idol temple, and he listened to them, releasing them from the command.

Alexander wished to turn the waters of the Euphrates back into their stream, and drain the swamps into which they had spread; but Babylon was under the curse of God, and was never to recover. Alexander caught a fever while going about surveying the unwholesome swamps, and after trying to hold out against it for nine days, his strength gave way. He said there would be a mighty strife at his funeral, perhaps recollecting how the prophecy had said that his kingdom should not continue; and instead of trying to choose an heir, he put his ring on the finger of his friend, and very soon died. He was but thirty-two, and had not reigned quite twelve years; but perhaps no one ever did greater things in so short a time. He died in the year 323 B.C.



So the great horn of the goat was broken when it was at the strongest. Few hated him, for though sometimes violent, he had generally been kind. He was frank, open, and free-handed, warm-hearted to his friends, and seldom harsh to his enemies, and he had done his best to educate and improve all the people whom he conquered. It was owing to him that Greek manners and habits prevailed, and the Greek tongue was spoken everywhere around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, though Persia itself soon fell back into the old eastern ways. Babylon became almost deserted after his death; the swamps grew worse, till no one could live there, and at last, the only use of the great walls was to serve as an enclosure for a hunting ground, where the wild beasts had their home, and kept court for ever.

CHAPTER 17 : THE GREEK KINGS OF EGYPT

“Why hast Thou then broken down her hedge, that all they that go by pluck off her grapes?” -
Ps. 80: 12

The leopard of Daniel's vision had four heads —the great horn of the rough goat gave place to four horns; so when Alexander was taken away so suddenly from the midst of his conquests, leaving no one in his room, his great officers divided them between themselves; and after much violence and bloodshed, four Greek kingdoms were formed out of the fragments of his conquests- Thrace, Macedon, Egypt, and Syria. It is only the two last of which we have to speak.

The angel who spoke to Daniel called their princes the Kings of the North and South. The north, or second kingdom of Syria, was very large, and went from Asia Minor to the borders of India, and it had two great capital cities, Antioch in Syria, and Seleucia upon the Tigris, where the Babylonians went to live when their city became deserted and uninhabitable. Both these places were named after the Greek Kings of Syria, who were by turns called Seleucus and Antiochus.

It would have seemed natural for Palestine to have belonged to Syria, but the Greek King of Egypt, whose name was Ptolemy Lagos, contrived to secure it. He entered Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day, when the Jews thought it wrong to fight, and so he gained the city without a blow. But this was no great misfortune to them, for the first Ptolemies were milder masters than the Seleucidae, and did not oppress their subjects. Ptolemy, however, brought a colony of Jews and Samaritans to live in Lybia and Cyrene, parts of Egypt, and so fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, that five cities in Egypt should speak the language of Canaan. They were treated with much favor, for he saw that they were the most trustworthy of all his people. Indeed, the Greeks respected them much. At this time the High Priest was Simon the Just, son of Onias. They enjoyed tolerable peace for the whole of the time they were under the Greeks of Egypt.



Ptolemy Lagos wanted to make his new city of Alexandria as much famed for learning as Athens, and for this purpose he founded a great library there. He collected from every quarter books written either on parchment, or on the paper rush of Egypt. When he died, in the year 284 BC, his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, or lover of his brethren, went on still more eagerly seeking for curious writings; and among those for which he wished were the Holy Scriptures. As they were in Hebrew, he caused them to be translated into Greek; and the Jews believe that this was done by seventy-two elders, who were shut up all day, two and two, in thirty-six little cells in a palace on a little island in the Nile, each pair taking one book of the Bible, and going back every evening to sup with the king. This history does not seem likely to be true, but it is quite certain that a version of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Greek was made about this time, and is called the Septuagint, from this tradition about the seventy. It came more and more into use, as Greek was considered the language of all learned men in the east. Most of the quotations in the New Testament are taken from it, and it is of great value in helping to show the exact meaning of the old Hebrew.

But if Ptolemy did desire to have the Scriptures in his own tongue, it was only for curiosity, not for edification, for he was a great idolator. When his wife died he tried to build a temple to her at Alexandria, which was to have a loadstone arch, with a steel statue of her in the middle, where he hoped the equal attraction would keep it as if flying in the air. But of course the fancy could not be carried out. He had a quarrel with Antiochus Theos, King of Syria, but it was made up by his giving his daughter Berenice in marriage to the Syrian, as Daniel had foretold: "The king's daughter of the South came to make an agreement with the King of the North."

But Antiochus had another wife before, whom he loved better. So when, in 246 BC, Ptolemy Philadelphus died, he put Berenice away, and took her back. She requited him by poisoning him for fear her favor should not last. Her son, Seleucus, then became king.

Seleucus then took Berenice prisoner and later put her to death. *"But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the King of the North."* This was the brother of Berenice, Ptolemy Euergetes, or the Benefactor, who came out of Egypt, overran Syria, and killed the murderess, carrying home much spoil and many of the Egyptian gods, which had been taken from the temples there in the time of Cambyses. Ptolemy Euergetes himself came to Jerusalem, and attended a sacrifice in the Temple.

But Greek learning was doing the Jews no good, and some began to reason like the heathen philosophers. A man named Joseph taught that people ought to be holy for the love of goodness, and not for the sake of a reward after death. His follower, Zadok, or Sadoc, went still farther, saying that there was no promise of any reward. His disciples, who were called Sadducees, declared that the soul was not separate from the body, but died with it; that there were no angels, nor spirits, and that only the five books of Moses were the real Word of God, thus casting aside all the prophecies. Such Jews as abhorred this falling away, kept themselves apart, and were called Pharisees, from a word meaning separate. The Pharisees grew more strict in the observance of all that had come down to them from their fathers, adding to it much that had gradually been put into the explanations and interpretations of the Law which were read on the Sabbath in the Synagogue. God was sore displeased with both the error of the Sadducees as well as the Pharisees.

Ptolemy the Benefactor was the last brave man of his family. His son, Ptolemy Philopator, or lover of his father, was weak and violent, and had a disastrous war with Antiochus the Great of Syria. In the course of the conflict he came to Jerusalem, and tried to force his way into the Holy of Holies, though the High Priest and all the priests and Levites withstood him, and prayed aloud that the profanation might be hindered. When he came to the court of the priests, such a strange horror and terror fell on him, that he reeled and fell, and was carried out half dead. But he was only hardened by this great wonder, and on his return revenged himself by collecting the Jews at Alexandria, and insisting that they should be marked with the ivy leaf, the sign of the Greek god of wine, or else be made slaves, or put to death. Out of many thousands, only three hundred submitted to this disgraceful badge. So in his rage, he collected all the others in the theater, and caused elephants to be made drunken with wine and frankincense, so that when driven in on them, they might trample them to death. But for two days following the king was too drunk himself to be present at the horrible spectacle, and

the Jews had all that time for prayer. When, on the third day, the execution was to take place, the beasts ran upon the spectators instead of upon the martyrs, so that though numbers of Greeks were killed, not one Jew was hurt, and Ptolemy gave up his attempt. However he did afterwards commit one savage massacre on his Jewish subjects. He died when only thirty-seven years of age, worn out by drunkenness; and the Jews, who had learnt to hate the Egyptian dominion, gladly received the soldiers of his enemy.

Antiochus the Great thus came into Jerusalem, deserting his young son, who was only five years old; and thus, in the year 197 BC, Jerusalem came to belong to the Seleucids of Syria, instead of to the Ptolemies of Egypt. The history of Ptolemy Philopator is predicted from the 10th to the 13th verse of the 11th chapter of Daniel's prophecy. The Jews suffered terribly all through these wars, which were usually fought out on their soil. Each sovereign robbed them in turn, while they were too few to guard themselves, and could do no otherwise than fall to the strongest.

CHAPTER 18 : THE SYRIAN PERSECUTION

"The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the air, and the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the land.' -Ps. 79:2

The history of Antiochus the Great is foretold in the 11th chapter of the prophet Daniel, from the 14th to the 19th verse. On the death of Ptolemy Philopator, this king entered Palestine with a great army, and easily obtained from the time-serving Jews the surrender of Jerusalem. Some of them who had forsaken their Law to gain the favor of Ptolemy, were punished by Antiochus, because he knew that no trust could be placed in men who cared for their own profit more than for their God. He then laid siege to Gaza and to Sidon, and won great victories, ravaging and consuming the adjoining lands with his armies; and afterwards made peace with young Ptolemy Epiphanes, giving him his daughter in marriage, hoping that she would betray her husband to him. She, however, entirely forsook him, and made common cause with her husband.

After this, the prophecy declared that he would "turn his face to the isles and take many." This meant that he should make an expedition to Greece, where he gained a good deal of land. But here Antiochus came in contact with the iron power, shadowed out by the great and terrible beast of Daniel's second vision. Some four hundred years before this time, the city of Rome had begun to grow up on some of the seven hills on the banks of the Tiber in Italy. The inhabitants were a stern, earnest, brave, honest set of men; not great thinkers like the Greeks, but great doers, and caring for nothing so much as for their city and her honor. They thought their own lives and happiness as nothing in comparison with Rome; and all the free citizens had a share in the government, so that their city's concerns were their own.

The religion of the Romans seems in early times to have been more solemn and grave than that of the Greeks. Jupiter was their chief god, the King of gods and men, who held thunderbolts in his hand, and they had eleven other principal gods. But by the time they had learnt to write books, they had begun to think these were the same gods as the Greeks worshipped under other names. They said Jupiter was the same as Zeus, and told of him all the foolish stories which the worse sort of Greeks had invented of Zeus. As their religion grew worse, they became more selfish, proud, and cruel. At first, their neighbours in Italy were always fighting with them, and their wars were for life or death; but after nearly three hundred years of hard struggling, without one year's peace, the Romans had conquered them all, and had safety at home. But they had grown too fond of war to rest quietly, so they built ships and attacked countries farther off, beginning with the great Phoenician city of Carthage in Africa, which it is said was settled by Canaanites who fled away from Joshua, and whose first queen was Dido, Jezebel's niece.



A great Carthaginian general, named Hannibal, who had been banished from home, came to Antiochus, and offered to help him in his war upon Greece. This Hannibal did chiefly out of hatred to the Romans, who were pretending to assist the Greeks, only that they might become their masters. If Antiochus had taken the advice of Hannibal, he might have succeeded better, but he was self-willed. The Romans gave him a terrible defeat, and he was obliged to promise to pay a great sum of money, and a heavy tribute afterwards; to keep no elephants to be used in war, and to give up his younger son, Antiochus, as security for his performance of the conditions. The tribute he had to pay to Rome quite ruined him; and while he was trying to rob an idol temple at Elymais, the people rose on him and slew him, in the year 187 BC.

His son, Seleucus, called by Daniel "a raiser of taxes," was very poor in consequence of the tribute, and therefore greedy. He tried to raise money by sending his servant, Heliodorus, to rob the temple at Jerusalem. Onias, the High Priest, and all the people, were in great distress, and made most earnest entreaties to God to deliver them from such profanation. Heliodorus came, however, to the temple, and was pressing on to the treasury, when suddenly a horse, with a terrible rider, appeared in armor like gold, and cast the spoiler to the ground, while two young men, of marvelous beauty, scourged him on either side. So when the heavenly champions had vanished, he lay as one dead. Onias prayed for him, and he was restored. The same beings who had struck him down coming to reveal to him that his life was granted at the intercession of the High Priest. When he returned to his master, and was consulted as to who might be a fit man to send to Jerusalem, he answered, "If thou hast any enemy or traitor, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him well scourged." So little impression did such a revelation of glory make on that hard selfish heart! The man who had been smitten by a visible angel could jest about it, and soon went on to greater crime. He poisoned his master in the hope of becoming king, as Seleucus's son was a hostage at Rome, that is, he had been given as a pledge that the tribute should be paid. But Seleucus's brother, Antiochus, who was on his way home from captivity at Rome, flattered the adjoining kings into helping him, drove Heliodorus away, and became king in 178 BC.

Vile indeed was Antiochus, nearly mad with violence and excess, going drunk about the streets of Antioch crowned with roses, and pelting with stones those who followed him, so that the Greeks laughed at him for calling himself Antiochus Epiphanes, or the Illustrious, and said he was really Antiochus the madman. He cared little for the old Greek gods; but the Roman Jupiter, "a god whom his fathers knew not," was his chief object of devotion, and in his honor, he instituted games like those of Greece.

Some of the Jews had begun to weary of their perfect Law, and fancy it narrow and vulgar, and the brothers of the good Onias were among the worst. Joshua, the next in age, changed his glorious prophetic name to the Greek Jason, and going to Antioch, offered a great sum of money to be made High Priest, and for leave to set up at Jerusalem a place for the practice of the heathenish games of strength, where men fought naked. Antiochus was but too glad of the offer, so the good High Priest was carried off to die a prisoner at Antioch, and the apostate was set up in his room in order to pervert the Jewish youth to idolatry. However, he was soon overthrown by his apostate brother, Menelaus, whom he had sent to pay the tribute at Antioch, and who, when there, promised the king a larger revenue, and to bring all the Jews to embrace the heathen worship. Jason fled to the Ammonites, and Menelaus and his brother

sold the gold vessels of the Temple to the Phoenicians. The Jews sent complaints to the king at Tyre, but instead of attending, he murdered the messengers, so much to the horror of the Tyrians, that they gave them honorable burial. These were indeed miserable years for Christ's visible church!

Antiochus now began a war with Egypt, and while he was there, Jason came back from the Ammonites and regained Jerusalem. But the news brought the king back in the utmost rage. Jason fled to Greece, and Antiochus, coming to Jerusalem, cruelly treated the people, robbed the treasury, himself went into the holy place, led by that horrible traitor, Menelaus. Uttering blasphemy, he sacrificed a hog upon the altar, and boiling the flesh, sprinkled the Temple with the broth, carried off the candlestick and all the rest of the gold, and then he went away to continue his wars. He left a captain and garrison to oppress the Jews, and an old man to teach them the worship of Jupiter. A little altar for sacrifice to Jupiter was raised on the true altar, the Temple was dedicated to Jupiter, as was also that of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim. In addition, the Sabbath was abolished, as was circumcision, and on the day of the king's birth, in each month, the Jews were forced to eat swine's flesh, and partake of idol sacrifices, and, at the feast of the god of wine, to carry ivy in the mad drunken processions in his honor. It was the most utter misery that had yet befallen the Jews. Temple, Priesthood, all gone! "*We see not our tokens; there is not one prophet more.*"

Yet that was the great time of glorious Jewish martyrdoms, for God ever has a faithful remnant. Numbers of the faithful were burnt to death together in a cave, where they had met to keep the Sabbath day. Two women who had circumcised their babes, had them hung round their necks, and were then pitched from the highest part of the wall of Jerusalem.

The aged scribe, Eleazar, who was ninety years old, when swine's flesh was forced into his mouth, spat it out again, and was scourged to death, saying with his last breath that he bore all this suffering because he feared the Lord.

A mother and her seven sons were taken, and as each refused to share in the idol rite and break the Law, they were put to death, one by one, with horrible tortures, each before the eyes of his remaining brethren. But the parting words of all were full of high hope and constancy. "The Lord looketh on us, and hath comfort in us," said one. "The King of the world shall raise us up who have died for His laws unto everlasting life," was spoken by another. "Think not our nation is forsaken of God, but abide awhile and behold His great power, how He will torment thee and thy seed," said another. The mother stood firmly by while each son's limbs were cut off, and he was roasted to death over a fire; and all her words were to exhort them to be steadfast, and to assure them their Creator could raise them if they died for Him. When the turn of the last son came, the persecutors, pitying his youth, entreated him to change his resolution, promising him riches and prosperity if he would adore the idol, and even calling his mother to plead with him. Then the noble woman laughed the tyrant to scorn. "Have pity on me, my son," she began; but it was not by saving his life, but by losing it, that she bade him show pity on her, so that she might receive him again with his brethren. He made a still fuller confession than the rest—he was slain by a still more savage torture. And then his mother, blessing God, died gloriously like her sons.

Others fled, and lived in the mountains, lurking in caves, and feeding on wild roots and herbs. Of such. Paul says in the book of Hebrews, "*They were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: of whom the world was not worthy.*"



CHAPTER 19 : THE MACCABEES

"In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces" —Zechariah 12:8

Never was there a time when God left Himself without a witness. Even in these darkest times of the Jewish history, He raised up a defender of His Name.

There was a small town, named Modin, near the sea shore, whither a Greek officer called Apelles was sent to force the people into idolatry. He set up an altar to one of his gods, and having ordered all the inhabitants to assemble, insisted on their doing sacrifice. Among them came a family of priests, who, from their ancestor, Hasmon, were known as the Asmoneans. The father, Mattathias, declared with a loud voice that he would permit no such dishonor to his God, and the first Jew who approached to offer incense, was by him struck down and slain. Then with his five brave sons, and others emboldened by his example, he fell upon Apelles, drove him away, and pulled down the idolatrous altar. He then fled away to the hills, where so many people joined him, that he had a force sufficient to defend themselves from their enemies. He went round Judea, circumcising the children, and rescuing the copies of the Law which the Greeks had seized from the synagogues. Some of these holy books, which had been defiled by paintings of the heathen idols, were destroyed, by order of Mattathias, after the writing had been carefully copied. Mattathias, who was already an old man, soon fell sick; and gathering his sons about him, reminded them of the deeds that God had wrought by the holy men of old, and exhorting them to do boldly in defense of His Covenant. He appointed as their leader his third son, Judas, who for his warlike might was called Maccabaeus, or the Hammerer; and the second, Simon, surnamed Thassi, (one who increases,) was to be his chief adviser.

In the year 166 BC, Judas Maccabaeus set up his standard, with the motto, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?" the first letters of which words in Hebrew made his surname, Maccabee. He went through the land, enforcing the Law, and putting the cities in a state of defense. Antiochus, meantime, was holding a mad and hateful festival at Daphne. But on hearing of the revolt of the Jews, he went into a great rage, and sent a huge army to punish them. Maccabaeus defeated this force, drove it back to Antioch, and then marched to Jerusalem, and forced the Greek garrison to take refuge in a fortress called Akra, on Mount Zion.

The courts of the Temple were overgrown with shrubs which stood like a forest, the priests' chambers had been pulled down, and the Sanctuary lay desolate. These brave men rent their clothes and wept at the sight; and then set at once to repair the holy place, their priest-leader choosing out the most spotless among them for the work. They pulled down the Altar that had been defiled, and setting aside its stones, built a new one, and out of the spoil that was in their hands, renewed the candlestick, the shewbread table, and the altar of incense. Then they newly dedicated the Temple, after three years of desolation. The anniversary was marked by the Jews, and was called the winter feast of dedication.

Still Judas was not strong enough to take the castle on Mount Zion. Instead, he built strong walls round the Temple, so that it too became a fortress, and he then went to Bethshan to defend the south border of Judea against the Edomites.

These tidings terribly enraged Antiochus, who was gone on an expedition to Persia, and he designed to form a league with his neighbors for the utter destruction of the Jews. But "he came to his end, and none could help him," for an overturn of his chariot so much increased an inward disease that had already begun, that he fell into most horrible tortures, and was in such a state of decay that scarcely anyone could bear to come near him. Horrible fears tormented him, and in his remorse he repented of all the evil he had done to the Jews, and sent them a letter assuring them of his favor. But it was now too late, and he died in great misery in 164 BC.

His son, Antiochus Eupator, was only nine years old, and his affairs were managed by a governor named Lysias, who continued the persecution, and led an army to the relief of the garrison in Mount Zion. Judas marched out to meet him, but was repulsed with the loss of six hundred men, and of his younger brother, Eleazar, who seeing an elephant of huge size, with a tower of unusual height on its back, thought the king himself must be there, and running beneath it, stabbed it so as to be crushed himself in its fall. Lysias then advanced upon Jerusalem, and laid close siege to it, placing the Jews in extreme peril. Just then another regent rose up against Lysias, and he made a hasty peace with Maccabaeus, and was admitted into the city. But when he saw its strength, he broke his promises, and overthrew the wall. On his return to Antioch, he punished the apostate high-priest, Menelaus, as the author of all these misfortunes, by smothering him in a tower filled with ashes. "Woe to the idol shepherd who had left his flock!"

Another half heathen, named Alcimus, was appointed in his place, and when the Jews would not receive him, brought down their enemies upon them again. Judas gained a victory, and wrote to entreat the alliance and protection of the Romans. But ere the answer to his letter arrived, he had, with only 800 men, fallen on a whole army of the Syrians, and was killed in the battle in 161 BC. His brothers, Jonathan and Simon, took up his body, and buried it at Modin, in the tomb of their fathers. They then continued to lead the faithful Jews, while Alcimus held Jerusalem, and there began to alter the Temple, taking down the wall of separation between the courts of the Jews and that of the Gentiles. But in the midst of the work he was smitten with palsy, and died.

It was the plan of the Romans to take the part of a weak nation against a strong one, because it afforded them an excuse for conquering the mightier of the two, so they gave notice that the quarrels of the Jews were their own. After much fighting, Jonathan obtained two years of peace, and became high-priest. Onias, the son of the good Onias, whom Jason had set aside, went to Egypt, and ministered in a temple built by the Jews, who had settled there. Ever since the Syrian kings had begun to misuse the Jews, they had grown weak and miserable. Antiochus Eupator was dethroned and murdered by his cousin Demetrius.

Shortly after, a man named Balas came forward, calling himself the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, and begging Jonathan to take his part, sending him a golden crown and purple robe, and naming him commander of the Jewish force. In a battle in the year 153, Demetrius

was slain; and Balas became king. Both Balas and his son Antiochus treated Jonathan with great favor, and he fortified Jerusalem, got possession of many other towns, and considerably strengthened the rightful cause. But a wicked rebel named Trypho, who designed the murder of his young master, Antiochus, began his conspiracy by treacherously assassinating Jonathan in the land of Gilead, B.C. 143, and soon after succeeded in killing the young king.

Simon Thassi was the only survivor of the brave Maccabaeen brothers, but he finished their work, and obtained from Rome, Egypt, and Syria, an acknowledgment that the Jews were a free people, and that he was their prince and priest. He took the castle on Mount Zion from the Syrians, and so fortified the Temple, that it became like another citadel. He was honored by all his neighbors. He built a noble tomb for all his family at Modin, consisting of seven pyramids, in honor of his father and mother, and their five sons; all covered in by a portico, supported on seven pillars, the whole of white marble, and the pediment so high that it served for a mark for sailors at sea. He died, like his brave brethren, by a bloody death, being murdered at Jericho, B.C. 135, by his own son-in-law, who hoped to usurp the government.

But Simon's eldest son, John Hyrcanus, was able to punish the murderer, and to obtain the full authority, by giving large presents both to the Romans and Syrians. It is said that he found, laid up in the sepulcher of David, 3000 talents of silver, which he used for this purpose. Hyrcanus was a very powerful and mighty prince, and not only reigned over all Judea, but conquered Edom, with all the curious dwellings in the rocky caves of Petra. He brought the country under subjection, circumcised the inhabitants, and brought them under the Mosaic Law. From that time Idumea decayed, and became an utter wilderness, the carved faces of the rocks witnessing to the truth of prophecy, as they stand forth, lonely and deserted in their grandeur, though glowing freshly with the rosy marblings of the rocks of Seir.

CHAPTER 20 : THE ROMAN POWER

"And He shall put a yoke of iron on thy neck until He have destroyed thee." —Deut. 28:48

Aristobulus, the son of Hyrcanus, was called King as well as High Priest of the Jews. But the mixture of civil and ecclesiastical rule in one person- other than Christ Himself- was not a wise policy. The Asmonean Kings were not like their fathers, the Maccabees. Still their courage and steadiness made the Jews much respected; and the Greeks and Romans around them began to read their books, and there were some few who perceived that the religion, there taught, was purer than idolatry, and wiser than the best philosophy.

The kings were assisted in government by what was called the Sanhedrin, a council of a hundred and twenty of the Scribes and of the chief priests, namely, the heads of the courses of priests. This council met daily in a hall near the great gate of the Temple, and heard cases brought before them for judgment, after the example of the seventy elders appointed by Moses.

Alexander Janneus, the son of Aristobulus, reigned from B.C. 104 to B.C. 77. He left his kingdom to his wife, Alexandra, who trusted much to the Pharisees, and raised them to great power. Her eldest son, Hyrcanus, was High Priest, and she left the kingdom to him at her death, B.C. 69.

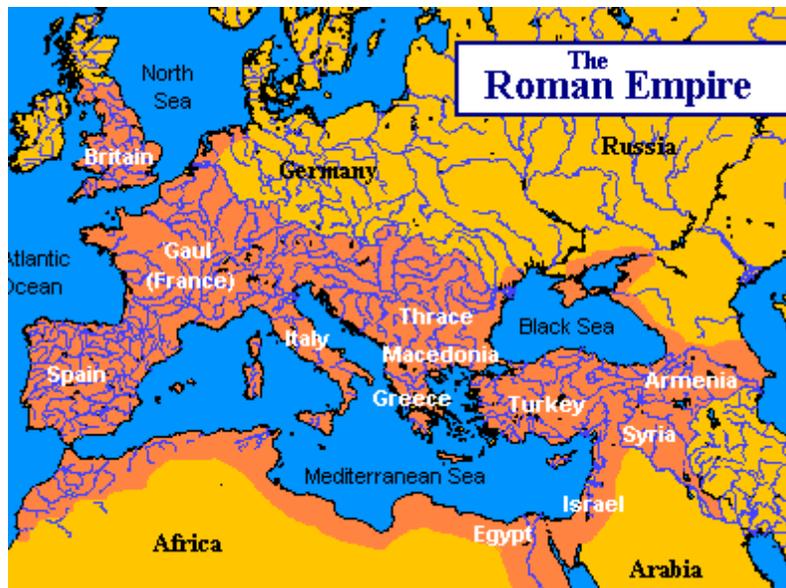
But his brother, Aristobulus, rebelling, with the help of the Sadducees, defeated him, and drove him from his throne. Hyrcanus was indolent, and was rather glad to be relieved from the trouble of reigning. But his friend, Antipas, an Edomite by birth and of the Jewish religion, persuaded him that his life would not be safe in Judea, and stirred him up to ask help, first from the Arabs, and when they were beaten, from the Romans, to whom however, Aristobulus had already sent a present of a golden vine, in hopes of winning their support.

The great awfulness of the Roman power was in the sureness of its conquests. It did not fly onward without touching the earth, like the great eastern conquerors; but let it set one claw on a nation, and the doom of that nation was fixed. First the help of the Romans was asked and readily given; then in return a tribute was demanded and paid; then the Romans would meddle with the government, till their interference became intolerable, and there was a rising against it, which they called rebellion; then they sent an army, and ruined the nation for ever. The king, queen, generals, and all the riches, were carried to Rome, where the conqueror came in to enjoy what was called a triumph. He was seated in a chariot drawn by white horses, a laurel wreath round his head, and all his captives and spoils displayed behind him; the senate or council coming out to meet him, and the people shouting for joy as they led him to the Temple of Jupiter to give thanks. The captives were afterwards slain; and, as a further festival, the people were entertained with shows of gladiators, namely, slaves trained to fight, even to death, with each other or with wild beasts. Then the conquered land became a Roman province. After the magistrates had served a year at Rome, they were allowed to choose which province they would govern; and there they did as they pleased, and laid heavy burdens on the poor inhabitants, for all men, not of Roman birth, they called barbarian, and used like slaves. Nor was there any hope of breaking this heavy bondage, for each city was a station of Roman soldiers, who were the bravest and best disciplined in the world. The army was divided into legions, each about 6,000 men strong, with a silver eagle for the standard. The legions were

again subdivided into cohorts, and again into hundreds, each commanded by a centurion, whose helmet had some mark by which his men might know him. No soldier could miss his place, either in battle, on a march, or in the perfect square camps which they set up wherever they halted; they obeyed the least word, and feared nothing; and nothing could hold out against their steady skill, perseverance, and progress. Wherever they went they built fortresses, and made wonderful straight solid roads, some of which remain to this day; and their ships and messengers going for ever from one province to another, made their empire all like one country; where the stern Roman was the lord, and the native was crushed down under his feet.

The Romans had just at this time put down the kingdom of Syria, and conquered nearly all Asia Minor. Their great general, Pompey, was holding a court at Damascus. Hyrcanus and Aristobulus came to lay their cause before him, thus asking a heathen who should be the Priest of the Most High God. Pompey sided with the elder, as the rightful heir, and led an army against Jerusalem. The siege lasted three months, and so strong was the place, that it would have held out much longer, but the Jews would not defend themselves on the Sabbath, at least no more than enough to protect their own lives. They would not disturb any of the operations of the siege, nor keep the engines from the walls on that day. Thus in 63 B.C. the Gentiles again entered Jerusalem on the very day observed as a fast in memory of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest.

Pompey spared the city from plunder, and touched none of the treasure in the Temple. But he would not be withheld from going into every part, even into the Holy of Holies. And though no immediate judgment followed, it was remarked that from that time his prosperity left him. He set up Hyrcanus as High Priest, but not as King —made him pay a tribute, put him under the control of Antipas, and forbade him to extend his domains. Aristobuius and his sons were carried off to appear in Pompey's triumph, but their lives were spared. Thus Judea, by her own fault, fell under the dominion of the fourth power with the teeth of iron.



Rome had hitherto been ruled by two consuls, who were chosen every year, and after their rule at home was over, went to make war in the provinces. But of late this plan had been wearing

out, and the great general, Julius Caesar, who had conquered France, then called Gaul, and had visited Britain, was making himself over-powerful. Pompey stood up for the old laws, but Caesar was too strong for him, and at last hunted him to Egypt, where he was murdered by the last of the Ptolemies. Julius Caesar, who was one of the greatest warriors and most able men who ever lived, managed Rome as he chose, and coming to Syria, confirmed Hyrcanus in his rank, and finding him careless and indolent, made Antipas procurator, or governor for the Romans. Thus Antipas and his son, Herod, held all the real power in their hands, though still under the Romans.

Going back to Rome, Julius Caesar became so powerful, that it was thought he would make himself king. After four years, some of the friends of the old laws killed him with their daggers in the Senate House in 44 B.C. After this, there was great confusion. While Augustus Caesar, the nephew of Julius, gained power in the west, Mark Antony, another Roman general, came to Egypt to attend to the affairs of the East. He was a selfish licentious man, who cared more for Cleopatra, the beautiful sister of the last Ptolemy, and Queen of Egypt, than for Rome or for his duty. He took bribes from Herod to support his power over the old prince, Hyrcanus, to whose daughter, Mariamne, Herod was betrothed. The son of the deposed Aristobulus, Antigonus by name, made friends with the Parthians, the descendants of the old Persians. Bursting into Judaea when the nation was unprepared, he carried off poor old Hyrcanus as a prisoner, and cut off his ears that such a blemish might prevent him from ministering again as High Priest.

Herod escaping, went to Rome. There he represented his case so ably, Augustus and Antony gave Herod men and money that he might drive out Antigonus, and promised that he should himself be king under them. The Roman army helped him to win back the country. As the caves in the hills were full of robbers, he let down soldiers in boxes over the face of the precipices, and thus contrived to destroy them all. After a siege of six months he took Jerusalem, and Antigonus surrendered to the Romans, who kept him prisoner for some time. Then, at Herod's entreaty, Antigonus was put to death. Herod thus became King of the Jews in 37 B.C.

Herod married Mariamne, who was very beautiful and amiable. Thus he hoped to please the Jews who were attached to the old line. But since Herod was an Idumean, and therefore could not be High Priest, he gave the holy office to her brother, until becoming fearful of the young prince's just rights to the crown, he caused his attendants to drown him while bathing, and afterwards appointed High Priests, as he chose, from the chief priests of the Sanhedrin.

Herod lived in constant fear and hatred of every Asmonean, and at last even turned against his own wife, Mariamne. He caused her to be put to death, and then nearly broke his heart with grief for her. Afterwards the same dread of the old royal stock led him to kill the two sons she had left to him.

The seventy weeks of Daniel- symbolizing 490 years in which the Jews had to repent and the Messiah would appear- were quickly passing by, and everyone expected that the long-promised Deliverer and King would appear. Some flatterers said it was Herod himself, the blood-stained Edomite. Herod did all in his power to maintain the notion, by repairing the Temple with great care and cost, making restorations there that were forty-six years in

progress, and spreading a golden vine over the front of the Sanctuary. There were others who said the one great King, whom even the heathen expected, was coming to Rome. Augustus Caesar had gained all the power. Augustus too had beaten Antony and Cleopatra in a sea-fight, and following them to Egypt, found that they had both killed themselves, Antony with his sword, Cleopatra by the bite of an asp, in order to save themselves from being made prisoners. Augustus was welcomed at Rome with a great triumph, and was called Emperor, the name always given to a victorious general. The Romans gave him all their offices of state, and he ruled over all their great dominions without anyone to dispute his power, any enemy to conquer at home or abroad. There was a great lull and hush all over the world, for the time was come at last. But the King was neither Herod in Judea, nor Augustus at Rome! Nay Herod, as a son of Edom, was but proving that the Scepter had departed from Judah. The reign of Augustus was a time when darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, for the Greeks and Romans had lost all the good that had been left in them, and were given up to wicked cruelty and foul self-indulgence. Even one of their own heathen oracles was caused to announce to Augustus that the greatest foe of the Roman power should be a child born among the Hebrews.



CHAPTER 21 :THE PROMISED MESSIAH COMES TO DELIVER HIS CHURCH FROM SIN

"It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel"-Gen. 3:15

Approximately 4,000 years since the creation of the world and man's fall into sin had passed. The world was groaning under the weight of its sin, but God's chosen people yet maintained their hope in a Christ, a Messiah, to rescue them. It was during the reign of Caesar Augustus in Rome and Herod the Edomite in the region where Jesus Christ was born, that Augustus, wishing to know the number of his subjects, so as to regulate the taxes paid by the conquered countries, to provide corn for the poorer Roman citizens, sent out an edict that each person should enroll his name at his native place, and there pay a piece of money. Thus the Divine Power brought it to pass, that Mary, who was about to bring forth a son, should travel with her betrothed husband to the home of their fathers, Rachel's burial place, Bethlehem. This was the little city where David had once been called away from the sheepfolds. There the stable of the ox and ass received the Master of Heaven and earth- Jesus Christ- when His people considered Him not, and shut their doors. But "unto us a Child was born, unto us a Son was given." The very years of our calendar are marked by the approximate year of His birth. From the Birth of our Lord, time is counted onwards, and the years marked as A.D., Anno Domini, Year of the Lord.

The shepherds on the hills heard the angels sing their song of peace on earth, good will to men. On the eighth day of His Life on earth, that Child was circumcised, and received the Greek form of the Divine name, Jehovah the Savior. This was the same name of Joshua who had been borne before by the Captain and by the Priest, who had led His people to their inheritance. Thence the Desire of all nations was carried to His presentation in the Temple. He was truly the first-born of all creation, but He was only known to the aged Simeon and devout Anna, as the messenger of the covenant, the Lord for whom they had waited. To Bethlehem came the mysterious wise men from the east. They had been led by the star to Jerusalem, and were there directed on by the scribes, learned in the prophecies.



But the wise men's inquiries had alarmed Herod's jealousy, and he sent forth the savage order, that the babes of Bethlehem should all be murdered, in hopes of cutting off the new-born King of the Jews. But while the mothers wept for the children who should come again to them in a better inheritance, the Holy One was safe in Egypt, where Joseph had carried Him, by the warning of God. This massacre was well nigh the last of Herod's cruelties. He was already in failing health, and after having killed his innocent sons because of their Asmonean blood, he was obliged to put to death the son of another of his wives for rebelling against him. A terrible disease came on, and fearing that the Jews would rejoice at his death, he declared they should have something to mourn for. Therefore, sending for all the chief men to Jericho, where he lay sick, he shut them all up in the circus, or place for Roman games, and made his sister promise that the moment he expired, soldiers should be sent in to kill them all. In this devil-like frame Herod died, in the seventieth year of his age, and the thirty-fourth of his reign, the

first year of our Lord. Herod's sister at once released the captives. He had had nine wives, and many children, of whom he had himself put three to death.

Archelaus and Herod Antipas were the sons of one mother, Herod Philip of another, and the murdered son of Mariamne had left two children, named Herod Agrippa and Herodias. Archelaus took the kingdom, but had not power to control either the people or the army. Three thousand Jews were massacred by the soldiers in the Temple, and Archelaus went to Rome to beg to be confirmed on his throne, and assisted in keeping his people in order. But his brother, Herod Antipas, was there already, begging for a share in the kingdom. The Jews sent after Archelaus, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us!" Augustus thereupon refused to give to either the title of King, but split Palestine into four divisions called tetrarchies, from tetra, the Greek word for four. He gave to Archelaus Judea, Samaria, and Idumea; to Antipas, Galilee; to Philip, Iturea, the part beyond the Jordan; and to a Greek named Lysanias, Abilene, in the north, near Mount Hermon. After this, Joseph returned from Egypt, but avoided the dominions of the cruel Archelaus, by going to his former abode in Galilee. Archelaus grew so wicked, that in the year 12 A.D. an accusation against him was sent to Rome by the Jews and Samaritans; and Augustus deposed him, sending him into banishment to Vienne, in Gaul. His brothers did not obtain his domain, but it was joined to the province of Syria, and put under the charge of a Roman procurator or governor, who kept down disturbances by the strong hand. But this made the Pharisees very discontented, as they fancied it was against the Divine Law to pay tribute to strangers. Augustus had been all his life busy in setting his empire in order, and making laws for it. It stretched from the Atlantic Ocean nearly to the river Euphrates, and bordered the Mediterranean Sea on both sides, the Alps shutting it in to the north, and the deserts of Africa to the south. The Roman citizens considered themselves the lords of all this space. Though at first only the true-born Romans were citizens, Augustus gave the honor to many persons of the subject nations. It freed them from being taxed, gave them a right to vote for magistrates, and saved them from being under the authority of the governors of the provinces. Every educated person spoke Latin and Greek, but the latter tongue was most used in the east, as the Romans themselves learned it as an accomplishment.

Augustus died in 17 A.D., leaving his power to his step-son, Tiberius, whom he had adopted as his own son, and thus given him the name of Caesar. Tiberius had not been kindly treated in his youth, and he was gloomy and harsh, and exceedingly disliked by the Romans. Under him, Pontius Pilate was made Procurator of Judea. Pilate took up his abode in Caesarea, a city built by Herod and his son Philip, on the coast, and named after the emperors. Pilate set up shields with idolatrous inscriptions in Jerusalem. But the Jews petitioned Tiberius, who ordered them to be removed, and there was much hatred between the Procurator and the Jews.

The thirty years of silent bearing of the common lot of man were now nearly over. Six months before the Messiah began to make Himself known, His messenger, John, the Desert Priest, began to prepare His way by preaching repentance in the spirit and power of the great Elijah, and then baptizing in the Jordan unto repentance.



The great purpose of the Old Covenant was accomplished when John, having made his followers feel all the weight of their sins against the Commandments, pointed out Him whom he had already baptized, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" A few faithful Galileans followed and believed, and miracles began to testify that here was indeed the Christ, the Prophet like to Moses, giving bread to the hungry, eyes to the blind, feet to the lame. Decreasing as He increased, John offended Herod Antipas by "boldly rebuking vice." This Antipas had forsaken his own wife, the daughter of an Arabian king, and had taken in her stead, his niece Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For bearing witness against this crime, John was thrown into prison, and afterwards beheaded, to gratify the wicked woman and her daughter, Salome.

The Arab King avenged his daughter's wrongs by a war, in which Antipas met with a great defeat. Meanwhile, the Pharisees and Sadducees, their heads full of the prophecies of greatness and deliverance, they grew more and more enraged at every token that the lowly Nazarene was indeed the Savior, the Hope of the whole world. Each token of perfection, each saying too pure for them, each undoubted miracle, only made them more furious, and for once they made common cause together. The Passover came. Herod Antipas came to Jerusalem to observe the feast. Jerusalem saw her King coming, meek, and riding on an ass. Amid the Hosannas of the children, Jesus wept at the vengeance that He foresaw for the favored city where He had been despised and rejected, and where He was Himself about to become the true Passover, which should purchase everlasting Redemption for His elect people.

The traitor- Judas Iscariot- sold Him to the Sanhedrin, or council, in which the last words of the prophecy through the Priesthood had declared that one man must die for the people. A band of Roman soldiers was obtained from Pilate to apprehend Jesus. Meanwhile, our blessed Lord instituted the new Passover- the Lord's Supper. In this Communion the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ remember His sacrifice on their behalf, and look forward to His Second Coming and Day of Judgment. Then Jesus went out to the garden, among the grey olives which still stand beside the brook Kedron, and there, after His night of Agony, He was betrayed by a kiss of Judas Iscariot.

Jesus was then dragged before the High Priest by the Roman soldiers under an accusation of blasphemy. As the Sanhedrin had not power of life and death, and such a charge would have mattered little to a Roman, a political offence was invented to bring Him before Pilate. The procurator perceived the innocence of the Holy One, but feared to befriend Him because of the raging multitude. After vainly trying to shift the responsibility on Herod Antipas, he washed his hands, to show that it was no affair of his own, and gave the Victim up to the murderers. They chose the most shameful death of Roman slaves, that they might show their hatred and contempt, unwitting that each act and each word had been foretold and foreshown in their own Law and Prophets.

For six hours He hung on His Cross, while the sun was dark, and awe crept on the most ignorant hearts. Then came the cry, "It is finished", and the work was done. The sinless, once-for-all-time Sacrifice had died. The price of sin was paid on behalf God's chosen people. The veil of the Temple was rent in twain, to show that the way to the true Mercy-Seat was opened and the old ceremonial worship and laws were coming to an end. The rich man buried Him

while the women watched. And when the Sabbath was over, the Tomb was broken through, and the First-fruits of them that slept arose. Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week.

Jesus Christ wondrously visited His followers for forty days, gave them His last charges, and then ascended into Heaven, carrying manhood to the bosom of the Father, and Himself being glorified sitting at the right hand of God the Father. There Jesus Christ- the very Son of God- intercedes continually on behalf of His people. God's people can thus come directly to the Father in prayer, in the Name of His Son.

Jesus Christ's other great gift for the church came soon after His ascension. On a first day of the week, on Pentecost, while His disciples were gathered to worship, Christ gave His people a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, just as He had previously promised. This same gift of the Holy Spirit was to be a blessing for His church from then on. And on that special occasion He revealed it would be a blessing for men of many nations by allowing his disciples to speak and understand the languages of many nations.

The Old Testament dispensation of the church was thus coming to a close and the New Testament era was rising in its place. The Israel of God- the very church of Christ- was now to consist of men of every kindred, tribe, and tongue, and not to be confined to just one nation and one people. The middle wall of partition separating Jew from Gentile was to be torn down. And God's Covenant of Grace was to be newly administered, just as the prophets had foretold. God kept His promises to the church. Glory be to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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This first in a two-part series on church history is primarily an edited and revised version of the following work in church history:

Yonge, Charlotte Mary, *The Chosen People: A Compendium of Sacred & Church History for School-children*. New York: Pott and Amery, 1868.

Reference was also especially made to James Bannerman's work "*Church of Christ*" and Jonathan Edwards' "*History of the Work of Redemption*". Indeed, it is the latter work which really stands as the guidepost for this history series.