

August 1

2 Samuel 18

V.1-18 – David organized his army in Mahanaim into three parts with established military leaders Joab and Abishai (brothers) in charge of two portions, while Ittai the Gittite, the recent Philistine emigrant from Gath was given charge of the third part. This would indicate that one third of David's forces were Philistines. From any perspective, this is a remarkable fact. How was it that the victor over Goliath the champion of Gath was able to attract so many loyal Philistines to his ranks? The answer lies in two significant things; (1) The character and spiritual qualities that Yahweh saw in David were seen by others – Ps. 78:70-72; and Ps. 89:20-24 where David is set forth as a forerunner and type of Christ; and (2) David's inclusion of Gentiles, not only among his mighty men, but their inclusion in the distribution of bread and wine equally with Israelites when the Ark was brought to Zion – 2 Sam. 6:19; Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:14-18. David converted Gentiles and received them without demanding circumcision. His was a Melchizedek approach – Gen. 14:13-18; Acts 7:44-50.

David wanted to go with his army but the people prevented it. It is clear that his motive for wanting to go was to protect the life of Absalom – “Deal gently for **my sake** with the young man, even with Absalom.” His reaction on receiving the news of Absalom's death also suggests this to be the case. Joab had two reasons why Absalom had to perish in the battle; (1) As revenge for himself after Absalom had burnt his barley crop – 2 Sam. 14:30-31; and (2) Joab knew that David's kingship was not viable while Absalom was still alive. The difficulties David had in the wake of the war proved that – 2 Sam. 20.

V.6-18 – “the battle was in the wood of Ephraim” – The battle was fought on the east of the Jordan river not far from Mahanaim. Why then is this wood called “Ephraim”? It probably got its name from another grisly battle fought here in the days of Jephthah – Judges 12:1-6. 42,000 Ephraimites perished here because of their adoption of Amoritish practices. 20,000 Israelites perished under Absalom, “and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured” because of the harsh terrain giving advantage to pursuers over those fleeing. Absalom himself attempting to flee on a mule was swung above the ground when his glorious hair (2 Sam. 14:26) became inextricably entangled in the low hanging branches of an oak tree. A man reported to Joab, “Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak” and was rebuked for not killing him on the spot. Wisely, that man preserved his own life by rebutting Joab's venom with David's expressed wish that Absalom be saved. He knew Joab would use him as a scapegoat when the crunch came. Joab finished the job with 10 men of his bodyguard and buried Absalom under a huge pile of stones, a shadow of the pillar that Absalom had erected for himself near Jerusalem (V.18).

V.19-33 – Totally different attitudes emerged when Ahimaaz the son of Zadok requested to run and take news to David in Mahanaim. His intention was to soften the blow for David, while Joab wanted the blow to be as harsh as possible. He nominated Cushie, probably a Gentile with no tact. Ahimaaz kept badgering Joab until he agreed to let him run, and he outran Cushie achieving his objective of partially preparing David for the worst. Cushie arrived and bluntly declared Absalom dead along with many other Israelites. David's grief was inconsolable – “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” The grief was understandable, the ubiquitous public expression of it shortsighted and dangerous as David was to find out. Sometimes it is wiser to keep our grief to ourselves.

Jeremiah 22

V.1 – “Go down to the house of the king of Judah” – Jehoiakim was the king at this time and this chapter covers quite a bit of history, including the character of Josiah’s reign and his death; the demise of his second oldest son Jehoahaz, and the terrible character of the reign of his oldest son Jehoiakim who is roundly condemned for his crooked behavior. Then the fate of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah ends the chapter.

V.3 – The demand from Yahweh was – “Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.” Jeremiah in V.13-19 shows that Josiah had practiced these things, but Jehoiakim was the exact antithesis of his father for which he would receive “the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem” (Jer. 36:30).

V.10 – “Weep ye not for the dead (Josiah), neither bemoan him (Jeremiah did – 2 Chron. 35:25): but weep sore for him that goeth away (Jehoahaz): for he shall return no more (he died in Egypt – V.11-12; 2 Kings 23:30-34), nor see his native country.” In V.11, Jehoahaz is called Shallum. Even though he was not the firstborn of Josiah, the people knowing the evil character of his older brother Jehoiakim, elevated him to the throne at age 23. He lasted 3 months before being removed by Pharaoh Necho returning from the battle of Carchemish (BC 609) in support of the failing Assyrians against the rising Babylonians under their commander Nebuchadnezzar, heir to the throne, and Yahweh’s “servant” to bring judgements upon His people. Jehoiakim proved why those judgements were just.

V.24 – Jehoiakim’s heir Jehoiachin called “Coniah” here (also known as Jeconiah) who was to succeed his father for just three months and ten days, is next in the firing line, and would be carted off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

V.30 – Even Zedekiah, Josiah’s third son comes into view. His sons were to be slaughtered before his eyes (2 Kings 25:7) and his own eyes punctured before being carted off the Babylon to die without progeny. It was to be through Jehoiachin’s sons the line of David would continue – 1 Chron. 3:17; Matt. 1:11-12. However, it is a curious fact that the actual bloodline of David (from his mother Mary) does not descend through Jehoiachin. It came down through Nathan, one of the sons of Bathsheba – Luke 3:23-38.

Romans 9

V.1-5 – Paul grieved for his kinsmen, Israelites who had incredible privileges (9 of them) – “to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

V.6-14 – Paul continued by pointing out that it is not genealogy and natural heritage that saves, but rather faith and righteousness. Abraham’s faith saw the birth of Isaac. Rebekah’s faith saw the birth of two sons, one whom God loved because of his faith and uprightness, and the other whom he hated because of his ungodliness, and this on the basis of His foreknowledge before they were born. The Apostle asks, “Is there unrighteousness with God?” and goes on to demonstrate that God is sovereign in matters of mercy and judgement, but He always operates within the bounds of His own principles (V.15-16).

V.17-29 – The case of Pharaoh is adduced to demonstrate that God is both sovereign and yet perfectly righteous in His dealings with men. The citation from Ex. 9:16 is an extraordinary example of this. Six plagues had fallen upon the Egyptians and the last of these, the plague of

boils had sorely afflicted Pharaoh so that he would have died if Yahweh had not intervened. This is evident from Ex. 9:16 when preparatory to the seventh plague Moses tells Pharaoh just that – “And in very deed for this cause have I **raised** thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.” The Hebrew word for “raised thee up” is *amad* – to stand. Young’s Lit. has “caused thee to stand” as have the RV and LITV. It is the same word used in Ex. 9:10 “stood” and V.11 “stand” and therefore is not about being raised up from birth as is commonly understood. God is saying to Pharaoh that he had ‘resurrected’ him from his sick bed on which he would have died. The purpose was “to shew thee my power.” This is also proven by the Greek used in Paul’s citation in Rom. 9:17 where the words “raised thee” is *exegeirō* – to rouse fully, that is, (figuratively) to resuscitate (from death), release (from infliction). Accordingly, Pharaoh would have died after the sixth plague if God had not intervened. Why is this important?

Pharaoh was allowed free will up to the end of the 6th plague. Only in Ex. 7:13 is there any hint that Yahweh had hardened Pharaoh’s heart before the 7th plague, and that verse is poorly translated in the KJV. For example, Rotherham translates the verse – “Then waxed bold the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them,—as spake Yahweh.” The ESV says – “Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them.” So, Pharaoh hardened his own heart as he did for all of the six plagues up to Ex. 9, but there is a change after the 6th plague recorded in Ex. 9:12 – “And Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh.” What this means is that during the first six plagues Pharaoh had free will, but from the 7th onwards he did not. Yahweh stepped in and hardened his heart for a purpose. That is why Paul sweeps on to show how God dealt with Pharaoh and Israel in V.18-29.

V.21 – “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” Israel and Pharaoh were effectively from the same lump of clay for the Potter to work with. From the 7th plague, Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart and created “the vessels of wrath **fitted** to destruction.” It is important to understand that the voice used for the verb “fitted” is in the Passive Voice not the Middle Voice as some have said. The Passive Voice means that Pharaoh was on the receiving end of God’s actions. He had no choice in the matter. His free will was gone. God had given him six opportunities to change and he had stubbornly resisted. We think of the 6,000 years (“days”) of human probation. Perhaps opportunities to change are near an end.

However, when it came to Israel who were nearly as hard-hearted as Pharaoh as they proved in the wilderness, the Potter made “vessels of mercy” to fulfil his promise to Abraham to bring his seed out of Egypt and “that he might make known the riches of his glory” on those He was to take as His wife at Mt Horeb. But these too who later defied Yahweh and saw His glory ten times (Num. 14:22-23) were also rejected for hard-heartedness. God is sovereign in matters of mercy and judgement, but He is always consistent with His own principles and promises.

V.24-29 – Citations from Hos. 2:23; Isa. 10:22-23 and 1:9 are advanced to show that God had always intended to call Gentiles as well as preserve a remnant in Israel by faith.

V.30-33 – Judaistic law-keepers who thought they could secure salvation by works of law would reject their Messiah (V.33; Isa. 28:16), but both Jew and Gentile who manifested faith in him would be imputed righteous and find life.

August 2

2 Samuel 19

V.1-8 – David went up to a place over the gate to weep bitterly and cry out (18:33), and consequently everyone who entered the town would have heard him. Soon the message spread about the king's grief and this caused his returning soldiers to slink back into Mahanaim ashamed and disheartened. They saw this as incongruous and ungrateful. Some of their number had forfeited their lives for David to save his life and that of his family. Joab saw the ramifications of this and severely upbraided David, who realizing that Joab was right when he concluded, it "will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now," corrected the mistake and sat in the gate in a form of public apology.

V.9-15 – As the news spread throughout the Land that Absalom was dead, the debate began about restoring David to the throne. David sought the intervention of Zadok and Abiathar the priests to persuade the embarrassed and fearful elders of Judah to get on board. The promise to make Amasa, the defeated General, captain of the host rather than the vengeful Joab might have swayed them a little, but it was a death sentence for Amasa. The elders of Judah went down to the Jordan to meet David, but serious tensions arose when they did not invite the rest of the tribes to join them (V.41-43) leading to the revolt of Sheba in chapter 20.

V.16-30 – Two men fronted up to explain themselves as David reached the western side of Jordan – they were Shimei the abusive Benjamite and Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan. Shimei brought a thousand Benjamites with him, and Ziba who had told lies about Mephibosheth was also there with his entire family. This in itself tells a story. They feared standing alone before the 'Beloved' as we must all do one day to give an account of ourselves. There will be no strength in numbers in that day. Shimei made a full confession of his sin, and David who had experienced Divine mercy himself by confessing, responded with mercy, but Abishai wanted to take vengeance. David repudiated him and swore an oath that Shimei would not die for **this** sin (we will deal with David's instructions before his death to Solomon to deal with Shimei later). As for Mephibosheth, his explanations are accepted by David, but having made an oath granting Saul's assets to Ziba, he can only correct the mistake in part – "I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land." Mephibosheth humbly accepted the outcome and in fact said Ziba could have it all given that he would continue to be part of David's house.

V.30-40 – "Barzillai the Gileadite" one of David's strongest supporters is invited to come with him to reside in Jerusalem, but Barzillai claimed old age and inability to enjoy anything much in his decrepitude and respectively declined the invitation. David, wishing to show his deep gratitude for Barzillai's support then invited his son Chimham to substitute for him. The latter went with David and was granted an inheritance near Bethlehem – Jer. 41:17.

Jeremiah 23

This chapter introduces the very real problem of false prophets who continually contradicted Jeremiah's prophecies. It is thought this chapter occurred in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim's reign and it culminates in a serious clash with false prophets in chapters 28 and 29 (1st year of Zedekiah).

V.1 – "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith Yahweh" – The word for "pastors" is *râ'âh* meaning to tend a flock, is used 27 times in Jeremiah often translated "shepherds" and even "feed." Shepherds and teachers have a heavy responsibility to feed the flock with what comes from the mouth of God and will be called to give account for their performance – Ezek. 33:7-9; Heb. 13:17; James 3:1. False teachers have always been a problem encountered by God's servants, and it is one of the tests applied

to us to see if we actually “earnestly contend for the faith” in our time – 2 Pet. 2:1; Matt. 7:15; Rom. 16:18; Jude 3-4.

V.2-8 – The condemnation of the false prophets of Jeremiah’s time is balanced by the promise that Yahweh would ultimately redeem His people and “set up shepherds over them which shall feed them” (V.4). Those shepherds will be led by “the good shepherd” the Lord Jesus Christ who goes by the name Yahweh-tsidkenu (“Yahweh our righteousness”) who will sit on David’s throne and “execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Then a new saying will be heard celebrating a Second Exodus (V.7-8).

V.9-40 – Jeremiah speaks on behalf of Yahweh, firstly expressing his own feelings, and then pouring out the Divine condemnation of the ruination dispensed by the false prophets. The “year of their visitation” was near. So bad was the behavior that Yahweh declared “they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.” These false prophets spoke “a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Yahweh” and prophesied continuing peace, and taught that no evil would come on bad behavior. The only remedy was their total destruction and ultimate replacement by good shepherds – “in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.”

V.23 – “Am I a God at hand, saith Yahweh, and not a God afar off?” is a challenge for all time. Our God may dwell in the heaven of heavens, but He is near, knowing the thoughts and the intents of the heart – Jer. 17:9-10; Heb. 4:12-13.

V.25-29 – “I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed” – The preeminent dreamer will emerge in Jer. 29 – “Shemaiah the Nehelamite” (‘he of the dream’). There are two ways to discern false prophets; (1) “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16 – cp. V.14); and (2) Apply the blowtorch of the Word of God – “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. **What is the chaff to the wheat?** saith Yahweh? Is not my word like as a **fire**? saith Yahweh; and like a **hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?**” Yahweh, through Jeremiah, in the balance of the chapter, continues to apply the fire, and smashes them with His hammer.

Romans 10

V.1-4 – The Apostle prayed for his kinsmen whom he knew were like he had once been. They had “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” and set about to “establish their own righteousness” and did not submit “themselves unto the righteousness of God.” As Paul had shown conclusively in his epistle thus far, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

V.5-21 – The citation from Lev. 18:5 “describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Obedience to the Law did indeed bring many benefits, but no man could keep it perfectly, and if you broke one commandment the rest of the Law fell upon you – James 2:10. It was a great “schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:24), and “holy, just and good,” but it could not deliver eternal life – Rom. 8:3. It was designed to bring those living under it to Christ, and he was as near as the mouth and pen of the Apostle who was directing their attention to the Word of God (V.8). Paul’s selective citation of Deut. 30:11-14 makes the point that all the strivings of Jews “going about to establish their own righteousness” (V.3) was wasted energy, for “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of **faith**, which we preach,” and that Word produces faith (V.17). Believing in the heart leads to confession with the mouth, and that ultimately leads to salvation after the Patriarchal pattern – Heb. 11:13. However, the citation of

Isa. 28:16 in V.11 is a subtle warning of the danger of sticking with Judaism. Jew and Gentile have equal access to salvation on the basis of faith. All they need is a teacher, and the Apostle was in the vanguard of those whose “sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

Paul uses three citations in V.19-21 to demonstrate that God always intended to call the Gentiles on the basis of faith and that it would provoke jealousy in His people Israel. The first citation is from Deut. 32:21 – “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish **nation** I will anger you.” Next he cites Isa. 65:1a expecting Jews would know the balance of the verse – “I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a **nation** that was not called by my name.” Finally, he cites Isa. 65:2 about God’s own “rebellious people” Judaistic people. The “nation” here is the true ecclesia which from the time of Isaiah right down to Christ’s second advent would largely consist of Gentiles. It is the “nation” Christ said would inherit God’s vineyard (Matt. 21:43), and the “nation” of Isa. 55:5 who would inherit the “sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3).

Romans 11

V.1-10 – Paul hastens to add that God had not totally “cast away His people” for Paul was himself a Jew, and there were quite a few others who had converted to Christ. Even Elijah’s earnest intercession for God to destroy Israel was rejected because there was then, as there was in Paul’s time a remnant saved by grace because of their faith, and not Judaistic works like those who were asleep, blind and deaf (V.7 is cited from Isa. 29:10), and whose ritualism was a snare (V.9-10 cited from Ps. 69:22-23).

V.11-24 – Paul returns to the theme of jealousy. The imagery of the olive tree is used of the failure of Israel and the grafting in of the Gentiles. Israel is the “good olive tree,” the Divinely provided “stock of Jesse” (Isa. 11:1), and its natural “branches were broken off” due to lack of faith, and their apostasy. In the hope of saving a remnant of His people, the Gospel went to the Gentiles (the “wild olive tree”) “to provoke them to jealousy.” Having been grafted into the olive tree of Israel, converted Gentiles “only stand through your faith” (ESV). “Behold therefore **the goodness and severity of God**: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **if** thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.” Ultimately, this will be the case (V.25-27) fulfilling Isa. 59:20-21.

V.28-36 – God’s covenants will be fulfilled despite the waywardness of His people. Gentile converts were once in the position of Israel now – blind, and should be thankful that the falling away of Israel allowed the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. Jew and Gentile were at one time “locked up all in the prison of unbelief” (Weymouth V.32). Paul launches into an unrestrained praise of Yahweh for “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” In the process he hits upon the formula for salvation – “For **of** (*ek* – out of) Him, and **through** (*dia* – the channel) Him, and **to** (the purpose) Him, are all things.” We are called by God’s grace to manifest His glory (like Israel – Jer. 13:11) and He is the channel (the means) of achieving it through the development of faith and character by the power of His Word – V.17 – “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

August 3

2 Samuel 20

The rebellion of Absalom tore the fabric of unity in Israel apart. Those who had grudges against David, like Ahithophel, Shimei and now “Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite” were given opportunity to reveal their hand and rise up against the king. To mollify the elders of Judah and suppress Joab, David had appointed Amasa (his nephew) as captain of the host. He had lost the war as Absalom’s General and now shows his slackness again when David needed rapid action against the growing insurgency of Sheba which was gaining momentum (V.2). Tragedy and bitterness lurked in these events.

V.3-13 – On arrival in Jerusalem, David set his house in order and directed Amasa to gather the army of Judah within three days. Amasa was unable to meet the target and David turned to Joab for immediate action against Sheba. Joab having a ready-made force of his own men, loyal Philistines and David’s mighty men, pursued Sheba and met Amasa along the way at Gibeon (it seems he had not done as badly as initially thought). Ambitious Joab had conceived an evil plan to commit cold-blooded murder to eliminate his rival for the top job in the army. As he approached Amasa (his cousin – 2 Sam. 17:25), his sword ‘accidentally’ fell out of its scabbard. He reached down to pick it up with his left hand while extending his right hand to grasp Amasa’s beard to kiss him (seemingly a brotherly gesture). Amasa had no reason to suspect danger from the sword in Joab’s left hand, but with a tight grip on the beard, it was used to strike Amasa in the chest below the rib cage opening a wound that allowed his entrails to gush out. This brutal murder is described by David in 1 Kings 2:5 – “what he (Joab) did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.” No wonder the men of the army were stopped in their tracks until Amasa’s writhing body was dragged off the road and covered.

V.14-26 – Tracked down to “Abel of Bethmaachah” (thought to be east of Banias), Sheba and his followers were besieged, and Joab set about casting up earthworks and battering at the wall. A wise woman stepped in and her words to Joab are a revelation – “I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of Yahweh?” thus unmasking the brutal character of Joab whom she must have known by report. His reply is laughable – “Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy,” this from the man who had just murdered his own cousin and left him wallowing in his own blood. The wise woman went to her people and they agreed to kill Sheba and cast his head over the wall to Joab to end the siege that threatened their own lives. Peace returned to Israel enabling David to reorganize his family and kingdom, but much bitterness and anger brewed beneath the surface.

2 Samuel 21

V.1-2 – Three years of famine saw David enquire of Yahweh the reason. Decades after Saul’s death, the nation was still paying for his sins, in particular, the breaking of covenants. 500 years before, Joshua and the elders of Israel had made a covenant with the Gibeonites that should never have been made, but had been broken by Saul when he “sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.” This teaches a very important lesson. When covenants are made before God, even if they are against His will (as in Josh. 9), men are held to them for all time. This applies across all human activities and is ignored at great peril. God’s name is involved, and he will not allow it to be sullied (Isa. 48:11). Saul’s Judaistic zeal for

Israel was to cost the lives of many innocent people – victims of his foolishness, disobedience and the despising of covenants.

V.3-14 – The Gibeonites did not want monetary reparations, only an “eye for eye” atonement from Saul’s family. This caused David some problems because he too had made a covenant with Jonathan to preserve his children (V.7; 1 Sam. 20:15,42). Poetic justice is often observed when Divine judgements fall. David selected the two sons of Rizpah, Saul’s concubine (with whom he had made no marriage **covenant**) who now has to pay for his despising of a covenant; and the five sons of Merab (ESV – not “Michal” as in the KJV – see 1 Sam. 18:19), who was supposed to be given to David after he slew Goliath (1 Sam. 17:25). You cannot escape the consequences of broken covenants, and often there are casualties among those who are innocent (Josh. 22:20). While Saul had made no covenant with Rizpah, she showed her absolute loyalty to him by living in the open for 6 months driving away the wild animals and carrion birds of prey from the **seven** (covenant) bodies hung on trees. David paid his respects to Rizpah and collected the bones of Saul and his sons, along with the seven recently hung up, and buried them in the inheritance of Kish, Saul’s father in Benjamin. God was appeased.

V.15-22 – War returned to David’s life as the restless Philistines attacked Israel again. David came close to death at the hands of “Ishbibenob, which was of the sons of the giant” as he “waxed faint” in the battle. Abishai saved him and it was obvious to all that David’s fighting days were over. However, his life was bookended when in several subsequent battles with the Philistines the remnants of the giants of Gath were eliminated by David’s mighty men, including the brother of Goliath and a related giant with a deformity of six fingers and toes.

Jeremiah 24

V.1 – Jeremiah saw a vision of two baskets of figs not long after “Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.” The kingdom of Judah had eleven years to run before its destruction in BC 587-6 by Nebuchadnezzar. The cream of the nation had been largely carried off to Babylon by him in successive campaigns from BC 606 through to 598. Those who remained surrounding Zedekiah are presented as bad figs, good for nothing, while those who had been carried to Babylon already were presented as good figs. They had been sent there “for their good” (V.5), because 70 years later in BC 536 a remnant were to return under the Decree of Cyrus. Those who remained in the Land were later slain or fled into Egypt (V.8) after the events of BC 586 and were cursed – “I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a **curse**, in all places whither I shall drive them.”

Romans 12

In this chapter, Paul turns to practical matters – the way the principles of the Atonement should be applied in daily and ecclesial life.

V.1-2 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your **reasonable** service” – A living sacrifice is an enigma, and yet it is the only logical response to the call to follow Christ. Paul expressed this in another way in Gal. 2:20 – “I am **crucified** with Christ: nevertheless I **live**; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the **life** which I now **live** in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The word for “reasonable” is *logikos* – pertaining to the reason or logic; hence, Rotherham translates “your rational divine service,” and Young’s Lit. “your intelligent service.” In

other words, gratitude for what God has done for us should be manifested by a life of sacrifice devoted to the service of Christ. The means whereby this can be accomplished is shown in V.2 – “And be not **conformed** (Middle Voice) to this world (*aion* – age): but be ye **transformed** (*metamorphoo* – Passive Voice) by the renewing (*anakainōsis* – renovation) of your mind, that ye may **prove** (Active Voice) what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The three verbs highlighted in bold have a different voice in the Greek. Our destiny is framed by the choices we make in life. We can choose to conform to the world, or eschew its ways, but only we ourselves can make those choices. That is why the verb “conformed” is in the Middle Voice (where one does something to or for himself). However, the renewing or renovation of the mind is an act of God through His Word, hence, the Passive Voice (we receive His action), but we must act for ourselves in ‘proving’ what the will of God is in daily activity, hence, “prove” is in the Active Voice.

V.3-8 – One of the great challenges of ecclesial life is finding the right fit for the abilities we possess and the opportunities we have for service. Problems arise when ‘square pegs try and fit into round holes’ as the saying goes. Humble honesty as to what we can best contribute to the ecclesia is the only sensible way to avoid tension and disappointment. We should neither overplay nor downplay what we may have been given by God (remember the one talent man?), but always have in mind the Apostle’s advice to the Philippians – “in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves,” which is echoed here – “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Sadly, it is sometimes the case that those who are not necessarily qualified still seek to dominate, such as Diotrephes – 3 John 9-10. Paul reminded the Romans that we “are one body in Christ” and the body can only function properly if every part performs the function God designed it for (V.4-6).

V.9-21 – The hallmarks of true followers of Christ are now listed by Paul. They must “be without dissimulation” (*anupokritos* – unfeigned, undisguised, sincere). These qualities speak for themselves, but kindness, diligence, empathy and prayerfulness are high on the list. The ESV translation of V.18 is helpful – “If possible, **so far as it depends on you**, live peaceably with all,” for it is not always possible to avoid conflict with the irascible. However, we must “recompense to no man evil for evil.” God will look after the matter in His time. Even the worst of men may be caused the ‘pain of remorse’ and conscience by having their erstwhile enemy do them good (“heap coals of fire on his head”), and this leads to one of the most important pieces of counsel given in the Word of God – “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Positive attitudes and actions are the best way to deflect and overcome negative and evil influences in our life.

August 4

2 Samuel 22

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge makes the following comment about this chapter – “This song, which is found with scarcely any material variation as Ps. 18, and with the words of this first verse for its title, belongs to the early part of David’s reign when he was recently established upon the throne of all Israel, and when his final triumph over the house of Saul, and over the pagan nations 2 Sam. 22:44-46, Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, and Edomites, was still fresh 2 Sam. 21. For a commentary on the separate verses the reader is referred to the commentary on Ps. 18.”

We propose to do the same and leave this consideration until Ps. 18 comes along.

Jeremiah 25

This prophecy was delivered in the 4th year of the reign of Jehoiakim, the corrupt and rapacious oldest son of Josiah. His rule was an utter disgrace and only hastened the final condemnation now that Nebuchadnezzar ("Yahweh's servant" – V.9; Jer. 27:6) had come to the throne in Babylon.

V.2-14 – Jeremiah recounts his commission from God which commenced in the 13th year of Josiah, some 23 years before. He and other prophets had called for reform but the nation would not hear or respond. The condemnation is renewed and its awful consequences enumerated. There would be a long desolation – "this whole land shall be a **desolation**, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon **seventy years**." In fact, there were to be three desolations of **70 years** running concurrently. These were: (1) Judah and the surrounding nations were to serve Babylon from BC 609 when Babylon fought with Assyria and Egypt at the battle of Carchemish until BC 539 when Cyrus overthrew Babylon; (2) The Temple would be desolate from BC 587/6 to 517-516 when it was finally completed by Zerubbabel and Jeshua; (3) The people of Judah would be in captivity from BC 606 when Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon as captives to BC 536 when under the Decree of Cyrus 50,000 returned to the Land. The land therefore kept its Sabbaths (2 Chron. 36:21) – "To fulfil the word of Yahweh by the mouth of **Jeremiah**, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil **threescore and ten years**."

V.15-38 – It is one of the marvels of prophecy that an historic event like the captivity of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar can be expanded and projected to the latter days on a much larger scale. The "wine cup of this fury at my hand" that Jeremiah was to "cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink" was passed to a long list of nations from all points of the compass, some of whom were not subject to the judgements that Nebuchadnezzar poured out. It is clear that the prophecy comes right down to the latter days, and this is made evident by the language that follows - "For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon **all the inhabitants of the earth**, saith Yahweh of hosts." This is complemented by, "A noise shall come even to **the ends of the earth**; for Yahweh hath a **controversy** with **the nations**, he will plead with **all flesh**; he will give them that are wicked to the sword," and "evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth." There has never been a time when the devastation of human life as a result of Divine judgements since the Flood has seen bodies so numerous that they are not buried, but left to rot in the sun (V.33). This is the time spoken of in Ps. 110:6 – "He shall judge among the nations, **he shall fill the places with dead bodies**; he shall strike through the head in many countries," and Isa. 30:25 – "in the day of **the great slaughter**, when the towers fall." It is the time of Armageddon which will be followed by 40 years of judgement against Catholic nations ("Babylon the Great") who will oppose Christ's rule (Ps. 2). This is why the "principal of the flock" is next mentioned by Jeremiah. This is the Papacy, "the foolish shepherd" and "the idol shepherd" of Zech. 11:15-17.

Romans 13

Paul starts with the fact of Dan. 4:17 – "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" when he says, "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." We are

required to submit to authorities providing they do not compel us to disobey God – 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Titus 3:1; Acts 5:29. This also includes paying prescribed taxes.

V.8-14 – Repaying debts to lenders within the community is a manifestation of love and of fulfilling the law to “love thy neighbour as thyself.” A range of evil behaviors drawn from the 10 commandments are listed by Paul to be avoided at all costs by believers. It is axiomatic that “now is our salvation nearer than when we believed,” but Paul knew how easy it is to slip back into old habits and be overtaken by weariness in the way – “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” One of those works of darkness was “chambering” – *koitē* – a place for laying down for cohabitation, which is why “adultery” is mentioned in V.9. What is required is integrity before God. The flesh is weak and biased towards sin. It needs to be ‘cut off at the pass’ – “On the contrary, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** for gratifying your earthly cravings” (Weymouth).

Romans 14

V.1-12 – Paul now turns to the tensions that existed in the ecclesia at Rome between Jew and Gentile. At the end of chapter 13 he had reminded them that it is not always easy to leave behind straight away the practices of the former life. This was true as well of converted Jews who were reluctant to give up what they had practiced all their life in keeping holy days and avoiding certain foods. So, he begins – “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions” (ESV). Interestingly enough, and disturbing to the Jew, he describes the ‘touch not, taste not’ approach as being “weak.” Judaisers regarded it as strength. “For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” In dietary matters and respect for special days there needed to be mutual respect and neither side should try to thrust their scruples on others, which was obviously happening in the ecclesia. Providing God was given praise and thanksgiving in these activities there was no harm done. The Judgement Seat is coming and all must give account of their behavior in the ecclesia. The ESV is correct when it translates V.10 – “For we will all stand before **the judgment seat of God**” (*theos*). The proof that “God” is correct is in the citation from Isa. 45:23 – “As I live, saith the Lord (Yahweh in Isaiah), every knee shall bow to **me**, and **every tongue shall confess to God.**” Why is this not the same as 2 Cor. 5:10 for example? – “For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ.**” The answer lies in Paul’s subtle reference to the work of the angels at the Judgement Seat. They will perform the interviews with individuals who must answer for their behavior in relation to their brethren – Matt. 10:26 – “for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.” The angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” and are the recorders of all things that will be revealed at the Judgement Seat – Mal. 3:16 (Rotherham) – “Then, they who revered Yahweh, conversed, one with another,—and Yahweh hearkened, and heard, and **there was written a book of remembrance before him**, for them who revered Yahweh, and for such as thought of his Name.” This book is not the Book of Life which only contains names (Luke 10:20; Rev. 17:8). It is the record of the actions, motives and behaviors of responsible servants of God recorded and kept for the day of judgement (Ps. 56:8; Rev. 20:12), and will be used by the angels to interview the responsible before they appear before Christ to have their destiny determined by him. What will not be found in those books are sins that have been forgiven – Isa. 43:25; Prov. 28:13-14; Jude 24; Rev. 14:5; 2 Pet. 3:14. This is why Paul makes the subtle change and speaks of “the judgement seat of **God**,” whose representatives the angels are – “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to **God.**”

V.13-23 – The Apostle had given sound reasons as to why it is not good policy to “judge one another anymore” in relation to matters of holy days and dietary scruples. It is possible to put stumbling-blocks in front of others on matters which God Himself does not ask for, or condemn. The Jews could maintain their dietary restrictions and keep special days, but they must not try to impose those on Gentile converts or demand the ecclesia adopt them, for “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” However, similarly, the Gentiles must not aggravate the Jews by insisting on eating foods in ecclesial gatherings that were abhorrent to Jews (Weymouth) – “If your brother is pained by the food you are eating, your conduct is no longer controlled by love. Take care lest, by the food you eat, you lead to ruin a man **for whom Christ died.**” Eating such foods privately would not be a problem, it was the aggravation within the ecclesia Paul was concerned about. In short, we have obligations to ensure that we do not place stumbling-blocks of any kind in the path of those “for whom Christ died.” The aim should be – “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” What should be sought is a clear conscience (ESV) – “Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.” Going against one’s conscience is acting in a manner that is “not out of faith” (*ou ek pistis*) – “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (ESV).

August 5

2 Samuel 23

The final chapters of 2 Samuel are not in chronological order. They are structured to form a picture of the final fulfilment of the promises to David. For example, the list of mighty men from David’s earliest days are placed near the end to typify the immortals of the **spiritual family** that David focused on in 2 Sam. 7 (see comments on July 22). In 2 Sam. 23:1,8, David heads the list of mighty men as a type of Christ, and this is followed in V.8-39 by gradations of honour and status among the mighty men, as there will be in the Kingdom among the saints – Matt. 20:23; Luke 19:17-19. There are curiosities in the list of 37 mighty men (some of whom were long since dead like Asahel and **Uriah** – one of a number of **Gentiles** in the list) for when the count is done from V.8-39, there are only 36 if you exclude David (do the count yourself), and we are told in V.39 – “thirty and seven in all.” This must mean that David is included at the head of the mighty men, and he of course is **the type of Christ**, and Christ is always going to be **first** among God’s ‘mighty men’ being the means whereby they attain to that status.

V.1-7 – It is essential to have an accurate translation of these verses, and that by Bro. Thomas is among the best (**bold** is used to highlight significant differences to the KJV - “Now these words of David, the last, are an oracle of David, son of Jesse; **even an oracle of the mighty man enthroned, concerning an Anointed One of the Elohim of Jacob; and the pleasant theme of Israel’s songs.** (A reference to Christ, not David)

Yahweh’s spirit spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue; Elohim of Israel spake to me, and the Rock of Israel discoursed, saying, **There shall be a ruler over mankind, ruling in the righteous precepts of Elohim.** And as brightness of morning, He shall rise the Sun of an unclouded dawn, shining forth after rain upon tender grass out of the earth.

Though my house is not so with Ail, yet He hath appointed for me the Covenant of the Olahm, ordered in everything and sure: truly this is all my salvation, and all my delight, though he cause it not to spring forth.

But the wicked shall be all of them as a thorn-bush to be thrust away; yet without hand shall they be taken; nevertheless a Man shall smite them. He shall be filled with iron and the shaft of a spear; but with fire to burn up while standing, they shall be consumed.” (Eureka Vol. 2 pg. 28).

For detail of V.1-7, see **Appendix 1**. A few important points will be made here.

V.3 – The ‘He’ here is the **Multitudinous Christ**, the future ruling body upon earth (Eureka Vol.1 pg. 349) – “This Eternal Spirit in his multitudinous manifestation is the Sun, belonging to the morning of that great day in which the world shall be ruled in righteousness; and Yahweh’s glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The Spirit in David contemplating this *ek pollon eis*, and vice versa, the One-in-Many, the future ruling body upon earth, says ‘There shall be a Ruler over mankind, a Just One, ruling in the righteous precepts of Elohim. And as brightness of morning, He shall rise the Sun of an unclouded dawn shining forth after rain upon tender grass out of the earth.’”

V.7 – “the man” – *ish* – great man = Christ; “shall touch them” – *naga* – to touch; lay the hand upon, hence to strike – Bro. Thomas – “But the Man shall smite upon them”; i.e. Christ will destroy the wicked by Divine power – Ps. 110:6; but must first be “fenced” (Mgn. “filled” is correct) “with iron and the staff of a spear”; i.e. the Roman spear which pierced Christ’s side – John 19:34; “burned” – *saraph* – to be on fire (root of Seraphim = the Saints); “with fire” – Compare the fate of Gog and Magog at Armageddon (Ezek. 38:22; 39:6) and at end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:8-9); “in the same **place**” – *shebeth* – from a root sig. both locality and a state of confidence, hence, Bro. Thomas – “in standing,” i.e. while in position standing to arms as in Zech. 14:12. The KJV is also acceptable = destruction of the wicked in the very place where Christ was crucified to destroy sin – see Ezek. 38 & 39; Zech. 12 to 14.

Jeremiah 26

Whereas chapter 25 concerned the 4th year of Jehoiakim, this chapter steps back to his 1st year to record how close Jeremiah had come to death at the hands of this rapacious monster.

V.1-7 – Instructed to “Stand in the court of Yahweh’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in Yahweh’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word,” Jeremiah obeyed and faithfully delivered the message from God to His people. It was a stinging rebuke of the rejection of God’s offer of mercy through His prophets that would lead to the destruction that had overtaken Shiloh – Jer. 7:12-14.

V.8-15 – “the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die,” but the princes that included one or two faithful men from the times of Josiah intervened – “Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people.” He gave them the same message and confirmed he was prepared to die for it.

V.16-24 – The princes swayed the people to say, “This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of Yahweh our God” and the elders gave the reasons for their attitude by recounting the prophecy of “Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah” against Zion for which he was not put to death by Hezekiah, and reformation came. However, more recently “Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah” had been pursued by Jehoiakim’s agents to Egypt, captured and had been repatriated to Jerusalem where he ruthlessly slew him. The same fate awaited Jeremiah, but “the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan (Josiah’s closest advisor) was with Jeremiah,

that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.” For the time being he was safe.

Romans 15

V.1-7 wrap up Paul’s arguments in chapter 14 about consideration for each other among Jewish and Gentile converts. Those who considered themselves strong “ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please” themselves. The primary example of this approach was Christ himself – “For even Christ pleased not himself” which is supported by a curious citation from Ps. 69:9 (an obvious Messianic psalm). That psalm says, “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” The context of the psalm is about Messiah’s temporary rejection by his own family (until he was raised from the dead) – Ps. 69:8 – “I am become **a stranger unto my brethren**, and an **alien** unto my **mother’s children**.” A little thought reveals why the Apostle quoted from this psalm. He had been talking about the need for harmony in Christ’s ecclesial family in Rome. Serious tensions had arisen over differences of opinion in that ‘family’ to the point that they were judging each other on matters that God was not particularly interested in. They were being **alienated** from one another unnecessarily. Zeal can sometimes be misguided (Rom. 10:2). We need a zeal for God’s House (the ecclesia) that is prepared to accept the consequences of misguided zeal such as had destabilized the ecclesia in Rome until it can be rectified by education (2 Tim. 2:25). The Judaistic brethren were in effect ‘reproaching God’ and needed to refrain, while the reactive Gentile needed to sacrifice his position of ‘strength’ for the sake of those “for whom Christ died.” Just as in Christ’s family, the day came when they were reconciled, so by sacrifice, the same outcome might accrue for a divided ecclesia. Compare the principle of Rom. 5:10.

V.8-13 – After all, Christ had died to confirm the promises God had made to Abraham that both Jew and Gentile might find a place in His Kingdom. The Apostle had Mic. 7:20 in view in what he next says, “that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Jews) for the **truth** of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his **mercy**.” So, we have **truth** and **mercy**. Listen to Mic. 7:20 – “Thou wilt perform the **truth** to Jacob, and the **mercy** to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.” God’s truthfulness and faithfulness to His covenants of promise was assured, but so was the promise of the mercy to be shown to the Gentiles – “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Paul follows with a series of citations about the inclusion of Gentiles – Ps. 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Ps. 117:1; Isa. 11:10, and while some of these pertain to the time beyond Armageddon, the principle remains the same. Given all that, the conclusion is, “Now **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

V.14-21 – Paul confirmed his right to set forth these things as “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.” His work was accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit in various ways that “through mighty signs and wonders” the Gospel might take root among the Gentiles where no-one else had preached Christ, so that prophecies like Isa. 52:15 might be fulfilled.

V.22-33 – Writing from Corinth, Paul had plans to visit Spain and would stop by in Rome on the way – “I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while” (a better translation by the ESV). But first he had to deliver the contributions made to the Jerusalem Poor Fund to the suffering brethren and sisters in Judea, making the point that the Gentiles had an obligation to recognize their position that he had outlined in chapter 11.

Romans 16

V.1-16 – Paul had effectively rounded off the epistle in chapter 15:33 – “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen,” but there were some practical matters that needed to be addressed. The first of these was to commend to them Phebe a member of the ecclesia in Cenchrea who evidently conveyed the epistle to Rome. Personal greetings and encouragements were to conveyed to those in Rome.

V.17-24 – Final instructions and personal greetings from Paul’s companions at the time come next. These instructions included standing aside from the recalcitrant who might ignore the Apostle’s sound advice on resolving the conflict in the ecclesia and continue to agitate, for their destructive influence would produce no good. We do have an obligation to avoid giving any support to those whose influence undermines the truth and “cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which” we have been taught – 2 John 9-11.

V.25-27 – Not unlike the conclusion of chapter 11, the Apostle launches into a fulsome declaration of the greatness of the God who had made known through ‘the apostle to the Gentiles’ the ‘good news’ of the work of Jesus Christ by which “all nations” had the opportunity “for the obedience of faith.” We too can say with Paul, “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”

August 6

2 Samuel 24

V.1-9 – It is thought that this event occurred about two years before David wrote chapter 23. That in itself is a curious fact. The reason appears to be that David’s incredible understanding of the mission of Christ as a Melchizedek king-priest that figures so prominently in his “last words,” as it did from his youth and led to him erecting a tent in Jerusalem to house the Ark (the tabernacle of David) was jeopardized by a foolish decision to number Israel, and so it comes last. The exhortation is that even the most spiritual of the sons of Adam can lapse into periods of uncertainty. We are dealing with a very deceptive and weak nature.

V.1 – Another curiosity is the involvement of Yahweh in these events – “the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and **he** moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah,” which is matched by 1 Chron. 21:1 – “And **Satan** stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.” It seems Yahweh was the Satan in this instance. However, the Scriptural testimony is clear – James 1:13-14 – “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, **neither tempteth he any man**: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” It was David’s pride that was at fault, but it has been suggested that David did not err in numbering Israel, for he sought only to collect money for the building of the Temple. It is also suggested Israel were punished by Yahweh for their apathy and disinterest in the project, and postulated that David was correct and Joab wrong in opposing the numbering. Is this right? David didn’t think so, because he acknowledged to God in 1 Chron. 21:17 – “Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even **I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed**; but as for these sheep, what have they done?” (see also V.10 – “I have **sinned greatly** in that I have done”). Neither did God exonerate David, noting – “Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but he finished not, because there fell wrath for it against Israel.” Taking a census to collect money for the temple project may have been an acceptable motive, but David’s numbering was clearly unlawful, and was seriously condemned and punished. For once, Joab was right! What then was happening here?

There were two factors at work in bringing this crisis to a head. As time went on it seems the nation had lapsed into a state of apathy. They were just bumping along as is often the case with nations, such as is said of Moab – Jer. 48:11 – “Moab hath been **at ease from his youth**, and he hath **settled on his lees**, and **hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel**, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.” No one enjoys constant conflict and trouble (Heb. 12:11), but it is a faithful saying as Paul said after being stoned at Lystra – “that we must through much **tribulation** (*thlipsis* – pressure) enter into the kingdom of God.” It is the Divine method – Heb 12:6 – “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” The second factor is that David himself seems to have lost his sensitivity to the inclusion of Gentiles, for in commanding Joab to number the nation he said “Go, number Israel and Judah.” There were tens of thousands of Gentile converts in Israel who seem to have been overlooked, and this is confirmed by a sound translation, like the RSV of 2 Chron. 2:17. In the events that follow it is clear that their omission was the cause of the judgements that fell. This shook up the nation and woke it from its lethargy, and restored David’s shaken confidence in his youthful enthusiasm for the inclusion of Gentiles in the purpose of God.

Because Joab opposed the numbering, he did a perfunctory job, not including the Levites or the tribe of Benjamin in the count – 1 Chron. 21:6. It is certain therefore he left out the Gentiles whom Solomon later counted and found to be 153,000 males. This was the most serious omission as far as God was concerned.

V.10-17 – Having been given the totals of **fighting men** (V.9), revealing the true purpose of the numbering, David immediately realized his mistake and confessed his sin – “I have **sinned** greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, Yahweh, take away the **iniquity** of thy servant; for I have done very **foolishly**.” There are always consequences for sin. “The prophet Gad, David’s seer” offered David three choices – “Shall **seven years of famine** come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou **flee three months before thine enemies**, while they pursue thee? or that there be **three days’ pestilence** in thy land?” David chose the latter because he leaned on the mercy of his God, and it proved to be a correct choice because the judgement was cut short, for a powerful reason – the salvation of Gentiles. So, “there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba **seventy thousand men**.” 70 is the number of the nations (Gen. 10; Deut. 32:8; etc.), and a “thousand” to Jews represented a family (Judges 6:15), hence, this number of casualties represented the family of the Gentiles who had been omitted from the numbering of Israel. They were part of Israel, but David had now excluded them, so God took out 70,000 Jews. We know they were Jews because when the destroying angel arrived at the threshing-floor of a Gentile the killing stopped – “the angel of Yahweh was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite.” Araunah is one of the names of Ornan and signifies “strong” (Strong’s) or “light was perpetuated” (BDB). The name occurs **12 times in Scripture** = Israel (11 in 1 Chron. 21). His other name Araunah signifies “joyful shouting of Yah” (BDB). The name occurs 9 times in 2 Sam. 24. He was a Jebusite meaning “trodden down” (like a threshing floor) which represents judgement (cp. 1 Chron. 21:20 – “threshing”). He had 4 sons the number of a new creation developed in righteousness, and when you add their father Ornan there is a total of 5 = grace. The message to David was clear – ‘you forgot the Gentiles’.

V.18-25 – David was instructed by God through Gad to “rear an altar unto Yahweh in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.” Ornan wanted to give it to him because as a Jebusite he had no title to it anyway, but David insisted on buying it on the basis of a very important principle – “I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto Yahweh my God of that which doth **cost me nothing**.” Sacrifice is not

sacrifice if it costs you nothing. An interesting statement is made in V.23 (Rotherham) – “The whole, did Araunah give, **as a king to a king**.” Did Ornan have ancestral links to Melchizedek who lived in this place nearly a thousand years before? We do not know, but it is a fascinating link with the very reason why David had so enthusiastically included Gentiles among God’s people – Gen. 14:13-18.

What we are not told here is that at the height of the crisis on the third day, David was on his way to Gibeon where the Tabernacle and altar of sacrifice were located. 1 Chron. 21:29-30 not only informs us that the Tabernacle was at Gibeon, but that David was prevented from going to it by the arrival of the destroying angel at Jerusalem. He was confused and doubtful about whether his placing of the Ark in a tent of his own erecting in order to incorporate Gentiles some 30 years before was right or wrong, and was only prevented from going to the Tabernacle by the angel arriving at Ornan’s threshingfloor and putting away the sword. God confirmed that he had it right – Gentiles had a place in the Melchizedek order.

Jeremiah 27

V.1 – “In the beginning of **the reign of Zedekiah** the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from Yahweh” the ESV corrects the KJV as required by V.3 – “Zedekiah king of Judah.” In the Septuagint the verse is missing as it seems some scribe has confused the title of this chapter with that of Jer. 26.

V.2-11 – Jeremiah is commanded to make a yoke and place it on his neck as a symbol for the yoke that Nebuchadnezzar would place on many nations listed in V.3 until the overthrow of Babylon in BC 539 – V.6-7. Any nation not accepting this fate would be wiped out – V.8. The problem would be false prophets contradicting Jeremiah. Thus, Jeremiah is now doing exactly what Yahweh had appointed him to do – Jer 1:10 – “See, I have this day set thee over **the nations** and over the **kingdoms**, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.”

V.12-22 – Jeremiah gave Zedekiah the same message as to the nations – “Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.” Again the false prophets would be the stumblingblock – V.14-15. He then turned to the priests and people who were concerned about the future of the furniture and vessels of the temple that Nebuchadnezzar did not take away in the captivity of Jehoiachin. They too were in danger of being deflected by the false prophets who proved to be successful in deceiving them – V.21-22.

Mark 1

THE FOUR-FOLD VIEW OF CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

Each book presents the subject from a different point of view — JESUS IS
King in Matthew
Servant in Mark
Man in Luke
Son of God in John

Book	Written for	Illustrating	General Character	Theme	Based on	Dominant Idea	Symbolism	Significance
MATTHEW	Jews	Jesus as Messiah	Prophetical	Kingship	Past revelation	Fulfilled	Lion	Royalty
MARK	Romans	Jesus as all-powerful	Practical	Servant	Present action	Straightway	Ox	Service
LUKE	Greeks	Jesus as the perfect man	Historical	Son of Man	Future glory	Compassion	Man	Humanity
JOHN	Believers	Jesus as God manifest	Spiritual	Son of God	Eternity	Believe	Eagle	Divinity

V.1 – “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” – Mark’s Gospel record reflects the ox face of the cherubim and presents Christ as Yahweh’s Servant. For more

detail on this aspect see **Appendix 2**. Mark's record is the shortest of all four and was written for a Gentile readership where the focus is largely on matters of interest to them.

V.2-8 – Mark does not focus primarily on history, as there is no mention of Christ's birth, childhood or anything else up to his baptism. He is introduced by John the Baptist – “Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Mal. 3:1). The message was of “a voice of one crying aloud—**In the wilderness**, prepare ye the way of the Lord, straight, be making his paths” (Rotherham). There is an emphasis on the need to get away from the cloistered stuffiness of Judaism in Jerusalem and make a new start “in the wilderness,” hence V.4 – “John the Immerser came, **in the wilderness**, proclaiming an immersion of repentance for remission of sins” (Rotherham), and there was a response – V.5. What they found there was a humble and completely committed and selfless prophet who was a forerunner and model of their Messiah.

V.9-13 – “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan” and as he came up out of the water “the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him” was accompanied by a voice from heaven declaring, “Thou, art my Son, the Beloved,—In thee, I delight” (Rotherham). Immediately though, he was driven by the Spirit into “the wilderness” and “he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan.” The repetition of “**the wilderness**” should not be missed. The reason why so many Jews did not respond to Jesus Christ was that they felt so comfortable in the traditions and practices of entrenched rabbinical Judaistic religion. The ritualism and awe of temple worship and the keeping of holy days and feasts held them in a thralldom that most could not leave. It is no different today with the sway over its followers exercised by the Catholic Church. What they needed was to get away from that into “the wilderness” so that they could see it for what it was from a different perspective – a desolate and doomed institution. Jesus was entirely focused “in the wilderness” where he batted away the temptations presented and was succoured by angels. What a difference that was to the cloisters of Jerusalem.

V.14-20 – When John was imprisoned by Herod, Jesus began his ministry and preached, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” As we know, the Kingdom was still 2,000 years away, but he was the nucleus of it and without believing in him there would be no access to it – Luke 17:21 (Rotherham) – “For lo! the kingdom of God, is, among you.” In Galilee he began to call his first disciples beginning with fishermen – “Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men,” and Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John forsook their trade and followed him.

V.21-28 – The first miracle that Mark records is the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum although Jesus had performed many miracles before that. It was a Sabbath (V.21) and the Pharisees would have been angered by what happened. They were later to blasphemously accuse the Lord of drawing on the power of a Gentile god – “This man only expels demons by the power of Baal-zebul, the Prince of demons” (Weymouth for Matt. 12:24). Here was a man in their synagogue who, to use the vernacular of the time, was ‘possessed by demons’. He was in fact insane and was a perfect representation of the spiritual state of the Judaistic scribes and Pharisees. Christ could cure their ‘insanity’ if they were willing, but they were not (that would have to wait until the Millennial Sabbath), while the Gentiles were willing and many were to be cured of the insanity of pagan ignorance. This is the reason why Mark focuses on this particular miracle in Capernaum where the Via Maris (“the way of the sea”), the coastal road that ran from Egypt to the north and passed through Capernaum made it a hub for Gentile travelers – Isa. 9:1-2 – “**the way of the sea**, beyond Jordan, in **Galilee of the nations**. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that

dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”
Unsurprisingly, “his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.”

V.29-39 – The healing of the insane man and of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law on a Sabbath did not set the town alight until the Sabbath had ended – “And **at even**, when the **sun did set**” indicates that the rabbinically influenced Jews of “the city of comfort” held off until 6 pm when the Sabbath ended, then multitudes gathered at the door of Peter’s home. He healed their physically sick, but it was going to be a struggle to heal the spiritually ‘insane’. Early next morning he went into the wilderness to take stock of the situation and pray. When the disciples found him, he directed them to new fields of labour – “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth,” and there, significantly, he entered their synagogues “casting out demons.”

V.40-25 – The healing of a leper is recorded by Mark as an encouragement to his Gentile readership – “there came a leper to Jesus entreating Him, and pleading on his knees. ‘If you are **willing**,’ he said, ‘you are able to cleanse me’.” (Weymouth). The Jews treated Gentiles like lepers and would not go near them (Acts 11:2-3). Apart from Miriam, no Jew had ever been cured of leprosy, but Naaman the Syrian had been, by faith (Luke 4:27). He was initially unwilling, but was persuaded to ‘believe a report’. So did this man, and “Moved with pity Jesus reached out His hand and touched him. ‘I am **willing**,’ He said; ‘be cleansed’.” (Weymouth). Told not to publicize his healing until he had presented himself to the priests who had never seen a cured leper, with the aim that they might consider who could possibly do such a thing and step away from their ‘insanity’, the cured leper disobeyed and caused serious harm to the ongoing preaching work of Christ in towns. However, the outcome was that he went back to where he began – “Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was **without in desert places**: and they came to him from every quarter” to the **wilderness** where a way could be prepared for the willing – “in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

August 7

1 Kings 1

V.1-4 – At 70 years of age, David’s health had declined to a point where poor blood circulation led to him being unable to keep warm. There being no bed time water bottles or electric blankets in those days, his carers brought in a fair young damsel to provide body heat for the king. Though David was beyond union with her, she was regarded as one of his wives and that fact was to cost Adonijah his life when he sought the hand of Abishag (“father of error,” i.e. “blundering”) in marriage after David’s death. He blundered indeed!

V.5-10 – Adonijah knew that Solomon was to succeed his father, but like Absalom his half-brother (ESV – “he was born next after Absalom” – V.6) he had a restless ambition to be king and did exactly what Absalom had done – “I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him” (2 Sam. 15:1). Acquiring the support of Joab and Abiathar, he thought he was on a winning ticket and convened an anointing feast, calling all those he thought would support his coup. Those he knew wouldn’t support him were not invited.

V.11-27 – Nathan the prophet informed Bathsheba of Adonijah’s coup and she went in to David and reminded him of his solemn oath – “Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.” Nathan entered at the opportune time to confirm her words and emphasize the seriousness of the threat to Solomon’s and Bathsheba’s lives.

V.28-53 – David confirmed his oath to Bathsheba and called “Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada” to instruct them to hastily anoint Solomon as king by taking him down to the spring Gihon on the king’s mule protected by the loyal Philistines of David’s bodyguard, and make sure everyone further down the valley heard the trumpet and the people shout “Let king Solomon live” (Young’s Lit). As they returned to the city to place Solomon on David’s throne “the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.” Adonijah and his guests could not help but hear the commotion, and immediately panic gripped the traitors as “Jonathan the son of Abiathar” (who had been a spy) arrived with the news of the elevation of Solomon to the throne. Adonijah’s party quickly broke up and dispersed, while he went and “caught hold on the horns of the altar” (presumably at Gibeon – see 1 Kings 2:29) pleading for clemency from Solomon. The wisdom to afterwards be shown by Solomon is evident in his response to his half-brother – “If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.” Solomon knew only too well the true character of Adonijah.

Jeremiah 28

V.1 – It is evident that Jeremiah’s message to Zedekiah about the yoke (27:12) was delivered 2 or 3 years after he delivered it to the nations (27:2-4) as that would have taken some time. That is why we read here “in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the **fourth year**” that “Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet” challenged Jeremiah in the temple and countered his prophecy to Zedekiah with his own false prophecy. He should have listened more carefully because Yahweh had said through Jeremiah – “yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might **perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you**” (27:15). Hananiah was to “perish” much sooner than the people he deceived.

V.2-9 – Hananiah’s false prophecy on behalf of Yahweh was “I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of Yahweh’s house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place,” and that Babylon’s yoke would be broken and Jehoiachin and all the captives returned from captivity. It was by any standard a very ambitious ‘prophecy’. Jeremiah sarcastically responded “Amen! So, may Yahweh do!” (Rotherham), and proceeded to outline the litmus test for prophets (Deut. 18:21-22) – V.9 – “when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that Yahweh hath truly sent him.”

V.10-17 – An angry Hananiah seized the yoke on Jeremiah’s neck and broke it, and proceeded to confirm his previous prediction. Yahweh’s response was terminal for the false prophet. He may have broken a wooden yoke but they would be replaced by yokes of iron as Nebuchadnezzar would come within 5 years to besiege Jerusalem, but for him the end would come much sooner – “So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month” (within 2 months of his false prophecy – V.1).

Mark 2

V.1 – Jesus returned to Capernaum (“the city of comfort”) which had become his home base after his rejection from Nazareth (John 2:12; Luke 4:29-31). Interestingly, the ESV translates the last words of this verse – “it was reported that he was at home.” There was a man waiting for him that needed ‘comfort’.

V.2-12 – The enacted parable of the healing of the palsied man reveals the two great needs of the human race. Palsy is a paralysis, and so is human nature. It paralyses men morally and

physically. This man, who doubtless had faith, and perhaps induced his four friends to take him to Christ, was seeking a cure for his physical disability. The Lord's actions are revealing. The **five** men (seeking 'grace') could not get near the Lord because of the crush outside the house which had a veranda. So they made their way up the external stairs and removed portion of the roof of the veranda in order to lower the palsied man at the feet of the Lord. His next words scandalized the Scribes and Pharisees present – V.21 – “Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

Christ is teaching a very important lesson. Men have two great needs – one is **moral** and the other is **physical**. Without the moral, there is no access to the physical. Our first great need is the forgiveness of sins. This is 'easy' compared to healing sickness or changing the nature after acceptance at the Judgement Seat. That is why Christ says “it is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee” than to cure a mortal disease (V.23). Forgiveness of sins is available to those who acknowledge God's righteousness and ask to be forgiven, and if they are found in a reconciled state at the Judgement Seat, a little more effort will be required to grant them immortality. Let us access that which is easy for God and seek forgiveness for sin.

V.13-17 – A little hint is provided to Mark's perceptive Roman readers when he records – “he went forth again by the **sea** side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.” The sea of course is Galilee (“of the nations” – Isa. 9:1). The time would come when multitudes of Gentiles would be taught by Christ's ambassadors.

The call of Levi (or Matthew) is another little morsel for his Gentile readers. As a tax gatherer for the Romans he was despised by his Jewish contemporaries which is why other tax gatherers and “sinners” had no diffidence to enter his house to be with Christ. The Pharisees complained, “Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?” His simple answer was (Weymouth) “It is not the healthy who require a doctor, but the sick: I did not come to appeal to the righteous, but to sinners.”

V.18-22 – The disciples of John the Baptist were still steeped in the Judaistic thinking of the nation and needed to see things from a different perspective. They queried why Christ's disciples did not fast like them and the Pharisees. The Lord's answer is incisive – (ESV) “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.” A new attitude was required lest there be rent and spillage. It is unwise to mend an old disintegrating garment with a new piece of cloth, and a new wine skin must be used for new wine because the old is not flexible enough to sustain the pressure of fermentation (new life and growth). The message was clear – people needed to leave behind law and ritual and come and join the bridal party (see Rom. 7:1-2).

V.23-28 – “he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?” There are three records of this incident that are very similar – Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5. The following comments were made on the latter.

The rabbis' had developed 39 different regulations governing what might not be done on the Sabbath day. These included harvesting which is what they accused the disciples of. The Lord advanced David's partaking of the newly replaced loaves of shewbread on a Sabbath day (1 Sam. 21:5-6) which was reserved exclusively for the priests (Lev. 24:5-9). How was that justifiable? For the same reasons Christ worked on the Sabbath day to heal and cure. David had been anointed king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:12-13). He had already in his youth worked out that the Aaronic priesthood would be superseded by the Melchizedek king-priesthood of Christ of whom he was now the forerunner (Ps. 132:2-9). Accordingly, when he brought the Ark from Kirjathjearim to place it in a tent of his own pitching (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1) and not in the

Tabernacle of Moses, as king he wore a priestly robe and dispensed to the people (both Jew and Gentile) bread and wine as Melchizedek had done (Gen. 14:18). That is why David could eat the shewbread without condemnation. Jesus Christ too, was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5). Like David he operated above the Law for a superior and more permanent cause.

V.27-28 – “And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore **the Son of man** is Lord also of the sabbath.” There are 84 occurrences in the Gospel accounts of the title “the Son of man” that the Lord uses concerning himself. Perhaps surprising to some is that he only calls himself “the son of God” four times in those records. We intuitively think that the title “the Son of man” is a reference to Christ’s mortal likeness to ourselves. This is not so. The title is drawn from Ps. 8:4 and 80:17. Ps. 8 was written by David after the slaying of Goliath. He foresaw in this event the victory of Christ over sin and death (hence, Ps. 8 features prominently in Heb. 2). The title refers to Christ’s delegated authority from his Father to conquer all carnal things. A simple checking of the context wherever the title occurs will confirm this fact. This is the reason why Christ deliberately performed miracles on the Sabbath. His Father had to work on Sabbaths after Adam had sinned, and has continued to do so – John 5:17 – (ESV) “My Father works **unceasingly**, and so do I,” and this was said when Christ was criticized for healing on a Sabbath. Yahweh had delegated His authority to Christ, hence, he was “Lord of the Sabbath.” The Sabbath was designed to bring benefits to man, so **it was made for man**, not man for it, to dominate him.

August 8

1 Kings 2

V.1-9 – The death of David at age 70 was at hand. He encouraged Solomon to be strong and mature, and to closely observe all the commandments of Yahweh set out in the law. One of these was that Solomon write out for himself a copy of the Law of Moses (Deut. 17:18). If he observed God’s principles and walked before Him with all his heart and soul, David’s throne would be perpetuated as God had promised. However, there were some matters that needed to be settled arising out of David’s reign. Integrity had kept David from dealing with the murderous Joab. How could he put Joab to death for murder when he himself had used Joab to murder Uriah? But Solomon had no such moral hurdle. He is instructed therefore to “Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.” But conversely, he was to show kindness to Barzillai and his family for the support he received when he fled from Absalom. Justice for crimes is one thing; gratitude for kindness is another. It is inconceivable that his advice to deal with Joab and Shimei could be inconsistent with David’s insistence that Solomon keep all Yahweh’s commandments. So, when David turned to “Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim,” it is clear David believed that his recommendation to Solomon was just. (See **Appendix 3** for a full treatment of this subject)

When Shimei confessed his sin, David swore an oath that he would not die with the sword **for that crime**. Unlike Saul, David had been a covenant keeper all his life. He was not going to break an oath on his deathbed. He deferred to the wisdom of Solomon which resulted in Shimei losing his life by his own choices. Shimei did not die by the sword because he cursed David, though that would have been just (Ex. 22:28). He died because he swore an oath not to leave Jerusalem for any reason, and within 3 years he had broken that oath. Knowing he was worthy of death for cursing David, Shimei readily accepted the terms of Solomon to build a house in Jerusalem (which was in fact in the territory of Benjamin, his tribe) – 1 Kings 2:36-38. He signed his own death warrant for a reason related to, but quite separate to his sin of cursing the king.

David and Solomon had kept the terms of David's original oath to Shimei. Solomon knew David was right and that the irascible character of Shimei would ultimately be his undoing. As he said to him – “Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to....” (1 Kings 2:44). Shimei had a volatile and uncontrollable temper which could not abide challenges to his personal interests. His hatred of David stemmed from the fact that the tribe of Benjamin lost the mantle of royalty when David became king, and he bristled at the fact that two of his servants (like David) took refuge in Gath with a king called Achish (1 Kings 2:39)! Really? It was from the shadow of Achish that David had returned to Israel to become king in the place of a Benjamite! It was too much for the angry and bitter Shimei and he committed 'suicide' by going to Gath to reclaim his servants. In the end, we are all the arbiters of our own destiny.

V.10-25 – After David's death, Solomon was confronted by another challenge from Adonijah for the throne. By seeking the hand of Abishag in marriage, Adonijah was craftily endeavouring to make himself king again. It was the practice of new kings to take the wives of the former king. Note Ahithophel's initial counsel to Absalom – 2 Sam. 16:21 – “Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house.” David himself insisted that Michal, Saul's daughter who had been given to another man be returned to him before any deal could be done with Abner (2 Sam. 3:13). Abner stepped over the line himself when he took Rizpah, Saul's concubine (2 Sam. 3:7) and was rebuked by Ishbosheth. Accordingly, Adonijah rightly paid with his life for treason.

V.26-46 – Solomon took the opportunity to then deal with the other traitors in Adonijah's coup – Abiathar and Joab. Abiathar was dismissed from the role of high-priest and replaced by Zadok thus restoring the high-priesthood to its rightful family – the family of Eleazer, in fulfillment of the edict against the house of Eli (1 Sam. 2 :35-36; 3:11-14). Joab was a double murderer and should have been dealt with in the reign of David were it not for the moral hold he had over David as the bearer of dark secrets (there is no evidence that David's letter to Joab via the hand of Uriah was ever made public). His death beside the altar was perfectly just – there was no mercy for this man at the very place which spoke of the willingness of Yahweh to forgive repentant sinners. Poor Benaiah had to make two trips to Gibeon (6 miles/10 kms away) to accomplish this grisly task. Joab was made to stew in his own juice for quite a while. Then Solomon dealt with Shimei as noted above “and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.”

Jeremiah 29

V.1-2 – This chapter is placed chronologically in the 1st year of Zedekiah not long after king Nebuchadnezzar had carried Jehoiachin and his family, and the cream of the nation (the “good figs” – Jer. 24:2) to Babylon in BC 598.

V.3-23 – Jeremiah sent a letter “by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon).” Its contents advised the Jewish captives in Babylon to build houses and plant gardens, marry and have a family, for they were in for a long sojourn of over 60 years before some of them would return (the 70 year captivity began in BC 606). Incongruously to some was the command to pray for Babylon, “for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” But as always, the false prophets would try to derail them with their dreams – “neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.” Greatly encouraging was the statement by God – “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Yahweh, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” They were encouraged to earnestly pray to their God with an assurance – “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” That is as true today as it was

then. If they put confidence in Yahweh, restoration would finally come when the 70 years was up. However, they would have to push against false prophets like “Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name.” These two were eventually deservedly “roasted in the fire” by Nebuchadnezzar (V.21-22). In Matt. 7:16, Christ taught – “Ye shall know them by their fruits” as good trees do not bring forth bad fruit. These two prophets were bad ‘trees’ for they “committed adultery with their neighbours’ wives, and have spoken lying words in my name.”

V.24-32 – There was a worse false prophet in Babylon by the name of Shemaiah the Nehelamite (“he of the **dream**”). This takes us back to Jer. 23:25 – “I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have **dreamed**, I have **dreamed**.” This false prophet sought to silence Jeremiah by his agents in Jerusalem – “Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests,” by writing a fierce letter in return. The contents of this letter are in V.26-28. “Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah,” but Yahweh instructed to send another letter by return mail condemning him, “and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people.” Opposing the word and decrees of God doesn’t pay. Shemaiah, like the false prophets Ahab and Zedekiah, were supposed to be among the “good figs” taken to Babylon, but they proved to be like Zedekiah the king and the people left with him – “**vile figs**, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil” (V.17). We are known by our fruits.

Mark 3

V.1 – The synagogue where the man with the withered hand was healed is not named in any of the three records, and this may be deliberate, for the man who was commanded to “stand forth in the midst” (Luke 6:8) was a microcosm of all Judaisers who frequented the synagogues. His withered hand was representative of their shriveled minds.

The healing of the man with a **withered hand** standing in the middle of a synagogue is another enacted parable where the actions are just as important as the words. The command to “Rise up, and stand forth in the midst” as a representative of all in that place indicates that their mind and thinking was of the withered/closed hand variety (1 Kings 13:4). The imagery is drawn from Isa. 58 where the principle of the Sabbath is beautifully portrayed. The law keepers who sat together on Sabbaths fasting had a clenched fist attitude (Isa. 58:4-5). The fast that Yahweh desired was the **open hand** that loosed the bands of wickedness; unloaded heavy burdens; and let the oppressed go free; broke every yoke; dealt bread to the hungry; guided the poor to a safe place and covered the unclothed (Isa. 58:6-7). These were things that could only be done with the **open hand** – the symbol for the Sabbath, and the way of Yahweh Himself– Isa. 59:1 – “Behold, Yahweh’s hand is not **shortened** (by being clenched), that it cannot save.” Herein lay the huge gap between Judaistic law keepers and the presumptive Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Angrily, Jesus looked around to see if there was any hope that these ‘clenched fist’ Judaisers might hearken, but seeing only a cold hatred, he commanded the man with the withered hand to “Stretch forth thine hand,” and when he did “his hand was restored whole as the other.” If only these closed minded law keepers would open their ‘Sabbath hand’ and seek to cure like Christ, and not seek to kill as they then set out to do to him (V.6).

V.7-21 – Huge crowds began to follow Jesus as he returned from Jerusalem to the Galilee region. Both Jews and Gentiles swarmed to him seeking cures for their various ailments. It became necessary for the Lord to take to the water in a boat lest he be overwhelmed by the crowd. He took the opportunity to ascend a mountain with his invited disciples and “ordained

twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” and to heal. Twelve disciples were made apostles (‘one sent’) and are named. Descending to a house in the hope of finding sustenance “the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread,” and if that were not sufficient inconvenience, his own relatives arrived “to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his mind’.” (ESV).

V. 22-30 – There was no escape, as next “scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.” This was blasphemy of the power of the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness. Simple logic was applied – “How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” This led to a condemnation from which there is no escape – “he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.”

V.31-35 – The Lord’s relatives had been unsuccessful in restraining him (V.21), so now his close family members turned up to make an effort to curb the embarrassment and possibly the persecution that was now accruing to them because of his impact on so many people that had stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees. We know from the N.T. epistles that Jewish converts that came into Christ were persecuted by fellow Jews for having forsaken Judaism (Heb. 12:2-6; 10:33; Gal. 5:6-12). There had to be strong reasons why the Lord’s family sought to restrain him. His response would have sent them home crestfallen and chastened – “Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” This was confirmation of what he taught consistently about family relationships getting in the way of following him – Matt. 10:34-39; Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16.

August 9

1 Kings 3

See **Appendix 4** for a summary of the life of Solomon extracted from study notes.

V.1 – Solomon’s reign began well, but he seemed to have a predilection for foreign women. He had already married Naamah the Ammonitess before ascending the throne, and had a son by her – Rehoboam his successor who was 41 when he succeeded Solomon who reigned for 40 years. His marriage to Pharaoh’s daughter may have been a political alliance with what historians say was a declining dynasty in Egypt that was replaced by the dynasty of Shishak who conquered Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam’s reign. While there was no law against Israelites marrying women of nations outside the land of Canaan (the forbidden marriages were those to the inhabitants of Canaan – Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3), and they could take wives from among captives from other nations (Deut. 21:10-12), it proved to be disastrous for Solomon after 20 years. While most of his wives were probably diplomatic wives whom he may not have seen very often, ignoring the law of the king (Deut. 17:17) not to multiply wives could only be disastrous eventually. However, despite all this, it is clear that Pharaoh’s daughter was a convert to Israel’s faith and there are no negatives found in the record concerning her, but in fact much to the contrary as she becomes of type of potential members of the Bride of Christ from among the Gentiles.

V.2-3 – The other issue that was to work against Solomon in time was the observation – “Only the people sacrificed in **high places**....only he sacrificed and burnt incense in **high places**.” Israel were commanded to destroy the Canaanites’ high places – “quite pluck down

all their **high places**" (Num. 33:52). While Solomon loved Yahweh and walked in the statutes of David, some dubious decisions were made in the early years of his reign that were to undermine him in due time.

V.5-15 – At Gibeon, Solomon offered a staggering thousand burnt sacrifices and "Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee," to which he gave a very mature, selfless and wise response – "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" God was so pleased with Solomon's attitude that He not only gave him wisdom and understanding, but also riches and honour together with length of days if he remained faithful. It was a positive start.

V.16-28 – It was not long before Solomon's wisdom was revealed in the case of two harlots who disputed possession of a living baby. True wisdom has an understanding of the way human nature works. On hearing the testimony of the two women, Solomon called for a sword and ordered that the baby be divided in two and shared between them. Immediately, the real mother said "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." It was a masterstroke, but how simple was it? So simple in fact that the record goes on to say – "Then the king answered and said, Give **her** the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof," and we are required to decide which one he meant. We do not have a problem because it is so obvious that only the true mother would be prepared to let her rival take custody of the child in order to save its life. True wisdom is like that – disarmingly simple.

Jeremiah 30

For a full set of Bible marking notes on Jeremiah's dream see **Appendix 5**.

Jeremiah 30 and 31 must be considered together because they constitute **Jeremiah's dream** of the future of Israel from the time of Armageddon onwards to the redemption of all Israel through the work of Christ and Elijah. The context from Jer. 30:2 to 31:26 is clearly a **dream** demonstrated by the prophet's waking statement, "Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me" (Jer. 31:26). This was God's response to the dreams of false prophets like Shemaiah the Nehelamite ("he of the **dream**") of chapter 29, and of those in Jer. 23:25-28. Another important connection with Jer. 23 is the almost identical repetition of Jer. 23:20 in Jer. 30:24. Jeremiah's dream also draws heavily on the experiences of Jacob and his dream at Bethel (Gen. 28).

V.3-7 – That this is a prophecy to be fulfilled in the latter days is immediately apparent from the introduction – "I will bring again the captivity of my people **Israel** and **Judah**, saith Yahweh: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Israel refers to the Jews outside the Land at the time of Armageddon, and Judah to the Jews in the Land (refer to **Appendix 3 May** pg. 83). The image of Jacob (the generic name for all Israel) is seen in V.6 – "Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?" The closest thing a man can experience to child birth is the pain associated with the squeezing of the sciatic nerve through the dislocation of the hip. That is what Jacob experienced at Jabbok when the angel touched his thigh and it was "out of joint" (Gen. 32:25). This crisis is a reference to the events of Armageddon and beyond – "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

V.8-9 – “For it shall come to pass in that day, saith Yahweh of hosts, that **I will break his yoke from off thy neck**, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him” – Though Esau’s name is not mentioned in the dream, he is omnipresent – see Jer. 31:11 (Bro. Thomas notes in Eureka Vol. 5 pg. 48 that it is “the yoke of Esau’s house”). He also says in Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 46 – “Edom, in the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel’s kingdom in ‘the latter days,’ is representative of the enemies of Jacob, banded together under the guardianship of Gog, who is then the Chief of the House of Esau.” It is clear that the dream is based on Jacob’s experiences as he returned from Haran to the Land of Canaan which is a type of the return of Israel from dispersion back to the Land of Promise in the latter days when “they shall serve Yahweh their God, and David (“the beloved” = Christ) their king, whom I will raise up unto them.”

Two Dreams

Jacob – Gen 28	Jeremiah – Jer. 31:26
❖ Fleeing in fear of Esau who was stronger than he	❖ Confronted by false prophets supported by the king
❖ Dreams of a staircase “planted earthwards”	❖ Dreams of Israel’s redemption
❖ The Abrahamic Promise confirmed	❖ The Abrahamic Promise fulfilled
❖ Assured of protection	❖ Jacob redeemed
❖ Awe-struck by Divine presence	❖ Awakens with joy and sweetness
❖ Builds a memorial	❖ Yahweh memorialised
❖ Makes a vow	❖ Christ made a vow

V.10-11 – The culmination of this will be the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants – “I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith Yahweh, to save thee: though I make **a full end of all nations** whither I have scattered thee, **yet will I not make a full end of thee.**” This is repeated word for word in Jer. 46:27-28 underlining its certainty. At the end of the Millennium all nations on earth will have been incorporated into the nation of Israel. That is why there is “no sea” (nations) in Rev. 21:1. This is prophesied here and in the Feast of Tabernacles (the feast the nations will keep in the Millennium – Zech. 14:16) illustrated in the slide at right. However, the beginning of the process leading to this outcome will be painful as the end of V.11 implies.

Israel the only ‘immortal’ nation

Jer. 30:11; 46:28 – “...though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee (Israel)....”

Prefigured by the Feast of Tabernacles

- ◆ Over 7 days 70 bullocks were sacrificed;
- ◆ **Day 1 (13); Day 2 (12) >>>> Day 7 (7) = 70;**
- ◆ The number of the nations in Scripture is **70;**
- ◆ The nations will keep the feast of Tabernacles in the Millennium (**7th Day**) – **Zech. 14:16;**
- ◆ On the **8th day** just **one bullock** was offered – represents only **one nation** after Millennium.

V.12-15 – “Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines” – The moral and spiritual state of “Jacob” (all Israel) prior to Armageddon is spelt out in Ezek. 39:23-26. It is not a pretty picture. Yahweh has hidden His face from His people in the latter days. They will have to pass through “the time of Jacob’s trouble” to be cleansed. Not only will Yahweh hide His face from them, but they will be friendless among the nations – “**All thy lovers have forgotten thee**; they seek thee not.” That includes currently close allies like America.

V.16-17 – Having come through “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” their future will be bright, for during that time Yahweh will turn on Israel’s enemies when the ‘correction in measure’ (V.11) is sufficient (Rom. 9:28) – “I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.” No longer will men say, “This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.”

V.18-24 – “Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof” – This is the result of Armageddon and the Second Exodus. The House of Prayer for all nations will be built on the site of present day Jerusalem which will have been cleaned like a slate by the great earthquake that exalts Mt Zion. Israel will have a permanent status and their ruler “shall be of themselves,” namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Rotherham translates V.21 – “And, his **illustrious one**, shall spring, from himself, and his **ruler**, from his own midst, shall proceed, and I will bring him near and he shall approach unto me,—For who is there that hath pledged his own heart to approach unto me? Demandeth Yahweh.” Indeed “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). The promise to Abraham in Gen. 17:7-8 comes next – “And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God,” all as a result of Armageddon – “Behold, the **whirlwind** of Yahweh goeth forth with **fury**, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked.” As noted above, V.24 is lifted from Jer. 23:20 – “in the latter days ye shall consider it.”

Mark 4

This chapter is companion to Matt. 13 and Luke 8. The Lord begins to teach in parables. He did this for a reason, as he declares in V.10-12. This is antithetical to common perceptions of Christ's mission – doesn't he want everyone to understand? Christ used parables to conceal his teaching from the unhearing and the unwilling. This teaches an important lesson. There has to be a desire to learn and to want to understand. Self-satisfaction seen in the Judaistic Jews of his day who thought they already had salvation by works of law blinded them to their real and urgent need. Hence, in Mark 4 there is emphasis on the importance of “**hearing**” – see verses 9,12,23-24,33. It will be noted that the phrase “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear” is used by Christ in his letters to the seven ecclesias of Asia (Rev. 2 & 3). Hence, the parables of the sower and the farmer in Mark 4. The latter only occurs in Mark. It is an extension of the well-known parable of the sower to emphasize the critical importance of hearing and the principle of granting to the diligent an abundant increase (V.24-25). The farmer does all he can do – ploughs in winter; sows the seed in spring; protects the new growth from predators by rising at night; waits patiently for the rain; etc. All this is tiring, so he must “sleep” (V.27). It has been shown by modern research that where there has been diligent attention paid to learning during the day, that learning is consolidated in the brain during sleep. Such is the testimony of Ps. 127:1-2 – Yahweh builds the spiritual ‘house’ – “For so he giveth his beloved sleep” is better and more accurately translated, “He giveth His beloved **while they are sleeping**.” That is the Divine blessing and increase for diligence in spiritual things. Never underestimate the value of Bible study.

V.35-41 – This bracket of verses is an important lead into Mark 5. The events of the previous 24 hours had completely exhausted the Lord and he requested, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” The disciples dismissed the multitude and “they took him **even as he was** in the ship” (ESV “just as he was”) indicating how exhausted he really was. Even then, he could not escape the crowd – “other boats were with him” but he was fast asleep. A violent Galilean storm whipped up “and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full” (not good for the accompanying boats). Self-preservation can be foolish at times – “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” Of course he cared, so Ps. 65:5-7 comes into view – “Which **stilleth the noise of the seas**, the noise of their waves, and **the tumult of the people**,” so he “rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the

wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” This is the introduction for three ‘storms’ in chapter 5 – the storm in the brain of Legion; the storm around the ‘hem healer’ and in Jairus’s house. Our hymn says, “With Christ in the vessel, we smile at the storm” (Hymn 340).

August 10

1 Kings 4

See **Appendix 4** for a summary of the life of Solomon extracted from study notes.

V.1-19 – Solomon organized his kingdom with an elaborate system of authority and responsibility across all parts, but it is evident that this bracket of verses covers a period of a couple of decades, for two of the appointed officials are noted as having married Solomon’s daughters – V.11,15. Unless these daughters were born before Rehoboam who was born one year before Solomon’s accession, then they would only be at marriageable age after 15 to 20 years.

V.20-34 – This section is also a summary of a long period of time. It paints a picture of a prosperous and happy nation with many international visitors to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but the seeds of trouble were being sown. The burden of taxation in one form or another to sustain such a kingdom would take its toll eventually, in harmony with Samuel’s warning in 1 Sam. 8:10-18. It was this heavy imposition on the people that led to the revolt at the end of Solomon’s reign – 1 Kings 12:4.

1 Kings 5

V.1-18 – Solomon began to make preparations to build the temple for which David had already made much preparation. Materials were needed and “Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon....for Hiram was ever a lover of David.” Solomon sought support from Hiram for materials, especially cedar wood, and labourers, and he generously offered to help, only seeking repayment in the form of food from Israel’s abundance – “So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.” The harmony between Israel and Tyre foreshadowed the cooperation of Christ with Britain – “And Yahweh gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together” – see comments on Isa. 23 on May 31.

The work began laying the foundation of the temple in the 4th year of Solomon’s reign and it was completed in his 11th – 1 Kings 6:37-38.

Jeremiah 31

V.1 – “At the same time, saith Yahweh, will I be the God of **all the families of Israel**, and **they shall be my people**” – This takes up the theme of chapter 30:22 – the aim of the Abrahamic Covenant which involved the redemption of all Israel – Gen. 17:7-8.

V.2 – “The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest” – This is a reference to the scattered 10 tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel who had been carried away into foreign lands by the Assyrians in BC 722, however the reflection “when I went to cause him to rest” goes back to the wilderness wandering under Moses when Yahweh desired to give His people rest but many perished. The reference to a wilderness is important because scattered Israel’s return to the Land under Elijah will be through “the wilderness of the peoples” (RV) – Ezek. 20:35. What follows is based on the return of Jacob from Haran as a type of the Second Exodus of Israel under Elijah.

V.3-14 – “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” – This is described in Hos. 2:14 similarly – “Therefore, behold, I will lure her and bring her to the wilderness, and speak to her heart.” This will be accomplished through the work of Elijah in the Second Exodus (Isa. 11:11). “Behold, I will bring them from the north country” like Jacob from Haran; “the lame” like Jacob halting on his thigh; “the woman with child” like Rachel bearing Benjamin; “her that travaileth with child” like Rachel giving birth (that Rachel is a type is made clear in V.15). The use of the names Israel and Ephraim also points to scattered Israel (see **Appendix 3 May** pg. 83) – “I am a father to **Israel**, and **Ephraim** is my firstborn,” hence, “He that **scattered** Israel will gather him.” Furthermore, “they shall come and sing in the height of Zion,” something the ten tribes have never done.

V.15-30 – “A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; **Rachel weeping** for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.” The value of this verse cited in Matt. 2:18 is that it proves Rachel is a type of natural Israel. It also confirms that what has preceded it is based on Jacob returning from Haran. The context continues referring to the sorrow of weeping of the past because of the loss of so many of natural Israel’s children, but when the remnant are redeemed the mood will change – “For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.” The change will come when Yahweh creates “a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.” The Hebrew for “compass” signifies “to turn about,” and in the Piel signifies, “to cause to turn about,” and hence “to repulse,” or “put to the rout.” The word “man” is *geber* and signifies a warrior. The “new thing” will be the weak daughter of Zion defeating her strong enemies (Logos Vol. 33 pg. 390).

V.31-40 – “I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah” – This covenant is the **Abrahamic Covenant**. Israel were under the Mosaic Covenant until AD 70. The Abrahamic Covenant was not ratified by blood until the sacrifice of Christ, so the nation of Israel were not serving God under that covenant. The proof that it is the “new covenant” is found in V.10 – “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” which is from Gen: 17:7-8. In Christ, there is forgiveness of sins, and God can say, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” The ordinances of sun, moon and stars, earth and sea are advanced as witnesses of the certainty of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. The chapter concludes with measurements for the House of Prayer for all nations as is also found in Zech. 14:10.



Mark 5

The three classes of humanity that Jesus (Yahshua – Yahweh’s salvation) came to save appear in Mark 5. There is Legion (a Roman legion had 6,000 men = the human race over 6 millennia). He may have been a Jew, but his name; place of abode (Decapolis with its 10 Gentile towns) in Galilee (“of the nations” – Isa. 9:1), and his circumstances (living among the dead – Eph. 2:1), all point to Gentiles for whom Mark is writing. He was afflicted with a medical condition called Cysticercosis – the infestation of the human brain by the larval stage of the tapeworm whose host is normally swine. The body is walled off against these larvae that have been ingested via

their eggs finding their way into the food chain. The brain however cannot repel them. As they gnaw away at the arteries and capillaries in the brain, it responds by excreting a fluid which fills the cranium and creates a pressure that results in wild maniacal outbursts like those evident in Legion's behaviour. The Jews had tried to chain him, as they had tried to chain Gentiles with the Law of Moses. It could not hold his wild outbursts (law highlights sin, it doesn't curb it – Rom. 7:8-11). The only cure was to treat the cause – the 'swine' in mankind – 2 Pet. 2:22. This was sent to where it belonged; 2,000 swine drowned, pointing to 2,000 years of Gentiles being baptized that they might "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." Legion was naked when he came to Christ (Luke 8:27), but is found in his right mind (2 Tim. 1:7), and clothed with a garment given him by the Lord who tells him to go home to his 'friends' (like us) and tell them all about Yahweh's salvation. That has been going on now for two millennia. It is significant that this incident is followed by the Lord passing over the sea ("Galilee of the nations") to the more Jewish side of the lake, but "he was nigh unto the sea" – the Gentiles would not be forgotten. The time for the Gospel to reach them was at hand.

V.22-43 – Two women come into view representing the two classes within Israel that the Lord came to save. A woman with an issue of blood for 12 years (unclean under the Law) had wasted her substance on ineffective doctors while being kept out of the synagogue (a place of refuge and solace) by Jairus, one of its rulers. He had a 12-year-old daughter grievously sick who had grown up watching her father exclude this pitiful woman. These two represent the two classes in Israel (12 being the number of Israel) that Christ came to save. Sinners and tax gatherers represented by the woman; the religious class living under law from birth by Jairus' daughter. Jairus, desperate, put his trust in Jesus (not something most Judaisers would do), but his plan was delayed by the woman with the issue. Christ firstly, as was his practice, focused on the outcasts of Israel who saw their need for his healing power. She was healed by her faith in his word (represented by the hem of his garment – Num. 15:37-49), but Jairus' daughter living under law died (law cannot save). Receiving the report of her death, the Lord encouraged Jairus to "just go on believing" as the Greek for V.36 has it. The Lord took only "Peter, and James, and John" to the grieving house of Jairus and dismissed the professional mourners with the rebuke – "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," at which "they laughed him to scorn" as they departed.

Only 6 living beings were permitted into the 'tomb' of Jairus' house with one dead, totaling 7 (the covenant and **Spirit** number). 5 possessed faith (and were looking for **grace**), one had the healing power, and one was dead. Identifying himself with the dead child, the Lord with a few words raised her from the dead – "Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." Then something incredible happened – "he charged them straitly that no man should know it." The parents clutching their living daughter were instructed to tell no one (almost impossible), unlike Legion, who was to tell everyone. Why this dichotomy? Because most Jews living under twisted Judaistic law would not believe even though one went unto them from the dead – Luke 16:30-31 – "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Jairus and his wife doubtless now believed, but that was not the case with most of those who frequented his synagogue, except for the woman healed of her issue whom Jairus didn't have to exclude any more. No wonder "they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."

August 11

1 Kings 6

This chapter provides comprehensive details of the features of the temple which largely speak for themselves. The temple took 7 years to build from Solomon's 4th year to the 11th.



Jeremiah 32

V.1-5 – Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in Zedekiah's ninth year in the tenth month – Jer. 39:1, but the siege was temporarily raised upon the approach of an Egyptian army. This chapter occurs in “the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.” “Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house” because he had prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would capture the city, and that prophecy had discouraged its defenders. Jeremiah had prophesied “Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans,” and would see Nebuchadnezzar face to face and “his eyes shall behold his eyes,” but as was later revealed his eyes would be pierced so that he would not see Babylon (Jer. 39:7).

V.6-15 – “Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, **Buy thee my field** that is in **Anathoth**: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it” – Jeremiah seemed a little surprised that his uncle actually turned up with the proposition to buy his field as he was locked up in the king's palace, but when he did, “Then I knew that this was the word of Yahweh.” The city was again solidly besieged and food was in short supply. It was not really a time for family land transactions, but God had a purpose in it all. The purchase was sealed according to the law and practice of old – Ruth 4:9-11. Baruch the son of Neriah was seconded to take charge of the registering of the documents and Jeremiah charged him publicly, “Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase....put them in an earthen vessel....Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.” It was a promise of restoration.

V.16-35 – Jeremiah was somewhat mystified by these events and prayed for understanding. Everything seemed against such an outcome. His prophecies were being fulfilled; the

Babylonian army was outside the walls of the city; how could anyone be thinking of making land purchases? He acknowledged though that “there is nothing too hard for thee” – a theme of Scripture beginning in Gen. 18:14 and repeated often – V.27; Job 42:4; Luke 1:37; 18:27. He then recounted all the great works Yahweh had done for Israel throughout their history and asked why this land transaction should be made at a time when the city is about to be overrun. The response was that the judgements would come and were wholly justified for the idolatry and wickedness of Judah.

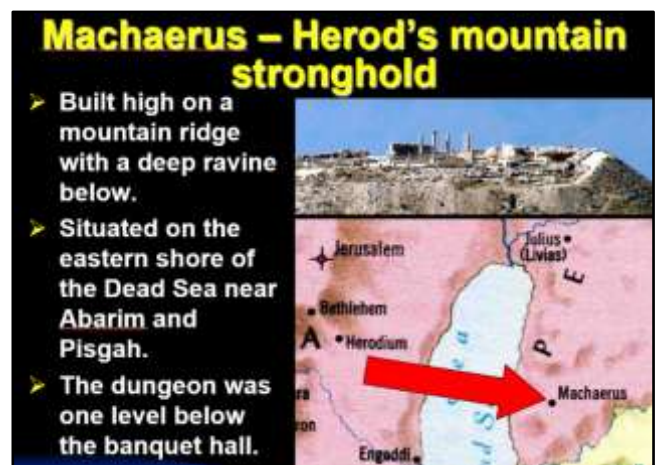
V.36-44 – Despite the awful judgements hanging over the nation, there is a message of hope – “Behold, I will gather them out of **all countries**, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.” This is the work of Elijah and involves “all Israel” not just the dispersed of Judah. The outcome will be their redemption and their conversion to the faith of Abraham – “they shall be **my people**, and I will be **their God**” – the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 17:7-8. The conversion will be complete – “I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul,” so, “Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith Yahweh.” Nothing is too hard for Yahweh.

Mark 6

V.1-6 – The rejection of Jesus at Nazareth is recorded in detail in Luke 4:16-30 (see comments on Luke 4 on **March 14** pg. 29). Not even his mighty works could raise them above shallow parochialism, and “he marvelled because of their unbelief,” so “he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.” It was evidence that “A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.”

V.7-13 – The sending forth of his 12 disciples to preach and heal has companion accounts in Matt. 10:11-13 and Luke 10:7-8. The comments on Matt. 10 on July 9 are repeated here – The twelve apostles were appointed and sent out with instructions to go only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” What they were to preach, and the way they were to react to the response is detailed. They were to use the power to heal freely in gratitude for what had been given them. The “labourer is worthy of his hire” principle was invoked (Luke 10:7), but not all would go smoothly.

V.14-29 – When Herod Antipas heard of Jesus, he assumed it was John the Baptist whom he had beheaded. What follows is the account of that evil deed. Herod imprisoned John the Baptist in his mountain top fortress at Machaerus after his three and a half year ministry because of his serious criticism of Herod’s actions in stealing his brother’s wife. John’s Nazariteship was brought to a successful conclusion as his head was separated from his body (the whole point of Nazariteship when considered from a spiritual standpoint). The bitter hatred of Herodias craved revenge against



John, but Herod feared upsetting the people who loved John (V.5). During Herod's birthday party, Salome, Herodias's daughter whose racy dancing so impressed him that he made a rash drunken vow to give her whatever she desired led to John's death. Schooled by her mother, she asked for John's head on a platter. Mortified by his own folly, Herod gave the order for the execution so that he would not look foolish in the sight of his guests. It is said that Salome many years later was beheaded in Spain (where they had been banished) when skating on thin ice! God's retribution is often poetic in character.

V.33-44 – There were two feedings of a multitude – the 5,000 mainly Jews – and the 4,000 mainly Gentiles (Mark 8:1-9). Jesus had compassion on 'sheep' with no shepherd (V.34). Here were Jews misled by Judaistic leaders who made their burdens unbearable (Acts 15:10). What these Jews needed was faith in the promises made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so that they might receive God's grace. Hence, there were 5 loaves (= grace – John 5:2) and 2 fish (Jew and Gentile) for a total of 7 = covenant. The 4,000 were fed with 7 loaves, for they being Gentiles needed the covenant God made with Abraham (Gal. 3). This is noted in Rom. 3:30 where the Apostle says, "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by (*ek* – out of) faith, and uncircumcision (Gentiles) through the faith" (Diaglott). The 5,000 Jews left 12 wicker hand baskets (Gr. *kophinos*) of crumbs. The 4,000 Gentiles left only 7 small lunch packs (*spuris* – a lunch hamper woven from reeds). Don't be deflected by those who point out that *spuris* is the word used of the basket Paul was lowered down the wall of Damascus in – Acts 9:26. Woven reed baskets can be of any size. It is ludicrous to think the disciples used a bag that size to carry their lunch on a day trip. What is the meaning of this? It is simple – the Gentiles were hungrier for the teachings of Christ than the Jews. History has testified to that.

V.45-52 – The disciples in the absence of Christ were crossing the Sea of Galilee (called "Galilee of the nations" – Isa. 9:1) towards Capernaum ("the city of comfort") in a 'ship' (the ecclesia) in the company of their brethren (fellow disciples). The 'ecclesial ship' was being buffeted and tossed to and fro by a violent storm (Rev. 16:14), and only the appearance of Christ could save them. When he arrived, the storm was calmed (Ps. 65:7), and the ship was immediately at the place they had set out for – "the city of comfort" (John 6:21; Isa. 51:3; 66:13; Zech. 1:17). There is a lesson for us in this account. Peter's typical enthusiasm saw him ask, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." This sounds like an act of faith, but it was not wise to put any confidence in human strength. He started well, but the turbulence changed all that. It is better to remain in the ecclesial ship in a time of violent storms at the end of the days rather than test our faith in a turbulent world. The Lord is not here yet, and he was not yet in the ship with his disciples when Peter made his request. Stay in the ship. The calm will soon come when he arrives.

V.53-56 – The healing continued especially when the hem of Christ's garment was touched. He was the Word made flesh after all, and out of him "went virtue" – Luke 6:19.

August 12

1 Kings 7

V.1-12 – Solomon took 13 years to build his own house concurrently with the building of the temple which took 7 years. He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon. The details speak for themselves. Solomon acquired the services of a man called Hiram "a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass." His skills were multifaceted and he manufactured all the requirements of Solomon's building

projects. “So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of Yahweh.”

Jeremiah 33

V.1-13 – Jeremiah remained imprisoned by Zedekiah in his 11th and final year, and he received another message to pass on (Rotherham) – “Thus, saith Yahweh, who **doeth it**,— Yahweh, who fashioneth it to **establish it**, Yahweh, is his name.” Because Yahweh is able to do anything, what follows presents a huge contrast. The utter desolation that would come within months would be completely reversed when the 70 years of desolation were over as a promise of much greater things to come at the return of Christ.

V.14-26 – The work of Christ at his Second Advent is the next subject – “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land.” Christ will save the tents of Judah (Jews in the Land) first (Zech. 12:7) – “Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely,” and Jerusalem will be called “Yahweh our righteousness” (*tsidkenu*) the title given to Christ in Jer. 23:6, for now the city hosts the son of David who will reign for 1,000 years – “David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” The Levites will also play an important part in the Kingdom Age as the lower order of priests in the House of Prayer for all nations and their primary role will be the sacrifices of those who come to worship – Ezek. 44. Those who accused Yahweh of casting off both the houses of Israel would be proven wrong in that day – “If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant.” Just as surely as the sun will rise on the morrow, so God’s covenants will be fulfilled in due time.

Mark 7

V.1-13 – The criticism by the Scribes and Pharisees of the failure of Christ’s disciples to observe the laws of ritual cleanliness sparked a stern condemnation of their Judaism. Their punctiliousness over ritual cleansing cloaked a huge betrayal of the 5th commandment through their Corban law. This rabbinical subterfuge allowed them to deny their parents any support because all their assets were devoted to the temple service. “Honour thy father and mother” had been completely submerged. Isa. 29:13 had been fulfilled – “in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the **commandments of men**.”

V.14-23 – What actually defiles men comes next. Edible food that goes into the mouth does no harm. What does harm is that which comes out of the heart of the natural man, the mouth being its spokesman (V.21; Luke 6:45). In the list of V.21-22, the Lord mentions 13 things that emanate from the deceptive and desperately sick heart of the natural man (Jer. 17:9). These are headed by “evil thoughts” (the real source of the actions that follow). 13 is the number of **rebellion** (Gen. 14:4; Nimrod = “we will rebel” the 13th generation from Adam, etc.).

V.24-30 – The Lord encountered a Gentile woman (a Syrophoenician) who grasped the crumbs that fell from Israel’s table due to their disinterest in the “bread from heaven.” Mature dogs were always kept outside the house in those times (Rev. 22:15). The Greek for dogs here is *kunarion* – a puppy. These were allowed under the table! This Gentile woman knew her place but eagerly grasped what many in Israel did not want.

V.31-37 – The principle manifested in the Gentile woman is illustrated by an enacted parable. A deaf and dumb man is brought to the Lord. Those who cannot hear from birth (human nature in its infancy), cannot speak (i.e. confess). This man was taken aside from the multitude (a

necessary thing), and the Lord put his fingers into his ear (hearing is essential), spat and touched his tongue. Christ's spittle symbolizes his words/teachings (when we speak spittle accompanies the sound). Paul referred to this process in Rom. 10:8-10, 17 – "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." This man could now hear, and now he could confess from the heart.

August 13

1 Kings 8

V.1-11 – "Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes...that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh out of the city of David, which is Zion" – It may be that Solomon chose a special time of the year in a significant year. The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge comments – "This did not take place till the year after the temple was finished, because that year was a jubilee. The 8th day of the 7th month, viz. the 30th of our October, being Friday, was the first of the seven days of dedication; the 10th day, Saturday, November 1, the fast of expiation or atonement was held; whereon, according to the Levitical law, the jubilee was proclaimed by sound of trumpet. The 15th day, Friday, was the feast of tabernacles, which was always very solemnly kept; and the day following, Nov.14, being our Saturday, when the Sabbath was ended, the people returned home" (see V.55-56). Be that as it may, the dedication of the temple and the placing of the Ark in the Most Holy marked a milestone year in Israel's history. There were positives and negatives in these events.

The Ark had been housed in David's tent (*ohel*) in Jerusalem for 40 years, some 6 miles (10 kms) from Gibeon where the Tabernacle stood (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1; 21:29). Its journey now was very short. Not only was David's tent dismantled, but so was the Tabernacle, and all its vessels were brought to Jerusalem (V.4). Numerous sacrifices were made and the Ark installed with a peculiarity – "they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place," although not from the entry and porch. The reason for this seems to be to indicate that the Ark had now reached its final resting place from which it would move no more. That however, was not to be the case. The other significant negative was that there was "nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone" of the Law. Aaron's rod that budded that spoke of Christ's resurrection and the pot of manna that spoke of the immortality awaiting the faithful (Rev. 2:17) were absent. This points to the fact that though God accepted the goodwill of His people, the institution was not permanent, as law cannot save. The work of Christ must supersede it. Nevertheless, after installing the Ark, and as soon as the priests left, "the cloud filled the house of Yahweh...for the glory of Yahweh had filled the house."

V.12-21 – Solomon praised and thanked God for fulfilling His promise to David, and while there had to be a primary fulfillment of 2 Sam. 7:13, the secondary and most important was still to come when Christ will build the House of Prayer for all nations. Solomon had reason to be thankful and joyous, but was a little ambitious by launching his praise with the words, "I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever." There were two reasons to be more cautious. The first was that apostasy would see the temple destroyed, which it was twice, in BC 586 and AD 70. The second was God's words to David in 2 Sam. 7:5-7, confirmed by Isa. 66:1 – "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" cited by Stephen in Acts 7:48-50; and even recognized by Solomon in his prayer (V.27).

V.22-53 – Solomon's magnificent prayer speaks for itself, as does his blessing and appeal in V.54-61, and these were followed by a huge number of sacrifices that overwhelmed the new altar. 2 Chron. 7:1 records – "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire

came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Yahweh filled the house.” All looked bright, but failure lurked in Solomon’s house.

Jeremiah 34

One of the curiosities of the Book of Jeremiah is that many chapters are not positioned in chronological order. This chapter occurred in the 10th year of Zedekiah’s reign as did Jer. 32, whereas Jer. 33 was in his 11th year. Jer. 35 however, was probably delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, when the king of Babylon made war against him. It is not always easy to see the reasons for this configuration except in the case of chapters 34 and 35. The setting is fundamental for a full appreciation of the content of each chapter.

V.1 – Jerusalem was under heavy siege by the Babylonian army. This chapter contains two discourses, one concerning the taking of the city, and Zedekiah’s captivity and death (V.1-7); and the other containing a condemnation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem for retaining their Hebrew slaves against the law of release (V.8-22).

V.2-7 – Zedekiah is condemned and told he would be captured and taken to the king of Babylon and see him face to face. However, he would not die by the sword (as did his sons and his government officials – Jer. 52:10), but his death would be long and drawn out as he wasted away in Babylon (a city he would not see with his eyes – Jer. 52:11).

V.8-22 – As the Chaldean army swept over the country, the wealthier classes would all flee to Jerusalem, taking with them their households. Among them were slaves who had been retained well beyond the seven years prescribed by Deut. 15 for their release. Manpower was short and Zedekiah probably realized that the non-observance of the Law would not help in the growing crisis, so he ordered their release as Nebuchadnezzar’s forces surrounded Jerusalem – “Zedekiah had **made a covenant** (*karath berith* – to cut a covenant) with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim **liberty** unto them.” Fascinatingly, the slaves were described as Hebrews – “That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an **Hebrew** or an **Hebrewess**, go free.” This terminology only occurs in this chapter in Jeremiah and its previous use in the O.T is in 1 Sam. 29:3. However, its first occurrence is in Gen. 14:13 and that is why it is significant here. Abraham is described there as “the Hebrew” and he had in his company Gentile converts to the Abrahamic Faith who shared bread and wine with Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18). In Jer. 35 there was a family of Gentile converts called the Rechabites who would survive the coming judgements and remain in the Land.

With Nebuchadnezzar’s army bearing down on them, “all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free” (V.10), but when the Egyptian army came up from the south, Nebuchadnezzar lifted the siege and pursued it. With the pressure off, they re-enslaved the released servants (V.11). The response from God reminded them of His covenant with Abraham to release his seed from Egyptian slavery (V.13; Gen. 15:13-14), and of the law of release of Deut. 15 (based on the Exodus), and then roundly condemned them to slavery for their perfidy in breaking their covenant which they had made “when they **cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts** thereof.” It is another fascinating fact that the only other place where this manner of ‘cutting a covenant’ is referred to is in Gen. 15:9-12,17. The language of V.20 – “their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth” is clearly an allusion to Gen. 15:11 – “And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away,” but Abraham would not protect or save them. However, he would protect the Rechabites of the next chapter because of their Abrahamic faith and their steadfast keeping of their father’s covenant. As we shall see, the Rechabites were Kenites, and they were one of the original tribes of Canaan who had to be

evicted from the Land for Abraham and his seed to inherit it – one of the great ironies of Scripture.

Mark 8

V.1-10 – The feeding of the four thousand is quite different to that of the 5,000. The latter were primarily Jews. That is why 2 Kings 1 was invoked as they were organized into groups of 50 and fed with 5 loaves and two fish. Here, the 4,000 are fed with seven loaves. Even in the collection of scraps there was a difference. The comments made on the two feedings on February 10 are repeated here. There are important lessons involved.

Comments on Mark 6:33-44. There were two feedings of a multitude – the 5,000 mainly Jews – and the 4,000 mainly Gentiles (Mark 8:1-9). Jesus has compassion on 'sheep' with no shepherd (V.34). Here were Jews misled by Judaistic leaders who made their burdens unbearable (Acts 15:10). What these Jews needed was **faith** in the promises made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so that they might receive God's **grace**. Hence, there were **5 loaves** (John 5:2) and **2 fish** (Jew and Gentile) for a total of **7** = covenant. The 4,000 were fed with **7 loaves** for they being Gentiles needed the covenant God made with Abraham (Gal. 3). This is noted in Rom. 3:30 where the Apostle says, "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by (*ek* – out of) **faith**, and uncircumcision (Gentiles) through **the faith**" (Diaglott).

V.11-21 – The perennial sign seekers demanded a sign but were repudiated – "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation." He departed from the doubters but had an issue to resolve with his disciples. "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod" – This mystified the disciples who had forgotten to bring bread in the boat. The Lord gave his disciples a tongue lashing for their lack of perception – "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Given that this was clearly an important matter to the Lord, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether we perceive. What the Lord expected them to understand was the meaning of the collection of the scraps from the two feedings. The 5,000 Jews left 12 (Israel) wicker hand baskets (Gr. *kophinos*) of crumbs, a fairly large amount. The 4,000 Gentiles left only 7 small lunch packs (*spuris* – a lunch hamper woven from reeds). Some quibble that *spuris* is the word used of the basket Paul was lowered down the wall of Damascus in – Acts 9:26. Woven reed baskets can be of any size. It is ludicrous to think the disciples used a bag that size to carry their lunch on a day trip. What is the meaning of this? It is simple – the Gentiles were hungrier for the teachings of Christ than the Jews. History has testified to that.

V.22-26 – The healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 is another enacted parable in Mark's Gospel written primarily for Romans. As in Mark 7:33, Christ used his spittle in the healing of this blind man. When we speak a small amount of moisture is ejected from the mouth. Hence, the water of the Word came forth from the mouth of he who was "the word made flesh." He could say, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The people of Bethsaida ("the house of fishing") were blind – Matt. 11:21; Luke 10:13. They ignored or rejected Christ's teachings. This is why Jesus took this blind man out of the town (V.23). This miracle was not for the people of Bethsaida, but for the Gentiles who would later receive Mark's record. The word of Christ (symbolized by his spittle) is applied to this blind man's eyes, and the healing hands of the Lord are placed upon him. To the question whether he saw anything, the man responded that he saw "men walking as trees." That is larger than reality. It is however, a phenomenon of those coming into the truth to see men as larger in the

scheme of things than they actually are. The antidote is further instruction and to “look up” to a higher being. So, the Lord applied his hands to the eyes and instructs him to “look up” – i.e. to look higher up to God. Then we can understand the true state of mankind and see “every man clearly.” The cured blind man is sent straight home. He is not permitted to go into the town as his healing would make no impression on the faithless inhabitants of Bethsaida. Their blindness would continue.

V.27-38 – See comments Matt. 16 on July 15. An additional comment here is the warning that being ashamed of Christ in a sinful time will not play well at the Judgement Seat – “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

August 14

1 Kings 9

V.1-9 – Our God can see the end from the beginning. We are just 2 chapters away from Solomon’s apostasy by recognizing the false gods of his foreign wives. Yahweh is gracious. He appeared to Solomon for a second time and accepted the genuineness of the temple building project and Solomon’s prayer, but then warns of the consequences of seeking false gods. This is couched in the most positive language possible which is an example of how we should deal with others. God knew Solomon would fail, but encourages him to remain loyal and to follow the example of David and remember the promises made to him.

V.10-28 – Twenty years had passed, and while Solomon’s reign prospered and increased in international recognition, there were indications that the summit had been reached. “Hiram the king of Tyre” who had supplied so much of the material for Solomon’s building projects was given 20 cities in the north, but on inspection found them not to his liking. Building projects cost money and require labourers and so it was essential that revenues be found. Building a navy to trade and bring gold from Ophir; acquiring horses and levying a labour force from the remnant of the nations Israel had not eradicated from the land of Canaan all helped, but the law of the king in Deut. 17:16-17 was increasingly coming into view – “he shall not multiply horses to himself...neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.” To be sure, God had promised him riches and honour, but the Word of God cannot be ignored or set aside without consequences.

Jeremiah 35

V.1 – “in the days of Jehoiakim” – It is thought in his 7th year, some 14 years prior to chapter 34. The reason for this arrangement was mentioned in the comments on chapter 34.

V.2-11 – “Go unto the house of the **Rechabites**, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of Yahweh, into one of the chambers, and give them **wine** to drink” – The Rechabites were descendants of Jehonadab the son of Rechab (2 Kings 10:15-16), and they were Kenites (1 Chron. 2:55); a Canaanite tribe in the land at the time of Abraham (Gen. 15:19). They evidently joined Israel through the family of Jethro (Judges 1:16; 4:11 via the family of Hobab – Num. 10:29-32). Jehonadab – “Whom Yahweh has impelled” from the root *nadab* signifies to impel; hence to volunteer – 2 Kings 10:15-16. The name “Jehonadab” occurs 7 times in the O.T. and hints at covenant with Gentiles (Abrahamic). Rechab means “rider” and is cognate with *rekeb* – chariot (from the same root *rakab*). Rechab occurs 5 times in Jer. 35 = grace to Gentiles. Rechabites occurs 4 times in Jer. 35 (5 in the O.T.).

Jeremiah brought “Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniyah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites” into a chamber in the temple and placed before them “pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.” They were out of sight. None of them had ever tasted wine, so the temptation to experiment was great, but no way. As a group they responded immediately – “We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.” They went on to list other restrictions – building houses, and owning vineyard or field for sowing. They were to be nomads like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and had done so until Nebuchadnezzar arrived in the Land and they had to take refuge in Jerusalem (V.11).

V.10 – “But we have dwelt in tents, and have **obeyed**, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.” The important word here is “obeyed” which is a key word in chapters 34 and 35 (see slide at right). It is the key to what follows when Yahweh chimes in.

Key to context - Hearing

- ❖ The Hebrew **shama** – to hear, listen to, obey - occurs 14 times in **Jer. 34 (5) & 35 (9)**.
- ❖ 14 is the number of **certainty of covenant** (7 = covenant; doubling = certainty **Gen. 41:32**).
- ❖ Translated “hear”, “heard”, “obeyed”, “obey”, “hearkened”, “hearken”.

V.12-19 – Jeremiah is sent by God – “Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to **hearken** (*shama*) to my words?” The Rechabites had scrupulously obeyed their forefather Jehonadab for 250 years on a range of matters which God had not forbidden, and they were Gentiles by origin, but God’s people broke every law in the book and would not hear His prophets. Judah would go into captivity, but the Rechabites would remain in the Land, and have a hope of eternity for their obedience – “Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.” This is one of the most astonishing ironies of all time. A Gentile tribe that had to be removed from Canaan in order for Abraham and his seed to inherit the Land promised to him will end up inheriting it while many of Abraham’s natural seed will not. There is hope similarly for us Gentiles if we are obedient to our Father and maintain a strong Abrahamic faith.

Mark 9

V.1-13 – “There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” is a promise to Peter, James and John that they would see their Lord transformed in their sight as we will see him in the Kingdom. With the ‘glorified’ Lord there stood Moses and Elijah in glory. The reason for the selection of these two lay in their almost identical experience in (probably) the same cave on Mt Horeb. The lesson they were taught there is the lesson of the Transfiguration, hence their appearance alongside Christ. That lesson was that men are not changed for the Kingdom by drama, miracles or the manifestation of awesome power. Moses, secreted in a cave (Ex. 33 & 34) while the ‘angel of Yahweh’s presence’ passed by (Isa. 63:9; Acts 7:38), saw the remnants of a glory that could have consumed him, but then heard a voice that proclaimed the most powerful influence on the lives of men – the Divine character declared by a voice, as the glory disappeared. Similarly, Elijah initially standing at the entrance to a cave (1 Kings 19:11-13) was driven back in fear as wind, earthquake and fire passed by. When the shaking, rumblings and loud noises accompanying those phenomena had subsided, Elijah nervously emerged from the rear of the cave when he finally had heard “the voice of a gentle whisper” (Rotherham for 1 Kings 19:12). He and Moses were taught that you cannot change men for the better by demonstrations of power (like that on Mt Carmel), you can only get them to sit up and take notice by that means. What changes men is a persistent “still small voice” teaching the things of the Word of God. Hence, the drama of the Transfiguration is followed by a cloud enshrouding

the glory which was passing by (Luke 9:34-35). Then as the cloud passed over them, a voice proclaimed “this is my son the beloved, **hear** him.” Then when the voice was past, they saw Jesus alone – the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Men cannot be changed for the Kingdom by miracles, only by “a more sure word of teaching” (2 Pet. 1:16-21) “whereunto you do well to take heed” as the power that builds and sustains faith (Rom. 10:17), and instills over time the characteristics of the God revealed to Moses on the mount (Ex. 34:6-7).

V.14-29 illustrate the above principle by an enacted parable. As the Lord descended the mountain with his three disciples talking of his impending death, he encountered a commotion. A distressed father with an epileptic son had come seeking help, but found only the impotence of the remaining disciples who could normally heal such afflictions. Why could they not handle epilepsy on this occasion? Having just been transfigured in glory, it was fitting there should be a demonstration of the purpose of his mission for which he was to die – the redemption of the human race. This epileptic child was a microcosm of the entire human race. Epilepsy was once called ‘the falling sickness’ because those afflicted would routinely fall to the ground. In Adam, we all have ‘falling sickness’ in a spiritual sense. Its symptoms speak of the nature we all bear – struck down at any time and any place (Rom. 7:17-21), loss of control, foaming out shame (Jude 13), shriveling away, etc. It is called by Christ “a foul spirit” (i.e. an unclean way of thinking), and “deaf” and “dumb” – i.e. unhearing and therefore non-confessing (Rom. 10:8-10). That is our natural condition in Adam.

The Lord engaged the father in what was clearly a fairly lengthy conversation in which the father of the child expressed his faith with painful reservations (another common human experience). The people who had previously come running (V.15) had now dispersed, having become disinterested in just words. They had come to see a miracle. But when they heard the father’s plaintive cry they came running again. Men want to see miracles, not hear the Word of God (it is too boring to untrained ears). On cue, the epileptic fell to the ground as though dead. “He is dead,” they said, just as the cure of our problem requires a ‘death’ in the waters of baptism. The Lord took him by the hand and there was a ‘resurrection’ to a newness of life. The vital message in this transaction is in V.22-23. The appeal of the distressed father was “if you have power (*dunamai*), have compassion and help us.” The Lord’s response was “If you have the power (*dunamai*) of belief, all things are subject to power (*dunatos*) to him that believes.” If only we believed that! The disciples, mystified by their inability to cure this problem asked why in the house (ecclesia). The problem of human nature could only be cured by one man – that man was Jesus Christ whose total self-denial (fasting), and unique close personal relationship with his Father (prayer) had secured him the glory seen in the vision on the mount of Transfiguration which guaranteed the ultimate redemption of the human race.

V.30-37 – The drama of the Transfiguration could distract from the critical element of Christ’s mission, so “he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.” They of course had no concept of that and expected the Kingdom to be set up immediately, hence, they were jostling among themselves – “by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.” The Lord set them straight – “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all,” and counselled a childlike spirit as the key to entry into the Kingdom.

V.38-41 – There was a precedent for the Lord’s answer to John who complained about a man casting out demons in Christ’s name – Num. 11:26-29. The essence of that precedent was, “For he that is not against us is on our part.” Those who refresh others with the power of the Word (“a cup of water to drink in my name”) will not lose their reward (Dan. 12:3).

V.42-50 – “whosoever shall offend one of these **little ones** that believe in me, it is better for him that a **millstone** were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” The “little ones” are those over whom Yahweh places His protective hand in the absence of the shepherd (Zech. 13:7). To put a stumblingblock before them will receive the fate of Catholicism – Rev. 18:21. Human nature is prone to stumbling, so drastic spiritual action is required. Hand, foot and eye must be sacrificed to achieve single-minded motivation and service. Christ weaves Isa. 66:24 into his exhortation. It refers to the dump west of the Temple in the Age to come where the bodies of those who have come to worship with a wicked heart will be thrown to rot and burn as a witness to all who come to that place that self-interest and an evil heart end in death. That was fair warning to disciples jostling for positions of power in the Kingdom, and interestingly quoted in the context of the Transfiguration (V.1), the very subject of the Kingdom referred to in the allusion to Isa. 66.

August 15

1 Kings 10

V.1-13 – “And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon **concerning the name of Yahweh**, she came to prove him with hard questions.” This is one reason why Christ could say in Matthew 12:42 – “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” She had an interest in Divine things that was not shown by Christ’s own people in his day, and he was greater than Solomon. After probing Solomon’s wisdom and witnessing the organization and prosperity of his kingdom, she confessed – “It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom,” and adds that “the half was not told me,” and was generous in her praise and in the abundance of her gifts which Solomon reciprocated.

V.14-29 – Solomon amassed enormous wealth primarily of gold, but also of much else. It would be difficult to imagine a more prosperous and superior reign – “And **all the earth** sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year,” except that of the Lord Jesus Christ of whom Solomon is a type. However, the seeds for failure had been sown. The law of the king (Deut. 17:16-17) had been set aside. Wives had been multiplied to the tune of 1,000; gold had been amassed so that silver was of no account; and horses were multiplied and brought out of Egypt. And, of course, international fame can be dangerous, even for ‘good’ men such as Hezekiah much later who succumbed to popularity based on success.

Jeremiah 36

V.1-4 – The 4th year of the reign of Jehoiakim was a very frustrating year for Yahweh’s faithful prophet and his loyal scribe Baruch. He was commanded to write on a scroll all the prophecies that he had made since the 13th year of Josiah to this year (22 year’s worth). He procured Baruch as his scribe and the work was completed, but evidently took some time given V.9. The consolidation of all the past prophecies was a last ditch effort by God to get His people to turn – “It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” We can easily forget unpleasant messages from the past. Now there could be no excuse.

V.5-19 – Jeremiah was imprisoned when the scroll was finished and he instructed Baruch to go and read it out aloud in the temple. Sometime later, in the 5th year of Jehoiakim in the 9th month a fast was proclaimed and many gathered to Jerusalem. It was an ideal time for Baruch to publicly read from the scroll. It caused a stir, and the grandson of Shaphan reported it to the princes of Judah who called upon Baruch to bring the scroll and read it to them. They immediately understood the implications of it and advised Baruch and Jeremiah to go into hiding.

V.20-26 – Jehoiakim demanded to have the scroll brought to him and have it read in his presence. What followed was one of the most disgraceful acts of blasphemy in the nation's history. As each leaf of the scroll was read, the king cut it off and cast it into the fire revealing his utter contempt for the Word of God. Ironically, it was at this very time that Yahweh was revealing His Word to Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel in Babylon. The 5th year of Jehoiakim was the 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:1) when Daniel interpreted to him the dream of the terrifying image of Dan. 2. While a descendant of David was burning God's Word, ironically a descendant of Nimrod was receiving it. Only three of the princes present objected to the burning of the scroll. The remainder acquiesced much to their shame, and Jehoiakim ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch "but Yahweh hid them."

V.27-32 – Yahweh instructed Jeremiah to write out all the contents of the burnt scroll again with additional words, and Baruch faithfully did so again (an enormous task). Jehoiakim was condemned and details of his coming ignominious death recorded in the new scroll.

Mark 10

V.1-12 – The Lord went to the eastern side of Jordan followed by many whom he taught assiduously. However, the omnipresent Pharisees pressed their loose views on divorce and remarriage on him. What follows provides clarity on the Lord's teachings concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage that have been confused by incorrect interpretations of the so-called "Exceptive Clause" of Matt. 19. Consistent with his teaching in Matt. 5:27-28, and the Apostle's teaching in Rom. 7:1-4, even thinking about remarriage while one has a living partner is adultery. It should be noted in Rom. 7:3-4 there is no equivalent in the Greek text for the KJV's "married." It should be translated "if she be for another man." Paul is presenting the case of believing Jews who though now in Christ wanted to continue living under the Law of Moses. It was like they still had a living "husband" (the Law). That was spiritual adultery. The perfect consistency of this argument lies in the fact that we are not yet married to Christ, only espoused to him (2 Cor. 11:2). A postscript to this, and consistent with it, is the fact that in verse 29 the RSV, Rotherham, the ASV and other translations do not include "wife" in the list of those who are "left" for the truth's sake.

V.12-31 – The next incident where the Lord rebuked his disciples for forbidding children being brought unto him lays the foundations for his encounter with the rich young ruler. Christ loved (*agapao*) this young man (V.21). He wanted to save him. To the question, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life," the Lord firstly reminds the young man that there is no good thing in man, and then lists 6 of the 10 commandments which he knew the young man had kept. The Sabbath (4th) is not mentioned for that was taken for granted for Jews, but the absence of the first three was an indication of this man's problem. He had another god in his life, namely, wealth (1st commandment broken). He had graven images in his life, namely, money, things (2nd commandment broken). He had taken upon himself service to God that would prove in the end to be "vain" and fruitless (the true meaning of the 3rd commandment). The lesson was clear – rich men can be saved, but only if their trust is not in the things that pertain to the present.

There are two Greek words in Mark 10 translated “way.” They are quite different. In V.21, Christ told the rich young ruler to “go thy way.” The word is *hupago* – to withdraw oneself; to depart. However, in V.17 and again in V.32 the word is *hodos* – a travelled way; road. This was the ‘way’ the Lord wanted all men to tread as he made his own ‘way’ to Jerusalem to be crucified (V.33-34). The rich young ruler was not in that ‘way’, but Bartimaeus was. In the enacted parable that begins in V.46 (to be considered with Mark 11), having received his sight (truth), he “followed Jesus in **the way**” (*hodos*). The preceding phrase in V.52, “Go thy **way**” is *hupago* and should simply be rendered “Go.” No one enlightened (cured of blindness) is counselled to ‘go their own way’. It is the way of the cross (V.32) in which we must walk (Mark 8:34).

V.35-45 – For comments on this section, see **July** 19, pg. 55.

August 16

1 Kings 11

V.1-3 – “But king Solomon loved many strange women” – Doubtless many of his 700 wives were ‘diplomatic’ wives given to him by nations seeking to be at peace with Israel as that was the practice of ancient times. However, an additional 300 concubines gives some substance to the phrase that he “loved many strange women.” What is not in doubt is that this was bad policy, for the law of the king was clear – “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away” (Deut. 17:17), and this is exactly what happened in Solomon’s case. Nehemiah’s summation of the situation could not be clearer – “Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless **even him** did outlandish women cause to sin” (Neh. 13:26).

V.4-8 – “when Solomon was old” – It is speculated he was between 50 and 55 at this time. “His wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not **perfect** with Yahweh his God, as was the heart of David his father.” It is important to understand what the phrase “his heart was not **perfect**” means. Later on we read of king Asa whose faith in God completely failed, and yet it is said of him that his heart “was **perfect** all his days” (2 Chron. 15:17). A heart without faith is not perfect, however Asa never turned away to false gods, and that is what it means. Solomon on the other hand never lost his belief in Yahweh (Ecc. 12:13-14), but he foolishly acknowledged false gods for the sake of his foreign wives, hence his heart was not **safe** – the meaning of the word “perfect” (*shalem*). It is evident that his acknowledgement of the false gods was not remote, the testimony is that he “**went after** (*hâlak* ‘*achar* – to walk after) Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.” Accordingly, the Mt of Olives where the abominations were established became known as “the mount of corruption” (2 Kings 23:13).

V.9-13 – Yahweh was rightfully angry with Solomon because He had twice appeared to him (“to whom much is given, much is required”). There is an allusion to the law of the king in the rebuke – “because that **this hath been with thee**” (Young’s Lit.), and this matches the requirement that when a king had written out his own copy of the Law it was to always be **with him** – “it shall be **with him**, and he shall read therein all the days of his life” (Deut. 17:19). Ten tribes were to be ripped away from Solomon’s successor and two remain that God might keep His covenant with David.

V.14-25 – God raised up two foreign adversaries to Solomon that pestered him for the remaining 5 to 10 years of his reign. They were “Hadad the Edomite” and “Rezon the son of

Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah” and ensconced himself in Damascus.

V.26-43 – The man appointed to snatch the 10 tribes from the house of David was initially one of Solomon’s most effective servants, namely, “Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite (i.e. Ephraimite – 1 Sam. 1:1) of Zereda” who was a young man of great ability that impressed Solomon (V.28) who elevated him. The “prophet Ahijah the Shilonite” (appropriately the place where lots were cast to apportion the Land to the 7 tribes) found Jeroboam alone and rent his new garment (for a new apportionment of the tribes by lot) into 12 pieces and gave 10 to Jeroboam. Ahijah had found Jeroboam “in the way” and the promise made to him was akin to that given to David (V.38), but was dependent on obedience. However, Jeroboam did not make a good start. Only he and the prophet knew about the promise that he would be king, but only when Solomon died (V.35), however he could not keep the secret and was forced to flee to Shishak the Pharaoh of a new dynasty in Egypt until the accession of Rehoboam.

Jeremiah 37

V1-10 – The chapter begins with a reference to Zedekiah succeeding his nephew Jehoiachin, but the time is the 9th year of Zedekiah when Babylon invaded again and besieged the city. The king sent ambassadors to Jeremiah with a request – “Pray now unto Yahweh our God for us,” but Jeremiah had been told not to pray for the doomed people (Jer. 11:14; 14:11). On the approach of the Egyptian army, the Chaldeans lifted the siege and went to deal with them. Great relief and ambitious prophecies swirled around the city, but Jeremiah assured them it was a vain hope. Even a defeated Chaldean army could overthrow Judah.

V.11-21 – Jeremiah took the opportunity of the relief of the siege to seek refuge in Benjamin, but was arrested at the gate and accused of treason. The princes “smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison.” The conditions were appalling and when sometime later Zedekiah sought from Jeremiah if there was any word from Yahweh, the prophet asked to be put in a better place. Having given the king a negative response from God, surprisingly, Zedekiah shewed him some clemency.

Mark 11

Mark wrote for Romans, so his record focuses on the inclusion of Gentiles in the purpose of God. The enacted parable of Christ riding into Jerusalem on a Sabbath, the 10th of Abib, is introduced in Mark 10:45 with the declaration that he came “to give his life a ransom for (the) many.” On arrival in Jericho (“the city of palm trees” – a symbol for the nations – Ex. 15:27; Rev. 7:9), blind Bartimaeus (“the son of the unclean” – the Jewish view of Gentiles) appealed to Christ to be cured of his blindness. His name curiously appears twice in a different form – a way of emphasizing his complete separation from salvation. He may have been a Jew, but he is presented as a Gentile. His perception of Jesus as the son of David revealed a faith absent in many Jews. The beggar (lowest in society) was howled down by many, but persisted with his loud appeals. Christ paused on his journey to the cross to heal this man who then followed Jesus “in the way” as many enlightened Gentiles have done since.

There are three trees in **Mark 11:1**. The Lord came to the Mount of **Olives** (symbol for both Jew and Gentile – Zech. 4:3; Rom. 11:17); Bethphage at which they arrive first means “the house of unripe **figs**” = symbol for Israel; from which Christ sent two disciples to Bethany – “the house of date **palms**” = the Gentile nations. So it was that Christ first came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and then sent his Apostles to the Gentiles. Every verse that follows is pregnant with the call of the Gentiles. Christ seeks only a colt. There is no mention here of the ass of Zech. 9:9 as in Matt. 21:7. The Spirit in Mark only focuses on the unbroken colt pointing to the

Gentiles. It is found 'outside the house' in "a place where **two ways** met" (Jew and Gentile), and is tied up (locked up in sin). That was the state of Gentiles in relation to the things of God. The Lord had "need of him" for it had always been God's plan to call Gentiles, and he knew there would be an immediate response – V.3 "straightway." Hence, **palm** branches (symbol for the nations – Rev. 7:9) were strewn in the way as Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem on the 10th of Abib (John 12:13) to be inspected as the Passover lamb for the salvation of all who would come to him. The crowd sang the words of Ps. 118:25-26 – "Hosanna" ('save now'), but the Lord's mind was on the preceding verse in the psalm – V.24 – "This is **the day** which Yahweh hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it." This is a reference to the "**day**" of the Millennium – the Sabbath day for which he was dying 5 days later that it might be made sure by grace.

On inspecting the temple, he declared it a leprous house and went to reside in Bethany (= Gentiles). Next day he cursed a fruitless **fig tree** (Israel) which only had a fig leaf covering like Adam and Eve – a religion of their own invention. Fig leaves are preceded by a bud at the end of winter. That bud is the incipient fruit and can be eaten, if necessary, though quite bitter. A fig tree with leaves must by order of nature have some fruit (fit for repentance), but Israel did not. Consequently, men would not eat fruit from Israel until the end of the Gentile age (*aion*).

Next the Lord cleansed the Jewish traders from **the Court of the Gentiles** and stopped all activity of the Mosaic order for a while, indicating its imminent demise in AD 70. In response to Peter's observation that the fig tree had dried up from the roots, Christ laid down the constitution of the new Abrahamic order – "Have faith in God." It is a faith that can say to the Mount of Olives ("this mountain"), "be thou removed and cast into the sea" as it will be when the great earthquake of Zech. 14:5 occurs, with absolute confidence that it will be fulfilled. Those with that kind of faith will be there to witness it on that day, providing that their earnest prayers for the fulfillment of God's purpose is matched by a readiness to forgive those who may have trespassed against them – V.25-26.

V.27-33 – While teaching in the temple, the chief priests, scribes and the elders of the people demanded of him – "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?" This disingenuous question is brilliantly dealt with by turning it back on them – "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me." This presented a real snare for them. If they said of John that he was sent from heaven, then Jesus would ask "Why did ye not then believe him?" If they said he was not sent by God, the people would stone them. Because they wouldn't accept John, neither would they make a positive decision about Christ – "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

August 17

1 Kings 12

The following summary of the character of Rehoboam is extracted from the study notes titled "The Kings of Israel and Judah" (published 1974-75) by the present writer. Details of his antecedents and a harmony of the records of his life can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Rehoboam was born one year before Solomon ascended the throne and grew up knowing nothing but the prosperity, peace and opulence of his father's reign. This fact undoubtedly contributed to his lack of character development, his indiscretion, and his pronounced lack of sympathy for the common people.

Acceding to the throne at the age of 41 on the death of Solomon, Rehoboam faced a crucial moment at Shechem when he appeared before the people to receive confirmation of his sovereignty over the whole kingdom. Everything depended upon a correct reading of the temper of the people and a wise decision to ameliorate their conditions of service to the monarchy. Instead, he manifested all the characteristics of a man who had been brought up as a spoilt child, living in the 'lap' of luxury and ease, growing up a stranger to hardship and work, and believing his position and status in life to be an inherent and inalienable right. Rehoboam's inexperience and complete lack of political finesse and discretion stood in sharp contrast to the political acumen and cunning of Jeroboam the champion of the common people. He was simply no match for the wily and campaign hardened Jeroboam. God had clearly foreseen that Rehoboam by his own folly and greed would bring about a set of circumstances resulting in the division of the Kingdom (1 Kings 11:11-13,35-36).

During his reign Rehoboam encouraged the growth of his father's idolatry so that heathen abominations flourished in Jerusalem and Judah. Even the lascivious worship of Ashtoreth was allowed to exist by the side of the worship of Yahweh and the worst immoralities were tolerated (1 Kings 14:22-24). Two basic reasons for his idolatry may be suggested. Firstly, his mother was an Ammonitess (a "strange woman" whom Solomon had married even before he ascended the throne) and this is twice emphasised (1 Kings 14:21,31). Her influence upon Solomon and the young Rehoboam was most probably corrupting (1 Kings 11:5). Secondly, the example of his father must have had a telling effect upon him. It was Solomon who had taught him to "train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6), yet Solomon turned to idolatry, setting his son an example which he was quick to follow.

The only wisdom manifested by Rehoboam during his reign was the thoughtful manner in which he dispersed his family throughout the cities of Judah and trained his sons in the affairs of state (2 Chron. 11:18-23). This perhaps reveals that he had learnt something about political survival from the disastrous events at Shechem. But when it is remembered that this was the man who as a boy was the object of the diligent and wise instruction of his father revealed in the Proverbs, Rehoboam was a bitter disappointment both to God and his people. He was a classic example of the pointlessness of sound instruction which is not supported by a sound and consistent example in the parents. Solomon's legacy to the nation was also his legacy to Rehoboam. The foundations of truth and purity had been undermined and Rehoboam was content merely to emulate the divided allegiance of his father to his destruction. He left the ecclesia in a decayed and listless state after 17 years of steady decline.

V.1-24 – "Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king" – Wisdom was required as a restless and aggrieved nation, heavily burdened by the taxation and levies of Solomon's rule, sought some relief. Foolishly, Rehoboam rejected the counsel of his older and experienced advisors and accepted that of his younger contemporaries. It was a disaster ending in the death of his Minister of Taxation, Adoram. God had used the folly of Rehoboam to fulfil his promise to Jeroboam via Ahijah the Shilonite. Rehoboam was warned off attempting to recover the 10 tribes by force by another prophet.

V.25-33 – "Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam" – The test of faith and implicit trust in the promises of God was immediately applied to Jeroboam, and he failed miserably. Two golden calves were made and placed in Bethel and Dan to divert his people from making their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times a year as they were

required to do under the Law (Deut. 16:16). He appointed his own priesthood and changed the date of the festivals, and true to human nature – “this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan” (much further than Bethel or Jerusalem). Flesh will go to any lengths and make almost any sacrifice in order to satisfy its own desires, but is remarkably reluctant when confronted with the responsibilities of the Truth.

Jeremiah 38

V.1-6 – The euphoria that attended the lifting of the siege by Nebuchadnezzar to fend off the challenge of the Egyptian army coming up from the south-west was now gone. The Babylonians were back in the 10th year of Zedekiah and from his cell of incarceration Jeremiah delivered another edict from Yahweh that caused him to be branded as a man of treason – “He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.” The princes of the ‘Egypt party’ who now largely controlled the government as Zedekiah lapsed into indecisiveness and equivocation, insisted that Jeremiah be executed for treason and for undermining the resolve of the defenders – “Lo! he is in your hand; for the king is not one who is able to do anything against you” (Rotherham). Execution was avoided, but a fate just as bad overtook God’s courageous prophet as he was lowered into a sewer and sank in the mud.

V.7-13 – But Jeremiah was not without friends, and Ebedmelech an Ethiopian eunuch made representations to the king on his behalf. With 30 men (everyone was weak from lack of food), and with rotten rags tied together they extracted him from the mire. For this act Ebedmelech was promised that his life would be preserved in the coming events – Jer. 39:16-18.

V.14-28 – “Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into **the third entry** that is in the house of Yahweh: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me” – This entry was the “corridor of the bodyguard,” a passage between the palace and the Temple (a secret place). Wary of Zedekiah’s capriciousness, Jeremiah hedged until given a guarantee of protection, but his message was consistent with previous prophecies that surrender to the Chaldeans was the only safe option. He appealed to the king to put his trust in Yahweh and not fear the princes, but to no avail. The intrigue of that time was staggering. Why do men not trust the Word of God?

Mark 12

V.1-12 – The parable of the vineyard is drawn from Isa. 5:1-7. Note the citations and allusions below (in bold blue):

Isa. 5:1 – “Now will I sing to my **wellbeloved** a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My **wellbeloved** (**Mark 12:6**) hath a **vineyard** (**Mark 12:1**) in a **very fruitful hill**.” (the underlined phrase is two words in the Hebrew – *ben shemen* – son, or family builder of oil = the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh – “Having yet therefore one son, his **wellbeloved**, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son” – **Mark 12:6**)

2 And he **fenced it** (“**set an hedge about it**” – **Mark 12:1**), and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also **made a winepress therein** (“**digged a place for the winefat**” – **Mark 12:1**); and he looked **that it should bring forth grapes** (“**might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard**” – **Mark 12:2**), and it brought forth wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah (**“husbandmen” – Mark 12:1,2,7,9**), judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

5 And now go to; I will tell you **what I will do to my vineyard** (**“What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?” – Mark 12:9**): I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but **behold oppression** (**“at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.” – Mark 12:4-5**); for righteousness, but behold a cry.

V.13-17 – What follows are two attempts to destroy Christ by the Pharisees and the Herodians (the name of a political party among the Jews, which derived its name from the support it gave to the dynasty of Herod) who throw their best at him, but are humiliated. The mealy-mouthed introduction by the Pharisees on the propriety of paying taxes to the Romans, receives a curious response – “Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it,” and when brought, “Whose is this image and superscription?” Stunned, they have no option but to say, “Caesar's” and were blown away when he said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” What could they say? “they marvelled at him.”

V.18-27 – The Sadducees, seeing the Pharisees humiliated, thought they could do better. They laid out a scenario involving the Levirate law about a woman who ended up having seven brothers as her husbands who all died childless. “In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife,” they asked, doubtless quite confident they had Jesus stumped. Sadducees, heavily Hellenized with Greek philosophy did not believe in the resurrection, or angels, but actually knew better – “Ye do err, **not** knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” The word “not” here is *me* (the subjective negation – see below on V.24), and indicates that they did in fact “know the scriptures,” but deliberately chose to ignore the implications of what they contained. The Lord's response was brilliant. Firstly, he points out that immortals in the Kingdom will not marry like the **angels** (which they did not believe in, but knew they existed because the Scriptures said so), and then hits them with “And as touching the dead, that they **rise**: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.” God calls “those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17).

V.24 – “And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know **not** the scriptures, neither the power of God?” Another small point for the technically minded. The Greek word in bold “not” in verse 24 is *me* – the subjective negation = no, not. There are two words in Greek for negation. The other is *ou* (you might see we derive two English words from these – namely, “me” and “you”. “*Me*” is subjective, i.e. about yourself; whereas “*ou*” is objective, i.e. someone else, not you! When these two words are used in tandem in the N.T. they represent an absolute negation – “No way” as we say. What significance might this have in

the current context? The Lord is not referring to their ignorance of the O.T. Scriptures. He is exposing their deliberate rejection of them! By saying “Ye know not the scriptures” the Greek equivalent of what he said in his own language (the subjective negation), means they were willingly ignorant of what Exodus 3 taught. They had an inkling that God could only call Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob if they had a future existence on the principle of Rom. 4:17 – “God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were,” but they dismissed it out of hand in order to uphold their own Hellenist views of the resurrection (Acts 23:8).

V.28-34 – One of their scribes of the Law stepped forward thinking he could salvage something from the wreckage in favour of Judaism – “Which is the first commandment of all?” The Lord’s citation of Deut. 6:5 would have been music to this scribe’s ears, but the Lord was not finished and added, “And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” This scribe who had come with dubious motives as we learn from Matt. 22:34-35 and Luke 10:25 was nevertheless more amenable than the Pharisees and Sadducees. His intelligent and perceptive response was commended by Christ – “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” Whether he ever escaped from Judaism and ritualism we do not know.

V.35-40 – After the scribe “no man after that durst ask him any question.” The time had come for his critics to be silenced. They ‘knew’ the Scriptures, but did not read them carefully enough. “How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, The LORD (Yahweh) said to **my Lord**, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? (Ps. 110:1). All Jews knew that a son could not be lord to his father. End of story – Jesus was the Son of God – “the common people heard him gladly,” and so he warned them of the scribes – “Beware of the scribes” whose religion was self-serving and hypocritical. They would be known by their fruits.

V.41-44 – As “Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain **poor widow**, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing,” he took the opportunity to impress the truth of what the scribe had said in V.32-33 – “to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and **sacrifices**.” The widow could not have made a greater **sacrifice** than she had – “For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her **want** did cast in all that she had, even **all her living**.” For the rich and well to do it was no sacrifice at all. They were more interested in the loud clang as their coins clattered down the throat of one of the 13 metal sopherim (trumpet shaped opening of the money chests) causing everyone to look in amazement at their ‘generosity’ and ‘righteousness’ – Matt. 6:1-4.

August 18

1 Kings 13

V.1-13 – The story of the man of God from Judah is one of the most heart-wrenching stories of the King’s record – “And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of Yahweh unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense” – At the very instant that Jeroboam went up to offer incense upon his altar, the man of God appeared. This was the all-important inaugural ceremony of Jeroboam’s own festival, and of his altar at Bethel. Connected with it was his confirmation in the eyes of Israel as their king and spiritual leader. It

was vitally important that all things go well at this inauguration of his own system of worship. Fittingly, at the crucial moment God intervened to condemn his **system of religion**, hence, “he cried against the **altar**.” The long range prophecy of Josiah who fulfilled it 308 years later was given. Jeroboam had appointed priests from “the lowest (*qatsah* – an extremity; from the fringes) of the people” (12:31) and the condemnation was “upon thee (the altar) shall he offer the priests” – The non-Levitical priesthood was one of the most abhorrent features of Jeroboam’s system. “And he gave a sign the same day...the **ashes** that are upon it shall be poured out” – “ashes” – *deshen* – the fat. This was the residue of the sacrifices consisting of ashes mingled with the fat. Under the Law it was holy and was removed from the altar and deposited in a clean place (Lev. 1:16; 4:12; 6:10). “Poured out” – *shaphak* has the idea of spilling forth. This not only ceremonially defiled the altar but also negated the sacrifice. God was thus demonstrating that the fat of the sacrifice which was exclusively His as a symbol of the total surrender of the human will and feelings, had been totally rejected in this case. Jeroboam’s right hand put forth to command arrest of the prophet immediately withered in proof of Ps. 137:5 – “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.” He tried bribery instead, but is repudiated by the prophet’s declaration, “For so was it charged me by the word of Yahweh, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.” This is curious. Why go out a different way? The man of God was not to give the impression to any of Jeroboam’s subjects that he was coming out of the land of Judah to attend the inaugural ceremonies as a worshipper. Those who saw him go in did not see him come out. Those who saw him leave would have thought him to be an Israelite leaving his nation. He was not to give the impression that it was acceptable to go backwards and forwards from Judah to Israel. He had to **go out** “another way”!

V.11-34 – The sons of “an old prophet in Bethel” who were in attendance at the inaugural ceremony informed their father of the prophecy of the man of God from Judah, and he pursued after him. So keen was he to have the company of someone of his own views on Jeroboam’s apostasy that he told lies about a message from an angel. Foolishly, the man of God returned with the prophet of Bethel who then was inspired uncomfortably to condemn his new found friend for his disobedience. The manner of his death became a parable of the demise of Jeroboam. Like Jeroboam, he set out riding the ass (a symbol of Israel), but because of failure under trial, Yahweh would be in the way like a lion to destroy him, though not Israel (Hos. 5:14). The old prophet mourned for, and buried the man of God in a tomb that Josiah left untouched 308 years later when he fulfilled the latter’s prophecy. Hypocrisy is corrosive – “**After this thing** Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but **made again** of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.” It is evident that after the prophecy of the man of God, Jeroboam had changed his mind and sacked his priests, but when he heard of the death of the man of God he reverted to his apostate approach. The plans of God are often affected negatively by hypocrisy.

Jeremiah 39

V.1-2 – “In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it” – This is a reminder of the beginning of the siege, and the resumption of the siege and its outcome after a brief period when Nebuchadnezzar had to deal with the oncoming Egyptian army – “And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up.”

V.3-10 – When Zedekiah saw the Babylonian princes between the two walls he knew the game was up and fled at night, but was overtaken appropriately near Jericho where the nation's history in the Land had begun. Taken north to Riblah (in Syria today on the Orontes) Zedekiah saw his sons killed before his eyes were punctured by Nebuchadnezzar's arrow. The city was burnt and the last captives carried off to Babylon by Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard who "left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah" (this included the Rechabites of Jer. 35, though they would not have been interested in the vineyards).

V.11-18 – "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee" – It is clear Nebuchadnezzar had heard about Jeremiah and his prophecies. This fact in itself would have secured any who had taken Jeremiah's advice to surrender to the Babylonians. That is also indicated by the fact that many survivors were taken as captives to Babylon. Jeremiah was committed to the care of Gedaliah. Another survivor of this crisis was Ebedmelech the Ethiopian who had shown kindness to Jeremiah.

Mark 13

The harmony of the three records of the Olivet Prophecy included in the comments on Mark 13 on February 17 can also be found in **Appendix 7** of this document. A full set of expository Bible marking notes are also available in **Appendix 6** of the **July** document. Additionally, a rebuttal of the recent idea that the Olivet Prophecy is all about the events of AD 70 and does not concern the Second Advent of Christ can also be found in **Appendix 7** of this document.

It is not intended to repeat here the extensive comments on Matt. 24 in **July** pages 67-69, however, a few observations on some matters that are exclusive to Mark's record will be made.

V.3 – "as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him **privately**" – Two sets of brothers were the only ones present when Christ delivered this prophecy. This gives some meat to his warning in V.12 – "Now the **brother shall betray the brother** to death."

V.32-37 – In the light of recent suggestions that the Olivet Prophecy is all about the events of AD 70 and does not involve Christ's return to the earth, how can it be demonstrated that Mark 13:32-37 belong to the period of the Second Advent? By context and plain facts! Ask yourself, did Christ know the time of AD 70. Yes, he did. How? From the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, which is why he could say in Matt. 10:23 – "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (meaning of course at the head of the armies of the people of the Prince). It is also clear that when Christ mentions the "abomination of desolation" in Matt. 24:15 that he is referring to Dan. 9:27 (70 weeks prophecy). So, if he knew the time of the events of AD 70, how can he say in Mark 13:32 (and its companion accounts) – "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, **neither the Son**, but the Father." When he spoke those words, he didn't know the exact timing of his second advent (he did once he arrived in heaven to take over the role of Michael the archangel). So, Mark 13:32-37 can only apply in its absolute sense to the latter days and the second advent of Christ.

"For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch" – This language is so similar to Luke 19:12-17 (parable of the pounds) and Matt. 25:14-30 that it can only refer to Christ's second advent and the prospect of his Judgement Seat.

“And what I say unto you (the two sets of brothers) I say unto all (all disciples of every era), Watch.”

August 19

1 Kings 14

The following summary of the character of Jeroboam is extracted from the study notes titled “The Kings of Israel and Judah” (published 1974-75) by the present writer. Details of his antecedents and a harmony of the records of his life can be found in **Appendix 6**.

The first king of the northern kingdom of Israel left an indelible mark on the history of God’s Ecclesia. He became known as “Jeroboam, the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin” (this Divine epitaph is found **13 times** in the record of Kings and Chronicles). Few men have been given the opportunities presented to Jeroboam, and few men have so blatantly abused them as he did. He was chosen by God as a man with the potential to lead Israel away from the idolatry of Solomon and back to the faithfulness of David’s reign (1 Kings 11:31-39). He must have possessed great potential to develop after David’s pattern, for God promised him “a sure house” long before he became king (1 Kings 11:38). No other king could claim such promises as were made to Jeroboam before his accession. However, the promises were conditional upon faith and obedience, and these qualities were soon to be put to the test. Sadly for Israel, Jeroboam was found dreadfully wanting even before he came to power.

The first indication of the ambition that was to destroy Jeroboam appears in 1 Kings 11:40; “Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam.” Why? Who told Solomon that Jeroboam was to be his successor? We know from 1 Kings 11:29 that only Ahijah and Jeroboam knew God’s intentions (“they two were alone”). The record is explicit on this point however. 1 Kings 11:26 says Jeroboam pre-empted the Divine timetable for the transition of power by “lifting up his hand against the king.” He did not take God at His word and failed to wait for the death of Solomon which he was clearly told would be the point at which he would accede to the throne (1 Kings 11:34-35).

Ambition proved stronger than faith and soon blinded him altogether. Indiscretion quickly followed as Jeroboam fled into Egypt to escape Solomon, and became familiar with the gods of that country, and in particular with Apis (the young bull). It seems almost certain that the apostasy of Jeroboam in introducing the worship of the golden calves into Israel can be traced to his experiences in Egypt. Upon the death of Solomon he quickly returned to Israel, anticipating the fulfilment of Ahijah’s prophecy. Jeroboam was an industrious and capable man, endowed with the ability to lead men (1 Kings 11:26-28). Despite his long absence he immediately assumed the role of negotiator for the discontented amongst the ten tribes, and from this position as leader of an influential minority he rapidly advanced to become the champion of the people and their popular choice as king.

This rapid progress speaks volumes concerning Jeroboam’s character. He was obviously a persuasive individual; a natural leader with an irresistible personality that easily captivated the hearts of a work-worn and sorely burdened people searching for a spokesman to espouse their cause and argue it with force before the king-elect. He was in every sense “the peoples man”, a social-democrat who contended for the people (see the meaning of his name), but who also had an eye for the achievement of strong personal ambitions.

The apostasy of Jeroboam demonstrates a complete absence of faith and is directly attributable to his ambition to retain power over his subjects. His blatant idolatry, tampering with Divine

appointments, and the unconcealed attempt to bribe the man of God from Judah, all resulted from this singular motivation. He has gone down in history as the man who initiated a religious system in Israel that finally destroyed it (2 Kings 17:21-23).

There are some remarkable comparisons between the lives of Saul and Jeroboam. Both had humble beginnings and great potential; were Divinely appointed but lacked faith; turned to disobedience and became idolaters, and then stubbornly resisted any attempts to turn them from their evil ways. The problem in the lives of both men was identical; pride and ambition to hold on to power at all costs.

V.1-20 – “At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick” – It was fitting that the aging Ahijah the Shilonite who had given the 10 pieces of his coat to Jeroboam should be the one to condemn him and his house. Knowing he could not go himself to Ahijah, he sent his disguised wife to ask about the future of their sick son. Yahweh forewarned the nearly blind Ahijah and he passed on the crushing message. The boy would die and Jeroboam would have no lineage to continue his dynasty – “and will cut off from Jeroboam every male” (a preferred translation to the KJV). The heir to the throne died, but was of higher quality than his father – “for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward Yahweh God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.” Jeroboam had started Israel on a course that would ultimately lead to their destruction. Not one of the subsequent rulers departed from the apostasy of Jeroboam. After a 22 year reign he died, “and Nadab his son reigned in his stead,” and continued his father’s policies.

V.21-31 – “And Judah did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done” – Rehoboam’s reign was a disaster, “For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree,” and “there were also sodomites in the land.” Yahweh had had enough “and it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem” and stripped it of its wealth, including Solomon’s gold shields which fittingly Rehoboam replaced with shields of brass (flesh). An important statement is made that had framed the character of Rehoboam’s successor – “there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.” After a reign of 17 years from 930-914 BC Rehoboam died 5 years before Jeroboam.

Jeremiah 40

V.1-6 – “**The word** that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had **let him go from Ramah**” – This, and the four following chapters, record the events which occurred in Judah from the taking of Jerusalem to the retreat of the remnant of the people to Egypt; and contain several prophecies of Jeremiah concerning them there; which were “the word which came to Jeremiah from Yahweh.” Jeremiah, after being freed from prison, continued among the Jews, till he was bound, with others of them, and carried to Ramah; where he was set a liberty in the manner described here. This is a clarification of chapter 39:11-14. It is evident that Nebuzaradan either did not receive Nebuchadnezzar’s commandment about Jeremiah, or ignored it, until he got to Ramah, for Jeremiah was put in chains and carted off with other captives to Ramah. Being released with adequate supplies, “Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.”

V.7-16 – Confusion and conspiracies plagued the denuded land and it was not long before rival groups began to jostle for power and control. “Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan” (Josiah’s faithful prime minister) had great difficulty in restoring some kind of order

and of convincing survivors that the best policy was to serve the king of Babylon. Many who had fled from the Babylonian invasion to foreign lands returned making the task of restoring order more difficult. One group led by “Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields” (i.e. the remnant of Judah’s army) were highly suspicious of another group led by “Ishmael the son of Nethaniah” claiming they intended to assassinate Gedaliah (with good reason as it turned out), and wanted to eliminate him, but he did not believe them. It was a situation almost certain to fail, and it did.

Mark 14

V.1-11 – The chief priests and scribes were looking for an opportunity to arrest Jesus, and couldn’t believe their luck when Judas Iscariot turned up to betray him. This arose out of Judas being rebuked by the Lord after Mary had anointed him with expensive ointment and he criticized her for it (he was a thief). There is an important exhortation here when the Lord said of Mary, “She hath done what she could.” If everyone did what they could in ecclesial life there would be much to commend.

V.12-25 – The disciples asked, “Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?” Sending two of his disciples he gave them a sign – “there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water.” Men did not normally carry water, for it was a woman’s task. The disciples “found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve,” and immediately issued the challenge, “Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.” Judas was revealed as the betrayer, but the disciples did not perceive it. The memorial feast was instituted with the promise that it would culminate in the Lord sharing it with his faithful disciples in the Kingdom.

V.26-31 – A further challenge came on the way to the garden of Gethsemane – “All ye shall be offended because of me this night,” citing Zech. 13:7. Peter exceeded his companions with assertions of his unwavering loyalty. It was to be a major crossroad in his life.

V.32-42 – Taking the inner circle of the disciples, Peter, James and John into a quiet place in the garden, the Lord made three plaintive prayers to his Father, who succoured him by sending an angel (Luke 22:43) because each time Jesus returned to his three disciples they were asleep. His words to them – “The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak,” also applied to him. In each prayer he said firmly in conclusion, “nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt,” for his spirit was willing to obey his Father “to the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8), but like his disciples he was saddled with a nature that was “weak” and naturally recoiled from the horror of crucifixion that awaited him. There was no other way, and he knew it, but that didn’t prevent his nature working the same way as ours would have under the same circumstances. The difference was that he would remain firm and loyal to his Father right to the end, whereas Peter and the other disciples would run away to save themselves, and even deny they knew him. No wonder he was determined to destroy this weak nature on the tree.

V.43-52 – The arresting party from the high priest arrived led by Judas who gave them a sign – “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.” A more heinous betrayal is hard to imagine (Luke 22:48). Peter hacked off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s servant but was commanded to put away his weapon. As the Lord upbraided the surreptitiousness of the betrayal, his disciples “all forsook him, and fled.” Another who “fled from them naked” appears to be John Mark, the writer of the Gospel.

V.53-65 – The trial recorded here before Caiaphas was the second of **six** the Lord was to endure. He was first brought before Annas (the effective high priest and father-in-law to

Caiaphas – John 18:13.34), and then taken to Caiaphas. Peter followed at a safe distance and snuck into the high priest's house "and warmed himself at the fire." He saw "many false witnesses" come to this farcical trial who could not agree, until two schooled 'witnesses' twisted John 2:19 – "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands," when Jesus actually spoke of his body, but these could not agree either. The high priest theatrically stood up and berated Jesus who remained silent (Isa. 53:7), until an oath of adjuration compelled him to respond – "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Ps. 110:1). Accused of blasphemy, Jesus was condemned to death and brutally treated and scorned blasphemously after being blindfolded

V.66-72 – Peter learnt how true the statement was that "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Whereas the three plaintive prayers of Jesus in the garden saw an increasing resolution each time, it was the reverse for Peter. The first charge that he was a disciple of Jesus produced a relatively mild "I don't know what you are talking about" response. The second "he denied with an **oath**, I do not know the man," and the third time, "But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak." The rooster immediately signaled his failure to keep his commitment and he departed weeping bitterly. Etched on his brain was the image of his Master looking sadly at him as he denied him the third time. Sometimes necessary development in eternal things can be very painful and embarrassing.

Three times in this chapter the Lord calls himself "the Son of man" (V.21,41,62). This is consistent with the fact that there are 84 occurrences of this title in the four Gospel records (fully 80 are used by the Lord of himself). By contrast the title "the son of God" occurs 25 times in the four Gospel records and the Lord only uses it four times of himself. There must be a reason for this.

We have no difficulty understanding the title "the son of God," but the title "the Son of man" is more challenging. Is this title emphasizing Christ's human connection with those he came to save, or, is there another purpose? The latter is the case. This title is drawn from Ps. 8:4, Ps. 80:17 and Ps. 144:3 where Christ is clearly referred to.

There are 108 occurrences of the phrase "son of man" in the O.T. – 92 of those of Ezekiel the prophet as a type of Christ (because he is only a type, the definite article is absent). In the psalms referred to above "the son of man" occurs because it refers to Jesus Christ.

The context of Psalms 8 and 80 are about Yahweh "visiting" (*paqad* – to attend to, muster, number, reckon, visit, punish, appoint, look after, care for) His son to ensure that sin and death were overcome to enable the salvation of the race (see Ps. 80:17). It is a title that emphasizes Christ's delegated authority from his Father to exercise dominion over all carnal things. David wrote Ps. 8 after killing Goliath which he saw as a type of the death of Christ to destroy the *diabolos* (see Heb. 2:6-15 where Ps. 8 is cited).

While reading the four Gospel accounts it is worthwhile focusing on the context where the title "the Son of man" occurs and ask the question – 'Is this context about the Lord's sharing of our nature, or about him exercising dominion over carnal things?' You are unlikely to find one where the emphasis is on Christ's humanity. They are almost exclusively about his delegated authority from his Father to exercise dominion.

August 20

1 Kings 15

The following summary of the character of Abijam/Abijah is extracted from the study notes titled "The Kings of Israel and Judah" (published 1974-75) by the present writer. Details of his antecedents and a harmony of the records of his life can be found in **Appendix 6**.

The reign of **Abijah** the son of Rehoboam lasted only 3 years and was marked by constant warfare combined with rapid progress in the building up of Judah's armed forces. Abijah was above all else a man of war. He was a belligerent character who scorned the "cold war" approach of his father against Israel by taking the war boldly to Jeroboam in an attempt to recover the 10 tribes to Judah, even though his army was outnumbered 2 to 1.

The scriptural record concentrates attention on only this one aspect of Abijah's life - his perpetual war against Jeroboam. Aggressiveness and belligerence characterise his short reign, and in seeking a reason for this fact attention must focus on the extraordinary words of 1 Kings 15:6. The context is the reign of Abijah and the record curiously states: "there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life," and then significantly concludes in verse 7 with the statement: "and there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam." Warfare was the heritage left to Abijah by Rehoboam his father. From the days of his early childhood and right through his development into manhood and up to the time of his accession to the throne, he had known nothing else but the bitterness and hatred of Rehoboam, who from the division of the kingdom until his death (17 years later) had maintained a continual state of war with Jeroboam.

Abijah was a product of his home life; a young man who perpetuated the hatred of his father for the house of Jeroboam. There is an important lesson in this. Where a home is filled with bitterness, resentment, vindictiveness and revengefulness as was the house of Rehoboam, the inevitable result will be the development of the same characteristics in the children who are brought up in that environment. The principle holds true; "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). These words were originally spoken to Rehoboam by his father Solomon and therefore were well known to him. His son Abijah was a perfect example, in a negative way, of that principle.

A close examination of Abijah's oration to Jeroboam and his army on Mt. Zemaraim as recorded in 2 Chron. 13:4-12 reveals that he was an intelligent man with an understanding of the requirements of the Law of Moses and its relationship to Israel's national life. Note for example his reference to "a covenant of salt" (verse 5), a phrase which only occurs in Num.18:19 in respect to the priesthood of Aaron and his family. However, in this speech it is obvious that his mind had been occupied solely with Israel's failure to keep the Law, to the total exclusion of his own nation's glaring weaknesses. He seemed to be blind to Judah's idolatry, and the apathy and laxity which had carried over from Rehoboam's reign which he had done nothing to eradicate. It is a common failing of self-righteous people to be hyper-critical of others while blind to their own faults (Matt.7:1-5). Sadly, aggressive indignation towards others in ecclesial life is sometimes a cloak for private corruption, acting it seems as a kind of salve for the conscience.

What counts in the end is God's view of things, and in the final analysis Yahweh judged Abijah as a wicked king who had followed in the sins of his father. Like many others after him he failed to follow the example of David his forefather whose heart was "perfect", or as the word implies a safe repository, for Divine things; and for whose sake alone Yahweh preserved David's seed on Judah's throne (1 Kings 15:3-5).

V.1-8 – “Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah” – His other name “Abijah” means “Yah his father,” but he was in truth the son of Rehoboam whose ways had shaped his son and successor, particularly the ongoing state of war between Israel and Judah (V.6, as noted above). He certainly was not like his great-grandfather David, for he pursued Rehoboam’s corrupt religion. The war between Abijah and Jeroboam is described in 2 Chron. 13:3-20 where there was a mixed outcome, but Judah prevailed because they trusted in Yahweh. After a 3 year reign Abijah died and was succeeded by his son Asa who became Judah’s first and greatest reformer.

V.9-24 – Asa came to the throne of Judah 2 years before the death of Jeroboam. He set about cleaning up the idolatry in Judah and removed his grandmother (not mother as V.10 suggests) Maachah the daughter of Absalom (called Abishalom here) who was “queen” or ‘principal lady’ in the kingdom. She had disgraced herself by setting up an unseemly idol in her house. A much fuller account is provided in the companion account of 2 Chron. 14 to 16 of his reformation and the war with Baasha and his foolish alliance with Syria and the consequences of it. It is a sad story which we will leave until we get to 2 Chronicles.

V.25-34 – The dynasty of Jeroboam perished in the early reign of his son Nadab when “Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon” during a campaign against the Philistines. The cruel and rapacious Baasha wiped out the entire family of Jeroboam fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah, but continued the policies and religion of Jeroboam for the next 24 years.

Jeremiah 41

The administration of Gedaliah set up by Nebuchadnezzar lasted less than 2 months before it was completely wiped out by “Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal” (a descendent of David – 2 Sam. 5:16). The rivalries and political intrigues of the time were beyond anyone to control and Gedaliah fell victim to the man he had been warned about in Jer. 40:14. Similarly, Ishmael wiped out 70 of a group of 80 survivors of the captivity who came with the marks of their apostasy, with only 10 surviving due to claiming to have much needed supplies for Ishmael’s band. On their way to secure them, Johanan the son of Kareah arrived to deal with Ishmael and the captives being carried away went over to him. It was at this juncture that the idea of fleeing to Egypt was hatched and this became Jeremiah’s next big problem. Two matters of interest emerge in this chapter.

V.7,9 – The pit into which Ishmael cast the bodies of his victims was that which king Asa of Judah (subject of the previous comments) had dug to fend off the threat of Baasha, although there is no mention of it in the records of Kings and Chronicles.

V.17 – “they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of **Chimham**, which is by Bethlehem” – This seemingly incidental remark confirms that David and Solomon had kept the former’s promise to Barzillai the Gileadite to provide an inheritance in Judah to Chimham his son – 2 Sam. 19:37-38; 1 Kings 2:7.

Mark 15

V.1-5 – Christ endured six trials between his arrest in the garden and his crucifixion. Brought to Pilate the Roman governor, he was asked what province he came from and was sent to Herod who disdained and brutalized him (Luke 23:7-11) and sent him back to Pilate. This is the final trial that led to his condemnation. Apart from confirming that Pilate had rightly said that he was king of the Jews – “Thou sayest,” “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb” he opened not his mouth so that “Pilate marvelled.”

V.6-20 – Pilate, caught between conscience, an apoplectic wife and charges of treason against Caesar condemned Jesus of Nazareth and released an insurrectionist and murderer. The Lord was mocked and brutally treated before being crucified.

V.21 – “And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, **the father of Alexander and Rufus**, to bear his cross.” An unusual feature of this passage is the seemingly gratuitous reference to Simon being the father of Alexander and Rufus. This is clearly inserted to point to something in the future. Cyrene was an ancient Greek colony and Roman city in northeastern Libya in North Africa. There were many visitors to Judea from that region – Acts 2:10 – “Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the **parts of Libya about Cyrene**, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes.” Simon was apparently from that region. Being a Roman city it is possible that he had a connection with Rome. There is a “Rufus” mentioned in Rom. 16:13 as a member of the Roman ecclesia. If in fact this Rufus is the one mentioned in Mark 15:21 (as many believe), then his father’s taking up of the cross and following Jesus (Matt. 16:24) may have been a crucial moment in his life.

V.38 – “And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” As noted in the comments on Ex. 30, the veil was a type of the flesh of Christ (Heb. 10:20). Being rent from top to bottom indicates that this was a work of God, as Peter informed the Jews on the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:22-24 – “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: **him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

See comments on Matt. 27:27-66 on **July 26** as the records are very similar.

August 21

1 Kings 16

V.1-7 – The following summary of the life and character of **Baasha** is extracted from the King’s notes – Baasha was an ideal choice as Yahweh’s judge to remove Jeroboam’s house in accordance with Ahijah’s prophecy (1 Kings 14:10-11). It also seems fitting that he should be the son of another Ahijah (1 Kings 15:27). Ruthless ambition motivated this man to seek the throne of Israel and so he became an effective instrument of judgement in God’s hands.

Although Baasha reigned for 24 years, little is recorded of him except for the cruel and ruthless manner in which he disposed of Jeroboam’s posterity, and the warlike stance that he adopted towards Judah. He was obviously a cold, unfeeling man, driven only by considerations of personal status, power and profit.

Perhaps the most significant thing recorded of Baasha is the unheeding manner in which he continued the apostasy of Jeroboam despite the judgements that he had personally administered on Jeroboam’s house. Both the words of Jehu the prophet and the final summary of his reign recorded in 1 Kings 16:7 make it clear that Baasha was condemned because of his failure to reflect upon the reasons why God had destroyed Jeroboam’s house. If that house had been utterly destroyed because of idolatry and apostasy, then Baasha should have realized that he too would be destroyed if he perpetuated Jeroboam’s apostasy.

V.8-28 – As with the dynasty of Jeroboam, that of Baasha ended exactly the same way in the 2nd year of Elah his son. Zimri, one of his captains assassinated him during a wild drinking

party and wiped out all Baasha's heritage, but he himself only lasted a week. The captain of the army Omri advanced on Tirzah and Zimri committed suicide by burning the palace over himself. It was not all smooth sailing for Omri either, for another contender for the throne arose in Tibni ("man of straw") who drew away half the population. He and his followers were ruthlessly crushed by Omri, but only after 4 years of brutal conflict (Cp. V.15,23 and 29). Omri was a powerful character and though his reign was relatively short, laid the foundations for much of what was to follow in Israel's history. He founded the city of Samaria and established his son Ahab (Israel's worst king) by his influential counsel – Mic 6:16 – "For **the statutes of Omri are kept**, and all the **works of the house of Ahab**, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing; therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people." It was a formula that would have made Cush and Nimrod proud. For a summary of the reigns and character of Omri and Ahab see **Appendix 6**.

V.29-34 – Ahab became Israel's worst king. Guided by his influential father, he not only continued assiduously the apostasy of Jeroboam, but compounded it by marrying "Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal ("with, or near Baal") king of the Zidonians" who brought with her Baal worship to which Ahab turned with enthusiasm. Samaria became the hub of Baal worship in Israel as Jericho had been, which is why the chapter ends in the way it does.

V.34 – "**In his days** did Hiel the Bethelite **build Jericho**: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of Yahweh, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun" (Josh. 6:26). Joshua's curse fell upon Hiel ("living of God" an ironic misnomer) who lost all his sons in the rebuilding of Jericho. This portended the destiny of Ahab's house which like Hiel's would have no descendants, and foreshadowed the end of Babylon the Great (the latter day counterpart of Nimrod's Baal worship) at the hands of a greater Joshua (Yashua) – the Lord Jesus Christ. It was fitting that a man (Hiel) living at the heart of Jeroboam's apostasy (Bethel) should have ended up rebuilding Jericho. That is where any apostasy ends up.

Jeremiah 42

There can hardly be a worse spiritual state than that which appeared among the remaining people of the Land now under the guidance and protection of "Johanan the son of Kareah" who came to Jeremiah with a seemingly humble appeal for Jeremiah to intercede to God on their behalf. They did not mean a word of it, for when the answer returned that their proposal to flee into Egypt would be disastrous they refused it. They were the arbiters of their own destruction when they involved God in their appeal – "Yahweh be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which Yahweh thy God shall send thee to us. **Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey** the voice of Yahweh our God, to whom we send thee." You cannot bring the Almighty into a promise like this and then repudiate His Word when it doesn't happen to suit the plans you have already made. God made them wait 10 days for an answer (V.7), just as Saul had been made to wait 7 days to test his faith and protestations of obedience. Fear of retribution from the Chaldeans agitated them as had fear of the Philistines done to Saul. In a lengthy address, Jeremiah gave a promise of Divine help if they remained in the Land, but a savage outcome if they went into Egypt against the will of God. He knew they had "dissembled" (*tâ'âh* – to vacillate, that is, reel or stray) in their hearts when they came to him. Anything short of honesty before God is suicidal as Saul found out.

Mark 16

V.1-13 – “when the sabbath was past” – The word “past” is *diaginomai* – to elapse meanwhile. Jewish days ended and began at 6 pm (and in Israel still do). Christ rose from the dead and was immortalized at 6 pm on the Sabbath (see comments on John 20, **April 24** pg. 51) exactly three days and three nights (required by prophecy – Matt. 12:40) after being entombed at 6 pm on Wednesday 14th Abib (see comments on Ex. 16:1 on **February 8**). What we are reading of here is a reference to nearly 12 hours later as the sun began to rise on the first day of the week (we call Sunday). The two Mary’s who had sat and watched Jesus being interred on Wednesday evening were on their way back again early in the morning and were astonished by an earthquake which accompanied the arrival of an angel (Matt. 28:2-4) whose task it was to roll away the stone and sit upon it as a testimony to all, that the Messiah had been raised from the dead (remember – Christ did not need to have open doors to enter and leave any place as an immortal – John 20:19). That angel they found sitting on the right hand side of the now empty tomb. Instructed to go and tell the disciples “they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.” It seems Mary Magdalene lingered, for she was next to encounter the risen Lord and he sent her to his disciples, as he did to the two on the way to Emmaus later that day.

V.14-20 – The disciples were slow to believe that Christ had been raised from the dead despite the reports received, and so he appeared to them “and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” This fact gives real force to Peter’s words in 1 Pet. 1:8 – “Whom having **not seen**, ye love; in whom, though now **ye see him not**, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” That is **our** challenge. He proceeded to give them a commission – (RV) “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” Signs (miracles) would attend their preaching to confirm the word.

August 22

1 Kings 17

For a full verse by verse exposition of this chapter readers are directed to pages 73 to 75 of the study notes “The Kings of Israel and Judah” accessible on web site <https://jimcowie.info> under the Study Notes tab.

V.1 – “Elijah the Tishbite” – Elijah’s name means “Yahweh is El” (power). He was a Tishbite, thought to be the upper Galilean town Thisbe in Naphtali. The record leaves no doubt however that he lived at this time in Gilead. Elijah bursts suddenly onto the scene out of obscurity to make one of the profoundest impacts on ecclesial history of any of God’s prophets. His history covers 9 chapters in Kings (1 Kings 17 to 2 Kings 3). His name is mentioned 69 times in the Old Testament and 30 times in the New Testament. Elijah’s rough and disheveled appearance was legendary (see 2 Kings 1:7-8), and wherever he went he instilled awe in those he encountered. Consistent with the ways of God he was the right man for the times; prepared in the solitude and harshness of Gilead for the work he was called upon to perform.

V.2-7 – Having delivered the message to Ahab that there would be no dew or rain for three and a half years, Elijah is sent to the brook Cherith a deep wadi running into the river Jordan from Gilead opposite Bethshan. Here ravens were to feed him, and water from the brook sustain him until it dried up. This was Elijah’s preparation to meet the widow of Zarephath (black clothing), for like ravens she had difficulty in providing her young food – Job 38:41.

V.8-16 – “Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee” – The name means “refinement; to refine metal”, or “place of the smelting furnace.” It may have acquired this name as a centre for the manufacture of molten images for Baal worship. If it was the home of Jezebel’s idols it was an ideal place for Elijah to hide. Who would think of searching for him next door to Jezebel’s home town? However, it was a long way from Cherith; a distance of some 160 km (100 miles) through a land decimated by intense drought.

V.11 – “and he called to her....Bring me, I pray thee a morsel of bread” – The request to provide water from the town well met immediate response. That was relatively easy to fulfil because water was still available, but now the test is severe. It was tantamount to the test applied to another woman from this area by the Lord in Mark 7:24-30. The principle that had to be acknowledged was; “Let the children first be filled”. The widow’s faith was equal to this.

V.12 – “As Yahweh thy God liveth” – This statement provides the key to the source of her faith. She had heard and **believed a report** about the gaunt and rugged prophet of Gilead in the palace of Ahab (see Luke 4:25). The fulfilment of his edict produced conviction in Yahweh the living God (V.1), the God of Elijah who now amazingly stood before her. She had “but an handful of meal...and a little oil” – These were the essential ingredients of a meal offering under the Law (Lev. 2:1-2), a handful of which was offered on the altar to represent the whole offering. The meal offering spoke of labours produced by the motivating power of the Spirit Word (oil). It was always offered in conjunction with a burnt offering (total dedication) and signified an understanding that profession must be matched by performance. The decision confronting the woman was to either deny Elijah (“Yah is power”) and live on the strength of the flour a little longer and then die a cruel and slow death, or make a “burnt offering” of herself and offer the “handful” of flour in acknowledgment that all belonged to Yahweh. Her fledgling faith in Israel’s God was equal to the challenge and as a result she and her son were sustained with Elijah throughout the drought (V.13-16). There was no famine of ‘the Word’ in her house as there was in Ahab’s domain (Amos 8:11-14).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE WIDOW’S SON – 1 Kings 17:17-24

V.18 – “What have I to do with thee” – Rotherham – “What have I in common with thee, O man of God.” The widow who is described as the “mistress (*baalah*) of the house” in verse 17 interpreted the death of her son as punishment for her past sins which may have been associated with Baal worship. In Elijah’s presence those past failures were magnified by his single-minded uprightness and dedication to the things of God. This is not then the language of recrimination, but of guilt stricken despair.

The dead boy was taken by Elijah to his room in the loft and laid upon his own bed where he made one of the earnest prayers that James refers to (James 5:17). Then identifying himself with the child three times, he prayed again, and life returned to the lad who was presented to his mother.

V.24 – “Now by this I know that thou art a man of God” – This miracle was a final testimony of Elijah’s authority as Yahweh’s representative. The widow’s faith was now mature in the conviction that her past sins had been forgiven. The resurrection was proof of it! In this Elijah was a forerunner of Christ who made the appeal; “believe me for the works sake” (John 14:11). The experience of Elijah at Zarephath was an example of the great work that could be done amongst the humble and insignificant people of the nation in the ‘backyard’ of Jezebel and in the heat of the ‘smelting furnace’. Elijah now had a mission to perform a similar work with 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Jeremiah 43

V.1-13 – The hypocrites now spoke up – “Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshai, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and **all the proud men**, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: Yahweh our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there.” Poor Baruch is next in the firing line – “Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us.” It turned out that they would have been better off going into captivity to Babylon than going down to Egypt, for when they arrived at Tahpanhes the message came that they would not escape Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt either. Jeremiah was to place large stones in the clay pile before the brickkiln at Pharaoh’s palace where the Babylonian king would set up his throne. A worse fate awaited the refugees from Judah. It is never wise to disbelieve God.

1 Corinthians 1

There must be a reason why the Apostle Paul includes Sosthenes in his introduction to the ecclesia at Corinth that was experiencing many problems revealed in this letter. Paul had spent a couple of years in Corinth (Acts 18). He preached that Jesus was the Christ in the synagogue until the resistance and opposition became so strong that he adjourned to the house of Justus next door to the synagogue. With the conversion of the ruler of the synagogue, Crispus and his family (Acts 18:8), Sosthenes became ruler and prosecuted the case against Paul before Gallio (Acts 18:12-16). Sosthenes was severely beaten by the Greeks for his leadership of this “insurrection” and subsequently was converted and joined the Corinthian Ecclesia. It seems he was with Paul at Philippi when the epistle was written. His conversion was a positive influence as Paul dealt with problems between Jews and Gentiles in the fledgling ecclesia in Corinth.

V.10-31 – There were serious divisions in the ecclesia, as well as a raft of other doctrinal and moral issues to address. In Christ it is desirable “that ye all **speak the same thing**, and that there be **no divisions** among you; but that ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind** and in the same judgment.” This is not possible where there are ‘parties’ and cliques who throw their weight behind men and not Christ. Respect of persons is dangerous and detrimental to harmony as was proven by their experience. Self-sacrifice, humility and meekness like that of Christ was the way to overcome party ‘politics’ and restore ecclesial harmony, but what stood in the way was Greek philosophy with its sense of superiority and “we know best” mentality (like the Humanism of today). God chose those who were despised by the Greeks “that no flesh should glory in his presence.” Focus on Christ provides a four part process that leads to eternal life – “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us **wisdom**, and **righteousness**, and **sanctification**, and **redemption**.” The truth, in contrast to philosophy produces Divine wisdom; which in turn develops righteous behaviour; which sets us apart from the world; and leads to life; “that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 2

V.1-6 – “For I determined not to know anything among you, save **Jesus Christ, and him crucified**” – The Apostle was himself the classic representative of a follower of Christ. There was no party spirit with him, or groveling to philosophical nonsense – “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.”

V.6-16 – Everything depended upon a right and proper understanding of the Word of God, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Some modern translations differ from some older translations for 1 Cor. 2:13. For example, the ESV translates – “And we impart this in

words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.” However, Rotherham (and others) translate that verse – “Which we also speak—not in words taught of human wisdom, but in such as are taught of the Spirit, **by spiritual words, spiritual things, explaining.**” This refers to a very important approach. The Bible must be allowed to interpret itself. It has been subject for millennia to men imposing on it their own opinions. “I think it means this,” or “my opinion is that it means this.” The Scriptures actually interpret themselves wonderfully. If a supporting and explanatory passage of Scripture from elsewhere is absent in the exposition of any passage or context, then it must be put on hold until one or more are found. There is always an explanation, or provision of a principle elsewhere. This is why the Old Testament is absolutely indispensable to the interpretation of the New Testament. It is one book from one perfect mind.

August 23

1 Kings 18

V.1-19 – “And it came to pass after many days, that the word of Yahweh came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth” – Three and a half years had passed without rain and the situation was so desperate that Ahab himself and his chief of staff Obadiah went on the hunt for hay to keep their horses alive. This was after a diligent search far and wide for Elijah had failed (V.10). “Obadiah” (“the servant of Yahweh”) was one of the 7,000 faithful in Israel. He had risked his life to feed and save 100 prophets from death at the hands of Jezebel. Despite being Ahab’s right hand man he was diametrically opposed to his policies and to Jezebel’s idolatries. From a Divine perspective this is expressed in the words – “Ahab went **one way** by himself, and Obadiah went **another way** by himself.” The sad part is that Elijah did not know Obadiah or his valiant efforts to save those like Elijah. He treated Obadiah almost as another enemy like Ahab. On confronting Ahab and correcting his misconception of who was really troubling Israel, Elijah issued the challenge to the prophets of Baal and of Astarte that culminated in the drama of Mt Carmel, although the latter were so busy pursuing their morally decadent religion with Jezebel that they did not turn up.

V.20-40 – The whole nation gathered on Mt Carmel and Elijah challenged them, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if Yahweh be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.” His mistake was to say, “I only, remain a prophet of Yahweh; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men” for there were 7,000 people who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18), and what about the hundred Obadiah had saved? This was a big stumblingblock to Elijah that needed correcting (Rom. 11:2-5). Two bullocks were brought and Baal’s prophets spent several hours trying to get a response from their inert god to answer by fire, while Elijah heaped scorn on them so as to increase the impact on the people of God’s answer to his simple prayer which was soon to be seen in such contrast to their frantic gyrations. Elijah built an ‘Israel’ altar of 12 stones, and to emphasize the difference between Baal and Yahweh, had his altar and sacrifice soaked in water. Fire descended from heaven and consumed everything. When “all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Yahweh, he is the God; Yahweh, he is the God.” 450 prophets of Baal were slain while the fervor continued.

V.41-46 – Fervent and persistent prayer brought rain (James 5:17-18), but only after seven trips to look westwards by his servant. Finally, “Lo! a little cloud, like a man’s hand coming up from the sea” (Rotherham) brought the admonition to Ahab – “Harness, and get thee down, lest the rain shut thee in” (ibid). Elijah outran Ahab’s chariot to the gates of Jezreel some 25

miles (40 kms) away. There were grounds for hope of reformation, but it all collapsed because of Elijah's fear of the recalcitrant Jezebel and her iron grip on Ahab.

Jeremiah 44

V.1-14 – The Jews who had been brought to Egypt by Johanan the son of Kareah dispersed to a number of cities and regions probably thinking they could evade the judgements Jeremiah had pronounced. After recounting the reasons why the nation had been overthrown, Jeremiah delivered a stinging rebuke from their God that they were now responsible for destroying the remnant in whom there was some small hope of reform – “Wherefore commit ye **this great evil** against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; in that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt” (V.7-8). They would all perish in ignominy – “none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain” except for Jeremiah, Baruch and Ebedmelech, and perhaps a few others – “for none shall return but such as shall escape” (V.14,28).

V.15-30 – The remnant then signed their own death warrant by rejecting God's message through Jeremiah and justifying their idolatry on the basis that it was all Yahweh's fault, with the women (V.19) in the forefront of the accusation – “since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.” In other words, turning from idolatry to Yahweh only brought suffering. With ingrained apostates it is always someone else's fault that troubles overtake them. They were doomed and what followed confirmed it.

1 Corinthians 3

The Apostle Paul described himself as “a wise master builder” in verse 10. He added that we are all builders, building on the foundation laid by the Apostles – the Lord Jesus Christ (V.11) – “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” He then lists the materials that may be used to construct ‘spiritual buildings’ (V.12) – “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.” The outcome of that labour will be tested at the Judgement Seat (fire being the symbol for judgement). Sadly, some of that labour will have produced outcomes that will not endure the trial of fire (V.13).

As the prophet Azariah said to Asa king of Judah returning from a miraculous victory to continue his reformation (2 Chron. 15:7) – “Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded” (V.14). However, in V.15 Paul says – “If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” Many faithful ‘builders’ will experience sadness at the Judgement Seat when some of those in whose lives they have had a substantial influence are found to be spiritual material that cannot endure the ‘fire’ – “wood, hay, stubble.” But for their faithful service in building they themselves will receive the reward of eternal life.

August 24

1 Kings 19

V.1-3 - “Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done” – The picture painted is of Ahab arriving home to be confronted by his domineering and recalcitrant wife. Though deeply impressed by the events on Carmel he seems to have fully disclosed all to Jezebel without

manifesting his real feelings. Any reformation in Israel depended on Ahab removing Jezebel from a position of influence. He was not strong enough to do this and obviously any resolve he may have had melted in her presence. Elijah panicked on hearing Jezebel's empty threat – "So let the gods do to me," for her gods had proved powerless on Carmel. The problem of Elijah's sense of isolation now becomes apparent. Once Ahab's resolve had withered, Elijah felt that a reformation was hopeless. He did not appreciate that even without the king there was substantial support in the nation for change (V.18). All the people needed was strong leadership. But Elijah fled! – "he arose, and went for his life."

V.4 – So distraught was the prophet he craved death in the wilderness – "he came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die," but God was not done with him yet. "Juniper" is the word *rothem* – the Spanish broom tree with a delicate white flower having a maroon centre, which grows to about 3 metres (8 to 9 feet) high. Its roots provided food for the poor (Job 30:3-4), and were useful as reusable coals when burnt (Ps. 120:4). Elijah did not recognize it, but the juniper tree was a fitting symbol for the humble in Israel who could have sustained him in the hour of need, and been fanned into flame by his zeal to reform the nation. But Elijah wanted all Israel to be eliminated (Rom. 11:2).

V.5-8 – "an angel touched him" - Lit. "an angel touching him." There is drama here. Elijah is wakened by an angel and invited to eat and drink, which he does. But then he falls asleep again and has to be wakened and instructed to eat some more. It does not appear to occur to him that he had been alone, so depressed was he! The point of this incident was to impress Elijah with the fact that even he needed to be confronted twice by the miraculous to respond, but he had given Israel only one chance and then forsook them. He needed to be more patient and persistent like the angel who had to approach him "the second time" (V.7). He needed strength for "forty days and forty nights" (Cp. Moses experiences on the mount of God – Deut. 9:8-9,18). There can be little doubt Elijah's motivation for travelling such an enormous distance 200 miles (320 km) from Beersheba was related to the giving of the Law in Horeb.

V.9-18 – Ensnared in a cave on Mt Horeb (perhaps Moses' cave) Elijah received a searching question – "What doest thou here, Elijah" – There were two objects to this question. Elijah was being asked to consider why he had chosen Horeb, and secondly, what was it about the way God works that brought him to this place. The clear tenor of the question was; "You are in the wrong place, Elijah." His repeated soliloquy did not impress the Almighty. He was not the only one left. Commanded to stand at the lip of the cave, he was exposed to wind, earthquake and fire in succession, but in between there was quietness, for the mighty power involved had "passed by." These mighty phenomena forced him to the rear of the cave and in the silence he finally heard something – "after the fire, the voice of a gentle whisper" (Rotherham). Emerging, he is asked again, "What doest thou **here**, Elijah?" He was so rattled that he mumbled the same soliloquy, and was given a list of instructions including anointing "Hazael to be king over Syria" and "Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel" (neither of which he did – it was left to Elisha), and "Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room" (which he only did reluctantly). What was the purpose of this painful exercise for God's prophet?

The awesome display of Divine power in wind, earthquake and fire was designed to demonstrate to Elijah how people react to the manifestation of raw power. Elijah was commanded to "Go forth, and stand upon the mount," but after this awesome display he was found cowering in fear in the security of the cave from which he does not emerge until he heard the "still small voice." God was teaching him forcefully that just as he needed to be called persistently by a gentle voice after feeling the power of the Divine presence, so Israel now needed a persistent teacher to build upon their new found awe for God. The phrase

“passed by” used here is reminiscent of Ex. 34:6 where the principles are identical. The lesson graphically demonstrated to both Moses and Elijah was that men are not converted by raw power alone. Lasting response only comes as a result of the appeal of a persistent voice (see comments on Matt. 17 on **July 16** pg. 46). This was Peter’s message in 2 Pet. 1:16-21. Israel needed a teacher. What was he doing here?

V.19-21 – The teacher was to be Elisha whom Elijah was to anoint, but typical of this man of wind, earthquake and fire, he “passed by” Elisha after casting his mantle (the symbol of his prophetic office) upon him. Elisha responded by sacrificing the work of the present life for the work of redeeming Israel. This is indicated in the enacted parable – “Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth” (12 the number of Israel). Seeking permission to farewell his family, he killed the oxen for a fellowship meal with his local associates. It was indicative of what was to come – “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; **break up your fallow ground**: for it is time to seek Yahweh” (Hos. 10:12).

Jeremiah 45

V.1 – The trials of Baruch had begun in earnest in the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s reign when he had been the scribe to write out Jeremiah’s prophecies in a scroll (Jer. 36). He had read it publicly and again before the princes, and went into hiding as Jehoiakim sought to kill him and Jeremiah. Now 18 years later, Baruch was in Egypt having gone through all the trials of the invasion and captivity. It was time to be reminded of Yahweh’s message to him via Jeremiah when he had been so deeply depressed by events that saw Jehoiakim burn the scroll written by Baruch – Jer. 36:1-6,23. His name means “blessed,” but he didn’t think so at that time.

V.2-5 – He was reminded that he had said, “Woe is me now! for Yahweh hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.” It was as though he was saying, “I am just a simple scribe, why is this happening to me?” He just wanted peace. God’s response to his complaint was – “Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.” There is a clue in this as to Baruch’s thinking at the time, because God next said – (Rotherham) “Wouldst, thou, then **seek to secure for thyself great things**? Do not seek! For behold me! bringing in calamity upon all flesh, Declareth Yahweh, Nevertheless I will give thee thine own life as a spoil, in all places whithersoever thou goest.” Baruch had a brother named Seraiah (Jer. 32:12; 51:59) who 10 years later accompanied Zedekiah to Babylon. He is described in Jer. 51:59 as “a quiet prince”; literally, “prince of the resting place,” i.e. a quartermaster. It was his business to ride forward each day, and select the place where the king would halt and pass the night. It seems Seraiah occupied the substantial family home which was among the “great houses” Nebuchadnezzar was later to burn down – 2 Kings 25:9 (RV) “And he burnt the house of Yahweh, and the king’s house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every **great (gadol) house**, burnt he with fire.” Baruch could not enjoy the comforts of that “great house” because he was hiding in some nook or cranny for years as Jehoiakim sought to kill him. The depression got to him. It is significant that the word for “great things” is *gadol*. What he had set his mind upon was about to be destroyed. We do well to accept this lesson learnt by Baruch. The destruction of all we see is at hand. The comforts of ‘great houses’ is ephemeral. We must not be like Lot’s wife who sought to remain in hers.

Jeremiah 46

V.1 – “The word of Yahweh which came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations” – The commission of Jer. 1:10 was now to be fulfilled beginning with Egypt to which the refugees of Judah had fled. Its future was grim.

V.2 – “Of Egypt: concerning the army of **Pharaoh-neco**, king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in **Carchemish**, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the **fourth year of Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah, king of Judah.” Pharaoh-neco, on his way to support the declining Assyrians against the rising Babylonians, defeated the army of Josiah, who soon after died at Megiddo (BC 609). After that victory, he defeated the Babylonians, and took Carchemish; and, having fortified it, returned 3 months later to Egypt (installing Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah and taking Jehoahaz to Egypt). Nabopolassar sent his son Nebuchadnezzar with an army against him, defeated him with immense slaughter near the river Euphrates, retook Carchemish, and subdued all the revolted provinces as the balance of the chapter reveals in a somewhat sarcastic manner. Three things are worthy of particular mention.

V.4 – “put on the brigandines” – Brigandines were a coat of mail, especially that which was made scale fashion; one plate overlapping the other, like the scales of fish.

V.18 – “Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come” – The topography of the valley of Jezreel is employed to verify the certainty of Nebuchadnezzar’s arrival.

Invaders came from the north (V.20), and passed between these two prominent eminences using the pass of Megiddo where Josiah died. The ‘hand’ with Tabor and Carmel pointed

to the work of Yahweh’s ‘servant’ – “I will deliver them into the **hand** of those that seek their lives, and into **the hand of Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon.” Egypt was doomed.



V.26-27 are an almost word for word repetition of Jer. 30:10-11 and speak of Israel's ultimate redemption. Egypt's fall and restoration had been foretold; so this closing message is an exhortation to the many erring Jews who dwelt there. Why should they flee from their country, and trust in a pagan power, instead of endeavoring to live in a manner worthy of the noble destiny which was their true glory and ground of confidence? It didn't make any sense.

1 Corinthians 4

The Apostle Paul had been criticized by some in the ecclesia at Corinth who were undermining his work (2 Cor. 11:3-4,12-15). They accused him of narcissism, alleging he was doing what he did for self-aggrandizement – 1 Cor. 4:1-3. Paul had examined his motives upon hearing this criticism (it is always good to do this despite the validity of the criticism). He had found no truth in it, but knew that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” – Jer. 17:9.

V.4 – (ESV) “For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.” However, Paul warns his critics that they too will be examined thoroughly at the Judgement Seat if they failed to apply the same rigorous examination to themselves.

V.5 – “judge nothing before the time.” Paul means that we have no authority to judge the motives of others. Only Christ can do that. His rule for us to ‘judge’ (i.e. assess others) was “ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16-20). At the Judgement Seat the motives of all responsible people will be examined, for he “will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” The Greek word for “counsels” is *boule* – volition, purpose, plan. Weymouth translates – “Therefore form no premature judgements, but wait until the Lord returns. He will both bring to light the secrets of darkness and **will openly disclose the motives that have been in people’s hearts**; and then the praise which each man deserves will come to him from God.”

V.6-16 – Paul goes on to repudiate the party spirit that had gripped the ecclesia, and to list the sacrifices he and his companions in the work made for the benefit of others; treatment that proved his concern for them as a father – “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many **fathers**: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel,” enabling him to make the call – “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.” However, he warned them that as a father he could apply discipline, and there was good reason why it may need to be applied.

1 Corinthians 5

The Apostle addressed a serious moral issue that the ecclesia in Corinth had not dealt with appropriately by withdrawal from the offender (V.5 – called “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.”). He warned that the ‘leaven’ of such immorality would permeate the whole ecclesia if left unaddressed (V.6). Then he turned to the Memorial service.

V.8 – “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover** is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of **sincerity** and truth.” The Passover was eaten in the absence of leaven (Ex. 12:8), and was followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 13:6-7). The principle was taught that life in Christ (our Passover) was to be free from the leaven of moral corruption in perpetuity. They needed “sincerity” – *eilikrineia* – clearness, that is, (by implication) purity. The root word signifies “to be judged by sunlight”, i.e. like a glass of water held up to the sun to be examined for impurities. “Let a man examine himself” – 1 Cor. 11:28.

V.9-11 – The Apostle reminded them of his counsel not to keep company with “fornicators” (like the offender of V.1), but acknowledged this is not possible in the normal activities of life. He advised, “with such an one no not to eat.” By “eat” here he does not mean eating a normal meal, but rather eating at the table of the Lord (bread and wine), for that is his context (V.8).

August 25

1 Kings 20

V.1-3 – “And Benhadad...went up and besieged Samaria and warred against it” – Here was proof to Elijah of God’s power to incapacitate Ahab and Jezebel whenever he wished to do so. Ben-hadad of Syria had assembled a large confederacy of 32 Kings, some of whom Ahab had previously approached seeking Elijah (1 Kings 18:10). “Benhadad” means “son of Hadad” and Hadad was the Canaanite storm god ‘responsible’ for storms and rain. Ahab was now to suffer at the hands of the ‘son’ of his own preferred god, Baal.

V.4-12 – “I am thine, and all that I have” – Ahab was astute enough to count the odds and so acceded to Benhadad’s demands. If the deal had held he would have been relieved of his greatest liability – Jezebel! But the Syrian king was greedy and upped the ante. Repudiating the revised demands, Ahab delivered a rebuke to the unproven confidence of Benhadad – “Let not him who straps on his armor boast himself as he who takes it off.” There is an equivalent in the English speaking world – “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.”

V.13-25 – The first battle was over before it began. The confederacy of 32 kings was a poorly led shambolic army more interested in carousing than fighting. “And, behold, there came **a prophet** unto Ahab king of Israel” and informed him that Yahweh would give him the victory that day. This chapter is more about teaching Elijah that he was not the only prophet of God in Israel, than about Yahweh shewing kindness to Ahab. There are at least two different prophets that interact with Ahab, and maybe more. Reference is made to “the sons of the prophets” and “the prophets” showing they were quite numerous (after all, Obadiah had saved 100 of them from Jezebel – 1 Kings 18:4).

V.26-34 – The second battle was won before it was fought because the Syrians foolishly said, “Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they” (V.23). Returning with a better organized army, Benhadad is defeated again and Ahab revealed his stupidity saying of Behadad “he is my brother” and making a pact – “So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.”

V.35-43 – Another prophet becomes involved with an enacted scenario that allowed the shallow Ahab to condemn himself from his own mouth. The authority of this prophet was not in dispute as a “neighbour” who refused to bruise him on command was immediately killed by a lion. Humiliated and condemned to the fate that Yahweh had appointed for Benhadad, Ahab “went to his house heavy and displeased.” It was not to be the last time for this evil man.

Jeremiah 47

V.1 – “The word of Yahweh that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the **Philistines**, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza” – If it is correct that Pharaoh-necho had been victorious in the first battle at Carchemish, but defeated 4 years later (see comments on Jer. 46), then it would have been on his return after that victory that he also conquered Gaza. The prophecy goes on to speak of the destruction of the Philistines.

1 Corinthians 6

The Apostle upbraids some Corinthian brethren for going to courts of law to resolve disputes. Then he makes a statement that is curious – 1 Cor. 6:3 – “Know ye not that **we shall judge angels**? how much more things that pertain to this life?” It is clear the Apostle is speaking about the future (“we shall”). The word “angels” can sometimes be used of human messengers, but Paul is actually speaking of the role of the saints in the Kingdom. The word “judge” is *krino* and one of the many variations on the meaning of the word states – “of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life, or pass judgement on the deeds and words of others.” The context here is about managing and resolving matters of everyday life. The angels will not be rulers in the Kingdom (Heb. 2:5), but the saints will (Rev. 5:9-10). They will be administrators in a society wherein the angels will be present (Rev. 5:13). The angels will not need instruction or correction, but they will be subject to the administration of Christ and his saints.

V.12 – “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Paul uses the mantra of the Libertines in the ecclesia at Corinth who had no problem frequenting the harlots’ temple on Mt Corinthus (1 Cor. 10:20-23 – note the same terms are used in V.23).

V.13 – “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.” This mantra asserted that God made food for the belly, and the belly to consume the food. The inference was that God had similarly made the reproductive organs of the body in male and female and these could be freely used in the harlots’ temple as he infers in verses 15 and 16. The counter reactions of the ascetics to the libertines in the ecclesia became the subject of chapter 7.

August 26

1 Kings 21

V.1-3 – “Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria” – His name means “fruits”. In the brief glimpse we get of Naboth in the record he is revealed as a righteous man; clearly one of the 7,000 referred to in 1 Kings 19:18. Ahab proposed to convert the vineyard into a vegetable garden for his own pleasure (see the principle of Deut. 11:10). He proposed two alternatives, both of which were unacceptable to Naboth. Ahab’s complete ignorance of the principles of the Law is revealed. An Israelite could not swap or sell his inheritance for the land was Yahweh’s (Lev. 25:23). To Ahab one vineyard was as good as another. He simply could not grasp the principles involved.

“Yahweh forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee” – The law of inheritance was clearly laid down (Num. 36:7; Lev. 25:13-28). The Israelite could not sell his inheritance permanently, nor was the king to take another’s inheritance (Ezek. 46:18).

V.4 – “And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased” – The same phrase is used in 1 Kings 20:43 and means “fretful and angry.” Ahab’s frustration when confronted by Divine principles being faithfully upheld is a revelation of his capricious and selfish character. He was not improved by the rebuke of a righteous man (Prov. 9:7-9).

V.5-16 – Jezebel got involved, noticing Ahab’s childlike tantrum she flexes her muscle within the marriage and basically mocked him – “Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? (effectively he didn’t – she did) arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” She wrote a letter in Ahab’s name and with his seal from Samaria (the capital) to the elders and nobles of Jezreel demanding their cooperation in the demise of Naboth. Cynically, Naboth was first to be exalted and then brought down by false witnesses, and then stoned, but not alone. His sons who would be the rightful heirs had to be removed as well and they too were murdered (2 Kings 9:26). A more devious and egregious treachery it is difficult to imagine, but it was to be poetically avenged in time.

V.17-24 – Having traveled north to Jezreel from Samaria after hearing of Naboth’s death, Ahab is encountered in the stolen vineyard by Elijah. What a shock that would have been – “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” Yes, and the condemnation was terminal for him and Jezebel.

V.25-29 – “But there was none like unto Ahab, which did **sell himself** to work wickedness in the sight of Yahweh, whom Jezebel his wife **stirred up**” (*cuwth* – to prick, i.e. to stimulate). It is from a root word meaning briars, thorns used in Josh. 23:12-13 and Num. 33:55. These passages are significant because of their reference to the Canaanites being

thorns in the side of Israel. By marrying Jezebel and adopting her ways Ahab had reintroduced the Canaanites and Amorites into the land. He had sold himself to her. On hearing the condemnation Ahab humbled himself, and as a testimony for Elijah's benefit Yahweh ameliorated and delayed the punishment. Elijah needed to understand (and so does everyone) that Yahweh is a merciful God **when** His righteousness is upheld. The humble acknowledgement of sin and failure will receive a response from God – Prov. 28:13-14 – “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Jeremiah 48

V.1 – “Against Moab thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel” – The axe is taken to Moab (He “hewed them by the prophets” – Hos. 6:5). The condemnation is lengthy and largely speaks for itself. There are some lessons along the way.

V.11 – “Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath **settled on his lees**, and **hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel**, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed” – Lethargy and inactivity, undisturbed by trial and hardship, bred self-satisfaction and apathy, and became cemented by pride (V.29) – “We have heard the **pride** of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart,” and resulted in Moab becoming a worthless tool in Yahweh's hand (V.10) – “Cursed be he that doeth the work of Yahweh deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.” Accordingly, “Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against Yahweh” (V.42).

1 Corinthians 7

Many errors can be avoided in the interpretation of 1 Cor. 7 if we first establish the overall structure of the section, and identify the various groups of individuals that the Apostle Paul addresses.

Overall structure

Beginning with chapter 7:1, the Apostle employs structural markers throughout the remainder of the Epistle to signify a change of subject as he progressively deals with matters about which the Corinthians had written to him. The words '*de peri*' (“now concerning”) occur in chapter 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,12, while '*de*' (“now”) is found introducing a new subject in Chapter 10:1; 11:2; and 15:1. It is vital to recognize these markers in chapter 7 in order to avoid confusing Paul's answers to two separate issues concerning marriage. Verses 1-24 constitute his reply to a number of questions concerning the propriety of sexual relations in marriage, and the consequent status of mixed marriages. On the other hand, verses 25-38 constitute his answer to a question concerning 'virgins' (i.e. those never married, but amongst whom there were some engaged to marry during a time of distress for the time). This section cannot be used to justify remarriage after divorce as has been done.

The resulting outline of chapter 7 would be as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| V.1-24 | Directions to the married and those formerly married. |
| V.1-7 | The ascetics answered – instruction on marital duties. |
| V.8-9 | Advice to widowers and widows to abide unmarried. |
| V.10-11 | Christ's command to the married – divorce and remarriage prohibited. |
| V.12-16 | The status of mixed marriages and the responsibilities of believing partners. |

- V.17-24 The governing principle – Remain in the situation of life in which the truth is found.
- V.25-38 Directions and advice to those who had never married.
- V.39-40 Summary – The law of marriage restated.

“Pauline privilege”

This is the title given to the alleged Apostolic permission provided by Paul to deserted and divorced believers allowing remarriage. That such permission does not exist is evident from both the context and the words employed by the Apostle, not to mention the overwhelming weight of Scriptural testimony that exists. It has been asserted that the Apostle oscillates between Christ’s commandments on the one hand, and his own advice on the other throughout the chapter, and that a contrast exists between Christ’s limited but definite laws and Paul’s more extensive Apostolic advice. Christ is said to have confined his teaching to marriage in the Truth where both partners are either believers or responsible to Divine Law, while it is left to the Apostle to offer advice to those involved in mixed marriages: i.e. advice which, it is alleged, includes the right to divorce and remarry where continuation of the marriage is impossible.

False interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:15 is one cause of confusion on the Apostle’s teachings – “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under **bondage** in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” The word “bondage” is *doulouo* and means “to enslave”. The only thing remotely related to ‘slavery’ in marriage is the conjugal obligation Paul has outlined in verses 1 to 5. That is why he said “let every man **have** his own wife” (V.2). He doesn’t mean every man should marry, for that would be contradictory to V.1 and V.7-8. The word “have” is *echo* – to hold to. Its use in 1 Cor. 5:1 indicates its meaning here – “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should **have** (*echo*) his father’s wife.” Clearly, it means sexual relations, not marriage.

Another difficulty arises from the KJV translation in verse 27 – “Art thou bound unto a **wife**? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a **wife**? seek not a **wife**.”

The word “wife” in the Greek is *gune* signifying ‘a woman, either married or unmarried’. The context determines which. Here, Paul is addressing ‘virgins’ (those never married). Some in Corinth had made a commitment to marry (i.e. were ‘engaged’ in our language), but times were tough and some were rethinking that commitment. Paul’s advice is “if you have already backed out, then stay single. If you decide to go ahead and marry, you have not sinned” (V.28).

The KJV confuses male and female in 1 Cor. 7:36-38. Rotherham’s translation is accurate and overcomes the obscurity – “If however anyone considereth it behaving unseemly towards **his** virginity, if **he** should be beyond the bloom of life,—and, thus, it ought to come about, what he chooseth, let **him** do,—**he** sinneth not: let them marry: But, **he** that standeth in **his** heart, steadfast, having no necessity, but hath authority concerning **his** own will, and, this, hath determined in **his** own heart,—to preserve **his** own virginity, well shall he do. So that, he that giveth in marriage **his own virginity**, doeth, well; and, he that giveth it not, shall do, better.” There is no direct reference to a female in this passage.

(A full set of verse by verse notes on 1 Cor. 7:1-27 can be found in **Appendix 8**).

August 27

1 Kings 22

V.1-12 – “Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel” – The reason for the alliance between the good king Jehoshaphat of Judah and the evil and idolatrous Ahab of Israel was intermarriage. The marriage was between Jehoram, Jehoshaphat’s eldest son and successor, and Athaliah, Ahab’s daughter. Jehoram means, “Yahweh raised” and Athaliah, “Yah has constrained” from the root, to compress, constringent. These names tell the story of Jehoshaphat’s reign. 2 Chron. 17 shows how Jehoshaphat rose high in the things of God while chapter 18 reveals how his reforms and ambitions were constrained. God had warned of the results of any alliance with aliens, and Ahab’s house was alien in every way. The effect of introducing Athaliah into the royal house of Judah was nothing short of catastrophic. Everything Jehoshaphat had laboured to build up was constrained and ultimately destroyed because of her. Jehoshaphat fell into this mistake because of prosperity and military strength.

The campaign against the Syrians to recover Ramoth-Gilead proved to be disastrous for Ahab and for Jehoshaphat who foolishly allied himself with Ahab when there was no chance Yahweh could be on their side. The companion account in 2 Chron. 18 provides a little more detail on the alliance and we will leave comments until it is considered. One matter that record does not mention is the washing of Ahab’s chariot – V.38 – They “washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of Yahweh which he spake” (1 Kings 21:19). V.39 – “Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the **ivory house** which he made” – So called from the character of its ornamentation. Ivory was largely used in the ancient world as a covering of wood-work, and seems to have been applied, not only to furniture, but to the doors and walls of houses. The ruins of Ahab’s palace can still be seen today in what is left of ancient Samaria. Ahaziah succeeded Ahab to the throne.

V.31-50 – “Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem” – This detail is not provided in 2 Chron. 17. We will leave the consideration of Jehoshaphat’s good reign until then. This record seems to focus on Jehoshaphat’s three foolish alliances with the house of Ahab. He was a very good king but was completely blinded by the marriage alliance he had made with Ahab. Even after refusing a renewed venture with Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat went on a military campaign with Jehoram the second son of Ahab after the early demise of Ahaziah (2 Kings 3). Sadly, it confirms the old adage that “blood is thicker than water” and it is seen so often in human experience.

V.51-53 – “Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel” – Ahaziah was a rabid Baal worshipper like his mother. His true character is revealed in 2 Kings 1 when he sent to Baalzebub to enquire about recovery from a fall from the roof of his palace.

Jeremiah 49

This chapter delivered judgement on Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam.

V.7-22 – Similar language is found in Obadiah; e.g. V.9 – “If grapegatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes?” is the same as Obadiah 1:5-6; cp. V.12 to Obad. 1:16; V.14 to Obad. 1:1; V.15 to Obad. 1:2; V.16 to Obad. 1:3; etc. V.17 declares the destiny of Edom – “Edom shall be a desolation.” As Isa. 34 and 63 show, Edom is the name given to latter day Babylon the Great (see comments **June 10** on Isa. 34) which makes V.19-21 very interesting.

V.19-21 introduce the work of Nebuchadnezzar as God's servant to bring judgement on Edom, but identical language occurs again in Jer. 50:44-46 concerning judgement on Babylon. That means there is another purpose over and above the past judgements on Edom and Babylon as Nebuchadnezzar is clearly not going to be Yahweh's servant to overthrow his own kingdom. Consequently, the most important fulfillment is yet to come when Christ will destroy the Edom/Babylon of the latter days. So history foreshadows future events. The imagery is of a lion (initially Nebuchadnezzar) coming up from "the swelling of Jordan" (the jungle on its banks) to attack "the habitation of the strong" ("perennial pasture" – ESV), i.e. the fold of Edom's flock because of the perennial pasture. For the phrase "but I will suddenly make him run away from her," an alternative translation is "I will rouse him and make him run upon her" (i.e. Edom). Yahweh's 'servant' is referred to in the next words, "and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me?" Initially, this was Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:9 – "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant"), but when these same words are spoken against Babylon in Jer. 50:44 it must be a reference in the first instance to Cyrus (Isa. 44:28 – "That saith of Cyrus, He is my **shepherd**"). Clearly there is a prophecy of the future work of Christ (Bro. C.C. Walker in his book on Jeremiah agrees). The question "for who is like me?" can only be answered in the ultimate sense by passages like Zech. 13:7 – "O Sword! awake against my **shepherd**, even against **the man that is my companion**, urgeth Yahweh of hosts" (Rotherham), and Isa. 49:7. The question, "who shall appoint me, a time?" is a reference to Yahweh's sovereignty over the appointment of times. He alone dictates when things will happen according to His prophecies. And the final question, "who is the Shepherd that shall stand before, me?" i.e. who can stand in the presence of God as His representative? Cyrus was one "shepherd" in relation to Israel to defend them from Babylon, but it will be Christ who will assume that role in the future. If the question is interpreted as meaning what shepherd stands against Yahweh, then the answer is the Papacy (the idol shepherd of Zech. 11:16-17).

V.34-39 – Elam of old was in the area of Persia and this prophecy concerns its overthrow by Babylon before it in turn joined with Media to overthrow Babylon (Isa. 21:2), but it has a future in the latter days – "But it shall come to pass in **the latter days**, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith Yahweh." Persia does have a part to play in the events of Armageddon – Ezek. 38:5.

1 Corinthians 8

In 1 Corinthians 8 the Apostle deals with the problem in the ecclesia over food offered to idols. His conclusion is that we have an obligation to those "for whom Christ died" to avoid anything that might undermine their conscience and sensitivities regardless of its veracity in our opinion. Paul said he would be a vegetarian for life (V.13) if there was any danger he might be a stumbling-block to a "little one" (Luke 17:2).

1 Corinthians 9

V.1-20 – Paul had enemies in the ecclesia at Corinth who tried to undermine his authority by accusations of self-interest – 1 Cor. 4:1-4. In defending his work he had to assert that he had not used any of the benefits that were rightfully his as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

V.21 – "To them that are without law, as without law, (**being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,**) that I might gain them that are without law." Some have claimed we have 'freedom' in Christ and that therefore we are free agents. This is not so, and the highlighted parenthesis in verse 21 (above) reveals that. We are under law to Christ, but not under the code of the Law of Moses. However, that law was "holy, just and good"

(Rom. 7:12), and enshrined all the unchangeable principles of God (Mal. 3:6). These same principles are embraced by the law of Christ commonly referred to as “The commandments of Christ.” We are not free agents to chart our own course in life.

In V.27 the Apostle uses the athletic games of his day as a vehicle to provide essential lessons for success in the race for life – “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (V.24). Serious athletes make many sacrifices and maintain a good diet, as well as run with purpose and intent to win. So should those in the race for eternal life.

In the Greek games there was a herald who proclaimed the rules prior to the events. He would run around the arena loudly shouting the rules of the contest. Paul’s concern was that as both the herald and a competing athlete, he might fall short of the standards set for spiritual athletes. If so, he would become a “castaway” (V.27). Accordingly, he said – “I **keep under** my body, and bring it into subjection.” The word *hupōpiázō* means to strike under the eye, or as in the familiar term, ‘to give someone a black eye’. The only other place this word is found is in Luke 18:5 where in the parable of the unjust judge he says of the poor widow, “Lest by her continual coming she **weary** me.” Its use there is a graphic hyperbole, but here it is another way of saying Paul “crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24), or “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Col. 3:5).

August 28

2 Kings 1

This chapter deals with the end of the reign of Ahaziah the son of Ahab. The following summary of his character from the study notes “The Kings of Israel and Judah” which can be accessed under the Study Notes tab on web site <https://jimcowie.info>.

The brief reign of the eldest son of Ahab was characterised by continual misfortune. External peace was shattered by the revolt of the vassal kingdom of Moab, and disaster struck at home when Ahaziah fell from a balcony of his palace and was fatally injured. On his death-bed Ahaziah reveals himself to be a genuine product of Ahab and Jezebel by sending to the centre of the pagan god Baalzebub for a prognostication regarding his future. Such demonstrations of infidelity and idolatry were to be expected from the children of Jezebel, but it was nevertheless an appalling state of affairs that such a man should sit on the throne of Israel once occupied by David the beloved. How low Israel had fallen through the apostasy of Ahab and his unholy alliance with Ethbaal king of the Zidonians!

So infuriated was Yahweh with the infidelity of Ahaziah that He intervened through no lesser a prophet than Elijah, and passed the death sentence upon him. So he died of the injuries sustained in the fall from the balcony of his palace; a fitting end for a man who ignored the law of Deut. 22:8 which provided for a safe place upon the housetop where prayer to God could be offered. This man who used the roof top only as a place for drunken pleasure could only think in his distress to offer his ‘prayers’ before the pagan god of the dung heap.

V.9-15 – This incident in which 102 servants of Ahaziah were ‘smoked’ by fire from heaven plays an important role in the mission of Christ. When 2 Kings 2:16 is taken into account where 50 sons of the prophets appear before Elisha (a type of Christ) it becomes clear why Christ required the 5,000 Jews fed by 5 loaves and 2 fish to be made to sit down in companies of 50 (Luke 9:14). It is also notable that Elijah’s name occurs 5 times in Luke 9 and that one of those occasions is based on this incident of fire being called from heaven (cp. Luke 9:54-56). This

was another step in Yahweh correcting the “I, I, only am left” mentality of Elijah. When he goes forth to lead the Second Exodus of Israel he will be a different man.

2 Kings 2

The insistence on serving, and the determined loyalty of Elisha to remain with Elijah even though he was requested to stay behind three times was shown in V.1-6. The removal of Elijah was known by other “sons of the prophets,” so it was certainly known by Elisha, but he was determined to serve to the end (2 Kings 3:11 – “Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah”) – “And they two went on” to the Jordan.

V.7-14 – Heading eastwards, Elijah was returning towards his home in Gilead and Jordan was crossed by the parting of the waters using his mantle (symbol of his prophetic office – Zech. 13:4). Elisha made a request to be granted “a double portion of thy spirit be upon me” which Elijah thought “hard” and laid down a condition (he was still struggling with his problem), and then took his mantle with him (remember he had once cast in on Elisha’s shoulders – 1 Kings 19:19). Elijah was picked up by a whirlwind after being separated by “a chariot of fire, and horses of fire” which “parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” The horses and chariot of fire remained with Elisha (2 Kings 6:17), and the whirlwind ripped the mantle from Elijah’s grasp and it fell at Elisha’s feet (twice stated V.13-14). Elisha cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof” and he had been, but now that role fell to Elisha (see 2 Kings 13:14) which is why the horses and chariot stayed with him (2 Kings 6:17). Using Elijah’s mantle “which fell from him,” Elisha returned back over Jordan to Israel to begin his work. The question is posed – what happened to Elijah? Two things are clear; (1) He eventually died, because all sons of Adam die – 1 Cor. 15:22; and (2) About 12 to 15 years later Elijah wrote a letter to Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat condemning him – 2 Chron. 21:12. That letter could only have been written by someone receiving reports of what was going on in the kingdom of Judah.

V.15-25 – Elisha’s ministry made an interesting start. Firstly, the sons of the prophets would not take his advice not to go searching for Elijah, and then he cured the water problem at Jericho by using the source of the problem – salt!. Finally that day he called two she bears to tear up 42 blasphemous youths. It is important to understand two things; (1) They were not little children. The word *na’ar* signifies an adolescent, so that Rotherham translates it “some lads” and the ASV “young lads”; and (2) Their blasphemy when they said “**Go up**, thou baldhead; **go up**, thou baldhead” was not about Elisha being bald (for he was), but because they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit power that had taken Elijah away (which they were scorning) and were demanding that Elisha give them a similar demonstration. It does not pay to blaspheme the power of God.

Jeremiah 50

Jeremiah 50 and 51 must be taken together. The name “Babylon” occurs 55 times in the two chapters. They constitute a lengthy condemnation of Babylon and their contents provide a good deal of the language used in Revelation 17 through 19 (see the following comment made on Rev. 18 on **June 29**):

It is worth noting that much of the language in this section of the Apocalypse (chaps. 17 to 19) is drawn from Jer. 50 and 51 where the name “Babylon” occurs 55 times. Some examples are **V.2** – Drawn from Jer. 50:39; 51:8,37; **V.4** – “Come out of her, my people” is drawn from Jer. 50:8; 51:6,45; **V.6** – “Reward her even as she rewarded you” is drawn from Jer. 50:15,29; **V.8** – “her plagues come in one day” and “she shall be utterly burned with fire” is drawn from Jer. 50:27,31; 51:58; **V.9** – “the kings of the earth...shall bewail her, and lament for

her” is drawn from Jer. 50:46; **V.21** mimics Jer. 51:63-64; **V.22** – “no craftsman, of whatsoever craft” is drawn from Jer. 51:17,47. There can be no accident in this. The greater than Cyrus is coming to destroy “Babylon the Great.”

It is important to note that the overthrow of Babylon of old is intertwined with the redemption of Israel, and this prophecy which became historic fact is the vehicle for prophecies of the future destruction of Babylon the Great in the process of the Second Exodus and the redemption of Israel in the latter days.

V.44 – It was noted in the comments on Jer. 49:19 that the almost identical words used in this verse of the overthrow of Babylon indicate that it points to the work of Christ prefigured by Cyrus. The really important fulfillment will be the latter day work of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10

Full ‘immersion’ in water saw Israel “baptized unto Moses” – 1 Cor. 10:1-2. Walking between two walls of congealed water (Ps. 78:13) on damp sand, with the cloud above them (twice mentioned) saw them surrounded by water as those baptized into Christ must be. Hence, Israel in the wilderness became a type for all succeeding generations of those called out of ‘Egypt’ – V.6 – “Now these things were our examples” (*tupos* – type or model). Much can be learnt from Israel’s 40 year sojourn in the wilderness as Paul goes on to demonstrate.

In a modern world filled with multifarious temptations that press upon old and young through the most sophisticated technologies, the advice of verse 13 needs to be kept at the forefront of our minds – “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” We all have the same problem, but a faithful God has provided a way of escape from temptation! Every room has a door; every gadget has a switch. Like Joseph, we can flee from temptation, if we choose to do so. But therein lies the problem – the desire to flee from lust is not inherent in human nature. In fact, it is the opposite – Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:23. A conscious desire to do God’s will is paramount – Ps. 40:8 – “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Our Lord shewed the way.

V.16-17 – “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not, a **sharing together** of the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not, a **sharing together** of the body of the Christ?” (Rotherham) – This is Paul’s segway into the big issue in the ecclesia – the attendance at the feasts in the harlots’ temple on Mt Corinthus by the Libertine brethren which was seriously impacting the conduct of the Memorial services in the ecclesia. The point he is making is that we are one body in Christ, represented by one loaf that is “broken” to be shared (11:24). How can members of that ‘body’ make themselves members of a harlot? (1 Cor. 6:15). This is why he later says in chapter 11:29 – “not discerning (separating) the Lord’s body.”

V.18-33 – Paul reverts to the brethren of chapter 6 who brazenly frequented the harlots’ houses and sat in fellowship with the worshippers of idols (V.18-22). In so doing, they disdained the memorial feast and treated it “unworthily” (1 Cor. 11:29 – *anaxiōs* – irreverently), modelling their gluttonous behaviour in the memorial meeting on the feasts in the idol’s temple.

Accordingly, they did not separate the Lord’s body (the ecclesia) from the world that they had allegedly left behind (1 Cor. 11:29). ‘Egypt’ was as much in them as it was tragically in Israel (V.5-10) our example (type).

August 29

2 Kings 3

Summary of the character of Jehoram the son of Ahab, king of Israel – Whereas Ahab's eldest son Ahaziah had vigorously pursued his father's Baal worship, Jehoram the younger son who acceded upon the accidental death of his brother was a "moderate" in idolatry by comparison. He removed the idol to Baal from Samaria and reinstituted the more innocuous, but no less evil, idolatry of Jeroboam. When it is remembered that Jezebel was still alive at the time this was no mean feat. Jehoram probably considered his action to be a grand gesture of conciliation to Judah and to the God of Jehoshaphat.

His approach to Jehoshaphat for military assistance after the revolt of the king of Moab, reveals him as a diplomat of some skill and indicates that he considered his rejection of Baal as a concession to Judah which would permit a military alliance to be established with Jehoshaphat. The message sent to Jehoshaphat seeking his help is couched in diplomatic terms and casually assumes that no impediment to an alliance existed. Following the debacle of Ramoth-Gilead and the stern rebuke of Jehoshaphat for his alliance with Ahab it might have been expected that never again would Jehoshaphat need to be admonished with the words; "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate Yahweh" (2 Chron. 19:2). However, now that Baal worship had been officially rejected in Israel by Jehoram, perhaps Jehoshaphat considered that the situation was different. Whatever may have been Jehoshaphat's perceptions, he foolishly entered into a military alliance with Israel that almost ended in disaster again.

The campaign against Moab is the only event in which an insight into Jehoram's character is offered. He is revealed as a man who recognized Yahweh but placed no faith in Him. As soon as adversity threatened the welfare of the confederate armies he ascribed their misfortune to Yahweh. Not for one moment did he entertain the obvious fact that the troubles experienced were directly attributable to his evils and that of his father's house. God revealed what He thought of Jehoram in the encounter that that king had with Elisha at the height of the crisis in the wilderness of Edom, saying through the prophet: "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother...surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee."

V.7 – "I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses" – Jehoshaphat had made this same declaration at the gate of Samaria with disastrous consequences (1 Kings 22:4). This is the third alliance with the house of Ahab and again it almost produced disaster. He was locked into a family connection that did not help him make wise decisions. Surely, he had not forgotten the rebuke of 2 Chron. 19:2 after the defeat of Ramoth-Gilead – "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate Yahweh? therefore is wrath upon thee from before Yahweh." He was soon to be reminded of another event of the past.

V.8-15 – After a seven day journey towards Moab through the wilderness of Edom the tripartite confederacy of Israel, Judah and Edom nearly perish from lack of water, and Jehoram blamed Yahweh. Elisha was in the company and is called by Jehoshaphat. Repudiating Jehoram, Elisha turned to Jehoshaphat with a curious request – "But now bring me a **minstrel**." What could that mean? It was to prompt Jehoshaphat's memory of events recorded in 2 Chron. 20. After the loss of his 1,160,000 strong army at Ramoth-Gilead, the surrounding nations took the opportunity to attack Judah. They were saved without lifting a finger, except for the Levites playing on instruments and Judah lifting up its voice in praise to Yahweh. Minstrels had won that conflict, and this company needed to heed the lesson that it would not be through the

strength of their own arm that they would prevail. Water was provided, but the outcome of the battle was very mixed as the confederacy broke down when the king of Moab sacrificed his son and heir to Chemosh. These repeated mistakes by Jehoshaphat may not cost him the Kingdom, but it did destroy his kingdom as finally Athaliah ruled Judah for 6 years. Compromise with those who do not share a fullness of commitment to the principles of God is always fatal.

Jeremiah 51

V.6 – “For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of Yahweh of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel” – Statements like this indicate that the redemption of Israel is intertwined with the destruction of Babylon. This is why these chapters are the basis of the Apocalypse. Israel’s redemption in the future will be achieved in the process of the destruction of Babylon the Great through the Second Exodus as Israel returning under Elijah have to fight their way through Europe (“the wilderness of the people” – Ezek. 20:35; Zech. 9:14-15).

V.7 – “Babylon hath been a golden cup in Yahweh’s hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” – This language is taken up in the Apocalypse – Rev. 14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3; 19:2. “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed” is taken up in Rev. 14:8; 18:2.

V.19-23 – Yahweh will use Israel as His “battle axe and weapons of war: for **with thee** will I break in pieces the nations, and **with thee** will I destroy kingdoms” – The phrase “with thee” is used 8 more times in this bracket of verses. This is the proof that this prophecy is essentially about the future although it is based on the past. Israel has never been used as God’s weapon against His enemies as described here.

V.59 – “And this Seraiah was **a quiet prince**” – Literally, “prince of the resting place,” i.e. a quartermaster. It was his business to ride forward each day, and select the place where the king would halt and pass the night as Zedekiah traveled to Babylon.

V.63-64 – “thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink” – This language is redolent of Rev. 18:21.

1 Corinthians 11

The Divine hierarchy of verse 3 – God, Christ, man, woman, is dismissed by modern Humanistic thinking. In fact, God is placed last, if at all, by many people. Christ is acknowledged in the calendar, but not always as a dominant force in the lives of most. Women seek to rise above men as Eve usurped the rightful position of Adam (1 Tim. 2:12), and many men meekly capitulate to the woman’s voice like Adam (Gen. 3:17).

In Corinth, some sisters sought the teaching role of the brethren. Some deliberately abandoned the common practice of women of that time by neglecting to wear a head covering in their gatherings. By so doing, they perhaps unconsciously, but publicly dishonoured their husband who sat beside them (“every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head,” i.e. her spiritual ‘head’, her husband – V.5, not to mention the one above him in the hierarchy!).

Some have argued that Paul’s statement that a woman’s hair is given as a “covering” eliminates the need for an additional physical covering (V.15). The word for “covering” is *peribolaion* – something thrown around one, that is, a mantle, veil (the only other occurrence of this word is in Heb. 1:12 where it is rendered “vesture”). This is a different word than is employed for the stipulation in verse 6 that a woman should be covered – *katakalyptō* – to

cover wholly, that is, veil. The confusion arises from not carefully reading the context. In verse 14, Paul says that even nature declares that it is a shame for a man to have long hair, but not for a woman. That is what he means in verse 15. Her hair is really like a garment of glory. The whole point of wearing a head covering is to hide her 'glory'.

The disrespect that the ecclesia was showing towards the memorial service is next addressed by the Apostle in verses 17 to 34. That is why he uses the word translated "unworthily" in the KJV. As previously noted, it is a reference to disrespect or irreverence; i.e. a dishonouring of God and Christ. There are seven things Paul counsels the Corinthians to reflect upon and adopt when they came together for the memorial service. These were:

1. **V.24** – Ensure the occasion is a "remembrance" (*anamnēsis* – a remembering, recollection) of Christ's sufferings and sacrifice, not an opportunity for displaying self-interest at the expense of others (the antithesis of his sacrifice).
2. **V.25** – To remember that Christ's sacrifice was critical "to confirm the covenant made unto the fathers" (now called the "new covenant" because it was ratified by blood long after the Mosaic Covenant – Ex. 24); see Rom. 15:8. Without the confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant there is no hope for anyone – Gal. 3:25-29.
3. **V.26** – They must recognize that at every partaking of bread and wine they "shew the Lord's death till he come." The Greek word for "shew" is *kataggellō* – to announce, declare, promulgate, make known; to proclaim publicly, publish. In other words, there is a public proclamation of the death of Christ. How was the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts consistent with the gluttonous behaviour of the Corinthians at the memorial service?
4. **V.27** – They should be aware that such disrespect and irreverence at that time was tantamount to crucifying Christ afresh (Heb. 6:6).
5. **V.28** – In sharp contrast to their "reveling and banqueting's," this was to be a time of quiet reflection on whether their life in any way matched the selfless and sacrificial model they had come to remember. Self-examination is not easy for the natural man, but it is an indispensable practice for the spiritual.
6. **V.29** – Irreverence and disrespect for the sanctity of the memorial service reveals a fundamental problem – the absence of the concept of the separation of the ecclesial body. Whether one leaves out the word "Lord's", or retains it, makes little difference. Paul's reference is to the 'body' of Christ, the ecclesia. Some in Corinth treated the memorial gatherings like the feasts held in the idol's temple on Mt Corinthus. Accordingly, they were weak, sickly and spiritually dead (sleeping) – V.30.
7. **V.31-32** – True and honest self-examination will invariably discover some weakness or failure that needs correction. If a decision is made to seek forgiveness and implement improvements in performance, then the individual has stood in judgement on himself. That obviates the need for the weakness/failure to be raised at the Judgement Seat and possibly lead to rejection.

In conclusion, the Apostle directs his readers to "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4), when he counsels – "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (V.33).

August 30

2 Kings 4

V.1 – Josephus says that the widow of this chapter was the wife of Obadiah whom Jezebel had finally caught up with and killed because he had saved so many from her persecuting hand. It is

suggested he may have borrowed money to feed the 100 prophets he saved (1 Kings 18:3-4). Be that as it may, the fact is that the creditor had come to enslave her two sons, although that was forbidden under the Law – Lev. 25:39-46. Interestingly, Green's Interlinear Literal translation has for the phrase “thy servant did **fear** Yahweh” – “you know that your servant has **seen** (*raáh*)Yahweh” which indicates he was a man of perception as well as reverence. The word “creditor” means to borrow on security (like a mortgage).

V.2 – Elisha's answer to the widow's problem is illuminating. He forces her to take stock. Her husband's only legacy was 'oil' (the Word), and this was her sole asset. The point is that if that is all you have, then it is all you need, providing it is multiplied to increase faith (Rom. 10:17). The one pot of oil (an earthenware jar = our body – 2 Cor. 4:7) she had was a representation of herself.

V.3 – “Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even **empty vessels**; borrow not a few” – There were plenty of empty 'vessels' in Israel that needed filling with 'oil' at that time, and by bringing these into the house (ecclesia) and filling them with the 'oil' of God's Word was the way to overcome her own 'debt' and to save her heritage. In the context, there are 6 occurrences of the word “vessels” (pointing to the problem of human nature).

V.4-7 – The miracle of the abundant oil unfolds until there are no more vessels to fill. This whole transaction is an enacted parable of the ultimate redemption of Israel. Here are its elements:

- The widow woman – Represents Israel living under the Mosaic Covenant – Lam. 1:1-3; Isa. 54:4-5.
- The creditor – Represents the Law of Moses and its heavy demands – Gal. 5:3.
- Two sons – Represent both the houses of Israel in captivity – Isa. 50:1.
- Lack of oil – Represents the punishment for iniquity – Deut. 28:40.
- Oil in abundance – Represents the work of the Deliverer – Rom. 11:26.
- The debt paid – Represents all Israel saved – Rom. 11:26.
- Live of the rest – Represents ungodliness turned away from Jacob – Rom. 11:26.

V.8-37 – “Elisha passed over unto Shunem, where was **a woman of position**, and she constrained him to eat bread” (Rotherham) – The generosity of the woman of Shunem (“double resting place”) towards the work of Elisha marked her out in Israel as a lover of God. Her provision of the essentials for the work – a room with a bed; a table; a chair; and a lamp were all that the prophet needed. When Elisha sought to reward her the true character was revealed. Asked, “wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?” she responded, “I dwell among mine own people” (i.e. she was content with her ecclesial life). Told that she would give birth to a son she replied, “Nay! my lord, thou man of God, do not delude thy maid-servant” (i.e. she was content with the lot God had given her, even though childlessness was regarded as a curse). This was a woman of rare quality indicated by her earlier proposal to her aged husband – “I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.” The spiritual recognize their own kind.

The death of the Shunammite's son was a drama she had feared, and her behaviour when confronting Elisha demonstrated that – “Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?” She had been content with her lot from God and accepted that it was best for her. Even when the boy was presented to her alive again, there is an indication of the quality of this woman – “he said, Take up thy son. Then **she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground**, and took up her son, and went out.” Most would have gone straight to the boy, but she stops to give thanks and to acknowledge God first.

V.38-41 – Curing of the “death in the pot” (the language of metonymy) at Gilgal by mixing in meal is an enacted parable of the power of the Word of God to overcome the poisonous effects

of human nature – Isa. 55:10-11 – “seed to the sower, and **bread to the eater**: so shall **my word** be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

V.42-44 – A miracle foreshadowing the multiplication of the loaves by Christ on two occasions is performed by Elisha (“El is salvation”) with the twenty loaves of barley brought by a man from Baalshalisha (“thrice-great lord”).

Jeremiah 52

V.1-11 – The book of Jeremiah concludes with a recounting of the fall of Jerusalem.

V.12-23 – Jerusalem destroyed; the Temple sacked and burnt.

V.24-30 – Scores of leaders killed by Nebuchadnezzar and thousands went into captivity.

V.31-34 – After 37 years in captivity in Babylon (now BC 561), Jehoiachin was released – “Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, and spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon.” It is important to understand why Jehoiachin received this favourable treatment. It was because he was the only king of Judah during the Babylonian invasions that obeyed the counsel to surrender to the king of Babylon – 2 Kings 23:12-16. This had been the constant command of God through Jeremiah (Jer. 21:8-10; 27:12,17), and only he obeyed. Even evil men benefit from obeying God.

1 Corinthians 12

V.1 – “Now concerning” – *de peri*. This phrase is the way marker as Paul progressively answers a series of questions put to him by the ecclesia at Corinth. The subject turns to spirit gifts that had become a problem in the ecclesia through their misuse.

Not all nine spirit gifts had the same glamour in their use. This caused a degree of trouble among the ‘gifted’. The important lesson was that not all aspects of ecclesial work are the same and our challenge is to recognize where our ‘gifts’ (not spirit gifts in our time) can best be used for the edification and development of the ecclesia. This was Paul’s argument in Rom. 12:4-8 which he outlines here as well in verses 12 to 21 using the various parts of the body.

His following words about the greater attention we give to the “uncomely” parts of the body are an important exhortation to both those who regarded themselves as unimportant because they did not receive the ‘flashier’ gifts, and to those who did who may have looked upon the less ‘gifted’ with a degree of disdain. “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.” However, it is not enough just to recognize the value of the less prominent members of the body, there must be empathy and sharing of love and concern – “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

1 Corinthians 13

Without *agape* love (a sacrificial love of the will – this is a cerebral love, not primarily emotionally driven), those who took pride in the flashier gifts were hollow drawers of attention to themselves (V.1). Similarly, teachers and geniuses, and those with deep faith and generosity were nothing without *agape* (V.2). What then are the qualities of this kind of indispensable love?

There are 15 qualities of *agape* listed, and fully 10 of them are negatives! Note the 8 bold words “not” below. Add to that the first quality – “suffering long” (that is acceptance of painful things through patience, is not active and positive action). Similarly, “bearing all things” is the quiet acceptance of ill-treatment or negative forces in our life. The word “endureth” is *hupomenō* – ‘to remain behind after others have gone’ is a positive action. So 10 negative and 5 positive puts a different perspective on the ‘love’ that many evangelical ‘christians’ promote nowadays. Sacrifice of self-interest in order to be obedient to God, and manifest Christ in everyday life, is at the core of this love. It is the “not my will be done, but thine” approach.

V.4-7 (RV) – “Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth **not**; love vaunteth **not** itself, is **not** puffed up, doth **not** behave itself unseemly, seeketh **not** its own, is **not** provoked, taketh **not** account of evil; rejoiceth **not** in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

V.13 – Gifts played their part, but three things excelled – faith, hope and love (*agape*). In immortality, faith and hope have no relevance, but the greatest of these – *agape* love will never cease to exist or lose its importance.

August 31

2 Kings 5

The record of the healing of Naaman the Syrian finds a place in the N.T. – Luke 4:27 – “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” The context in Luke 4 is about **believing a report and manifesting faith in it**. Symbolically, leprosy represents human nature, and when active, the sin that comes from it.

V.1 – God had already been at work in Naaman’s life without him knowing it – “Now, Naaman, general of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man in presence of his lord, and held in honour, **because, by him, had Yahweh given deliverance to Syria**,—and, the man, was a hero of valour— but , a leper” (Rotherham). An Assyrian monarch had pushed his conquests as far as Syria at this period, bringing into subjection all the kings of these parts. But Syria revolted after a few years and once more made herself independent. It was probably in this war of independence that Naaman had distinguished himself. It is also evident from V.2 that Syrian bands had invaded parts of Israel and taken captives, among whom was the little Israeli girl who became Naaman’s wife’s maid. God was at work in this man’s life and events unfolded to see him heading to Israel to find a cure for his leprosy.

V.3-14 – Leprosy has a way of reducing man’s pride. It is disfiguring and corrosive of all that men hold dear in personal presentation, but this very successful and afflicted man still had pride. He balked at Elisha not coming out and dramatically healing him on the spot, and was livid at the suggestion that a cure could be effected in the despised muddy waters of Jordan. At this point he did not understand the principle that healing depends on **faith** in God’s Word and humbly accepting it. Men are not cured of the problem of human nature by miracles and drama, for that only enhances their sense of self-worth and appeals to human pride (this is the lesson

of the Transfiguration and Peter's summary of it – 2 Pet. 1:16-21). **Men need to believe a report** (Isa. 53:1) about God's way of salvation. It requires a humbling immersion in water based on faith. Thankfully, Naaman had a wise servant with him that persuaded him of the simplicity of it all, and he got off his 'high horse' and submitted himself to bathing seven times (covenant) in Jordan, just as Jesus himself did much later to "fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15).

V.15-27 – Leprosy cured in Naaman was hard at work in Gehazi. Naaman's offer of a gift was refused by Elisha on the basis that men are "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold" (1 Pet. 1:18), but this was too much for the 'leprosy' working in Gehazi, Elisha's servant – "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 John 2:15-16). His greed brought dishonour to the things of God in the eyes of Gentiles, and poetic justice to himself in the acquisition of Naaman's leprosy. A very important exhortation arose from this incident – "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?" It is a question even more relevant to us at the end of the days.

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah's life is one of the loneliest and saddest in Scripture. His personal experiences were bitter; the message of disaster he had to proclaim was depressing and unwelcome; and the times in which he lived were of unparalleled calamity. His cause was lost from the beginning, because the people would not hear him. He was everywhere hated and misunderstood. While intensely loving and grieving for his countrymen and his nation, he was despised and persecuted as an enemy and a traitor. This book is an expression of his feelings; his assessments of **how such a thing could happen**, and his hopes.

The Hebrew title and theme of the book is – *eykah* = "How" – 1:1; 2:1; 4:1,2.

The book progresses from an early feeling of shame and bewilderment, to a growing awareness and appreciation of God's presence and His hand in man's affairs – both to chasten and to save. Its aim is to instil confidence in God during the worst of times in our life.

The structure of the book

Chap. 1 – The affliction of Jerusalem – Jeremiah speaks on behalf of suffering Jerusalem – the daughter of Zion.

Chap. 2 – The source of the affliction – Jeremiah speaks as the voice of the righteous remnant who lament the fate of Zion and call upon God to remember His people.

Chap. 3 – Renewed hope in affliction – Jeremiah speaks on behalf of his erring brethren and the faithful remnant. He also speaks for Christ and his brethren.

Chap. 4 – The reason for affliction – Jeremiah confesses for Zion.

Chap. 5 – Prayer for deliverance from affliction – Jeremiah delivers a national prayer.

Lamentations has an acrostic structure. Each chapter is divided into 22 stanzas, except for chapter 3 which has 66 (3 x 22). Chapters 1 to 4 are alphabetic acrostics with one stanza for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet (which has 22 letters). In chapter 1 the letters are in order. However, in chapters 2 to 4 the letters are in order except for the 16th and 17th which are transposed. Chapter 5 is not acrostic, but has 22 lines. There are seven sections all told representing matters of God's covenant.

V.1 – "**How** (*'êykâh*) doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!" – This was the question that occupied Jeremiah. How was it possible that the city where God had placed His

name; that had in it the throne of David; and a people who were Yahweh's wife (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 2:2; 3:1,8) end up in this condition? Abandonment of the ways of God was the answer – “Yahweh hath afflicted her for the **multitude of her transgressions**: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy” (V.5).

V.9-22 – “I am become vile” and “do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all **my** transgressions: for **my** sighs are many, and **my** heart is faint” are statements in which Jeremiah speaks on behalf of the daughter of Zion. It is what Daniel did in Dan. 9:4-16 – “We have sinned, and have committed iniquity” when he himself was not guilty of his people's failure. This is the lament of someone deeply invested in the welfare of his people.

1 Corinthians 14

Paul addressed the problem of the gift of tongues being used inappropriately due to its appeal to human nature which is attracted to the flashy and impressive.

It will be noted that the word “tongue” (KJV) is often preceded by the italicized word “*unknown*”. The word “tongue” is *glossa* meaning ‘a language (specifically one naturally unacquired); i.e. a foreign language. *Glossa* occurs 21 times in chapters 12 to 14, and 15 of those are in chapter 14.

Paul's argument is simple – what is the value of using a foreign language to a community who do not understand it? It may be impressive and attract attention to oneself, but it is of no value to anyone, unless it is interpreted.

In verses 34 to 40 he turns to the matter of sisters speaking in the gatherings. They are not to do so, and his proof is drawn from the Law of Moses – Num. 30 where the law of vows is outlined. A male making a vow before Yahweh was to keep it. There was no way of escape. However, in the case of a wife and daughter, the matter was different. The husband/father could disallow the vow they made on the day he heard it. The import of this was clear. The husband/father of the household was the head. His authority was not to be usurped – 1 Tim. 2:11-12. Sisters in Corinth were guilty of this.

In recent times, due to the influence of Humanism with its ‘unclean’ attitudes of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, Paul's counsel has been set aside. The argument is that his advice only concerned the local situation in Corinth and does not apply to any other ecclesia, then or now. This is a serious misrepresentation of the text. Paul introduced this matter with the words of verse 33 – “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as **in all ecclesias** of the saints.” His counsel is for **all ecclesias** in any era. Furthermore, he says in verse 34 – “Let your women keep silence in the **ecclesias**.” So, he doesn't have only Corinth in mind. He then adds words that are fatal to the suggestion that his counsel is his own opinion on the matter (as some have argued) by saying – “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (V.37). What we have here are clearly commandments of Christ. These cannot be dismissed quite so easily.

Ignorance is a problem in the modern world. Paul acknowledges that it has always been a problem by saying in V.38 – “But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” Those who wish to keep the commandments of Christ cannot afford to be ignorant. Ecclesial order is jeopardized by ignorance. “Let all things be done decently and in order” (V.40).

APPENDIX 1

The following slides provide detail on 2 Samuel 23:1-7.

David's authority – V.1

“said” – *na'am* - to speak with assurance and authority (occurs twice in verse). Is used nearly 300 times in this peculiar form of God's utterances, but only in 3 places of human speech - here and in **Num. 24:3,4,15, 16**, and **Prov.30:1** - all claim special inspiration (see V.2).

“the man” – *geber* - valiant man, warrior. A man of experience in warfare.

“high” – *al* – on top.

David's theme – V.1

“the anointed” – *mashiyach* - anointed (Messiah). The word *ol* occurs before this word - so it should be rendered – “concerning an Anointed One”.

“of the God of Jacob” – *Elohim* - the mighty ones of Jacob = Yahweh who will be finally manifested in redeemed saints.

“and the sweet psalmist of Israel” – *na'iyim* - delightful. **Bro. Thomas** translates “even the pleasant (theme) of Israel's songs”, i.e. Messiah is the theme of the Psalms.

2 Sam. 23:3

V.3 – “The God” - *Elohim*. Theme of ‘Mighty Ones’ permeates the discourse.

“He that ruleth over men must be just” –

Roth. – “One ruling over men, a righteous one...” **Bro. Thomas** – “There shall be a ruler over mankind, a just one”. The ‘He’ here is the Multitudinous Christ, the future ruling body upon earth (**Eureka vol.1 pg. 349**).

The sun of righteousness

“ruling in the fear of God” - **Bro. Thomas** – “ruling in the righteous precepts of *Elohim*”. This is the quality of the rule of Christ and the saints.

V.4 – “as the light of the morning” - **Bro. Thomas** – “as brightness of morning”. Speaks of the new Millennial Day which introduces the Kingdom Age.

“the sun riseth” - Analogous to Christ and his brethren as the government of the Age to come - **Mal. 4:2; Matt. 13:43; Rev. 21:23; 22:16; Dan. 12:3; SS 6:10**.

A morning without clouds

“a morning without clouds” - There will be no obscuring of Christ's rule. Note the language of the earlier stage - **Ezek. 1:26-28**.

“as the tender grass” - Grass = flesh (**Isa. 40:5-8**). The regrowth after the scything judgements of God - **Ps. 72:6**.

“clear shining” - Uninterrupted light of Divine government - **Rev. 22:5**.

“after rain” - Lifted from **Deut. 32:1** = doctrine, teaching of Christ and saints after judgements.

David looks to the future

V.5 – “Although my house be not so with God” - The translations differ: **Roth.** -

“When not so was my house with God, then he..”. **RSV** – “Yea does not my house stand so with God, for he has..”.

Interlinear Bible – “For is not so my house with God? For he has..”.

Companion Bible – “For is not my house thus through God? For he..”.

“hath made with me” - **Roth.** – “hath appointed me”.

Covenant of Olahm

“an everlasting covenant” - **Bro. Thomas** - “the Covenant of the Olahm” (the Hidden Period or Millennium).

“desire” - *chephets* - pleasure, desire. See use **Ps. 1:2; 16:3; Isa. 58:3,13**.

“grow” - *tsamach* - sprout. Used **Ps. 132:17** (‘bud’); **Jer. 33:15; Ezek. 29:21; Isa. 55:10**.

V.6 – “Belial” - without profit, worthlessness. **Interlinear Bible** – “But the wicked”. **Roth.** – “the abandoned”.

The wicked destroyed

"all of them" - Implies total and final destruction of all the wicked in the earth. Cp. **Rev. 21:8**.

"as thorns" - *kohtz*. 5th use in O.T. First occ. of the word is in **Gen. 3:18**. The curse of mortality through sin.

"thrust away" - *nadad* - to drive away.

"because they cannot be taken with hands" - Bro. Thomas - "though not with hand shall they be taken"; i.e. they shall be taken 'without hand' as in **Dan. 8:25; 2:34-35** - without human agency.

Triumph through crucifixion

V.7 - "the man" - *ish* - great man = Christ.

"shall touch them" - *naga* - to touch; lay the hand upon, hence to strike. Bro. Thomas - "But the Man shall smite upon them".

Christ will destroy the wicked by Divine power - **Ps. 110:6**.

"fenced" - Mgn. "filled" is correct.

"with iron and the staff of a spear" - The Roman spear which pierced Christ's side - **John 19:34**.

Divine judgement to come

"burned" - *saraph* - to be on fire. Root of Seraphim (= Saints).

"with fire" - See the fate of Gog and Magog at Armageddon (**Ezek. 38:22; 39:6**) and at end of Millennium (**Rev. 20:8-9**).



The sure mercies of David

Yahweh's furnace in Zion

"in the same place" - *shebeth* - from root sig. both locality and a state of confidence. Bro. Thomas - "in standing", i.e. while in position standing to arms as in **Zech. 14:12**. A.V. is also acceptable = destruction of the wicked in the very place where Christ was crucified to destroy sin - see **Ezek. 38 & 39; Zech. 12 to 14**.

The final destruction of the wicked is at Jerusalem - **Rev. 20:8-9**.

APPENDIX 2

Significance of Ox in Scripture:

- Symbol of power to work (Prov. 14:4)
- Symbol of willingness to serve (Job. 39:9-12)
- Symbol of spirit of sacrifice (Lev. 1:5; 4:4; 4:10)

Tribe – Ephraim – (Gen. 49: 23) Son of Joseph

He was sold for a servant and suffered that he might save his brethren. **Psa. 105:16-18**

Prophet – Jeremiah – His life's work – he preached and he suffered

- **8:21** – Felt pain as results of his labors
- **15:17** – Bitterness of spirit because of faithfulness
- **9:1** – Cried because of despair

Opening of Gospel:

Mk. 1:1 – No genealogy “servants have no genealogy”

= “son of his father” See **Mal. 1:6; 3:17**

- servant of his father
- his father is his master
- Ministry begins at **Mk. 1:14 – 13 vs into gospel** – {Mt. 76 verses – Lu. – 183 verses} Once service

3 Unique Passages:

1. **Mk. 4:26-29** – “The Servant manifests quiet patience”
2. **Mk. 7:31-37** – “The Servant is completely involved”
3. **Mk. 12:28-34** – “The Servant understands true sacrifice”

3 O.T. References:

1. **Mk. 1:35; 16:9** – Jer. 25:3-4 (Parable of the Seed)
“The Servant is always ready”
2. **Mk. 11:9-11** – Psa. 118:26-27 (Miracle of Deaf/Dumb)
“The Servant comes for sacrifice”
3. **Mk. 12:33** – 1 Sam. 15:22 (Enquiry of the Scribe)
“The Servant renders total obedience”



Facial Features

- Large, soft **Eyes**
- **Docile** expression
- **Gentle** lowering of dependence and **service**

3 Special Features:

1. **The Six Evenings** – “The Servant works to create”
Mk. 1:32; 4:35; 6:47; 11:11; 14:17; 15:42
2. **The Chapter Openings** – “The Servant labours without ceasing”
Mk. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; 9:1; 11:1; 12:1; 13:1; 15:1; 16:1
3. **The Gospel of Emotions** – “The Servant serves with passion”

Anger – 3:5	Fatigue – 4:38	Incredulity – 6:6
Care – 6:34	Empathy – 7:34	Frustration – 8:12
Tenderness – 9:36	Love – 10:21	Resolution – 10:32

3 Major Themes:

1. **The humility of loyal service**
 - A notable idea in Mark is the spirit of concealment in Christ's labours. (**Mk. 1:34; 44; 3:12; 4:11-12; 5:43; 7:24; 36; 8:26; 30; 9:9, 30**)
 - The work of the Servant was to be quiet and unobtrusive without popular acclaim or prominence – cp. **Isa. 42:2-4**
 - Number of times Christ is addressed as lord, master (2962) “kyrios” **Mt. 25** **Mk. 2-Lu. 31-Jn. 34** – (**Mk. 7:28** means “sir” **Jn. 4:11; 12:21**) (**Mk. 9:24** – omitted in Roth, RSV, NASB)
2. **The exhaustion of faithful labour** –
Here the servant withdraws to renew strength to:
 - **Mk. 1:35** the outskirts of Capernaum **Mk. 1:45** the wilderness place
 - **Mk. 3:7** the shores of Gennesaret **Mk. 6:6** the villages of Galilee
 - **Mk. 6:31** the wilderness of Bethsaida **Mk. 6:46** mountains of Gaulanitis
 - **Mk. 7:24** the borders of Tyre **Mk. 8:27** towns of Caesarea Philippi
 - **Mk. 9:2** the heights of Hermon **Mk. 11:1** the town of Bethany
 - **Mk. 14:35** the garden of Gethsemane **Mk. 16:19** the Father in heaven
3. **The dedication of the complete sacrifice** –
- Section on journey to the cross – Mark the longest of all Gospels
- 3-unique ref. to Christ being ‘on the way’ (Each linked to prediction of suffering/death of Christ) **Mk. 8:27-32; 9:30-35; 10:32-34**
- **Mk. 10:32** (cp. **Pro. 7:22**) echoes Jeremiah's experience. (cp. **Jer. 11:19**)
- **Mk. 1:10** – Way from heaven torn open to announce Son of God at

Key Words

	M t	M k	Lk	Jn
Immediately – (2112) “ <u>euthous</u> ”	18	42	8	7
Hands – (5495) “ <u>cheir</u> ”	3	10	4	0
Unclean – (169) “ <u>akathartos</u> ”	2	11	6	0

Expresses the driving energy of the Servant striving to fulfill his ministry
References to Christ laying his hands upon others for healing
The work of the Servant was to confront sin and remove it

3 Notable Inclusions:

1. The Discussion in **Capernaum** (**Mk. 9:33-37**)
“The Servant seeks no pre-eminence”
2. The Ministration of the Son of **Man** (**Mk. 10:42-45**)
“The Servant ministers and suffers”
3. The Certain Young **Man** (**Mk. 14:51-52**)
“The Servant is always faithful”

3 Notable Omissions:

1. The Visit of the **Magi** (**Mt. 2: 1-2**)
“The Servant receives no homage”
2. The Discourse on the **Plain** (**Lk. 6: 17-49**)
“The Servant frames no laws”
3. The Women taken in **adultery** (**Jn. 8: 1-11**)
“The Servant passes no judgement”

APPENDIX 3

DAVID'S COUNSEL TO SOLOMON TO DEAL WITH JOAB AND SHIMEI

At first sight it does appear that David falls victim to the human desire for vengeance and retribution – the 'get even' syndrome in human nature that we are so familiar with. However, the truth is that David is actually seeking to vindicate Yahweh's righteousness in advising Solomon to deal wisely (1 Kings 2:6,9) with the perpetrators of capital crimes that he himself was unable to do. This becomes clear from a careful reading of 1 Kings 2:1-9. In verse 3 he counsels Solomon to “keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses.” It is inconceivable that his advice to deal with Joab and Shimei could be inconsistent with that injunction. That he asks Solomon to care for the children of Barzillai (V.7) is also implicit proof that this is not about revenge, but rather about doing right by the promises and commitments he had made.

David was restricted by two road blocks to himself upholding the righteousness of God in relation to Joab and Shimei. He had used Joab as his agent to murder Uriah and Joab doubtless had David's letter (2 Sam. 11:15) in his possession. Like Aaron before him (Lev. 10:19), David felt completely unworthy of dealing with a case in which he himself was a failure. He had murdered Uriah (his 'competition' for Bathsheba who had steadfastly resisted masking David's adultery by going down to his house). Like David, Joab later murdered his competition for the role of captain of the host. How could David stand in judgement of Joab? Similarly, with Shimei David had tied his own hands. On returning from Mahanaim David swore an oath to a seemingly repentant Shimei that he (David) would not put him to death for his treasonous behavior when David was fleeing from Absalom (2 Sam. 19:23). The law of Ex. 22:28 – “Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people” (RV), required Shimei to be dealt with and in that Abishai was correct – 2 Sam. 19:21 – “Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?” Understandable failure by David to get this right at the time only led others like Sheba to revolt against the anointed king with impunity (2 Sam. 20:1-2). David made several errors of judgement during this period – publicly mourning for Absalom as his loyal soldiers returned from the battle; appointing Amasa, the opposing General, to replace Joab who had defeated him (weakening himself against Sheba and almost guaranteeing Amasa's eventual demise); and believing a conniving Ziba against the later revealed truthful words and appearance of Jonathan's disabled son Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 16:1-4; 19:24-30). It is fair to say that a gnawing conscience based on vivid memories of past grievous failures (see David's confession - 2 Sam. 16:10-12), had made him feel completely helpless as a leader and a deserving recipient of Divine judgement.

The judgements meted out by Solomon on Adonijah, Joab, Abiathar and Shimei were all just and right. By seeking the hand of Abishag in marriage, Adonijah was craftily endeavouring to make himself king again. It was the practice of new kings to take the wives of the former king. Note Ahithophel's initial counsel to Absalom – 2 Sam. 16:21 – “Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house.” David himself insisted that Michal, Saul's daughter who had been given to another man be returned to him before any deal could be done with Abner (2 Sam. 3:13). Abner stepped over the line himself when he took Rizpah, Saul's concubine (2 Sam. 3:7) and was rebuked by Ishbosheth. Accordingly, Adonijah rightly paid with his life for treason. Joab was a double murderer and should have been dealt with in the reign of David were it not for the moral hold he had over David as the bearer of dark secrets (there is no evidence that David's letter to Joab via the hand of Uriah was ever made public). His death beside the altar was perfectly just – there was no mercy for this man at the very place

which spoke of the willingness of Yahweh to forgive repentant sinners. The sacking of Abiathar too was just and a fulfillment of the edict against the house of Eli (1 Sam. 2:35-36; 3:11-14; 1 Kings 2:26-27), thus returning the high-priesthood to its rightful family – the family of Eleazer. David did not do this for three reasons - (1) the loyalty of Abiathar to him right up until the usurpation of Adonijah; (2) the sense of guilt David felt for telling untruths to Ahimelech (Abiathar's father and high-priest) in the presence of Doeg occasioning the death of Abiathar's entire family (1 Sam. 22:22); and (3) David's consciousness of his adulterous behavior with Bathsheba (though forgiven by God, he could never forgive himself – Ps. 51:3). Was not Eli's house characterised by the unlawful deeds of Hophni and Phineas who “lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation?” (1 Sam. 2:22). Hypocrisy was something that David eschewed. In the same way that Hophni and Phineas made men abhor the offering of Yahweh (1 Sam. 2:17), David had “given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme” (2 Sam. 12:14).

As for Shimei, the applied wisdom of Solomon saw him lose his life by his own choices. Shimei did not die by the sword because he cursed David, though that would have been just. He died because he swore an oath not to leave Jerusalem for any reason and within 3 years had broken that oath. Knowing he was worthy of death for cursing David, Shimei readily accepted the terms of Solomon to build a house in Jerusalem (which was in fact in the territory of Benjamin, his tribe) – 1 Kings 2:36-38. He signed his own death warrant for a reason related to, but quite separate to his sin of cursing the king. David and Solomon had kept the terms of David's original oath to Shimei.

The wisdom of Solomon was revealed very early in the discernment of human behavior and emotions. This became obvious in his treatment of the dispute between two harlots over the living child – 1 Kings 3:16-28. Solomon knew David was right and that the irascible character of Shimei would ultimately be his undoing. As he said to him – “Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to....” (1 Kings 2:44). Shimei had a volatile and uncontrollable temper which could not abide challenges to his personal interests. His hatred of David stemmed from the fact that the tribe of Benjamin lost the mantle of royalty when David became king, and he bristled at the fact that two of his servants like David took refuge in Gath with a king called Achish (1 Kings 2:39)! Really? It was from the shadow of Achish that David had returned to Israel to become king in the place of a Benjamite! It was too much for the angry and bitter Shimei and he committed 'suicide' by going to Gath to reclaim his servants. In the end, we are all the arbiters of our own destiny.

1 Kings 3:28 – “judgement”

mishpāt

mish-pawt'

From H8199; properly a *verdict* (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a *sentence* or formal decree (human or (particularly) divine *law*, individual or collectively), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly *justice*, including a particular *right*, or *privilege* (statutory or customary), or even a *style*: - + adversary, ceremony, charge, X crime, custom, desert, determination, discretion, disposing, due, fashion, form, to be judged, judgment, just (-ice, -ly), manner of law (-ful), manner, measure, (due) order, ordinance, right, sentence, usest, X worthy, + wrong.

“judged”

shâphat

shaw-fat'

A primitive root; to *judge*, that is, pronounce *sentence* (for or against); by implication to *vindicate* or *punish*; by extension to *govern*; passively to *litigate* (literally or figuratively): - + avenge, X that condemn, contend, defend, execute (judgment), (be a) judge (-ment), X needs, plead, reason, rule.

APPENDIX 4

Extract from the study notes “The Kings of Israel and Judah”.

SOLOMON

The accession to the throne of Solomon the son of David was different in every way to that of his father and, tragically for the nation, the impact of his reign upon the subsequent history of Israel was also vastly different. David’s legacy to the nation has already been referred to in the summary of his life and character. By contrast Solomon’s legacy to the nation was the introduction of a corruption that finally brought about its dissolution.

Solomon has the unenviable distinction of being the first king to introduce idolatry into Israel and is the man held solely responsible for the division of the kingdom—God’s ecclesia. Whereas David unified and established the kingdom, Solomon corrupted and divided it (1 Kings 11:11).

A review of Solomon’s life reveals some great achievements and some sad failures which are made all the more tragic because he had such a unique beginning and wonderful circumstances and opportunities for success. We will only attempt to briefly review his achievements and failures.

The early part of his reign is marked by achievements and success which made him the greatest king of his time (1 Kings 10:23). Never again did Israel reach the heights of glory attained in Solomon’s early years. He was known world-wide for his unsurpassed wisdom (1 Kings 10:24), and for his many writings (1 Kings 4:32). The magnificence and splendour of the temple completed in his seventh year made Israel the centre of universal attention and wonder. Furthermore his early years were characterised by absolute peace and prosperity for Israel and the total unification of the people as they basked in the benefits derived from his greatness, prosperity and universal acclaim. In all of these things Solomon was an ample type of the Lord Jesus Christ in that time when he shall sit upon the throne of David ruling over the humbled nations in righteousness and peace, and presiding over the worship of his Father in “the house of prayer for all nations.”

Solomon’s failure was copybook, for in every particular of the demands made of a king under the Law he failed (Deut. 17:14-20). He was unheeding of the warning not to return to Egypt to acquire horses and sent his servants to buy horses and much else as well (1 Kings 10:28-29). He was unmindful of the commandment not to multiply wives to himself, and “loved many strange women” (1 Kings 11:1-2; Neh. 13:26). Furthermore, he amassed enormous wealth so that silver became of no greater value in Jerusalem than stones (1 Kings 10:27). Every king was commanded to concentrate his mind upon the law of God and write out his own copy of that law (Deut. 17:18-20). Solomon however diversified his education and God gave him wisdom in all matters in which he sought out knowledge, according to His promise (1 Kings 4:29-31). Solomon became an oracle in all the philosophies and wisdom of his time, excelling all the great men of the east. There was in this an insidious danger which soon manifested itself.

Solomon’s mind was occupied with matters that cannot be ascertained by searching. The origins of earth’s creator, the reasons behind the established order of nature and the purpose of human existence, all matters of faith to men like David, vexed a philosophic mind and resulted in Solomon embarking upon a quest of experimentation with every lust and whim of the flesh (Ecc. 1:17; 2:1-11). Never before or since has there been a man as full as Solomon, and as a consequence able to fulfil every desire of the flesh. He did so, and finally concluded that it was all “vanity and vexation of spirit.”

It was inevitable that under these circumstances apostasy would result, and in due course “his wives turned away his heart” and he served the gods of the surrounding nations, introducing a corrupt form of worship into Israel which remained for 350 years until the days of Josiah when it was finally eradicated completely (1 Kings 11:7). Yahweh was enraged by Solomon’s apostasy because it came about despite two unique appearances to him, warning him against “going after other gods” (1 Kings 11:9-10).

Finally, God once again appeared to Solomon to inform him that the kingdom would be rent from him except for the tribe of Judah (for David’s sake), and that he would be held solely responsible (1 Kings 11:11-13). For the phrase: “Forasmuch as this is done of thee”, Youngs Literal translation has: “Forasmuch as this is with thee”, which is clearly a subtle reference to the very law which Solomon had ignored. In the Law of the King (Deut. 17:14-20) which Solomon had broken in every particular, the king was instructed to copy out the book of the Law for himself. To this instruction is then added the words; “and it shall be with him” (verse 19), that he may daily ponder its message and remember its demands upon him. Instead of finding this Law with Solomon God found idolatry and rebellion against the provisions of the law governing the kings.

The last words of Solomon reveal that he eventually came to a full realization of his disregard for the Law of the King, for he uses the language of Deut. 17:14-20 and quotes directly from it in Ecc. 12:8-14, saying; “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole (or complete) man.”

APPENDIX 5

Jeremiah's Dream

Bible Marking Notes on Jeremiah 30 & 31

In Jer. 31:26 the prophet records that he awoke from sleep finding his thoughts sweet. Clearly what is recorded from Jer. 30:4 to 31:26 constitutes the content of that dream. Jeremiah's dream is patterned on Jacob's at Bethel (Gen. 28) and the life of Jacob forms the basis of the prophecy, especially final release from the yoke of Esau. This is significant because Jeremiah's dream is preceded by the false dreams of Shemaiah the Nehelamite ("He of the dream"). For teaching rebellion Shemaiah is condemned to the fate of Esau's house (Jer. 29:30-32).

<p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 30</p> <p>¹ The word that came to ¹<u>Jeremiah</u> from the LORD, saying,</p> <p>² Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, ²<u>Write</u> thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.</p> <p>³ For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that ³<u>I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah</u>, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall ⁴<u>possess</u> it.</p> <p>⁴ And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah.</p> <p>⁵ For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of ⁵<u>trembling</u>, of ⁶<u>fear</u>, and not of ⁷<u>peace</u>.</p> <p>⁶ Ask ye now, and see whether a ⁸<u>man</u> doth ⁹<u>travail with child</u>? wherefore do I see every ¹⁰<u>man</u> with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into ¹¹<u>pale</u>ness?</p> <p>⁷ Alas! for ¹²<u>that day is great</u>, so that none is like it: it is even ¹³<u>the time of Jacob's</u> ¹⁴<u>trouble</u>; but he shall be saved out of it.</p> <p>⁸ For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will ¹⁵<u>break</u> ¹⁶<u>his yoke</u> from off thy ¹⁷<u>neck</u>, and will ¹⁸<u>burst</u> thy ¹⁹<u>bonds</u>, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:</p> <p>There are two stages to the deliverance of Jacob:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christ will "save the tents of Judah" first immediately after Armageddon – Zech. 12. 2. Elijah will lead the Second Exodus for 40 years to recover all Jews outside the Land – Ezek. 20. <p>⁹ But they shall serve the LORD their God, and ²⁰<u>David their king</u>, whom I will raise up unto them.</p> <p>¹⁰ Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be ¹<u>dismayed</u>, O Israel: for, lo, ²<u>I will save thee from afar</u>, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.</p> <p>¹¹ For ³<u>I am with thee</u>, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make ⁴<u>a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee</u>, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will ⁵<u>correct</u> thee in ⁶<u>measure</u>, and will ⁷<u>not leave thee altogether unpunished</u>.</p> <p>¹² For thus saith the LORD, Thy ⁸<u>bruise</u> is incurable, and thy wound is grievous.</p> <p>¹³ There is none to plead thy ⁹<u>cause</u>, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.</p>	<p>Jeremiah's dream – Jacob redeemed and restored to the Land</p> <p>¹ "Whom Yah has appointed" (Easton - "Raised up or appointed by Yah"). Son of Hilkiah (most likely high priest in time of Josiah - 2 Kings 23:4). Called BC 626 and prophesied for 42 years.</p> <p>² The sins of Judah were written indelibly – Jer. 17:1; 25:13. Judgement would fall, but redemption and restoration are certain for Jacob in the latter days (v.24).</p> <p>³ Refers to restoration of the latter days in two stages – first Judah (Jews in the Land at Christ's return), and then all scattered Jews through the work of Elijah – Ezek. 20:33-38.</p> <p>⁴ <u>yarash</u> - to occupy (by driving out previous tenants, and possessing in their place).</p> <p>⁵ <u>charadah</u> – (Feminine) fear, anxiety. Cp. "virgin of Israel" - Jer. 31:4,21.</p> <p>⁶ <u>pachad</u> – sudden alarm; dread – Gen. 31:42,53.</p> <p>⁷ <u>shalom</u> – peace through unity. Occs. 31 times in book. A key theme. Judah's false prophets promised it, but the grounds for peace were absent.</p> <p>⁸ <u>zakar</u> – male of the species.</p> <p>⁹ <u>yalah</u> – to bear young. Alludes to Jacob's hip-socket being dislocated pinching the sciatic nerve, the closest pain a man can experience to child birth.</p> <p>¹⁰ <u>geber</u> – strong man, warrior.</p> <p>¹¹ Roth. – "ghastliness".</p> <p>¹² The day of Yahweh – Zech. 14:1 (13:8-9).</p> <p>¹³ The greatest crisis in Jacob's history will be the time of Gog's invasion of the Land and the Second Exodus under Elijah – Ezek. 38 & 39.</p> <p>¹⁴ <u>tsarah</u> – tightness; straits, distress.</p> <p>¹⁵ <u>shabar</u> – to burst; break down.</p> <p>¹⁶ Esau's yoke (Bro. Thomas – Eureka Vol. 5, pg. 48 – Logos Edition). RSV – "that I will break the yoke from off their neck and I will burst their bonds and strangers shall no more make servants of them." See first use of "yoke" – Gen. 27:40.</p> <p>¹⁷ <u>tsavvar</u> – root idea is of cramping, confining in sense of binding (under a yoke). Hence, back of the neck. First 2 occs. Gen. 27:16,40. See context Isa. 10:27.</p> <p>¹⁸ <u>nathaq</u> – to tear away.</p> <p>¹⁹ <u>moserah</u> – bond; halter.</p> <p>²⁰ "Beloved". Refers to Christ as Israel's future king.</p> <p>Jacob comforted with guaranteed future</p> <p>¹ <u>chathath</u> - to be shattered, be broken.</p> <p>² Based on Jacob's return from exile in Haran. This declaration is repeated Jer. 46:27.</p> <p>³ Echo of Gen. 28:15.</p> <p>⁴ Divine guarantee of the abolition of all nations. This will be finally fulfilled beyond the Millennium when only one nation will exist on earth – Israel – Rev. 21.</p> <p>⁵ <u>yasar</u> – discipline, correct, chasten.</p> <p>⁶ <u>mishpat</u> – judgement, justice. Ygs. Lit. – "I have chastised thee in judgement".</p> <p>⁷ <u>naqah</u> – to hold innocent. Roth. – "not holding thee, guiltless".</p> <p>⁸ <u>sheber</u> - breaking, fracture, crushing, breach, crash, ruin, shattering. Translated "hurt" Jer. 6:14; 8:11.</p> <p>⁹ <u>dun</u> – judgement.</p> <p>¹⁰ <u>ahab</u> – friends.</p>
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<p>¹⁴ All thy ¹⁰lovers have ¹¹forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have ¹²wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a ¹³cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were ¹⁴increased.</p> <p>¹⁵ Why criest thou for thine ¹⁵affliction? thy ¹⁶sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were ¹⁴increased, I have done these things unto thee.</p> <p>¹⁶ Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that ¹⁷spoil thee shall be a ¹⁸spoil, and all that ¹⁹prey upon thee will I give for a ²⁰prey.</p> <p>¹⁷ For I will ²¹restore health unto thee, and I will ²²heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an ²³Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.</p> <p>¹⁸ Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's ¹tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and ²the city shall be builded upon her own ³heap, and the ⁴palace shall remain after the ⁵manner thereof.</p> <p>¹⁹ And out of them shall proceed ⁶thanksgiving and the voice of them that make ⁷merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be ⁸few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be ⁹small.</p> <p>²⁰ Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their ¹⁰congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that ¹¹oppress them.</p>	<p>¹¹ <i>shakach</i> – forget, cease to care. So it will be just prior to Armageddon.</p> <p>¹² <i>nakah</i> – to strike.</p> <p>¹³ Ygs. Lit. – “fierce one”. See Lam. 2:5; Hos. 5:14.</p> <p>¹⁴ Roth. – “numerous”.</p> <p>¹⁵ <i>sheber</i> – See use v.12.</p> <p>¹⁶ <i>makob</i> – pain, sorrow. First occ. Ex. 3:7.</p> <p>¹⁷ <i>shaas</i> – to plunder, spoil.</p> <p>¹⁸ <i>meshissah</i> – booty, spoil, plunder. This word is used Ezek. 38:12-13; 39:10. The last oppressor will be Gog.</p> <p>¹⁹ <i>bazaz</i> – to spoil, plunder. Used Ezek. 38:12-13; 39:10.</p> <p>²⁰ <i>baz</i> – spoil, booty, robbery. Used Ezek. 38:12-13.</p> <p>²¹ <i>alah arukah</i> – Lit. ascend to wholeness. Same words used 2 Chron. 24:13; Neh. 4:7.</p> <p>²² <i>rapha</i> – heal. The work of Yahweh Ropheka – Ex. 15:26.</p> <p>²³ In 1975 the United Nations declared Zionism equated with racism (repealed 1991).</p>
<p>Israel and Judah in the Prophetic Scriptures ‘Israel’, ‘Ephraim’ and ‘the remnant of Jacob’ – Refers to scattered Jewry worldwide – Zech. 9:13; Ezek. 20:27, 30, 39; Mic. 5:7-8. ‘Judah’ – Refers to the Jews in the Land at Christ’s return – Zech. 12:7.</p>	<p>Jacob redeemed in the latter days ¹ <i>ohel</i> – nomads tent. Implies a scattered people. ² Jerusalem. ³ <i>tel</i> – mound, heap of ruins. After the earthquake at Armageddon Jerusalem will be a heap of rubble with exalted Mount Zion in the midst. ⁴ <i>armon</i> – citadel, palace, fortress. See use in Ps. 48:3, 13 of the House of Prayer for all nations. ⁵ <i>mishpat</i> – verdict, judgement. ⁶ <i>todah</i> – confession, praise, thanksgiving. ⁷ <i>sachaq</i> – to make sport, to jest, to play (including instrumental music, singing, dancing). Used Jer. 31:4. See use Zech. 8:5. ⁸ <i>ma’at</i> – to make small or few. Christ will redeem Jacob and Israel will become the head of the nations. ⁹ <i>tsâ’ar</i> – to be or grow insignificant.</p>
<p>²¹ And their ¹²nobles shall be of themselves, and ¹³their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to ¹⁴draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that ¹⁵engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD.</p> <p>²² And ¹⁶ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.</p> <p>²³ Behold, the ¹⁷whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with ¹⁸fury, a ¹⁹continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with ²⁰pain upon the head of the wicked.</p>	<p>¹⁰ <i>edah</i> – assembly (Roth.). Judah and Israel will become a united community in the Land under Christ’s rule – Ezek. 37:21-25.</p> <p>¹¹ <i>lachats</i> – to squeeze, press, oppress. The final oppressor will be the Roman Catholic system in Europe.</p> <p>¹² Should be singular. RSV – “Their prince shall be one of themselves”. Refers to Christ as Israel’s King.</p> <p>¹³ Jesus Christ was born King of the Jews – John 18:36-37.</p> <p>¹⁴ <i>qarab</i> – to bring near, present. Used in Zeph. 3:2 of a personal relationship with God. Christ’s willing obedience to his Father was the key to the ultimate fulfilment of the promises to Abraham.</p> <p>¹⁵ <i>arab</i> – to pledge. Roth. – “For who is there that hath pledged his own heart to approach unto me?”</p> <p>¹⁶ Echo of Gen. 17:7-8. The Abrahamic Covenant will be in the final stages of fulfillment.</p> <p>¹⁷ Used in the context of Armageddon – Ps. 83:15; Jer. 25:32; Ezek. 1:4; Zech. 9:14. Cp. Jer. 23:19.</p> <p>¹⁸ Used Ezek. 38:18 of God’s anger at Gogian invasion of the Land. Refers to unheard of judgements at Armageddon and beyond – Mic. 5:15.</p> <p>¹⁹ <i>garar</i> – roaring.</p> <p>²⁰ <i>chiyl</i> – to twist, whirl about. Roth. – “A tempest rolling itself upward,— Upon the head of the lawless ones, shall it hurl itself down!”</p>
<p>In Jer. 23:20 the identical Hebrew words are used in a sentence with one additional word – “perfectly”. The context concerns the re-establishment of the throne of David by Christ and the redemption of Israel.</p>	<p>²¹ “It is done” will be announced after Armageddon (Ezek. 39:8; Rev. 16:17) and again at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 21:6).</p> <p>²² Roth. – “established the purposes of his heart”.</p> <p>²³ This is a prophecy concerning the second advent of Christ. Cp. Ezek. 38:16.</p> <p>²⁴ <i>biyn</i> – to show oneself discerning or attentive, consider diligently.</p>
<p>²⁴ The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, ²¹until he have done it, and until he have ²²performed the intents of his heart: ²³in the latter days ye shall ²⁴consider it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jeremiah 31</p> <p>¹ ¹At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of ²all the families of Israel, and ³they shall be my people.</p>	<p>The restoration and conversion of all Israel promised ¹ The conversion of Israel is a post-Armageddon work – Jer. 30:24. ² After Armageddon the remnant of ‘Judah’ will be converted. The Second Exodus will also see the purging and conversion of scattered ‘Ephraim’. ³ Fulfilling Gen. 17:7-8 in relation to Abraham’s natural seed.</p>

<p>² Thus saith the LORD, ⁴<u>The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness</u>; even Israel, when I went ⁵<u>to cause him to rest</u>.</p> <p>³ The LORD hath appeared of ⁶<u>old</u> unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with ⁷<u>lovingkindness</u> have I ⁸<u>drawn</u> thee.</p> <p>⁴ ⁹<u>Again I will build thee</u>, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy ¹⁰<u>tabrets</u>, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make ¹¹<u>merry</u>.</p> <p>⁵ Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of ¹²<u>Samaria</u>: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as ¹³<u>common things</u>.</p> <p>⁶ For there shall be a day, that ¹⁴<u>the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim</u> shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.</p> <p>⁷ For thus saith the LORD; ¹⁵<u>Sing</u> with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the ¹⁶<u>chief</u> of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, ¹⁷<u>the remnant of Israel</u>.</p> <p>⁸ Behold, ¹⁸<u>I will bring them from the north country</u>, and gather them from ¹⁹<u>the coasts of the earth</u>, and with them the blind and the ²⁰<u>lame</u>, the woman with child and ²¹<u>her that travaileth with child</u> ²²<u>together</u>: a ²³<u>great company</u> shall return thither.</p> <p>⁹ They shall come with ²⁴<u>weeping</u>, and with ²⁵<u>supplications</u> will I lead them: I will cause them to walk ²⁶<u>by the rivers of waters</u> in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: ²⁷<u>for I am a father to Israel</u>, and ²⁸<u>Ephraim is my firstborn</u>.</p> <p>¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, ¹<u>O ye nations</u>, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and ²<u>keep</u> him, as a shepherd doth his flock.</p> <p>¹¹ For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ³<u>ransomed</u> him from the hand of ⁴<u>him that was stronger than he</u>.</p> <p>¹² Therefore they shall come and sing in the ⁵<u>height of Zion</u>, and shall ⁶<u>flow together</u> to the goodness of the LORD, for ⁷<u>wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd</u>: and their soul shall be as a ⁸<u>watered garden</u>; and they shall not ⁹<u>sorrow</u> any more at all.</p> <p>¹³ Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their ¹⁰<u>mourning into joy</u>, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their ¹¹<u>sorrow</u>.</p> <p>¹⁴ And I will ¹²<u>satiate</u> the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.</p> <p>¹⁵ Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in ¹<u>Ramah</u>, lamentation, and bitter weeping; ²<u>Rahel</u> weeping for her children ³<u>refused to be comforted</u> for her children, because they were not.</p> <p>¹⁶ Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and ⁴<u>they shall come again from the land of the enemy</u>.</p>	<p>⁴ Refers to Israel under oppression in Egypt – Ex. 1:8-22.</p> <p>⁵ Israel brought out of Egypt to be given rest in the Land – Deut. 12:9. Roth. - "From afar". The long history of Israel proved how great and enduring Yahweh's love for His people was.</p> <p>⁷ <i>chesed</i> – Ex. 34:6-7.</p> <p>⁸ Used Hos. 11:4 of God calling Israel out of Egypt.</p> <p>⁹ Theme of the prophets - Isa. 44:26-28; 58:12; 60:10; 61:4; Jer. 24:6; 31:28; 33:7; Ezek. 36:33,36.</p> <p>¹⁰ Translated 'timbrels' Ex. 15:20 (context – Israel's deliverance).</p> <p>¹¹ Harks back to Jer. 30:19.</p> <p>¹² Went into captivity 120 years before. Foreshadows the restoration of "all Israel" to the Land and their unity under Christ's rule.</p> <p>¹³ RSV – "shall enjoy the fruit".</p> <p>¹⁴ Since Jeroboam the watchmen of Ephraim looked for invasion from north or south. In the Kingdom their duty will be to direct worshippers to Zion.</p> <p>¹⁵ A call for all to rejoice in the redemption of Israel – Isa. 44:23; 52:8-9.</p> <p>¹⁶ <i>rosh</i> – head.</p> <p>¹⁷ Two thirds of Jews in the Land (Zech. 13:8) and the older generation of Jews outside the Land will perish in the events of Armageddon and the Second Exodus.</p> <p>¹⁸ Based on Jacob's return from Haran. Prophecy of return of Jews from Russia and Europe – Isa. 43:6; Jer. 3:12,18; 16:15; 23:8; Zech. 2:6.</p> <p>¹⁹ i.e. from all countries.</p> <p>²⁰ Jacob halted upon his thigh – Gen. 32:31; Mic. 4:6; Zeph. 3:19.</p> <p>²¹ Based on Rachel – Gen. 35:16; Jer. 31:15; Mic. 4:9-10.</p> <p>²² <i>yachad</i> – unitedly. Bound together by the truth.</p> <p>²³ So Jacob returned from Haran – Gen. 33:5-8.</p> <p>²⁴ Jacob prevailed with God by weeping – Hos. 12:4.</p> <p>²⁵ <i>tachanun</i> – earnest prayer. Cp. Gen. 32:9-12.</p> <p>²⁶ The Second Exodus led by Elijah - Isa. 11:11-16; 41:17-19; 43:16-19.</p> <p>²⁷ See Jer. 3:4,19; 31:20.</p> <p>²⁸ 'Ephraim' is title of Jews outside the Land at the return of Christ, also called 'Israel' and 'the remnant of Jacob'. Cp. Ex. 4:22.</p> <p><u>Yahweh redeems Jacob from the hand of Esau</u></p> <p>¹ After Armageddon Christ will publish to all Gentile nations his intention to redeem all Israel – Isa. 43:6. Nations supporting the Papacy (head of the house of Esau) will resist their return to the Land – Obad. 18; Mic. 5:8.</p> <p>² <i>shamar</i> – hedge about, guard.</p> <p>³ <i>ga'al</i> – act as a kinsman-redeemer.</p> <p>⁴ Esau – the prophetic name for all anti-semitic nations. The final 'Esau' is the Papacy in its opposition to Christ's rule and the redemption of Israel.</p> <p>⁵ Zion means "conspicuous". Indicates the time of its elevation – Ps. 48:2.</p> <p>⁶ Israel will precede all nations flowing to Zion – Isa. 2:2; 60:5; Mic. 4:1.</p> <p>⁷ Five blessings = grace.</p> <p>⁸ Requires conversion. See use Isa. 58:11.</p> <p>⁹ <i>da'ab</i> – to become faint, languish. 3 occs. O.T. Trans. "sorrowful" v.25.</p> <p>Jacob is saved out of his trouble; the yoke of Esau is at length broken from off his neck; and the first dominion, the kingdom, has come to the daughter of Jerusalem (Gen. 27:40; Mic. 4:8). Eureka Vol. 4, pg. 26</p> <p>¹⁰ Cp. Isa. 51:3,11; 65:18-19.</p> <p>¹¹ <i>yagon</i> – grief, sorrow, anguish.</p> <p>¹² <i>ravah</i> – saturate. Teacher and scholar will be satisfied with Yahweh's goodness in the Kingdom.</p> <p><u>The bitterness of the past superseded</u></p> <p>¹ The captives of Judah were later gathered to Ramah. It was from here that the daughter of Zion went into captivity – Jer. 40:1. Much bitterness and sorrow was focussed here – Lam. 1:2-3.</p> <p>² Last of 47 occs. of the name Rachel in O.T. She is also the subject of Mic. 4:8-10. Cited Matt. 2:17-18 in a secondary fulfilment.</p> <p>³ Rachel named Benjamin Ben-oni ("The son of my sorrow") – Gen. 35:18, but was over-ruled by Jacob. So Judah's grief-stricken captivity in Babylon eventually culminated in the birth of "the son of the right hand" – Mic. 5:2-3.</p> <p>⁴ As a remnant of captives returned from Babylon, so the remnant of Jacob will return from dispersion at Christ's return – Mic. 5:7-8.</p>
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<p>¹⁷ And there is hope in thine ⁵<u>end</u>, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.</p> <p>¹⁸ I have surely heard ¹<u>Ephraim</u> ²<u>bemoaning himself</u> thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock ³<u>unaccustomed to the yoke</u>: ⁴<u>turn thou me</u>, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.</p> <p>¹⁹ Surely after that I was turned, I ⁵<u>repented</u>; and after that I was ⁶<u>instructed</u>, ⁷<u>I smote upon my thigh</u>: I was ashamed, yea, even ⁸<u>confounded</u>, because I did bear the ⁹<u>reproach</u> of my youth.</p> <p>²⁰ ¹⁰<u>Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?</u> for since I spake against him, ¹¹<u>I do earnestly remember him still</u>: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; ¹²<u>I will surely have mercy upon him</u>, saith the LORD.</p> <p>²¹ Set thee up ¹³<u>waymarks</u>, make thee ¹⁴<u>high heaps</u>: set thine heart toward the ¹⁵<u>highway</u>, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, ¹⁶<u>turn again to these thy cities</u>.</p> <p>²² ¹⁷<u>How long wilt thou go about</u>, O thou ¹⁸<u>backsliding</u> daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, ¹⁹<u>A woman shall compass a man</u>.</p> <p>²³ Thus saith ¹<u>the LORD of hosts</u>, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of ²<u>Judah</u> and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O ³<u>habitation</u> of ⁴<u>justice</u>, and ⁵<u>mountain of holiness</u>.</p> <p>²⁴ And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, ⁶<u>husbandmen</u>, and they that ⁷<u>go forth with flocks</u>.</p> <p>²⁵ ⁸<u>For I have satiated the weary soul</u>, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.</p> <p>²⁶ Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was ⁹<u>sweet</u> unto me.</p> <p>Abbreviations RSV – Revised Standard Version Roth. – J.B. Rotherham's Emphasised Bible Ygs. Lit. – Young's Literal Translation Cp. – Compare Lit. - Literally</p>	<p>⁵ This word is translated "latter days" in Jer. 30:24. It refers to the second advent of Christ and the Second Exodus of Israel.</p> <p>The attitude of Ephraim returning under Elijah</p> <p>¹ Refers to Jews outside the Land at Christ's return – Zech. 9:13-15.</p> <p>² <i>nud</i> – to bemoan oneself. First used of Cain as a "vagabond" – Gen. 4:12,14. See use Jer. 4:1 ("remove") and 2 Kings 21:8 ("move").</p> <p>³ <i>lo lamad</i> – not goaded or taught. Israel was destroyed for "lack of knowledge" – Hos. 4:6. Ygs. Lit. – "as a heifer not taught".</p> <p>⁴ Ephraim will repent and change his ways during the Second Exodus – Hos. 14:1-8; Jer. 3:22-25.</p> <p>⁵ <i>nacham</i> – to be sorry, repent. Roth. – "I was filled with regret".</p> <p>⁶ <i>yada</i> – to know. Roth. – "after I came to know myself".</p> <p>⁷ Echo of the great lesson of Jacob's life – Gen. 32:24-32.</p> <p>⁸ Translated "blush" Jer. 8:12 – A complete change.</p> <p>⁹ <i>cherpah</i> – disgrace (RSV).</p> <p>¹⁰ Ygs. Lit. – "A precious son is Ephraim to Me? A child of delights?"</p> <p>¹¹ Though Yahweh chastised Ephraim He never forgot His covenant with Abraham – Rom. 11:28; Ezek. 36:21-24.</p> <p>¹² See Mic. 7:18-19.</p> <p>¹³ <i>tsiyun</i> – signpost, monument.</p> <p>¹⁴ <i>tamrur</i> – guideposts, markers.</p> <p>¹⁵ See Isa. 11:16; 62:10-11.</p> <p>¹⁶ The dispersed of Israel will return to the Land of their fathers – Zech. 10:9.</p> <p>¹⁷ Roth. – "How long wilt thou turn hither and thither". Cp. 1 Kings 18:21.</p> <p>¹⁸ <i>shobeb</i> – backturning, apostate.</p> <p>¹⁹ Heb. "compass" signifies "to turn about," and in the Piel signifies, "to cause to turn about," and hence "to repulse," or "put to the rout." "Man" is <i>geber</i> and sig. a warrior. The "new thing" will be the weak daughter of Zion defeating her strong enemies (Logos Vol 33 pg. 390).</p> <p>The glory of Jerusalem – Habitation of justice</p> <p>¹ Yahweh Sabaoth the militant title of Deity infers this outcome can only come in the wake of Divine judgements through Christ and the saints.</p> <p>² Refers to Jews in the Land at Christ's coming. The remnant will be converted and will prepare the Land for habitation by their brethren returning under Elijah in the Second Exodus.</p> <p>³ Used Isa. 32:18; 33:20.</p> <p>⁴ <i>tsedeq</i> – righteousness. See Jer. 23:5-6.</p> <p>⁵ Zion's destiny – Ps. 48:1-2; 87:1-3; Obad. 17; Mic. 4:1; Zech. 8:3.</p> <p>⁶ <i>ikkar</i> – plowman, husbandman, farmer.</p> <p>⁷ Expanded in Jer. 33:11-13. See also Zech. 2:4.</p> <p>⁸ Jeremiah's dream ends with a picture of absolute tranquillity and satisfaction in the Land when "all Israel" has been redeemed and settled.</p> <p>⁹ See use Ps. 104:34.</p>
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APPENDIX 6

REHOBOAM – The Indiscreet (JUDAH)

HEBREW - Rechabam from a prim. root *Rechab*, to broaden and *am*, a people. Hence his name signifies “a people has enlarged.” (Oxford - “Who has enlarged a people”)

FIRST MENTION - 1 Kings 11:43 **LAST MENTION** - 2 Chron. 13:7

AGE AT ACCESSION - 41 **AT DEATH** - 58

LENGTH OF REIGN - 17 years from 930-914 BC

MOTHER - Naamah an Ammonitess (1 Kings 14:21; 2 Chron. 12:13). Her name means “pleasantness” (cp. her namesake Gen. 4:22). The fact that Rehoboam’s mother was an Ammonitess is twice emphasised and appears to be an allusion to Deut. 23:3, and a hint to one of the factors contributing to his apostasy.

CONTEMPORARY KING - Jeroboam 931-910 BC.

HARMONY OF THE RECORDS OF REHOBOAM’S REIGN

	1 Kings	2 Chron.
Began his reign aged 41	11:43	9:31
Journey to Shechem for coronation	12:1	10:1
Jeroboam leads a delegation to him	12:2-5	10:2-5
The counsel of the old and the young	12:6-11	10:6-11
Rehoboam’s foolish reply to people	12:12-15	10:12-15
The revolt of the ten tribes	12:16-17	10:16-17
Adoram stoned - Rehoboam flees	12:18-19	10:18-19
Retaliation prevented by Shemaiah	12:21-24	11:1-4
Fenced cities of Judah fortified		11:5-12
Levites migrate from northern kingdom		11:13-17
Rehoboam’s family - his wise arrangements		11:18-23
His idolatry & Judah’s apostasy	14:22-24	12:1
Invasion of Shishak king of Egypt	14:25-28	12:2-12
Final summary and obituary	14:29-31	12:13-16

JEROBOAM *The Ambitious Manipulator* (ISRAEL)

HEBREW - Yarobam - “The people will contend.” From a prim. root *ruwb*; to toss, i.e. grapple; fig. to wrangle or hold a controversy, and *am* - a people (as a congregated unit).

FIRST MENTION - 1 Kings 11:26 **LAST MENTION** - 2 Chron. 13:20

LENGTH OF REIGN - 22 years (1 Kings 14:20). From 931-910 BC

ORIGINS - 1 Kings 11:26

FATHER - Nebat - “Regard”, from root to scan, i.e. look intently at; by imp. to regard with pleasure. The phrase “Jeroboam, the son of Nebat” occurs 21 times.

MOTHER - Zeruah - “Leptous” from prim. root, to be stricken with leprosy.

PLACE OF BIRTH - Zereda - “to pierce or puncture”.

TRIBE - An Ephrathite, i.e. an Ephraimite as Zereda is in Mt. Ephraim (see 1 Kings 11:28).

CONTEMPORARY KINGS - Rehoboam (931-914 BC), Abijah (913-911 BC), Asa (911-871 BC).

HARMONY OF THE RECORDS OF JEROBOAM'S REIGN	1 Kings	2 Chron.
Emerges as champion of Israel	11:26-28	
Ahijah's prophecy and instructions	11:29-39	
Flees from Solomon into Egypt	11:40	
Leads delegation to Rehoboam	12:2-5	10:2-5
The people appoint him as king	12:20	
Jeroboam's apostasy - the golden calves	12:25-33	
Rebuked by the man of God from Judah	13:1-32	
His persistence in idolatry	13:33-34	
Abijah his son falls ill	14:1-4	
Ahijah condemns Jeroboam's house	14:5-16	
The death of Abijah	14:17-18	
The death of Jeroboam	14:19-20	

ABIJAH – ***The Belligerent*** (JUDAH)

He is called Abijah in Chronicles and Abijam in Kings.

HEBREW - Abijah - "Yah his father" Abijam - "Father is (of) the sea"

FIRST MENTION - 1 Kings 14:31 **LAST MENTION** - 2 Chron. 14:1

LENGTH OF REIGN - 3 years from 913-911 BC

MOTHER - Maachah - 1 Kings 15:2; 2 Chron. 11:22. Called Michaiah - 2 Chron. 13:2.

Said to be daughter of Absalom and daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. Absalom only had one daughter - Tamar (2 Sam. 14:27). Josephus says Maachah was Absalom's grand-daughter; Uriel being Tamar's husband.

HEBREW - Maachah - "Depression". Michaiah - "Who is like Yah". Absalom - "Father of peace". Uriel - "Flame of El".

CONTEMPORARY KINGS - Jeroboam 931-910 BC.

A HARMONY OF THE RECORDS OF ABIJAH'S REIGN	1 Kings	2 Chron.
Began to reign in Jerusalem	14:31	12:16
Prepares for war with Jeroboam		13:1-3
His oration to Israel on Mt. Zemaraim		13:4-12
Jeroboam's ambush and Judah's victory		13:13-20
Abijah's prosperity and might		13:21-22
Final summary and Divine estimation	15:1-8	
His death and burial in Jerusalem	15:8	14:1

OMRI - ***The Statute-maker*** (ISRAEL)

HEBREW - Omriy - "Heaping"

FIRST MENTION - 1 Kings 15:15 **LAST MENTION** - 2 Chron. 22:2

LENGTH OF REIGN - 12 years from 885-874 BC

CAPITAL - Tirzah (5 years); Samaria (6 years).

CONTEMPORARY KING - Asa 911-871 BC

SIGNIFICANT REFERENCES - Micah 6:16; 2 Chron. 22:2; 2 Kings 8:26.

SUMMARY OF CHARACTER

Despite his obscure beginnings and seemingly limited achievements Omri ultimately became the most powerful influence on the kingdom of Israel since Jeroboam its first king. He established a dynasty which lasted nearly 50 years and had a profound influence on the destiny of the nation. It was Omri who built the city of Samaria which became the permanent capital of Israel until the Assyrian captivity. And it was Omri who brought up and educated Israel's worst ever king, Ahab. Omri doubtless played a part in forging the political alliance with Ethbaal king of the Zidonians which led to Ahab taking in marriage Jezebel his daughter. This arrangement was to have immeasurable consequences for both Israel and Judah.

Omri is presented in the record as a politically successful man because of his self-motivation and determination. He possessed a self-interested initiative and was clearly a man capable of immense influence in the lives of other people. This is the distinct impression gained from the brief record of his life, and is the obvious import of one important reference to him in Micah 6:16. Micah records: "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab." This is a Divine commentary on the effect of Omri's teachings on Israel. He was a man full of ideas and schemes, albeit evil schemes. From these ideas he formulated principles and statutes which were readily grasped and acted upon by Ahab his son. The power and influence of Omri's statute-making is revealed in a curious description of Athaliah his grand-daughter in 2 Chron. 22:2-3. She is there spoken of as the **daughter** of Omri, not as the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The reason becomes apparent when in verse 3 it is recorded that Ahaziah "also walked in the **ways** (or works - Mic. 6:16) of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his **counsellor** to do wickedly." Athaliah was her son's 'statute-maker', hence she is styled the daughter of Omri.

Omri left an indelible mark on the history of his nation. His reign was a turning point in that history and commenced an even greater period of apostasy than that which had existed from the days of Jeroboam. Tragically, the statutes of Omri also found their way into Judah and ushered in one of Judah's darkest periods in the years following the reign of king Jehoshaphat.

SUMMARY OF THE REIGN OF OMRI

1 Kings

His rise during political turmoil

16:16-18

Victorious in the civil war against Tibni

16:21-22

Establishes Samaria as capital of Israel

16:23-24

The unprecedented evil of his reign

16:25-28

AHAB -

Israel's Worst King
(ISRAEL)

HEBREW - **Achab** - "Brother (i.e. friend) of his father." "Resembling the father" (Noth).

FIRST MENTION - 1 Kings 16:28 **LAST MENTION** - 2 Chron. 22:8

LENGTH OF REIGN - 22 years from 874-853 BC

FATHER - Omri ("heaping")

WIFE - Jezebel - "chaste" (cp. Rev. 2:20). The daughter of Ethbaal ("with or near Baal") king of the Zidonians ("to catch fish") - see Judges 18:7; 2 Kings 23:13.

CONTEMPORARY KINGS - Asa 911-871 BC; Jehoshaphat 871-847 BC.

SIGNIFICANT REFERENCES - Micah 6:16

SUMMARY OF CHARACTER

Ahab has the unenviable distinction of being known as the worst king to ever sit upon the throne of Israel. He owed much of that distinction to the influence of his wife Jezebel who stirred him up to do evil (1 Kings 21:25-26). Nevertheless it would be wrong to suggest that Jezebel was responsible for all of Ahab's evils. The record clearly reveals Ahab as a strong and determined individual who lacked neither courage or enterprise. This coupled with the education and guidance he received from his father Omri "the statute-maker" (Mic.6:16), would have made him a champion of evil even without the influence of Jezebel. But she undoubtedly had the effect of inciting him to far greater evils than he might have committed without her. Most significantly, Jezebel's influence was prominent in the introduction of a new and destructive religion that made Israel a stronghold of paganism!

The inspired historian almost appears incredulous as he penned the words of 1 Kings 16:31: "And it came to pass as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him." Baal worship had been eradicated from the land by Israel under Joshua, and though it had reappeared for brief periods during the times of the Judges it had virtually become extinct during Israel's history as a monarchy. Now under Ahab and Jezebel the god of the Amorites and Canaanites was once again firmly entrenched in the land. It is for this reason that a prophecy delivered by Joshua at the fall of Jericho received its fulfilment during Ahab's reign (1 Kings 16:34). Jericho was the first city to fall to Israel in the land and as such it represented the ultimate capture of the entire land by Israel. With its fall the doom of Baal and his devotees was signalled and guaranteed. It was highly significant that Jericho was rebuilt during the reign of Ahab, and that reference to the fact should be placed immediately after the condemnation of Ahab's vile Baal worship and evil idolatries. The Spirit is showing in a curious way that, viewed from the Divine perspective, the Amorites and Canaanites were once again in control of the land of Canaan. They were there in the form of Ahab and his house and the Baal worshippers of Israel (1 Kings 21:25-26).

Considerable space is devoted to the reign of Ahab in the record of the Kings largely because of his association with Elijah the prophet and Jehoshaphat king of Judah. In all those accounts he emerges as a man fixed in the ways of idolatry and wickedness, and yet occasionally and briefly moved to the recognition of Yahweh as Israel's God. There was in him something to which God could appeal. Yet despite the many opportunities given to Ahab to reform, and the miracles performed to convince him of Yahweh's existence, he stubbornly continued in his evil ways. Only the condemnation of his house delivered by Elijah in Naboth's vineyard produced any sign of remorse in Ahab, but even this did not result in any meaningful reformation of his life.

Ahab died by the Divine hand fully deserving the reputation he had acquired as Israel's worst king. His painfully slow death from loss of blood, and the subsequent washing of his chariot in the pool of the harlots was a fitting and poetic end for such a man. He had given himself over to Jezebel the harlot of Zidon, and in the end his life blood was washed into the cesspool that harboured the filth of the very priestesses they had installed to conduct the immoral worship of Baal in Samaria.

HARMONY OF THE RECORDS OF AHAB'S REIGN	1 Kings	2 Chron.
Accession in Asa's 38th year	16:29	
His great evil and idolatry	16:30-33	
Jericho rebuilt in his reign	16:34	
Elijah appears suddenly and announces a drought	17:1-7	
Elijah dwells with the widow of Zarephath	17:8-24	
Elijah meets Obadiah and Ahab	18:1-16	
The contest on Mt. Carmel	18:17-40	
Elijah declares the approach of rain	18:41-46	
Elijah flees from Jezebel to Horeb	19:1-18	
Elijah calls Elisha to follow him	19:19-21	
Ahab attacked by Benhadad of Syria	20:1-12	
Syria defeated with Divine help	20:13-21	
Divine warning that Syria would return	20:22-27	
An assurance of God's help	20:28-30	
Ahab spares Benhadad and honours him		20:31-34

Ahab is sorely rebuked by a prophet	20:35-43	
Ahab seeks to possess Naboth's vineyard	21:1-4	
Jezebel intervenes and arranges Naboth's death	21:5-14	
Ahab takes possession of Naboth's vineyard	21:15-16	
Elijah condemns Ahab's house	21:17-24	
Ahab humbles himself - Yahweh's mercy revealed	21:25-29	
Jehoshaphat makes an alliance with Ahab	22:1-4	18:1-3
Cracks appear in the alliance	22:5-14	18:4-11
The prophet Micaiah called	22:13-14	18:12-13
The prophecy of Micaiah	22:15-28	18:14-27
Micaiah thrown into prison	22:26-28	18:25-27
The battle at Ramoth-Gilead	22:29-33	18:28-32
Ahab wounded by an arrow, dies	22:34-36	18:33-34
His burial in Samaria	22:37	
The dogs lick his blood in Samaria	22:38	
Final summary	22:39-40	

APPENDIX 7

Mark 13 is one of three records of the Olivet Prophecy. The following harmony of the three records will assist understanding.

<h1>Harmony of the Olivet Prophecy</h1>		
The Olivet Prophecy – AD 70 (Mostly)		
Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple	1 And as he went out of the temple,	
and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.	One of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here.	5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts
2 And Jesus said unto them	2 And Jesus answering said unto him	He said
See ye not all these things	Seest thou these great buildings?	6 As for these things which ye behold
Verily I say unto you, There shall not be one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.	There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down	The days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down
3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives	3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple	
The disciples came unto him privately, saying	Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,	7 And they asked him, saying
Tell us when shall these things be? (1.)	4 Tell us when shall these things be	Master but when shall these things be?
And what shall be the sign of thy coming? (2.)	And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled	And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?
And of the end of the world? (3.)		

And of the end of the world? (3.)		
4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you	5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you	8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived:
5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many (2Thess.2:3)	6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.	For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.
6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet.	7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars Be ye not troubled For such things must needs be But the end shall not be yet.	9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions Be not terrified For these things must first come to pass But the end is not by and by
7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom	8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom	10 Then he said unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom
And there shall be famines		
And pestilences		
And earthquakes in divers places	And there shall be earthquakes in divers places	11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places
	And there shall be famines and troubles	And famines and pestilences
		And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.
8 All these are the beginning of sorrows	These are the beginning of sorrows	

Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted	9 But take heed to yourselves For they shall deliver you up to councils And in the synagogues ye shall be beaten and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake for a testimony against them	12 But before all these They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake
	10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations	13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.
	11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye	14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer
		15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom Which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist
	for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit	
	12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son and children shall rise up against their parents	16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends

and shall kill <u>you</u>	and shall cause them to be put to death	and some of you shall they cause to be put to death
and <u>ye</u> shall be hated of all nations for my names sake.	13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my names sake	17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake
10 And then shall <u>many</u> be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another		
11 And <u>many</u> false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive <u>many</u> .		
12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of <u>many</u> shall wax cold.		
13 But <u>he</u> that shall endure unto <u>the end</u> , the same shall be saved.	but he that shall endure <u>to the end</u> shall be saved	
		18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish
		19 In your patience possess ye your souls
14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall <u>the end</u> come.		

Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
15 When ye shall therefore see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand).	14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand)	
		20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.
16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains	then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains.	21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto
		22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.
17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house	15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house.	
18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.	16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment	
19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!	17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!	23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.	18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.	
21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be	19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.	for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people
22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened	20 And except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved, but for the elects sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days	
23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there; believe it not.	21 And then if any man shall say to you Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, he is there believe him not.	
24 For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.	22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall shew signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible,	

Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
	even the elect	
25 Behold I have told you before	23 But take ye heed Behold, I have foretold you all things	
26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth Behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.		
27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, And shineth even unto the west, So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.		
28 For whithersoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together		
Transition from AD 70 to the Latter Days		24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled

The Olivet Prophecy – The Latter Days (Mostly)		
Matt.24:29-36	Mark 13:24-32	Luke 21:25-33
29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened	24 But in those days, after that tribulation the sun shall be darkened	Post AD 70 25 And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear , and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth
and the moon shall not give her light	and the moon shall not give her light	
and the stars shall fall from heaven	25 And the stars of heaven shall fall	
Transition from AD 70 to the latter days		
and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken	and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken	
30 And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven; and then shall all the		for the powers of heaven shall be shaken

Matt.24:29-36	Mark 13:24-32	Luke 21:25-33
tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory	26 And then shall they see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.	27 And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other	27 And then shall he send his angels and shall gather together his elect from the four winds from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.	28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.
32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree	28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree	“angels” = Elijah and saints in the Second Exodus – Isa. 11:11. “trumpet” – see Isa. 18:2-3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14. “one end of heaven” – Deut. 30:4. “four winds” – Zech. 2:6.
When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is nigh	When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is near	
		29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree and all the trees when they now shoot forth Ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand

- Luke 21:29 – “all the trees” – Trees are a symbol for nations in Scripture – Ezek. 31.
- When Israel became a nation in 1948 there were 57 nations in the United Nations. There are now 193 nations.

33 So likewise ye when ye shall see all these things	29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass	31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass
know that it is near, even at the doors	know that it is nigh, even at the doors	know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand
34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled	30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.	32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled
35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.	31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.	33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.
36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven	32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven	
	neither the son	
but my Father only	but the Father	

- A 'generation' is a lifetime, not 40 years as some have suggested (see Matt.1).
- Luke 2:25-26, 36-38 – The pattern was set for the fulfillment of Luke 21:32. Simeon and Anna were of advanced age as will be those who saw the fig tree of Israel produce leaves in 1948, but no fruit as yet.

WHY THE OLIVET PROPHECY IS NOT ALL ABOUT AD 70

The Olivet Prophecy appears in Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. In recent times some have argued that it only applies to Christ's own generation and refers entirely to the events of AD 70 and does not apply to his Second Advent.

Standard Christadelphian teaching is that the Olivet Prophecy up to Matt. 24:29a, Mark 13:25a and Luke 21:24a is unquestionably about the events of AD 70. However, from Matt. 24:29b, Mark 13:25b and Luke 21:24b the Lord shifts to the latter days and the events surrounding his Second Advent.

The transition from the events of AD 70 to Christ's second advent occurs after the words "and the stars shall fall from heaven" (Matt. 24:29 KJV). In both Matt. 24:29b and Luke 21:26 the language switches from singular to plural. Check out the grammar for Luke 21:26 and you will find the word "heaven" there is plural, just as it is Matt. 24:29b. The heavens being shaken refers not to just one nation being shaken as Judea was in AD 70 when its luminaries went into eclipse, but to international chaos and tumult. It is a historical fact that Vespasian who was recalled from the siege of Jerusalem in AD 69 to become emperor brought peace to the empire after the tumult, chaos and wars of the reigns of Caligula, Claudius and Nero. That tranquility lasted right up until AD 183 and is verified Scripturally by the white horse period of the 1st Seal (Rev. 6:2). There was very little widespread tumult in the decades beyond AD 70. Accordingly, the final words of Matt. 24:29 "and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" repeated in Luke 21:25-26 simply cannot refer to the period immediately beyond AD 70. They clearly relate to the latter days when Jerusalem would be freed from Gentile control prophesied in Luke 21:24, and verses 25 and 26 specifically refer to the period from 1968 to the present.

Bro. Thomas makes a telling point in The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come 1860 pages 278-279 when he says:

Jesus revealed to his beloved disciple, then an exile in Patmos, "on account of the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," about 30 years after that event (AD 70), that he would "come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so, Amen!" Has every eye beheld him since John placed this on record? Has the Jewish Nation, who pierced him by the hands of sinners, seen him, not since John's exile, but even since they crucified him? Has every eye beheld him coming in the clouds, since he was taken up into heaven; much less since John wrote this in Patmos? Have all the "kindreds of the earth," or Tribes of the Land wailed because of him since then? (End of quote – see the article in another attachment)

Bro. Thomas compares Rev. 1:7 to Matt. 24:30 in articles in The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come. Christ's words spoken more than 30 years after AD 70 make it obvious that Matt. 24:30 could not have been fulfilled then or in the decades that followed.

Much is made of Christ's words in Matt. 24:34 - "This generation". The argument is that Christ refers only to those living at that time, in particular the four disciples who heard his prophecy. Can this be sustained? Everything depends on the meaning and use of the word "this". The Greek word is *haute* and occurs in the N.T. 352 times. Strong says it is variously translated "he (it was that), hereof, it, she, such as, the same, these, they, this (man, same, woman), which, who." It is therefore a pronoun with wide application and context will determine its meaning in each place.

The context of Matt. 24:34, Mark 13:30 and Luke 21:32 is clearly about latter day events as is demonstrated in the dot points below.

The parable of the fig tree

Consider the implications of the above for the words about the fig tree and the generation that sees it shoot forth. Some make much of the phrase "this generation" as being exclusively the disciples who heard him speak. Ponder these questions and facts:

If AD 70 constitutes the drying up of the fig tree (Israel) as the Lord taught in Luke 13:6-9 and Matt. 21:19, when might **that** generation of disciples have seen it "shoot forth" leaves (Luke 21:30) or as he says in Matt. 24:32, it "putteth forth leaves" in some kind of revival? They didn't, but some of us have.

- Why does the fig tree prophecy come after what are clearly latter day events in both Matt. 24 and Luke 21 if it doesn't have any relationship to latter day disciples? Christ says "the days of Noah" and "the days of Lot" would prevail on the earth when he appeared. We see such days in the world today. Violence and immorality fill the earth, but fascinatingly, Christ does not mention these particular problems in Matt. 24:37-38 and Luke 17:26-28. He focuses on just one thing as a warning to latter day disciples who live in prosperity and the comforts that have marked the post-war era. Men would be eating and drinking, marrying multiple times, buying and selling, building and planting right up to the day of the Lord's coming. That did not happen in the period leading up to AD 70 as Bro. Robert Roberts makes very clear in his synopsis of Josephus's account (see the last two chapters of The Ways of Providence). They were eating each other at the end, not carousing in restaurants and hotels, or buying and selling, building and planting as men are today in fulfillment of Christ's prophecy.

- What does “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees” in Luke 21:29 mean? Surely this is a reference to the fact that Israel would not be alone in shooting forth leaves when it was revived as a nation in 1948. When the United Nations Partition vote was held on 29 November 1947 there were 56 nations in the UN. Now there are 193. Trees are a symbol of nations (Ezek. 31) and this is clearly a prophecy of the profusion of nations at the time of Israel’s revival. That did not happen in the era of AD 70.
- What is included in the words of Christ in Luke 21:31? – “So likewise ye, when ye see **these things** come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Is the “these things” strictly confined to the fig tree prophecy, or does it embrace the signs in sun, moon and stars, tumult among all nations and governments universally shaken? If the latter, then the phrase “this generation” of Luke 21:32 cannot be confined to Christ’s immediate disciples in the 1st century. It must refer to his latter day disciples because his own generation did not see these things.
- Furthermore, were Christ’s disciples who heard him speak expected to understand that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand in their era as Luke 21:31 states? How does that square with Christ’s teachings in parables like Luke 19:11-27 which were specifically given to convince his disciples that the kingdom was not going to immediately appear in their day.
- What does “summer” infer? It is harvest season surely. Yes, the time of Divine judgement, namely Armageddon (“the harvest of the earth”). And why is this stated just prior to Luke 21:31? Well, because Armageddon precedes, and is about the setting up of the Kingdom of God. Were Peter, Andrew, James and John going to see that in their day?
- “You” and “ye” in the Olivet prophecy cannot be confined to Christ’s own generation. How do we know? For the above reasons and because he is clearly speaking to all his disciples in places like Mark 13:32-37. When he says, “And what I say unto **you** I say unto **all**” in V.37, the “you” clearly refers to the four to whom he was speaking (v.3) and the “all” is obviously to all his disciples in every era, but particularly those who belonged to the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy – those alive at his second advent which is clearly the subject of these final words of the prophecy.
- How can it be demonstrated that Mark 13:32-37 belong to the period of the second advent? By context and plain facts! Ask yourself, did Christ know the time of AD 70. Yes, he did. How? From the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, which is why he could say in Matt. 10:23 – “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (meaning of course at the head of the armies of the people of the Prince). It is also clear that when Christ mentions the “abomination of desolation” in Matt. 24:15 that he is referring to Dan. 9:27 (70 weeks prophecy). So, if he knew the time of the events of AD 70, how can he say in Mark 13:32 (and its companion accounts) – “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, **neither the Son**, but the Father.” When he spoke those words he didn’t know the exact timing of his second advent (he did once he arrived in heaven to take over the role of Michael the archangel). So, Mark 13:32-37 can only apply in its absolute sense to the latter days and the second advent of Christ.
- Accordingly, the preceding words – Matt. 24:34 – “till all these things be fulfilled”; Mark 13:30 – “till all these things be done”; Luke 21:32 – “till all be fulfilled”; which include the Kingdom being nigh and the events immediately preceding it, must by definition incorporate a generation beyond Christ’s own. Beware of the “this generation” diversion, because that is what it is – a distraction without real substance.

- Another passage employed to assert that “this generation” only applies to 1st century disciples is Matt. 26:64 – “Jesus saith unto him (Caiaphas the high priest), Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” It is alleged that the high priest himself would have to see a ‘coming’ of Christ and this could only be in AD 66-70 when he came unseen at the head of the Roman armies in fulfillment of Dan. 9:26. The words translated “shall ye see” is one Greek word *opsesthe* which means “to gaze with wide open eyes, as at something remarkable” (Strong). It is a plural word and therefore does not refer to one man. Caiaphas is said to have died on the island of Crete in AD 66 and it is unlikely that his father-in-law Annas would have been alive in AD 70. In any case, they as Sadducees did not believe in resurrection and had no interest in, or understanding of, what he was saying. It meant nothing to them. Christ’s words here are a reference to his second advent and his appearance at Armageddon when “every eye shall see him” (Rev. 1:7 which is an explanation of Matt. 24:30). Then, and only then, will he be seen “coming (*erchomai* – moving from one place to another) in the clouds of heaven (the saints) with power and great glory.”

The inescapable conclusion is that the final section of the Olivet Prophecy from Matt. 24:29b, Mark 13:25b and Luke 21:24b is about the latter days, not about the events of AD 70. They come in the first part of the prophecy.

APPENDIX 8

VERSE BY VERSE NOTES 1 CORINTHIANS 7

Verse 1

"Now concerning" - 'epi de' - with this scriptural marker, Paul turns to address the questions put to him on specific matters in a letter from the Corinthians. Having silenced the boast of the Libertines ("all things are lawful") in Chapter 6, he now proceeds to deal with the ascetics who contended that sexual relations even in marriage were not good and should be avoided.

"the things whereof ye wrote unto me" - interpretation would be easier if this letter had been preserved, but it is not impossible to establish with reasonable accuracy the content of the questions posed by the Corinthians without it. Careful examination of the Apostle's reply is the key to this. It is vital to remember that Paul is addressing *special questions*, not simply discoursing on general matters concerning marriage.

"it is good for a man not to touch a woman" - this is clearly a quotation from the Corinthian's letter. It was doubtless a slogan of the ascetics developed in opposition to the Libertine slogans of Chapter 6:12-13 ("all things are lawful" and "meats for the belly and the belly for meats"). The latter saw no harm in "fornication" (6:13-18). The former were repudiating sexual relations altogether. Hence, they said it was not "good to touch a woman" at all. That they meant their own wives is obvious from vv2-5. The word "touch" is 'haptomai' - 'to attach oneself to, ie. to touch'. The word was used of setting something on fire by fastening fire to it. Thus its relation to sexual intercourse can be seen (cp. v.9 "burn"). Paul is not saying that it is good not to marry a woman, for this would make him contradict himself when he later says, 'so then he that giveth in marriage doeth well' (cp. v.38).

He agrees with the ascetics that where it is possible to refrain from marriage and thus avoid sexual relations altogether, that this is to be preferred (cp. vv. 7-8, 25-26, 32-38), but he totally disagrees with their assertion that married people should refrain from sexual relations for considerations of religious purity.

Verse 2

"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication" - This is not a good translation of the Greek. The words are 'dia de tas porneias', lit. "but on account of fornication". The italicised words "to avoid" should be deleted. Paul directed the abstemious ascetics to the problem of fornication. Their liberal brethren saw no problem in exposing themselves to the danger of consorting with temple prostitutes (cp. 6:13-18), but these had gone to the opposite extreme and avoided sexual contact with their own wives, ostensibly to devote themselves to fasting and prayer (cp. v.5). By so doing, they likewise exposed themselves to the danger of fornication. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", or to use Paul's own words read 1 Cor 10:12-14. Abstention from marital duty was not only unnecessary, it was dangerous. Having previously married, these brethren had revealed their need for a wife (cp. v.7-9,37), now they regarded the demands of religious zeal to be incompatible with the baser needs of the body. Paul directs them in no uncertain terms to abandon such a view.

The word "fornication" - 'porneias' refers to sexual sin in general, including adultery.

"let every man have his own wife" - The Apostle cannot mean by this that every brother (and every sister) should get married in order to avoid sexual sin. This would contradict his teaching in Vv.7-8,25-26,32-31. Moreover the verb 'echeto' ("have") is in the present tense and imperative mood. This form of a verb expresses a command, advice, or request, ie. do something now, making these words even more incompatible with the command that follows if it is understood as advice to marry. Consequently, we must seek another meaning.

It is clear Paul uses "have" ('echeto') here in the same way he did in 1 Cor 5:1, where it cannot mean marriage, but the act of cohabitation. Reference to a lexicon shows the basic word 'echo' to have a wide usage, generally meaning to have, hold, possess, etc. The context must determine its usage in any place. 1 Cor 5:1 is quite obvious and so is its use here if we read vv.1-5 together as a context. Paul's meaning in this passage could be paraphrased - "it is good if a man can abstain from sexual relations with a woman, but you are married; beware of fornication! Let husband and wife cohabit together and render the responsibilities of marriage without grudging or compulsion".

Verse 3

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence" - The words "due benevolence" ('opheileo eunoia') signify the debt of kindness. 'Eunoia' comprises the words 'eu' - "well", and 'nous' - "the mind", ie. 'to be well-minded or considerate'). Some texts, however, only have 'opheileo' and translate "let the husband render unto the wife her due" (cp R.V., Roth). This obviously means 'the conjugal obligation' as it is rendered by the Diaglott. There are duties in marriage: one of these is to meet the sexual needs of one's partner. So also the wife is then instructed to give what is her husband's due. It must be remembered, however, that the Apostle is speaking in the context of deliberate abstention as opposed to normality in response to a question concerning religious zeal. He does not have in mind the many circumstances of life which may force or require temporary abstention from the conjugal obligation, eg. childbirth, illness, incapacity etc. Paul's command is not designed to be used in making unreasonable demands upon one's spouse.

Verse 4

"The wife hath not power of her own body" - "power" is 'exousiazō' - to have or exercise authority. Diaglott renders this "controls". This phrase seals the foregoing interpretation. Paul had begun in v.1 with the question of "touching" a woman. This verse demonstrates that his context is sexual relations in marriage. The woman does not have authority to refuse the needs of her husband, nor, as he goes on to say, does the husband have authority to deny his wife her physical needs.

Verse 5

"Defraud ye not one another" - The word 'apostereo' signifies "to rob, despoil, defraud, deprive of". Hence the Diaglott translates this, "Do not deprive each other". To refuse the duty of marriage on the grounds of scriptural responsibility and service to God, is in fact, robbery of one's partner! This would have shocked the lofty ascetics of Corinth, but, Paul does make one concession.

"except it be with consent for a time" - "with consent" is 'ek sumphonou' - lit. from or by agreement, from sun - with, and "phone" - 'a sound', thus in unison, accord, or agreement. Hence the Diaglott, "unless by agreement for a season". The word "time" is 'kairos' signifying an occasion, ie. a set or proper time. Where there is full and harmonious agreement between husband and wife to engage

in spiritual exercise, sexual relations may be set aside, but only for a set time. Then they must "come together again.

"that satan tempt you not for your incontinency" - Paul began with a warning about "fornication" (cp. v.2). Now he reinforces his point. Flesh is ever active, (within and without the body). Self-control is difficult enough without increasing the pressure for unnecessary reasons. Even well-intentioned ascetics are subject to periods of "incontinency". The word 'akrasia' means 'the character of one not having power over his passions; a want of self-control'.

Verse 6

"but I speak this by permission" - 'sungnome' signifies a "joint opinion, mind or understanding." Throughout this Chapter, Paul offers his spirit guided advice to the Corinthians on matters about which the Lord had given no commandment. In doing this he endeavours to be of one mind with Christ in determining his answers to their questions (cp vv 25,40). The concession he made in v.5 to allow abstention from sexual intercourse by agreement for a season is one such judgement which he believes the Lord would share, though no commandment was given by him on the subject.

"not of commandment" - Diag. "not as an injunction." The commandment had been given - "Let each render the other's due" (cp. vv.2-4). This was God's will concerning the function of marriage. Verse 5 is a concession only to be applied where there is mutual agreement to exclusively seek higher things for a season.

Verse 7

"every man has his proper gift of God" - Paul's wish is that all men had the self-control and singleness of purpose which enabled him to refrain from "touching" a woman (cp. v.1), and have no need for marriage (cp. 9:5). But every one has a proper ('idios' - "one's own, individual") gift ('charisma' - "favour kindness") from God. Paul's self-control came from the nature of his mission and the totality of his commitment to it. He counted that as a gift from God. He had "power to lead about a wife" but denied it for the work's sake. Others had different gifts from God. In the case of the abstemious ascetics of Corinth, one of their gifts from God was a believing wife (cp. Prov.18:22), and to her they had a conjugal obligation.

Vv 8-9 ADVICE TO WIDOWERS AND WIDOWS

Verse 8

"I say therefore to the unmarried and widows" - following on from his expressed wish that all men should be like him, Paul now turns to address the question of the position of those who had been married but whose partners had died. This may at first appear to be a sweeping statement, but careful analysis leads to this conclusion. The "unmarried" men and widows of the ecclesia were just as concerned as those who were married, with the question, "Is it good for a man to touch a woman?" (cp. v.1).

The word "unmarried" is 'agamos' signifying "without nuptials, unmarried." It occurs only four times in the N.T., and all in this chapter (cp. vv.11,32,34) . The meaning of the word is simply "unmarried", yet Paul employs it of different types of unmarried. In v.11, he uses it of the wife who has been separated from her husband. She is still married because reconciliation with her

husband is counselled, so its use in v.11 indicates a state in which one lives as though married, but is ineligible for marriage - ie. she is not to contemplate marriage to another.

In v.32 'agamos' is used of a man never married, for Paul's theme there is "virgins" (cp. v.25,34-37). He uses the word again in v.34 of a woman who has never married. Hence, the particular nuance or shade of meaning Paul intends must be determined by context and grammar. It is the grammar which comes to our aid in v.8. Firstly, both the word for "unmarried" ('agamos'), and "widows" ('chera' = bereaved of her husband) are in the plural and dative case. By "widows", Paul obviously means women who have lost their husband in death, hence the article employed is in the feminine gender. However, the article preceding 'agamos' in the text is in the form which can only be masculine or neuter. Either Paul intended unmarried men solely or he chose the article in the neuter gender in order to embrace both male and female. Let us examine the context.

If Paul meant by "unmarried" both male and female who had never married, why did he add reference to widows only and exclude reference to widowers? If "unmarried" includes the never-married and widowers, why separate widows? If "unmarried" means all unmarried, why not include the separated or the divorced (v.11)? By such a process of elimination, it becomes clear that Paul uses 'agamos' in v.8 to refer to brethren who had been bereaved of their wives. Thus we may accept the view of those who say that 'agamos' occurs here in the masculine gender and refers to widowers. There is a word in the Greek for widowers ('cheros'), but it does not occur in the N.T., or in the Septuagint. Reference to Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon reveals that 'agamos' is used to denote both bachelors and widowers.

As we have seen, the grammatical parallelism of v.8 requires that "unmarried" refer only to widowers and not to any bachelor or single person. Paul's readers were considering answers to their specific questions and would have been in no doubt as to his meaning.

"it is good for them if they abide even as I" - if the preceding conclusion is accepted, this statement would confirm what many believe:- that the Apostle Paul was himself a widower (cp. Acts 6:12; 7:58; 8:1 with Freeman's "Bible Manners and Customs" page 388). Marriage was regarded as a solemn duty by Law-abiding Jews (cp. Edersheim "Sketches of Jewish Social Life" page 147). A Rabbinical precept declared that a Jew who had no wife was not a man. It is very likely that Paul was married before his call to the Truth, but that he had lost his wife at some stage. This speculation is of little consequence in regard to Paul's own position, but if true, it would give added force to his counsel addressed to widowers and widows that they "should remain even as I do" (cp. Diag). This is in complete harmony with his opening statement in v.1:- "it is good for a man not to touch (have sexual relations) with a woman." But he does not forbid remarriage. hence....

Verse 9

"but if they cannot contain, let them marry" - the word "contain" is 'enkrateumai' - "to exercise mastery or dominion over." The Diaglott translates this as "possess self control." The self-control in question being that which enables a man not to "touch" a woman.

"it is better to marry than to burn" - "to burn" is the Greek 'puroomai' meaning "to glow with heat as in a furnace, metaphorically to burn." The Diaglott has "inflamed." As pointed out in the notes on v.1, this word is clearly related in the mind of the Apostle to the word for "touch." It would be

good if, like Paul, the previously married could suppress sexual desire and have no need to "touch" a woman (cp. v.1, 7-8), but uncontrolled desire is dangerous; it is better to remarry than to risk "fornication" if self control cannot be exercised. Remarriage for the bereaved is perfectly lawful, but "only in the Lord" (cp. v.39).

Vv 10-11 CHRIST'S COMMAND TO THE MARRIED

Verse 10

"Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord" - Paul is still riveted to the question which had prompted his reply in v.1, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." Implicit in the slogan of the ascetics was a repudiation of marital duty and perhaps even of marriage itself: certainly where a believer was married to an unbeliever it seems they counselled dismissal (cp. vv.12-14). To rebut these tendencies, the apostle lays down a commandment which he hastens to add is only a restatement of a commandment of Christ concerning marriage. This obviously gave added force to his "charge or command" ('paraggello'), but in no way weakened the force of the apostolic commands which follow where appeal to specific laws of Christ could not be made (cp. 1 Cor 14:37).

"Let not the wife depart from her husband" - This was the essence of Christ's teaching in Matt 19:4-6. What God had joined was not to be "put asunder" ('chorizo') by the action of man. The word for "depart" here and in v11 is 'chorizo' signifying, in the middle voice, "to separate oneself, to depart from a person, thus to put a space between." The word primarily speaks of separation, and by extension ultimately came to be used of divorce which may ensue from separation. 'Chorizo' has been found along with 'aphiemi' (used by Paul in v.11) in ancient legal papyri with the meaning of full divorce. However, it is clear Paul has in mind only separation in this context, because he speaks of the reconciliation of the separated parties.

Christ's law forbade both separation and divorce. The former is normally the action of one seeking to escape the responsibilities of marriage, the latter the action of one seeking to end the marriage permanently. Both result in a space being put between what God made 'one-flesh'. Hence in selecting the word 'chorizo' in Matt 19:6, the spirit represented Christ as prohibiting any action that jeopardised the union of marriage. By repudiating sexual relations within marriage, the ascetics of Corinth had taken the first step in the wrong direction, however high-sounding their motivation may have seemed. The next step for the zealous ascetics was to separate altogether and perhaps this course had already been advocated. But Christ and Paul both forbade the believer to initiate separation, and this obviously put an end to the assertion that Christ could be better served in a state of separation. In a brief aside, Paul acknowledges that separation may become a fact of life in marriage, even between believers, but should it occur against the law of Christ, the sin must not be compounded by contemplation of divorce and remarriage.

Verse 11

"But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband" - in the Greek, these words are in parenthesis as though they were an aside by the Apostle to address another aspect of this subject, namely:- what if separation should occur? This is in the subjunctive mood and passive voice (with middle signification) indicating that a wife may become the subject of separation, evidently by her own action. A literal translation would be:- "But if also she be

separated" (cp. Interlinear Greek-English N.T.), or "If but indeed she is separated" (Interlinear Bible). Separation is forbidden, but where it becomes a fact of life, Christ's law forbids pursuit of remarriage and provides only one positive course of action - reconciliation. "Reconciled" is 'katalasso', signifying to 'change from enmity to friendship, to reconcile'.

This implies the need for mutual effort and the grammar suggests this. The imperative mood is employed, denoting a command to the wife, while the passive voice requires a readiness by the husband to receive her. It is obvious therefore, that "unmarried" ('agamos') in this verse does not mean to be without a marriage partner. As we have seen, even divorce does not produce that result. The context demands that the word be understood as being in a state of marriage but living as though one was unmarried with no prospect of marriage to another.

"and let not the husband put away his wife" - the verb translated "put away" is 'aphiemi', denoting in the present infinitive and active voice, 'to leave' (cp. Roth, RV). The command of Christ to husbands is quite plain:- "Do not leave your wife". The ascetics of Corinth who repudiated sexual relations in marriage and perhaps advocated separation to accomplish this, were thus effectively silenced by Christ's command.

Vv.12-16 THE STATUS OF MIXED MARRIAGES – THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Verse 12

"But to the rest speak I, not the Lord" - the translations differ here as to whether Paul is speaking of some remaining matters raised by the Corinthians in their letter to him, or whether he turns to address those in the Ecclesia whose situation was not covered by his previous remarks. It matters little, the result is the same. The question of "touching" a woman (cp. v.1) is still firmly fixed in Paul's mind. Those with ascetic tendencies married to unbelievers, would have seen greater justification for ceasing all marital relationships in their case. Surely it could be argued on the grounds of holiness, that sexual association with an unbeliever should be repudiated! Thus Paul had to address the question of marriage relationships with unbelievers; a subject which the Lord had not specifically addressed in his teaching, though the same basic principles applied. The believing partner is not to initiate separation or divorce. Christ's command to married believers was unequivocal: no separation, divorce or remarriage (cp. v. 10 -11). It is inconceivable that his command to a believer in a mixed marriage would have been any less demanding. To contend otherwise requires that we view marriage with an unbeliever to be less binding than that between two believers. This cannot be so and it is this very point that Paul proceeds to settle. It is clear that the question of the status of mixed marriages had arisen among the Corinthians; the result perhaps, of the rigorists assertion that it was good not to touch a woman.

"she be pleased to dwell with him" - the word for "pleased" is 'suneudokeo' signifying literally 'to think well with, to take pleasure with another in anything, to approve of, to assent'. The R.V. translates this as "content". The word for "dwell" is 'oikeo' - 'to dwell, to inhabit as one's abode'. This speaks of an unbelieving wife who is perfectly content to fulfil her role as spouse and companion in the home.

"let him not put her away" - Again, the word 'aphiemi' is employed as in v.11. The R.V. translates this:- "Let him not leave her", which gives plainer sense to the word and to the context. Paul is answering the problem of those who sought to separate themselves from marriage partners for reason of religious purity. The believing husband is commanded not to contemplate leaving an unbelieving wife. An identical commandment is given to the believing wife with the unbelieving husband in v.13. Paul is not here concerned with the question of a marriage where the unbeliever makes it virtually impossible to sustain the relationship. His subject is a mixed marriage where there is assent and contentment on the part of the unbeliever but which is threatened by the departure of an ascetically minded believer seeking religious purity. That this is the case is shown by his rejoinder in v.14 to the apparent assertion of the ascetics that marriage to an unholy alien was not in fact a real marriage at all. This view of the ascetics is only one step removed from the view that a marriage contracted in the world between two who are in darkness is "a mere compact of the sexes", and not really a marriage at all.

Verse 14

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife" - "sanctified" is 'hagiazō' - 'to make holy, to set in a state opposed to the common or unclean'. The use of this word provides a clue to the nature of the assertion by the rigorists of Corinth. It appears they claimed that the non-believer was unholy and therefore unfit for association with a believer. Consequently, the marriage could be regarded as non-existent. Paul counters this by directing attention to the children. If there was no real marriage, then the children produced by this relationship were illegitimate! This jolting rejoinder helps restore some rationality to the discussion.

The fact is, as far as God is concerned, marriage as a state is just as real and binding among unbelievers as it is among believers. A mixed marriage, where the unbelieving partner is content to dwell in peace, is not to be regarded any differently to marriage in the Truth where separation and divorce are forbidden (cp. v.10-11). It is for this reason that Paul says the unbelieving spouse is "sanctified" in the believer. This sanctification is not the acquisition of spiritual holiness through association with a believer, but rather complete fitness to be a partner in every aspect of marriage. This is the sense in which Paul uses the same word 'hagiazō' in 1 Tim.4:5 in relation to the fitness of meat for consumption by saints. The Apostasy would command abstention from meats (cp. v.3), but saints with knowledge of the Truth through the Word of God, and prayers of thanksgiving would have no difficulty in partaking of it. The Word and Prayer do not change the constitution of the meat but do provide the conditions whereby it can be used with perfect fitness by saints. So it was in the case of marriage to an unbeliever. He or she was fit for use by the believer and marital responsibilities outlined by the Apostle in vv.2-5 were equally applicable to a mixed marriage.

"else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" - the word 'akathartos' - 'impure, unclean' is contrasted with 'hagios' - 'holy, set apart'. Paul's obvious meaning is that the children were legitimate, not illegitimate as would have been the case, if the assertion had in fact been correct, that marriage in unbelief was invalid. If the children were legitimate before the conversion of one parent, then they were also legitimate afterwards. That being the case, the same was true of the marriage. Conversion did not change its meaning or responsibilities, it only brought them into clearer focus for the believing partner.

Verse 15 – "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart" - the word for "depart" is again 'chorizo' in both instances. Occurring in the middle voice, a literal rendering would be:- "separate himself". Paul's command to the believing partner has been, "do not separate from an unbelieving partner where the latter is content to preserve the marriage". Now he addresses the question of a believer's responsibility if the unbeliever separates himself and forsakes the marriage. This is an important question. Realising the permanence of the marriage relationship, the earnest believer will be anxious to do everything possible to preserve the marriage and to fulfil their responsibilities to it. To what extent do those responsibilities go? "Let him separate himself" (cp. Interlinear Bible) says Paul. If the believer has sincerely endeavoured to provide a basis for the marriage to be preserved and the unbeliever forsakes the home permanently, nothing can be done, but to allow him or her to depart. The believer's responsibility ceases at that point. Marital duty is no longer relevant. Hence Paul adds: -

"a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases" - "under bondage" is the Greek word 'doulou' signifying in the passive voice 'to be enslaved'. The word occurs here in the perfect indicative tense expressing a condition resulting from past action. Marriage brings responsibility. Some of these responsibilities have been the subject of Paul's directions from v.2 onwards. If the context is adhered to, it is obvious that he is here referring to those marital responsibilities upon which any marriage relationship depends for its harmonious continuance. The "bondage" is that to which he referred in v4 - submission to the will of the other in the matter of marital duty and its attendant responsibilities. However, strenuous attempts have been made by those espousing the "Pauline Privilege" theory to show that 'doulou' relates to "the law of marriage" and therefore to the legal relationship of marriage, rather than the responsibilities of that relationship. Two arguments are pressed to establish this point. We need to carefully examine each in turn.

Firstly, it is contended that Paul's context is the legal termination of marriage. The word 'aphiemi', having been used occasionally in the profane writings for divorce, is said to have the meaning of legal dissolution of marriage in vv.11-13, and yet nowhere in Scripture does it have this exclusive meaning. The emphasis of this word is on leaving or departing from another, which may indeed culminate in divorce, thus creating a separation. To rest an entire case on one possible sense of meaning of any word is dangerous, but especially so when it is yoked in this context with 'chorizo' which is only used in the N.T. of separation. Paul's context to this point has not been legal termination of marriage, but separation for reasons of religious zeal and purity.

Secondly, it is argued that 'doulou' (cp. v.15) and 'deo' (cp. v.27,39) mean virtually the same thing, ie. the whole marital relationship and bond. There are eight occurrences of the word 'doulou' in the N.T., and none except this one, have any connection with marriage. The context therefore, must be the final arbiter of its meaning here; a meaning which we would expect to be in harmony with its general usage in the N.T. The word occurs in Acts 7:6; Rom.6:18,22; 1 Cor.9:19; Gal.4:3; Titus 2:3 and 2 Peter 2:19 where its obvious meaning is 'to become or to be made a servant or slave'. To assert, as some have, that the word embraces the legal bond of marriage because of its alleged connection with the whole master/servant relationship is a conclusion simply bereft of lexical and contextual support. Paul uses the word 'deo' in vv.27,39; and Rom.7:2 to refer to a bond or contract of marriage. 'Deo' signifies 'to bind, tie, or fasten'. It has a wide usage, but in relation to marriage it is akin to the idea expressed in the Hebrew word 'dabaq' rendered "cleave" in Gen.2:24.

Marriage is a binding relationship but it is not slavery. To employ the figure of the master/slave relationship to marriage is incorrect and quite unscriptural. To merge the words 'deo' and 'doulou' as though they have the same meaning in the context of marriage is just as improper. This is to indulge in what might be called 'the root fallacy': the belief that the meaning of the root of a word can confidently be taken to be part of the semantic value of any 'etymologising', or giving excessive weight to the origin of a word over and against its actual semantic value in a given context. Even if these two words can be shown to be related, the test of meanings of words is by their contexts, not their root.

A confusion of scriptural figures has led some to the conclusion that 'doulou' and 'doulos' refer to the legal "bondage" of marriage, but a simple concordance study will show that neither of these words is ever used to describe the marriage relationship. 'Deo' is the word employed for that purpose and Paul is careful to discriminate between these words. He uses 'doulou' twice and 'doulos' four times in Rom.6 when speaking of our former and present state in relation to two slave masters - Sin and Righteousness, but employs only 'deo' in Rom.7:1-5 where the figure is the bond or "Law of Marriage".

It needs to be emphasised again that nowhere in Scripture is marriage presented as a master/slave relationship. Submission in marriage should be mutual (cp. Eph.5:21-33). We may reject, therefore, the assertion that 'doulou' in v.15 speaks of the whole master/slave relationship including its legal bondage and give to the word its normal meaning - 'to be enslaved as a servant'.

That this refers in the context to marital duty is beyond dispute and is proven by Paul's first words in this sentence: "A brother or sister is not under bondage". Both husband and wife have equal responsibility to meet the needs of the other (cp. vv.2-4). Neither is free to please themselves. That is the only way in which they are "enslaved" in marriage. Paul is simply saying in this verse that where an unbeliever departs, the believing partner is no longer required to fulfil that marital duty.

The "Pauline Privilege" theory allowing divorce of the unbeliever and remarriage by the believer cannot be correct for a number of reasons, and these may be briefly summarised thus: -

- (1) The first and most important consideration is the nature of marriage itself:- ie. it is a Divine ordinance arising out of Creation and therefore is binding upon all, irrespective of their faith or lack thereof. Whether a spouse is a believer or non-believer has little to do with Christ's teaching on the indissolubility of marriage which he derived from Gen.1:27 and 2:24. Only death can dissolve a "one-flesh" relationship (cp. 1 Cor.7:39).
- (2) The entire context of 1 Cor.7:10-16 revolves around, and does not depart from, Paul's and the Lord's command that a believer must not separate or divorce. In v.15, Paul is simply qualifying his commands concerning marital duty in the case of a broken mixed marriage. He cannot be saying that the believer is no longer "bound in marriage" to his unbelieving spouse because this introduces an idea foreign to the whole context and contrary to the nature of marriage as God established it.
- (3) Paul uses the word 'chorizo' in vv.11-15 to speak of separation. In v.11, remarriage is expressly excluded. It is unlikely the opposite would be true of v.15.
- (4) Paul's words following v.15 are implicit proof on two counts that he did not intend that deserted believers should remarry. Firstly, the positioning of v.16 which clearly harks back to vv.12-14 provides the reason for persisting with a mixed marriage and appears to match the phrase "or be reconciled to her husband" in v.11. Reconciliation is the only course open to separated believers

and this principle applies to the believer in a mixed marriage. Secondly, Paul's counsel in vv.17-24 "to abide as called" is strongly suggestive that he could not have counselled divorce and remarriage to the deserted believing partner.

(5) If the believing partner is at liberty to remarry, they may only do so "in the Lord" (cp. v.39). But Christ expressly forbade marriage to a divorcee, stating that to do so was to commit an act of adultery (cp. Matt.19:9; Luke 16:18). Paul could not therefore have been providing liberty for the deserted and divorced believer to remarry.

"but God hath called us to peace" - a literal translation is provided by Rotherham - "But in peace hath God called us". The Truth brings peace to the believer. This peace comes through the forgiveness of sins (cp. Eph.2:13-18), and results in peace of mind (cp. Phil.4:7), and the capacity to live peaceably with all men (cp. Rom.12:18). This peace brought in to a mixed marriage should provide a basis for a sound marriage, given the good-will of the unbeliever. Wisdom, patience, and consistency may even result in the conversion of the unbeliever in due time without the need for 'nagging' which is certain to undermine the marriage if persisted with (cp. 1 Peter 3:1-4). The believer with the interests of the Truth and the marriage at heart, will promote peace in the home but without compromise of essentials. Paul's use of this phrase suggests that the unbeliever has departed the marriage because of the Truth and in spite of the believer's attempts to preserve the marriage.

His counsel "in such cases" is to allow the unbeliever to depart. If he or she has departed because of the quiet and patient maintenance of the Truth in the home, nothing further can be done. Certainly, the peace in which God has called us cannot be preserved by compromise of the Truth, nor by pressing one's self on an unwilling and hostile partner.

Verse 16

"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" - This verse has been understood in two completely different ways. Some have interpreted Paul to be saying that compromise to preserve a mixed marriage should not be contemplated. "How do you know that your compromise of the Truth will finally lead your unwilling partner to conversion?" is perhaps an adequate paraphrase of this interpretation. Others believe that Paul is referring back to verses 12-14 and is thus providing the reason why a mixed marriage should not be forsaken by the believer. Like the Apostle Peter (cp. 1 Peter 3:1-4) he is said to be providing hope and encouragement to the believer in a mixed marriage situation. Which of these views is correct? The translations are not much help, often being weighted with the particular interpretation favoured by the translator. In fact, the A.V. is a good and faithful translation in this verse and comes very close to the original. The context is therefore the only real guide to understanding here.

This writer believes the context favours the latter view; ie. that v.16 is connected with Paul's counsel in vv.12-14 that mixed marriages should not be forsaken, because while the marriage is harmonious there is always the hope of converting the unbeliever. The following reasons are given in support of this view:-

(1) Paul's emphasis in this context has been upon the preservation of marriage by faithfully meeting the responsibilities which it brings. This view is consistent with that theme.

(2) The first two words of v.17 provide a key to interpretation which must not be missed. The words 'epi me' lit. "if not" are so rendered by Rotherham, Diaglott, and Young's Literal. This gives

to v.17 an obvious connection with v.16 with clear implications for the context. "If not", introduces Paul's discourse on the principle that should govern marriage, among other things, after one's call to the Truth. This construction of v.17 would appear to rule out the first reading of v.16 mentioned above, as a little careful thought will reveal.

(3) It is said that early writers on the N.T. connected v.16 with v.13, whereas commentators from the thirteenth century onwards thought v.16 to be the explanation of v.15. This fact of itself would not be of any importance, but the demands of contextual congruency make it clear why it was so.

Verse 17

"But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one" - As previously noted, this verse begins literally "if not"; ie. if it is not possible to convert an unbelieving partner, and he or she forsakes the marriage, the believing partner is to remain in the state in which the call of the Truth came. This is the plain import of these words in complete harmony with the context.

"So let him walk" - Roth. "So let him be walking". The apostle now amplifies this theme in the following verses to the end of v.24. There he concludes with the over-riding principle of this chapter, "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God". Circumcision and bond service are added to the believer's marital state as things not to be changed on coming to the Truth.

We will not enter into a detailed analysis of vv.17-24 here, except to note an important principle introduced in v.19. There the Apostle says that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing but the keeping of the commandments of God (is everything)". On careful reflection, this is a remarkable statement. Circumcision was a commandment of God given to Abraham (cp. Gen.17:9-14). It both preceded and took precedence over the Law given through Moses, and yet it was not binding on believers from Apostolic times onward. Paul even says that it counted for nothing. What are we to make of Paul's statement? Circumcision was an important commandment of God to Abraham and to subsequent generations, but it was not relevant to believers from Apostolic times. We also know that it will be reintroduced in the Kingdom Age (cp. Ezek.44:9).

A vital principle is established here. The commandments of God are paramount to believers whatever they are and in whatever time they are given. Those commands may be different at various stages of human history according to God's purpose. It is not for us either to question or confuse God's commands in matters great or small. To Abraham, God could command separation from Hagar to establish a principle, but to Brethren in Christ, separation is forbidden.

Under Moses Law God suffered divorce, but Christ completely forbid it. Those who advance the practices of former dispensations or even possible practices in the Kingdom Age as a basis of action for believers today make a serious error. It is not what God commanded previous generations, or will suffer in future generations that is important to us. All that matters is that we keep the commandments made to us and these Paul has made plain in this chapter.

Vv.25-38 DIRECTIONS AND ADVICE TO THOSE NEVER MARRIED

As previously shown, the Apostle now turns to a different aspect of the subject with the introductory words of v.25, "Now concerning", which constitute a structural marker in the closing

chapters of the epistle. He has dealt with the questions concerning those married or previously married, and now he turns to answer questions raised by the Corinthians about those not married, some of whom were apparently about to marry. This is a vital fact and once recognised puts an end to problems that have arisen over vv.27-28. It will be necessary for us, therefore, to establish this vital separation of subjects. In attempting this, we will address only the critical phrases and words of this section of the chapter.

Verse 25

"Now concerning virgins" - In the Greek this reads literally "But concerning the virgins" with the definite article present. Paul turns to address a specific class in the Corinthian Ecclesia who had obviously been the subject of a specific question addressed to him. The word for "virgins" is 'parthenos' signifying 'a virgin, a young unmarried person of either sex', and is so used in a figurative sense in 2 Cor.11:2 and Rev.14:4. That the word is used here of both unmarried men and women is made clear by the context itself.

In v.26, speaking of virgins, Paul says "It is good for a man so to be", and then immediately adds "art thou bound unto a wife?" This indicates that he has in mind principally the brethren. It is not until v.28 that he makes mention of unmarried sisters saying, "and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned". Here the words "a virgin" are in the feminine gender in the Greek.

"I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgement" - Again, as in v.12. the Apostle cannot draw on commandments of Christ concerning virgins, but he offers his spirit-guided apostolic judgement on the question in hand. We can be assured that Paul's "judgement" is perfectly consistent with the principles he has previously enunciated (cp. 1 Cor.14:37).

Verse 26

"for the present distress" - the word 'anagke' signifies 'constraint' and seems to refer to a distressful situation which had befallen the Corinthian Ecclesia that applied some constraints to freedom of action. Paul's advice is coloured by "the present distress" and he emphasises the same principle as in vv.7-8 but here it is applied to those who had never married. Celibacy is to be preferred to marriage. Especially when times of trouble are upon the Ecclesia.

Verse 27

"Art thou bound unto a wife" - Vv.27-28 are often interpreted as though they did not rightfully and naturally belong to a context in which the Apostle is obviously dealing with virgins. Various devices are employed to accomplish this. Some treat these words in a parenthetical manner and argue that Paul has found it necessary to revert to speaking to those already married or previously married. Why he should do this is not satisfactorily explained and on any objective reading of the text it cannot be sustained. What then is the stumblingblock to reading these two verses simply as part of the context "concerning virgins"? It would seem to be twofold, based on the meaning ascribed to the words "bound" and "wife". The word "bound" is 'deo' signifying 'to bind, tie, or fasten'. It is used again in this chapter in v.39 of the bond that marriage imposes on a woman. However its simple meaning is 'to be bound to anything'. Could it not refer to a commitment to marry; a betrothal or engagement which binds two together? In ancient times a betrothed woman was regarded as a man's wife (cp. Deut.22:23-24; Matt.1:18-20; cp. also Edersheim 'Sketches of Jewish Social Life' - page 148). Seeing the context unquestionably refers to virgins and specifically

unmarried men in vv.25-27, it is reasonable to postulate that Paul is referring to engaged or betrothed couples.

The next problem is the use of the term "wife". Does this not mean a spouse? The word in the Greek is 'gune' signifying 'a woman, either married or unmarried'. The context determines which of these states a woman occupies, as a simple concordance study of the use of the word in the N.T. will demonstrate. Let us analyse the use of the word in this chapter alone. This will be sufficient to show that the word is used interchangeably of married and unmarried women, and that it is the immediate context that determines which is the case. 'Gune' occurs 21 times in 1 Cor.7. Its first occurrence (v.1) obviously refers to women in a general sense because Paul goes on to exhort brethren that they cannot avoid "touching" their wives; here the word again is 'gune'. Its last occurrence in v.39 clearly refers to a married woman however. Thus the first and last uses in the chapter show the diversity of usage which is discernible throughout the N.T. Most of the occurrences of the word in this chapter are in the context of marriage and consequently the meaning is obvious. For example, in v.34 a wife ('gune') is contrasted with a virgin ('parthenos'). Here reference is made to the wife as being "married" so that there is no doubt about her state. No such statement is made of those "bound unto a wife" in v.27 and if the surrounding context is the arbiter of meaning, then 'gune' in that verse must simply mean 'a woman as a prospective wife'. A literal translation of v.28 is also helpful to establish this fact.

The grammar requires that we read v.28 literally to say, "But if also thou mayest have married thou didst not sin". The subjunctive tense infers Paul's expectation that some "virgins" contracted to marry would have proceeded with their plans before his reply to the Ecclesia's questions arrived. Those so bound to a woman who had now married her had not sinned, but those who through uncertainty or difficulty, who had loosed themselves from a prospective wife were not to seek another. This is perfectly consistent with Paul's underlying advice, that it was "good for a man not to touch a woman". Careful consideration of this literal translation of v.28 will show that Paul is not referring to those (as in v.27) who are still "virgins" but to those who had left that state by marriage. Consequently the linkage normally made between the last sentence of v.27 and v.28 is not contextually sound.