

## September 1

### 2 Kings 6

V.1-3 – “The place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us” – (Rotherham) “the place where we **sit before thee**,” i.e. “the place where we assemble and sit to hear thy teaching” (cp. Zech. 3:8 – “Hear, I pray thee, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy friends who are **sitting before thee**” – Rotherham). Elisha visited the sons of the prophets in circuit, staying a short time at each place where a “school” was established. So many attended here that they had no room, so they proposed to build a new building at Jordan. To accomplish this aim, they said – “Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and **take thence every man a beam**, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell.” We all have an obligation to build in the house of God – 1 Cor. 3:10-13; Eph. 2:20. The ‘ecclesia’ was growing and everyone needed to pitch in and carry a ‘beam’ for the ‘structure,’ but they also knew they needed Elisha (“El is salvation”) to go with them – “Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.”

V.4-5 – “they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed” (the word does not mean borrowed, but **begged**), hence, great embarrassment and sorrow for what might be interpreted by some as a lack of care and gratitude.

Jordan (“the descender”) in its serpentine course from ‘the sea of life’ (Galilee) to ‘the sea of death’ (the Dead Sea) passes through the city of Adam (Josh. 3:16). It is a parable of human life. It was here that Jesus Anointed was baptized by John on the declaration that “all flesh is grass,” and he came up out of the water (like the axe head). Leprosy is omnipresent on either side of this story with Gehazi afflicted with Naaman’s for his avarice and greed (5:27), and the four desperate lepers of the next incident (7:3).

V.6 – “he (Elisha) cut down a stick (*ets*) and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim” – The word for “stick” is *ets* the common word for tree in the O.T. but it is used in some significant contexts; e.g. Ex. 15:25 of the tree cut down to make the waters of Marah (“bitter”) sweet; Deut. 21:22-23 of the curse of hanging on a tree; Esther 7:9-10 of the “gallows” on which Haman intended to hang Mordecai, but ended up on himself; Jer. 11:19 of Jeremiah (as a type of the crucified Christ); etc. Remember, it was Elisha (“El is salvation”) that cut down the “tree” and cast it into Jordan – “my Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.” (John 10:17-18). What might this enacted parable be teaching?

V.7 – “Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it” – The stick represents the cross of Christ. The iron axe head represents the crucifixion of Christ as it fell into the murky waters of Jordan representing mortality in Adam. He was crucified (a Roman practice) by Romans whose metallic symbol was **iron**, and pinned to the tree with **iron** nails, and then pierced with an **iron** shaft (2 Sam. 23:7 – “fenced with **iron** and the staff of a spear”), but the muddy waters of mortality could not hold him. By obedience to the death of the cross he rose out of the grave and was changed. We need to reach out to him and take hold of the “tree” that lifted the axe head (for building in God’s house) out of the serpentine ‘Descender’ – “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). This is the only way to effectively build in the House of God. We do so out of gratitude – 1 Cor. 15:10.

V.8-23 – The marauding bands of the Syrians continued their forays into Israel and Elisha's warnings to the king of Israel enabled him to elude the invaders several times so that "the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?" He suspected treason, but informed of the truth, he decided to arrest Elisha who was at the time in Dothan ("two wells"). A great host with many chariots surrounded the town much to the chagrin of Elisha's young servant – "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" to which Elisha responded, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." When the young man's 'eyes' were opened he saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The calmness and assurance of Elisha in situations of danger is such a contrast to the fearfulness of Elijah. It is the hallmark of his ministry and a foreshadowing of Christ of whom he was a type. Faith and an absolute confidence in God is the key. We too have angels ministering to us (Heb. 1:14) so that in the ultimate sense there be more with us than with our enemies. The horses and chariot that had remained with Elisha when Elijah was taken away by a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11) had now multiplied. Blindness inflicted on the Syrian army saw them led to Samaria where the bemused king of Israel and an even more bewildered bunch of Syrian soldiers were there well fed and sent packing. Not a drop of blood was shed to achieve that outcome.

V.24-33 – Benhadad tried again by besieging Samaria and a drastic shortage of food resulted. Two women had made a pact to eat their baby sons in the crisis and after one was boiled and consumed the other woman dipped out. This was the outcome of apostasy as Lev. 26:29 and Deut. 28:52-58 make clear. The king's fury was directed towards Elisha who as Yahweh's representative was blamed for the awful famine that produced such barbarism. Again, the fearless prophet had a surprise for king Jehoram.

## **Lamentations 2 – The source of the affliction**

Jeremiah speaks as the voice of the righteous remnant who lament the fate of Zion (V.13-14), and call upon God to remember His people (V.18-20).

V.1-9 – Recounting the just judgements of Yahweh

V.10-14 – Tears for the afflictions of his people

V.15-17 – Jerusalem's enemies rejoice and gloat

V.18-22 – Jerusalem's prayer to be remembered

In chapter 1 the theme "none to comfort her" occurs seven times (covenant related issues) and in V.18 of that chapter, there was recognition of God's hand in her desolation which continues as the main theme of chapter 2. In this chapter the use of "Lord" (*adonay*) instead of "Yahweh" is a glaring example of 'sensitive' copyists avoiding the use of the Divine name by substituting *adonay* (see Companion Bible – Appendix 32). Yahweh is mentioned by name seven times as the One Who "hath done this" (V.1,2,5,7,8,17,20). Crushing, in V.16, Jerusalem's enemies boast proudly, "We have swallowed her up," but they, as all others ignorant of the purpose of God, have misinterpreted the forces and the reasons behind the history of the Jews. God has thought only to punish the nation temporarily, as a necessary part of His overall plan. Then He will cleanse them and establish them, for they are His peculiar people, and He cannot utterly cast them away, because of His promises to their fathers (covenant). The promises to the fathers were made immutable by oath, as Paul reminds us. Nevertheless, their punishments (and their recognition of it as coming from God) are essential.

## 1 Corinthians 15

This resurrection chapter is large in its proportions and message. Just a few matters of its content can be considered here.

Firstly, for those who may question the importance of types in Scripture, there is an important challenge in verse 4. Paul writes about Christ that “he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” The Scriptures of which he speaks are of course the Old Testament. The challenge is this – find a place in the O.T. which tells us that Christ would be raised on the third day **without using a type**. It can only be demonstrated by types – Jonah, Hezekiah, Joshua 3, etc. The Bible is full of types, shadows and symbols.

In **verses 24 to 28**, the Apostle speaks of the end of the Millennium and the time when God will be “all in all”; i.e. all beings on earth will be immortal. This is demonstrated in that series of verses by two prominent words in the Greek. They are *pas* translated consistently 10 times as “all”; and *hupo* standing alone, and as part of the word *hupotasso* 8 times (there are 4 occs. of *hupo* in V.27 in the Greek text not evident in the KJV). Eight is the number of immortality in Scripture, and ten stands for ‘all’ – hence, all will be immortal.

In **verse 29** Paul makes the statement – “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” The ‘baptism’ he has in mind is the same which the Lord spoke of in Mark 10:38-39, namely, the sufferings of Christ. Paul provides his answer in **verse 30** – “And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?” The jeopardy of which he speaks is recounted in 2 Cor. 11:23-27. His life was constantly in jeopardy because of his mission to preach the Gospel.

From **verses 35 to 58**, the Apostle deals with the resurrection and its outcome. He scolds the doubters in Corinth in V.35-36 and asserts that “even nature itself” taught the principles of resurrection. We get the same product from the ground that we sow – wheat produces wheat according to the law of Gen. 1:11-12. Similarly, a mortal body buried in the ground is resurrected mortal, not something different.

The Greek word for “sowest” is *speiro* and occurs 3 times in V.36 and 37, all in the Active voice meaning to scatter seed, to sow seed (Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon). It represents the burial of the dead body just as “bare grain” is placed in ploughed earth and covered over.

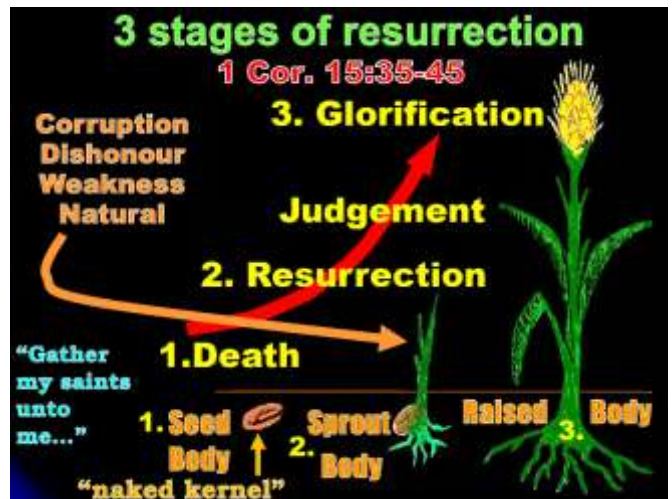
However, in verses 42 to 44 the same word *speiro* occurs 4 times, but in a different form. The word in the Greek is *speiretia* in the Passive voice meaning to spring or be born (Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon). It speaks of the **results** of sowing, not the act of sowing. This is proven by the first sentence of V.42 – “So also is the resurrection of the dead.” The word “resurrection” is *anastasis* – the standing up dead ones (as Bro. Thomas translates it in ‘Anastasis’). So what follows is not about burying a dead body, but causing it to stand up by resurrection and undertaking a process that leads to a change of nature (consistent with V.35 – “to, or for what body do they come forth” – Bro. Thomas).

Accordingly, another important word used four times in V.42-44 is “raised.” It is the Greek word *egerthesontai* (from *egeiro*) meaning ‘to raise up, rebuild, cause to exist.’ It is not a reference to resurrection, but to the end of the process – glorification. The table at right shows the way these verses should be understood.

**The pattern of contrasts in Vv. 42-44**

<b>“sown”</b>	<b>“raised”</b>
<b>“it springs forth in...”</b>	<b>“it is caused to exist in...”</b>
<b>Corruption</b>	<b>Incorruption</b>
<b>Dishonour</b>	<b>Glory</b>
<b>Weakness</b>	<b>Power</b>
<b>Natural Body</b>	<b>Spiritual Body</b>

V.45 – “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” – In ‘Anastasis,’ Bro. Thomas states on a number of occasions that the resurrected body will be in condition and nature like the body of Adam before he transgressed and was made subject to death. This is not correct, and as time went on, subsequent to the publication of ‘Anastasis’ it is evident that Bro. Thomas modified his understanding on the subject of the condition of the resurrected body. His comments in Eureka Vol. 3 (original version) are quite clear that he believed the resurrected body is the same in its condition as it went into the grave. He wrote – “But the dead body was made to live again. It was thus restored to its former life; **brought back to what it was before.**” In **Appendix 1** (page 90) there is an extract from the study notes ‘Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ’ providing full coverage of this matter.



V.52-58 – “the dead shall be **raised** incorruptible” – The word “raised” is *egeirō* meaning to cause to exist. It is not a reference to the actual resurrection of the body, but to its transformation from mortality to immortality as the following verses illustrate. Two words and their counterparts are prominent in this section. They are “corruptible” and “mortal” in such sentences as, “For this **corruptible** must put on **incorruption**, and this **mortal** must put on **immortality**.” It is evident that the real focus is on the transformation of a mortal body into an immortal body, but some have suggested that the parallelism might suggest a moral element as well. Thayer does say that the word “corruption” in V.50 – *phthora* can mean in the NT, in an ethical sense, corruption, i.e. moral decay. Certainly the bias in human nature is corrupting and will be one of the things that is left behind when the body is transformed into an immortal body. Two O.T. citations cement the Apostle’s teaching – Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14.

In the light of the incredibly bright prospects for the faithful in all ages who will be resurrected and changed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ; Phil. 3:21 – “who, in the exercise of the power which He has even to subject all things to Himself, will transform this body of our humiliation until it resembles His own glorious body” (Weymouth). This is truly an incentive to remain firm and active in the Truth’s service – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

## September 2

### 2 Kings 7

V.1 – “To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria” – The Expositor’s Bible comments – Food so loathsome as an ass’s head, which at other times the poorest would have spurned, was now sold for eighty shekels’ weight of silver; and the fourth part of a *xestes* or *kab* which was itself the smallest dry-measure, the sixth part of a *seah* of the coarse, common pulse or roasted chick-peas, vulgarly known as “dove’s dung,” fetched five shekels. Accordingly, this

was to be a dramatic collapse in the price of food, and well beyond the ability of some to believe possible seeing they were paying ridiculously exorbitant prices in the famine.

V.2 – “Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if Yahweh would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.” The “lord” was the king’s ‘right-hand man’ (as we would say), or an aide-de-camp in modern military parlance. An example was seen in Naaman who asked for clemency in 2 Kings 5:17 – “In this thing Yahweh pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he **leaneth on my hand**, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon.” One of the functions of this man was to support the king in his chariot when at war as seen with an Assyrian king in the frieze at right with both a chariot driver and an aide-de-camp ensuring the king does not fall from the chariot. This man’s unbelief proved costly for him.



V.3-20 – Four starving lepers sitting outside the gate of Samaria knew their time had come – “Why sit we here until we die?” There was no point in entering the city as there was no food. They made the decision to surrender to the Syrians and accept the outcome. In the twilight they found the Syrian camp deserted with everything left behind. After a period of unrestrained gluttony and hiding of treasure their collective conscience caused them to do the right thing and report the situation to the king. Disbelief reigned, but after a cautious inspection all the way to the Jordan, reality sunk in. So, Elisha’s prophecy came to pass, and being charged with imposing some order on the frantic trading in the gate of the city, the lord on whom the king leaned was punished for his unbelief when “the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.”

### **Lamentations 3 – Renewed hope in affliction**

In this chapter, Jeremiah speaks on behalf of his erring brethren and the faithful remnant. He also speaks for Christ and his brethren.

V.1 – “I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath,” said Jeremiah as he now takes up his lament, placing himself in the position of his erring brethren just as Christ would do. The Divine method is clear, “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6). The same process of correction which Jeremiah and the faithful of his countrymen had to undergo is designed for the faithful of all ages. But throughout all the affliction there is one overriding thought – “It is of Yahweh’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: **great is thy faithfulness**....the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him” (V.23,25). God’s faithfulness is seen in this chapter in two different ways; (1) in mercy and sustenance now, and; (2) in a sure reward in the future. This is what gave God’s faithful but distraught servant Jeremiah **hope** – “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope” (V.21).

Accordingly, the central thought of Lamentations is found precisely in the centre of the book. The proper climax is chapter 3:19-36 where two vital matters are considered. The first is the need to patiently endure trial, particularly in one’s younger years (it is proportionately easier for older folk) – “It is good that a man should both **hope** and quietly wait for the **salvation** of Yahweh. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his **youth**. He sitteth alone

and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him” (V.26-28). Jeremiah had been compelled to do this by his commission from God (Jer. 1:6-7).

V.31-33 is the second vital element and the real focus. Note the different words for “man” in this context. V.27 – “man” – *geber* – a valiant man or warrior – offering encouragement for the tried and tested in their youth (V.35). V.33 – “children of men” – *ben-a-ish* – providing the rationale for family builders of ‘great’ men. V.36 – “a **man** in his cause” – *adam* – Lit. “to subvert a man in his contest” (struggles) means there is always a purpose in trial. V.39 – “a living **man** complain” – *adam* – the adverse experiences of life are a blessing if viewed and used correctly, for the creation was subjected to vanity for a purpose – Rom. 8:20.

V.40-41 – “Let us **search** and **try** our ways, and **turn again** to Yahweh. Let us **lift up our heart with our hands** unto God in the heavens” – Honest self-examination, renewal of right attitude, and making a spiritual ‘heave offering’ of surrender (Lev. 7:29-32) to attain peace with God are enjoined. The “heart” is the deeper part of the mind where character is formed. To lift it up with our hands (the means whereby work is done) in the act of **surrender** (the meaning and purpose of the heave offering) is to commit one’s ways and works unto God without reservation.

## 1 Corinthians 16

V.1-4 – One of the major projects of the Apostle was the collection of funds for the brethren in Judea suffering from the famine that had afflicted the land. This was the famine which was predicted by Agabus, and which occurred in the time of Claudius Caesar – Acts 11:28-30. Barnabas was associated with Paul in conveying the contribution to Jerusalem. He appealed to the Corinthian ecclesia to be generous in their contributions to the ‘Jerusalem Poor Fund’ and expected they would be. However, in his second (retained and recorded) epistle he had to prod them (2 Cor. 8&9) as there was hardship also in Corinth (1 Cor. 7:26).

V.5-14 – Paul planned to visit the ecclesia which was likely to be preceded by Timothy whose timidity worried the Apostle given the number of assertive brethren in the ecclesia and its existing problems – “Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear.” The more robust Apollos was not available to visit Corinth and this was a disappointment for Paul as he would have been able to address some of the problems. It is curious that Paul should adopt the words of the Philistines in 1 Sam. 4:9 – “quit you like men, be strong” when speaking of the need for faith, but the courage of their convictions would be necessary to handle the problems the ecclesia was confronting. That courage would only be possible by fixation on love for Christ and his ways so that “if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha” (“excommunicated at the coming of Christ”).

V.15 – “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints).” Addictions are one scourge of the modern world. If the only ‘addiction’ we had was devotion to the service of the saints we would do well. The word “addiction” in the KJV is *tasso* – to put in order, arrange. Most translations say “that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints.”

## September 3

### 2 Kings 8

V.1-6 – One of the most remarkable stories in the ministry of Elisha was the provision of a son for the faithful but barren Shunamite, and the subsequent raising of the young boy from the dead. This chapter completes the story. She had taken Elisha's advice to take refuge in another land to avoid seven years of famine in Israel. Having sojourned in the land of the Philistines she was now back in Israel and presented to the king to seek restitution of her land from squatters. Amazingly, Gehazi who was carrying the leprosy of Naaman had become a servant of the king and was asked by him, "Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done." While he was recounting the story of Elisha raising the boy, the Shunamite and her son came into the court and appealed to the king. Gehazi was stunned, and the king incredulous, but this is a classic example of how Divine providence works in the lives of those who trust God and walk in truth before Him. God's timing is always perfect. Under these circumstances, not even "this son of a murderer" (as Elisha called him in chap. 6:32) could resist the obvious. Restitution of the Shunamite's land was assured. We need to trust the care of our God – "for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

V.7-15 – The prospect of a change of monarch in Syria caused Elisha much grief. Benhadad had been an oppressor of Israel, but was now unwell and hearing that Elisha was visiting Damascus (an astonishing fact in itself), sent his right hand man Hazael to enquire of his prospects for recovery. Elisha gave a positive answer, but could not restrain himself before Hazael – "Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit Yahweh hath shewed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept." That is, "And he (Elisha) settled his countenance, and set it (toward Hazael), until he (Hazael) was ashamed." Elisha fixed on Hazael a long and penetrating look, until the latter's eyes fell before his, and his cheek flushed. Asked why the prophet wept, the answer came – "Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child." Hazael quibbled, "is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" but Elisha saw through him. Hazael returned to his lord and communicated Elisha's message, and when Benhadad relaxed Hazael promptly suffocated him and seized the throne.

V.16-24 – The record turns to the accession of Jehoram to the throne of Judah and it is from the perspective of a northern observer (the books of Kings appear to be by northern prophets and Chronicles by southern scribes later assembled by Ezra). For example, this record does not mention that the first thing that Jehoram did was to murder all of his six brothers (sons of Jehoshaphat – 2 Chron. 21:2-4), and many of Jehoshaphat's advisors. He clearly did this under pressure from Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. Consequently, his reign was a disaster from the outset. One phrase seems to characterize his 8 years on the throne – they "revolted from under the hand" of Judah. Even one of his own cities rebelled, so corrupt was his reign – "Libnah revolted at the same time." The relative stability of Jehoshaphat's reign had gone.

V.25-29 – Not recorded here is the terrible demise of Jehoram. He died an excruciating death, evidently from long drawn out dysentery – "after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases" (2 Chron. 21:19). No one deserved it more. Succeeded by his youngest son Ahaziah, as invaders took away all his sons except Ahaziah (2 Chron. 21:16-17), it was not long before Athaliah came to power in Judah. His close



relationship with his uncle Jehoram in Israel brought Ahaziah down when he went to visit him after he was sorely wounded in the war with Syria.

## Lamentations 4

The third chapter of Lamentations is really the high point of the book. In the last two chapters Jeremiah returns to a further consideration of the pitiful state of Zion, due to her continuing apostasy. However, these last two chapters are distinct from the first two in that they tell of sincere repentance, and they outline more clearly the coming deliverance “to turn back the captivity” of Israel (4:21,22). Here we have one of the most moving and horrifying pictures of suffering and famine which inevitably followed the invasion of Judah. There is the terrible portrayal of famine, and consequent cruelty, as those that remained behind struggled frantically to survive (V.4,5).

V.1 – “**How** is the gold become dim! **how** is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street” – The lament returns to the question, how could this happen? As the painful judgements are recounted, there is an emphasis on how drawn out they were – “the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was **overthrown as in a moment**, and no hands stayed on her.” Again, “They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger: for these pine away.”

V.20 – “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Yahweh, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen” – Gentile commentators invariably say this refers to Zedekiah. However, there was never any security under his rule. Moreover, he was not anointed by Yahweh for “the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.” The real life of the nation expired on the death of Josiah. Everything imploded after his death. There can be little doubt that Jeremiah, so often at loggerheads with Zedekiah, was not referring to him, but to his close friend and ally Josiah whom he lamented greatly – 2 Chron. 25:35.

## 2 Corinthians 1 and 2

Paul wrote this second preserved epistle to the ecclesia at Corinth after an earlier severe admonitory letter which he refers to in 2 Cor. 2:4; 7:8 which has not been preserved. While that letter had clearly compelled the ecclesia to deal appropriately with the offender referred to in 1 Cor. 5:1, it had also stirred up some strong feelings towards the Apostle. The tenor of the language used in these two chapters is coloured by that. Paul had enemies in the ecclesia at Corinth (11:3-4,12-15) who were determined to undermine his work. He knew he needed to proceed with caution towards those who were sympathetic towards him who had been bruised by his admonitory letter.

## September 4

### 2 Kings 9

V.1-13 – It was left to Elisha to anoint Jehu (“Yah is he”) as king of Israel to wipe out the house of Ahab (1 Kings 19:16); originally a task assigned to Elijah. It was done in a strange manner. A son of the prophets is sent by Elisha to Ramoth-Gilead where the army of Israel was holding the line against the Syrians with a phial of oil to anoint Jehu. Told to “make him arise up from among his brethren” (V.2) indicates that he was one of a number of captains of equal rank.



Taken aside into an “inner chamber” the oil was poured on his head and the young prophet fled the scene leaving Jehu to emerge anointed, but not publicly declared as king. The subtleties that follow demonstrate why this man was chosen by God. The subtleties began when the young prophet arrived to the group of captains – “I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, **Unto which of all us?** And he said, To thee, O captain.” Masterful! Then when he emerged anointed “Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, **Ye know the man, and his communication**” which they clearly didn’t. Another cunning stratagem (like we would say, ‘come on, you know’). He recounted the prophets condemnation of Ahab’s house and then said – “Thus saith Yahweh, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.” This man was no fool. He knew how to manipulate the situation and did so with finesse.

V.14-29 – Joram (Jehoram) had been wounded in battle and “returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him.” He was not ready for what happened next. Jehu took charge of the army and continued his use of subtle persuasiveness – “And Jehu said, **If it be your minds**, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.” Conveniently, Ahaziah king of Judah was visiting his wounded uncle when Jehu arrived at Jezreel. Two messengers on horseback did not return having been commanded to fall in with Jehu, and so Jehoram and Ahaziah took to chariots to confront Jehu now identified by his chariot driving.

V.20 – “the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously” – Some men were known by their driving (*minhag* – driving of a chariot) even in ancient times. Jehu’s idiosyncrasy was that he drove “furiously” (*shigga’own* – craziness; from the root *shaga* – to rave through insanity). Rotherham translates: “for with mad haste doth he drive”; Moffatt – “for he drives like a madman”; and Gray – “with abandon.” The indication is that Jehu’s driving was so eccentric as to be characteristic of a madman. It cannot be that he drove at full gallop at all times for this could not be sustained on a long journey, and furthermore others would not be able to keep up with him. The fact that two messengers came to him and then fell in behind proves this to be so. It is more likely that his style of driving showed the animated yet controlled impatience of a man who has a burning zeal to accomplish a work but is constrained by stubborn realities that frustrate him. The picture is of Jehu driving his chariot horses at the fastest sustainable gait; probably something akin to canter. The bone jarring discomfort of this speed could only be endured by a “madman”!

V.21-29 – It became very evident what the mission was about when Jehoram asked, “Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah.” Both kings were killed – “Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart” and of Ahaziah, “Smite him also in the chariot.” Bidkar (“by stabbing” i.e. an assassin) Jehu’s captain is commanded “cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, Yahweh laid this burden upon him” to fulfil Elijah’s condemnation – 1 Kings 21:19,24-29.

V.30-37 – Jezebel’s turn finally came. She was true to form to the very end – “when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she **painted her face**, and **tired her head**,

and looked out at a window.” Rotherham – “she set her eyes in stibium.” The words “she painted” are *siym puwk* signifying to put (on) paint, or dye: (spec. stibium for the eyes). Stibium is bluish-white in colour. The word *puwk* is translated “with painting” in Jer. 4:30; and “with fair colours” in Isa. 54:11. “Face” is the Hebrew *ayin* – eyes. The world has not changed! Women have always endeavoured to enhance their beauty and attractiveness to men by painting ‘eye-shadow’ around their eyes. She also “tired her head” – Rotherham – “ornamented her head.” The word “tired” is *yatab* – to make well (lit. sound or beautiful) in the sense of adornment, ornamentation (1 Pet. 3:3; 1 Tim. 2:9). She had tried to make herself attractive to Jehu, however, she simply could not help herself – “as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?” Jehu “lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs” to whom he commanded, “Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.” This means she did not drop straight down. She would have fought wildly to survive, and grasped at the wall as she fell, thus opening wounds that splattered blood on the wall and on the horses below. Jehu went on to deal with other matters, and after some time ordered that Jezebel be buried out of respect for her origins, but when they “went to bury her: ...they found no more of her than the **skull**, and the **feet**, and the palms of her **hands**.” Not even dogs could stomach her thinking (skull); ‘walk’ (feet); or her works (hands). The condemnation of Elijah had been fulfilled – 1 Kings 21:23 – “The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.”

## Lamentations 5

Again, as in the earlier chapters, Jeremiah dwells at length upon the details of the siege and the captivity. There is by now no doubt to the Jews that God is behind this whole affair; neither is there any doubt as to His reason (V.16 – “The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!”). Indeed, the whole chapter is a sustained prayer to God — in every verse acknowledging His authority and power — and calling upon Him to intervene on behalf of His people. This is the elegy which traditionally closes every Hebrew lamentation.

## 2 Corinthians 3

In this chapter, Paul addresses the problem of some in the ecclesia at Corinth who insisted on living under the Law of Moses (they were inveterate Judaisers), and they undermined his work. He speaks of them in no uncertain terms in 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 12-15. Accordingly, in this chapter he demonstrates that the Law of Moses, while “holy, just and good” (Rom. 7:12) could not give eternal life. It served only to convince man of his innate sinfulness (Rom. 7:5-11). So, at the death and resurrection of Christ it was abolished as a code of a life of laws and rituals (but not its principles which remain the same under the law of Christ – 1 Cor. 9:21).

The Apostle uses the law inscribed in stone as a representation of a “ministration of death” (V.7), and contrasts that with the writing on “the fleshly tables of the heart” of “the spirit of the living God” (V.3; Rom. 2:15). He then uses the imagery of Moses face with its fading glory to contrast with the ever-increasing ‘glory’ of the face (identity/character) of Christ (V.7-18).

We repeat below what was said about Ex. 34:29-30 in February.

Moses face shone with luminosity after conversing on the mountain and in the ‘tent of meeting’ with Michael the archangel (Ex. 34:29-30). After speaking with Aaron and the children of Israel, Moses put a veil on his face to obscure the fading of the glory as the luminosity faded away.

The italicized word “*till*” in V.33 (KJV) should be “when” for as soon as he had finished speaking to Israel with an unveiled face, he placed a veil over his face (V.35). Paul explains the meaning of this in 2 Cor. 3:13-16.

V.13 – “And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel **could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.**” The Law of Moses was to be superseded by Christ. The former had a glory that would fade; the things that belonged to Christ would only increase in glory – see 2 Cor. 4:6-7, 16-18.

Sadly, Jews who clung to the Law actually had a veil on their face (V.14-15). We are able to look at Christ’s ‘unveiled’ face as in a mirror. The more we focus on the character of Christ who manifested perfectly his Father’s character (Yahweh’s ‘way’ – John 1:14), the more we are transformed into the same likeness as Paul says in V.18 (Rotherham) – “And, we all, with unveiled face, receiving and reflecting, the glory of the Lord, into the same image, are being transformed, from glory into glory,—even as from a Spirit that is Lord.” It is a stage-by-stage process. It doesn’t happen quickly.

## 2 Corinthians 4

In this chapter, the Apostle expands upon the brightness of the glory of Yahweh manifested in Christ and his faithful followers. This can be hindered and negated by “the hidden things of dishonesty” and by “craftiness” and by “handling the word of God deceitfully” (V.1), all of which are easily fallen into by the deceitful nature we possess (Jer. 17:9). We have the “treasure” of “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (ESV) in “earthen vessels” (V.4-7).

V.10 – Paul alludes to the body of Joseph carried for 40 years (probation period) through the wilderness as a reminder to “take up the cross and follow” Christ, of whom Joseph was a complete type.

V.13 – Paul quotes Ps. 116:10 (“I believed, and therefore have I spoken”) in reference to the resurrection of Christ, and the prospect of being there when he pays his vows in the courts of Yahweh’s House of Prayer for all nations (Ps. 116:8-19). It is to such wonderful visions of the future that Paul alludes in V.17-18 (“a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”). The “outward man” (i.e. the physical body) decays, but the “inward man” is “renewed” (*anakainoo* – to renew; to daily acquire new strength which previously it had not) day by day by the intake of the Word of God (“as by the spirit of the Lord” – 1 Cor. 3:18).

## September 5

### 2 Kings 10

V.1 – “Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria” – The reference to Ahab’s sons would include the children of Jehoram as well and represented the entire royal line. The slaughter of all Ahab’s ‘children’ was **Divine poetic justice** upon Ahab and Jezebel for the murder of Naboth and his sons. This context should be compared carefully with 1 Kings 21 as there are many similarities. “Jehu wrote letters” – This is what Jezebel had done to secure Naboth’s death (1 Kings 21:8). He wrote “unto the **rulers of Jezreel**” – Strangely the rulers (*sar* – a head person) of Jezreel were at this time in Samaria. Jehu was in Jezreel and sent his letters to them in Samaria. Jezebel had written from Samaria and sent her letters to these same men in Jezreel. The poetic nature of this judgement is very precise, and was quite deliberate. But

another fact emerges – “and to them that brought up Ahab’s children” – (Rotherham) “them who had been foster-parents.” The word is *omenim* – to foster as parent or nurse. But where was Jezebel? She was their mother or their grandmother. She seems to have been too preoccupied with the pleasures of her vile Baal worship and other pursuits to have concern about the upbringing of her children. That task was committed to ‘foster parents’, some of whom were the murderers of Naboth’s sons! Three times the record refers to these foster parents. Clearly the lesson is not to be ignored in this generation where the standards of society in respect to bringing up children are set by ‘career’ women like Jezebel.

V.2-4 – “seeing your master’s sons are with you” – There is a bold challenge in this letter. They had the ‘heirs’ to Ahab’s throne and a defensible city. Would they anoint a king and fight to restore Ahab’s dynasty? Jehu’s approach was subtle and effective. The readers of his letter were caused to consider step by step the chances and the cost of mounting a successful resistance. Even the best (Roth. – “goodliest”) and meekest (*yashar* – straight or even); (Rotherham – “fittest”) of their “master’s” sons were not worth fighting for at the risk of their own lives. For this cause they were “exceedingly afraid” (Roth. – “feared they very greatly”) knowing that “two kings”, Jehoram and Ahaziah had fallen before him. Again there are echoes from 1 Kings 21. Jezebel had instructed the same elders of Jezreel to set Naboth “on high” among the people and then to bring “two” false accusers to stand before him. They had felt this fear before too, being “exceedingly afraid” to disobey Jezebel’s demand.

V.6 – “If ye be mine” – The second letter produced more ‘gentle’ prodding by Jehu with a heavy price tag: the heads of the 70 progeny of Ahab’s house! Caught between self-preservation and death they obeyed, and conveyed the grisly cargo in baskets (*duwd* – a pot for boiling; by resemblance of shape – a basket) to Jezreel.

V.8 – “Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate” – Perhaps there were two heaps to allow for a heap on either side of the road leading into the city. There may also have been an allusion to Naboth’s sons for his vineyard was near the gate of the city (9:21).

V.9 – “Ye be righteous: behold I conspired against my master and slew him: but who slew all these?” – Jehu was a remarkable character. He delighted in bloodshed and plainly derived some satisfaction from watching the discomfort of others who were implicated in his bloodthirsty work. This is the reason for his condemnation in Hos. 1:4. The biting sarcasm of his opening words, “Ye be righteous” was indicative of an attitude that was not acceptable to God. It was good that he would let nothing “fall unto the earth” of all God had spoken against Ahab (V.10), but he was not justified in deriving so much pleasure from executing the judgements.

V.11-14 – “So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel,” and also in Samaria (V.17). Along the way he encountered 42 members of the house of Ahaziah heading north for a family visit unconscious of the situation, and he slaughtered them as well.

V.15-27 – “he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him” – Jehonadab (“Whom Yahweh impels”) was the father of the family of the Rechabites who maintained their faithfulness to God and their family principles right through to the days of Zedekiah the last king of Judah (Jer. 35:6,8,14,19). They were a unique family in Israel whose roots were in the Gentile tribe of the Kenites (1 Chron. 2:55) from which the family of Jethro had come (Judges 1:16; 4:11). Rechab means “horseman” or “the rider” and it is fascinating to see how the record plays upon that name as Jehonadab joins Jehu in his work. He had come out to meet the destroyer of Ahab’s house because he earnestly desired to see the eradication of Baal worship out of the land and the restoration of the pure worship of Yahweh. He played an

important part in the massacre of the Baal worshippers by ensuring that no curious worshippers of Yahweh lost their lives. Fittingly, the house of Baal was made into a public toilet, for they “brake down the house of Baal, and appointed it for a sewer-house.”

V.28-36 – Tragically, for Jehonadab there was to be no reformation in Israel. “Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam...Jehu departed not” – The man who had destroyed Baal worship out of Israel (V.28) reverted to Jeroboam’s apostasy. This emphasizes the difficulty of complete reformation once apostasy obtains a firm foothold and becomes accepted as the norm. Twenty eight years of apostasy followed, and Yahweh began to chip away at Israel’s inheritance east of Jordan in response (V.32-33), however, true to our God, He granted Jehu four generations on the throne for his work.

## Ezekiel 1

Bro. Thomas wrote in Eureka Vol. 1 page 75-76 concerning the Cherubim – “In the first and tenth chapters of his prophecy, Ezekiel shows what they typify or represent. Let the reader peruse these chapters in connection with Apoc. 4 and 5; and he will find that the cherubim are representative of *the Spirit corporealized and manifested in the Saints*, the Elohim of Israel—the One Eternal Spirit in multitudinous manifestation.”



The detail is too great for adequate coverage by brief comments, so Bible marking notes on Ezekiel 1 can be found in **Appendix 2** (page 92). One matter needing comment is the timing of the prophecy in V.1-3 – The 30th year is not Ezekiel’s age (even though he was a priest), for it is also the 5th year of Jehoiachin’s captivity (V.2). This is a key element of this book where particular attention is paid to dates. Refer to Chapter 2 of “The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy” by Bro. Henry Sulley for an exposition of the Jubilee Period (50 years from the Resurrection to the inauguration of Temple worship).

Bro. Sulley wrote in ‘The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy’ Chap. 2 – From this testimony, it is evident that when the things exhibited in the Ezekiel vision become accomplished facts, Ezekiel will be there, and take a prominent part in the organisation of the Temple worship. He thus stands forth as a representative of the *resurrected* class, and therefore is a man of sign to the Spiritual House of Israel, as he was to the natural descendants of Abraham. From this, it would follow that the injunction given to Ezekiel is also intended for *every prospective constituent of the spiritual house*, of which he forms a part.

V.26-28 – The vision culminates in a throne “and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.” A rainbow was seen in the cloud of V.4 – “a brightness was about it” is a reference to it (cp. Rev. 4:3; 10:1). The rainbow appears at the end of the storm and therefore symbolises the consummation of Yahweh’s purpose through His covenant – Gen. 9:9-17.

## 2 Corinthians 5

V.1-4 – Paul speaks of the ‘nakedness’ of human nature. He is not speaking here of spiritual nakedness which keeps one out of the Kingdom (Rev. 16:15), but of the state in which we were born (Job 1:21), and ultimately return to the ground – 1 Tim. 6:7 – “For we brought nothing

into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” His context is clearly about ultimately putting on immortality (“a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”), “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be **unclothed** (end up as we were born), but clothed upon, **that mortality might be swallowed up of life.**”

In the mortal state we are distant from immortality – V.6 – “whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord” (in the sense that we do not yet possess his immortal nature), but when one falls asleep (as Paul desired), the next waking moment is in the presence of the Lord and the receipt of the reward that awaits the faithful – 2 Tim. 4:8. That will manifest what we actually are – Rotherham on V.10 – “For, we all, must needs be **made manifest** before the judgment seat of the Christ.” The word “appear” is *phaneroo* – to make manifest (translated that way in the KJV of V.11).

V.21 – “For **he hath made him to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” This verse has created problems for some in relation to the Atonement. The Greek word for “sin” – *harmatia* is used twice in this verse but clearly means something different in each case. It is obvious the second occurrence concerns transgression, of which Christ was free. But he possessed a nature (like us) that was biased to sin, and in which there is no good thing (Mark 10:18; Rom. 7:18; Jer. 17:9). Therefore, he possessed what Paul calls “the body of sin” (Rom. 6:6). This is the language of **metonymy** used often in Scripture. The figure of speech known as Metonymy is where the thing contained is put for the container, and vice versa. An example of this is found in 2 Kings 4:40 – “there is death in the pot.” One of the sons of the prophets had mistakenly added a poisonous plant into the broth that was fatal to those who ate it. Accordingly, their cry was “there is death in the pot.” They meant the poisoned food would lead to death. That is metonymy. Christ had a “body of sin” in that he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

## 2 Corinthians 6 and 7

V.14-18 – When stating the complete dichotomy between truth and error, light and darkness, etc., Paul draws on the principles of the Nazarite vow of Num. 6 – “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of (delete ‘the’ – there is no Def. Art.) living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in (*en* – within) them, and walk in (*emperipateō* – to go about in, walk in them); and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate (*aphorizō* – to be set apart for some purpose), saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and **ye shall be my sons and daughters**, saith the Lord Almighty.” The only thing under the Law of Moses where a woman had equal access and liberty with a man was in the Nazarite law – Num. 6:2 – “When **either man or woman** shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto Yahweh.” That is why chapter 7 begins – “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

The Corinthians had allowed a terrible “uncleanness” to exist in their ranks by failing to withdraw their fellowship from the sinner of 1 Cor. 5:1. Now that they had acted against that uncleanness by withdrawal and ultimately recovery of the offender, the Apostle commends them for upholding the values of the Nazarite – 2 Cor. 7:11.

## September 6

### 2 Kings 11

The companion account of Athaliah's evil machinations in 2 Chron. 22 & 23 is more extensive than 2 Kings, so comments will be reserved until October. Here an overall summary of her life and wickedness will suffice. **Summary of the character of Athaliah** – The epithet, "That wicked woman", is the Scriptural testimonial of Athaliah the daughter of Jezebel (2 Chron. 24:7). She is distinguished in the record of Kings for two acts that amply encapsulate the achievements of her rule. The callous murder of all the children of the royal household, excepting the baby Joash, who narrowly escaped death through the intervention of the faithful Jehoshabeath, illustrates the murderous contempt of Athaliah for Yahweh and the seed of David who were to occupy the throne in accordance with the promise made to David. During her career, firstly as the wife of Jehoram and the dominating mother of Ahaziah, and then as sole ruler of Judah, she manifested utter contempt and bitter hatred of the things associated with Yahweh and His covenant with David, and sought to expunge the Truth from the minds of the people of Judah. In enticing the people away from the things of God she was effectively committing "murder" on a massive scale after the pattern established in the brutal slaying of the royal seed.

The second thing noted of Athaliah was that she "had broken up the house of God" and dedicated all of its vessels of service to Baalim. This was true of the Temple, but also of the nation as a whole, who constituted "the house of God". Athaliah worked to break up God's ecclesia and to turn its living "vessels of service" to the worship of Baalim. It was as well for Judah that she only partially succeeded in fulfilling this objective, for surely God would have terminated the history of Judah as a kingdom much sooner than He did.

The appalling condition into which Judah had fallen because of Jehoshaphat's foolish policies towards the house of Ahab fully matured during the 6 dark years of Athaliah's reign. How low Judah had slipped that a vile and corrupt woman, the daughter of Jezebel, the most hateful woman in scripture, should sit on the throne once occupied by David and Solomon. Not even the idol-conditioned and spiritually apathetic people of Judah were able to tolerate such a state of affairs, and openly rejoiced when Jehoiada overthrew the hated usurper and had her slain, after 6 long years in which he had been preparing the child Joash to be brought forth to the people. It is significant that Athaliah reigned 'six' years "over the **land**" – the number of man and the flesh! Upon her much desired death the record states; "all the **people of the land** rejoiced; and the city was quiet"; for both the land and the people were enjoying a welcome Sabbath (the seventh year).

### 2 Kings 12

Similarly, in this chapter comments will be made on matters not dealt with in 2 Chron. 22 to 24 and the remainder reserved to October.

**Summary of the character of Joash** – Joash is one of the great tragedies of the period of the kings. His early reign under the firm spiritual guidance of Jehoiada marked a turning point in Judah's history. The dark days of Athaliah's rule, and the supremacy of Ahab's house in the affairs of the royal house of Judah, came to an abrupt end with the death of "that wicked woman" and the accession, at the age of seven, of the sole and rightful heir to David's throne. The steady and wise hand of Jehoiada the high priest successfully guided both the young king and the nation on the path of reformation. The fruit was a restoration of faithful service to Yahweh which had suffered enormously through neglect under the successive reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah, each



of whom had assiduously promoted the idolatrous Baal worship of the house of Ahab in Judah. All went well until the death of Jehoiada, and then the real character of Joash was revealed with tragic results for both him and the nation.

Jehoiada the high priest was the uncle of Joash by his marriage to Jehoshabeath the sister of Ahaziah, the young king's father. During the early years of Joash's reign he was virtually king, as the young child was clearly incapable of ruling Judah at the age of seven. In his capacity as "king-priest" Jehoiada was the strength and the conscience of God's ecclesia as it slowly recovered from the apostasy of Joash's predecessors. While Jehoiada stood behind Joash he reigned well, and the nation responded to his reforms and his efforts to repair the Temple. Princes and people alike willingly and joyfully contributed to the repairing of the Temple, and such was Joash's own enthusiasm for the project that he was finally moved to censure his uncle for what he interpreted as procrastination on the project.

However, Joash's zeal and enthusiasm for Divine things was shallow and short-lived. When the towering presence of Jehoiada was removed by old age, the young king who had been dependent upon his uncle all his life was suddenly thrust upon his own resources, and when the first test came he was found wanting. The moral 'conscience' of the nation was gone, and the princes of Judah who had responded to the imposing stature of Jehoiada in Divine things knew that Joash did not possess the same depth of character, nor the old priest's unshakeable faithfulness to Yahweh. They perceived that Joash was not an individual in his own right, and that he had been entirely dependent upon his mentor and guide for direction and strength. Sensing that the time was right to uncover their real sympathies, they approached Joash with a proposal to reintroduce the idolatrous and fleshly worship of Asherah which Jehoiada had removed. The sensual pleasures associated with the idol worship in the high places had not been forgotten, and the princes of Judah sought a return to the open "religion" of the high places with all its subtle attractions for the flesh. Jehoiada would not have tolerated such a thing and they knew it, but now he was gone, and they were sure that the Truth did not run as deep in Joash as it had in his uncle. They were right, and Joash succumbed to their pressure, and immediately proceeded to undo all the good of his early years.

Yahweh sent prophets to warn Joash of the consequences of his apostasy, but he and the princes of Judah were unmoved, until the spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada who had become the high priest upon the death of his father. So vehemently did Zechariah condemn the rulers of Judah for their apostasy that they conspired against him and secured his death by commandment of the king. Joash had turned a full circle. From a child totally dependent upon Jehoiada he had now become a ruthless murderer through the influence exerted upon him by the princes of Judah. The result was the death of a man (his own cousin) who was endeavouring to uphold the same principles which his father had diligently taught Joash. This fully illustrates how shallow his character was, and reveals him as a man who was easily influenced to do either good or evil, depending on the prevailing attitudes of those with whom he associated.

Joash the boy-king and Zechariah the high-priest elect had shared the same home and received the same education from Jehoiada. They were cousins, and it is probable that they had grown up together; and yet in the crisis, Joash "remembered not the kindness" of Jehoiada, without whom he could not have reigned, but "slew his son". Thus the record presents him as being callously ungrateful in addition to being shallow.

The demise of Joash was fitting and exquisitely poetic. A small army from Syria decimated Judah's forces and slew the princes who had been partners in Joash's crimes. The invading forces left Joash wounded and helpless, and this tragic king met death at the hand of those upon whom he was totally dependent in his distress – his own servants. As he had begun, so he died: helpless in a bed-chamber; killed by two servants who are described extraordinarily as the sons of an Ammonitess and a Moabitess. Inexorably, the mind is drawn back to the origin of Moab and Ammon who were conceived as Lot lay helpless in the hands of two women (his daughters) after reaping the consequences of forsaking his uncle and associating with the 'princes' of the land.

The companion record in 2 Kings 12:1-3 provides some additional details to Chronicles:

V.1 – "In the seventh year of Jehu" – Jehu slew Ahaziah, Joash's father at the time of his coup. As Joash was only seven at the time of his accession in Jehu's seventh year he could only have been a few months old when Athaliah seized power.

V.2 – "all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him" – The word "instructed" is *yara* – to flow as water, i.e. to rain; fig. to point out, hence to teach. It is translated "rain" in Hos. 10:12, and "teaching" in 2 Chron. 15:3. This reveals the source of Joash's success during his early reign. He was diligently instructed by a "teaching priest."

V.3 – "But the high places were not taken away" – The high places remained, and effectively decentralized Judah's worship. This was a legacy of Jehoshaphat's compromise with the house of Ahab. It was to lead to disastrous results when Jehoiada died.

## Ezekiel 2

V.1 – "And he said unto me, **Son of man, stand upon thy feet**, and I will speak unto thee" – In this chapter, Ezekiel receives his mission to the captives in Babylon 34 years after Jeremiah, Yahweh's prophet in Judah had begun, and in parallel with him for about 6 years. His title "Son of man" (without the definite article) is not to emphasize his humanity (as many commentators suggest), but rather to set him forth as a type of Christ who will exercise God's dominion in the earth as is clear from its use, for example, in Ezek. 38:2 – "Son of man, set thy face against Gog." This is the work of Christ in the latter days. The reason why the article is absent is because Ezekiel is only a type, not the substance (or anti-type). There are 84 occurrences in the Gospel accounts of the title "the Son of man" that Christ 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. Similarly, in the reading of Ezekiel the theme of **exercising dominion** is everywhere to be found. Hence, its use in this book.

The other significant element in V.1 is the figurative **resurrection** of Ezekiel in the words "stand upon thy feet" like the figurative resurrection of Daniel – Dan. 10:11. That this is the intended meaning is made clear in V.8-10 where the prophet is commanded to eat the scroll containing the judgements proclaimed against Yahweh's rebellious house who had adopted the religion of Babylon. This was the forerunner of the "little open scroll" that John was invited to eat in Rev. 10:8-11 that contained the judgements to come on all rebellious nations and false religions, but particularly Babylon the Great. Like John, Ezekiel, as a representative of all the

faithful will participate in the exercising of dominion in the earth to establish the Kingdom – the theme of Ezekiel 1.

## 2 Corinthians 8 and 9

These two chapters concern the collection for the Jerusalem Poor Fund. The Corinthians had shown enthusiasm when Paul initially proposed to them the need to regularly contribute to the fund until he could come and collect their contribution (1 Cor. 16:1-3). Clearly, Paul had heard that that enthusiasm had waned. He uses a combination of strategies to convince his flagging Corinthian brethren to renew their zeal for the project.

He points out that the Macedonian ecclesias with much more serious economic issues had given generously to the fund (V.1-5). He wished to avoid the embarrassment should it become widely known that their zeal from 12 months prior had waned (V.6-11; 2 Cor. 9:2-4). He then exhorts on the value for the present and the future of a willing mind – 2 Cor. 8:12 – “For if there be first a **willing mind**, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (V.12-24). Using the experience of the wilderness wandering of Israel, he makes the observation that because the manna only lasted one day, those who collected more than they needed generously passed on the excess to those who, for whatever reason prevented it, had not collected enough for their family (V.15 citing Ex. 16:18). Temporal wealth is only temporary. Sharing it with needy brethren when necessary stores up future treasure – 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

It is a rule of creation that we reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7). So, meanness, stinginess and disinterest in the well-being of others will lead to diminished future harvests – 2 Cor. 9:6 – “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Willingness, generosity and whole-heartedness lead to bounty – 2 Cor. 9:7 – “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a **cheerful giver**.”

Truly, in the gift of His only begotten son, Yahweh has shown the way – 2 Cor. 9:15 – “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

## September 7

### 2 Kings 13

V.1-9 – “Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria” in the 23rd year of the reign of Joash in Judah for 17 years. In this period Israel was decimated by the Syrians and only given relief through the intervention of Elisha (V.14-19) who prophesied three victories by Jehoash (also known as Joash) over the Syrians. Commentators say he was the God given “saviour” of V.5, but without Elisha that would not have happened. Elisha was furious that Jehoash had not smitten the ground with the arrows “five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice” (V.19,25), but all that was necessary was the preservation of Jehu’s dynasty for four generations as promised by Yahweh in 2 Kings 10:30. The success of Jehoash was really only a stay of execution for Israel – they were not ‘saved’ for long.

**Summary of the character of Jehoahaz** – Little is recorded of the son of Jehu, Yahweh’s avenger, that enables a full character assessment to be made. Jehoahaz was content to walk in the idolatry of Jeroboam, as was his father who had been anointed by Elisha to destroy the vile Baal worship of

Ahab and Jezebel. He was therefore of the same stamp as all the other kings of Israel who for the sake of political expediency promoted the idolatrous calf worship of Bethel and Dan.

The subservience of Israel to the surrounding nations which had commenced during the last years of Jehu grew more intense in the reign of Jehoahaz as God delivered them into the hands of Hazael and Benhadad of Syria in retribution for their stubborn idolatry and apostasy. In the extremity of his oppression by Syria, Jehoahaz was moved to seek Yahweh, and was heard by Him, because He had compassion on Israel which was rapidly declining towards total dissolution. It is recorded that Yahweh sent a saviour to Israel (2 Kings 13:5). There seems little doubt that the deliverer was the aged prophet Elisha. It is significant that Elisha's prophecy of Israel's deliverance through Jehoahaz's successor Jehoash, was given on his deathbed. Like the son of God he delivered the ecclesia in his death. Furthermore, the remarkable revival of the dead man thrown into the grave of Elisha (2 Kings 13:21) foreshadowed the resurrection to justification of the saints.

V.10-25 – “In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years” – Sorting the names of the kings of both nations in this period is complicated due to the intertwining of the royal families after Jehoshaphat's foolish, almost fatal, alliance with Ahab. There are always consequences for foolish decisions like that.

**Summary of the character** of Jehoash – ‘the indifferent deliverer.’ The inspired record of Kings is concerned only with one incident during the reign of Jehoash, and that is the final prophecy of Elisha the prophet. The picture of Jehoash that emerges from a study of this incident is of a man conscious of Elisha's standing before Yahweh, but who could not bring himself to manifest Elisha's conviction in Him. At the bedside of the old prophet, Jehoash was moved to tearfully address him with the words used by Elisha himself at the departure of Elijah; “O, my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.” Jehoash stood in awe of the great prophet and recognized his importance to the nation, but he just did not possess sufficient faith to make the most from the last prophecy of Israel's “saviour” (2 Kings 13:5) that Yahweh had sent. Commanded to strike the ground with the “arrows of deliverance from Syria” he indifferently smote 3 times and stopped. Elisha was wroth for he knew that the promised deliverance would be cut short because of the failure of Jehoash to fully enter into this enacted symbolism. It revealed him for what he really was: a man lacking conviction in God, and hence somewhat indifferent to a deliverance promised through an aged, sick and dying prophet.

### **Ezekiel 3**

V.1-15 – Ezekiel, in the same way as John in Rev. 10:8-11, consumed the scroll handed to him, but it was not a literal eating for it was a vision. This is evident from V.12-14 – “Then the spirit took me up” and he heard from behind him “a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of Yahweh from his place,” followed by the return of the vision of chapter 1 – “the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.” Then “the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of Yahweh was strong upon me.” In other words, Ezekiel was swept up by the Spirit and ‘taken’ into the future, just like John. God is drawing the curtain aside briefly so that faithful people can take a look at their future role as the Cherubim of Yahweh. This is why Ezekiel was figuratively resurrected in chapter 2:1-2.

What is important here is the sweetness and bitterness involved in the eating of the scroll. Like John, Ezekiel found the content of the scroll “was in my mouth as honey for sweetness” (i.e. he agreed with the judgements written in it), but when he was required to declare them to his “impudent and hardhearted” people, he “went in **bitterness**, in the heat of my spirit” exactly like John in Rev. 10:10 – “as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was **bitter**.” We can agree with Yahweh’s judgements (and we must), but the execution is another matter. It will be a bitter process, as Ezekiel found it to be when set against his own people. The same principle is at work in our individual lives. Genuine servants of God will fully agree with all that is required of them (God’s will should be sweet to us), but its execution is a challenge. Denying the human will and “crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts” is not always easy. It can be “bitter” – see the principle of Ps. 119:103-4,128.

The impact of this vision was profound – “Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there **astonished** among them **seven days**” (V.15).

V.16-17 – “Son of man, I have made thee **a watchman unto the house of Israel**: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” – Mistakes have been made by such words as these and their repetition in chapter 33:2-9. Ezekiel was not made a watchman to the Babylonians. He was appointed a watchman to the house of Israel. Some have misused this Scripture to suggest we have an obligation to speak to every one we encounter in the world. This is not so. We do have an obligation to preach “and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15), but we are not required to speak to every one we encounter in daily life. In fact, Christ counsels us to be careful and “give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” We can in fact bring dishonour on the truth by such misinterpretations of Scripture. If the Babylonians had appointed Ezekiel as a watchman for themselves, then Ezek. 33:2-6 would apply, but they did not appoint him.

V.18-27 – The responsibilities of Ezekiel as a watchmen are spelt out in great detail, but incredibly he is struck dumb so he cannot speak. How could he meet his obligations? His fellow captives in Babylon were so hard-hearted and rebellious that there was no point in passing on Yahweh’s messages. However, the day would come – “But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth” which He did – Ezek. 11:25; 24:21,27; 29:21; 33:21-33. In between those occasions Ezekiel was a man of sign in some curious ways, the saddest of these was the death of his beloved wife.

## 2 Corinthians 10 and 11

In these two chapters, the Apostle turns to address those who were undermining his work in the ecclesia. He mentions “some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh” in 2 Cor. 10:2. This is the launchpad for verses 3 to 5 – “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not **carnal** (*sarkikos* – pertaining to flesh), but **mighty through God** (Youngs Lit. – “but powerful to God”) to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down **imagination** (*logismos* – reasonings, computations) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every **thought** (*noema* – purpose) to the obedience of Christ.” Human experience demonstrates the impossibility of bringing every ‘thought’ into captivity unless you are the Son of God, but mere mortals can be single-minded when it comes

to plans and purpose. Direction of life and future plans can be harnessed to the will of God in the everyday warfare of life.

In **2 Cor. 11**, Paul expresses his deep concern that the teachers of Judaism who visited Corinth and made disciples would also deceive many others (V.3). He describes the teachers of error as “false apostles, deceitful workers” (V.13), and their leader as “Satan...transformed into an angel of light.” Paul’s concern materialized in due time when from his final incarceration he wrote to Timothy – “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me” (2 Tim. 1:15).

## September 8

### 2 Kings 14

Apart from a hint in V.19 – “Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem,” one could think Amaziah was not a really bad king, but this would be a mistake. He was one of Judah’s worst rulers and this is clear from the record of 2 Chron. 25. Comments will be reserved until that chapter comes along. Here is a summary of his reign.

**Summary of the character** of Amaziah – ‘the offensive infidel’ – The epithet, “The offensive infidel”, seems at first sight too severe an indictment of a king who is assessed by the Divine recorder with the words; “he did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, but not with a perfect heart”. This Divine estimation of Amaziah relates to his early years in which he was content to walk in the ways of his father Joash, though not with the singleness and integrity of David. This early period of his reign was characterised by mediocrity, and it was clear that his true character had yet to be revealed. When the real Amaziah emerged he manifested himself with such incredible rashness, arrogance, and infidelity that God sought to destroy him.

A review of Amaziah’s life reveals two leading characteristics that shaped his destiny – infidelity and arrogance. Mediocrity in the Truth is not a sound basis for ultimate success. The man who is not fully committed to Yahweh will eventually be tested to see if the foundation of his life is firm. That test came to Amaziah in his war with Edom. In what is an incredible display of infidelity to his God, Amaziah defeated Edom with Divine help, and then turned and took their gods as his own. Surely, it must have occurred to him that the gods of Edom had proven powerless to save their devotees from his hand. Amazingly however, Amaziah rejected Yahweh who had given him the victory over Edom and chose to serve the impotent idols of the conquered! Such perfidy defies belief, but it happened.

Arrogance is a product of pride, and Amaziah is revealed as a very proud man. Although he was prepared to accept the advice of the first prophet sent to him with a warning of the dangers of hiring mercenaries from Israel; the second encounter after his victory over Edom is a classic demonstration of pride and arrogance. Even before the prophet of God could conclude his words, he was rudely, and abruptly, interrupted by Amaziah, who using his royal power and authority taunted and threatened the prophet in order to silence him. From that time on, God sought to destroy him; and significantly, used Amaziah’s own arrogance and pride to that end.

Confident after his victory over Edom, Amaziah challenged Jehoash of Israel to war, and in circumstances Divinely guided, was defeated and utterly humiliated. Disgraced in the eyes of his own people and reduced to powerlessness by Jehoash, Amaziah lived on for another 15 years until a conspiracy among the people gathered sufficient momentum, and he met an ignominious

death at Lachish. This was a fitting end for a king who had by rashness and arrogance alienated himself from both his God, and his people.

Amaziah is distinguished among the kings through his remarkable ability to offend people. Thoughtlessness resulted in offence to the mercenaries of Israel; ruthlessness to the captives of Edom outraged the remnant of that nation; inexplicable perfidy and idolatry enraged Yahweh; arrogance and boastfulness evoked the wrath of Jehoash; and finally the ways and acts of Amaziah offended and alienated his own people.

V.23-29 – “In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years” – The reign of the second Jeroboam was the longest of all the kings of Israel and the most prosperous time in all their history, all due to Yahweh’s faithfulness to His promise.

**Summary of the character of Jeroboam II** – The Divine historian has preserved only the military exploits of Jeroboam as he set about completing the work of his father in recovering the territory lost to Syria during the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz. The only other noteworthy thing recorded of him is that like all his predecessors he continued the idolatry of “Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.”

It is evident that Jeroboam was a capable and determined warrior and military tactician. His strength as a military leader was used by Yahweh to restore Israel to a measure of viability as a kingdom in what must have been a final attempt to recover His backsliding people from deeply ingrained apostasy. However, Jeroboam’s military success only succeeded in producing a period of peace and prosperity for Israel which they used for materialistic and self-serving purposes. Amos vividly describes life in the time of Jeroboam as being characterised by licentiousness, drunkenness, and oppression (Amos 2:6-8; 4:1; 6:6). The wealthy and unscrupulous prospered (Amos 5:10-12; 8:6), while the king assiduously promoted idolatry at Bethel (Amos 7:13).

Archaeologists attribute the massive walls of Samaria which the Assyrians took 3 years to breach, and the splendid palace in Samaria to Jeroboam’s era. He was a brilliant warrior and creative builder, but an abysmal spiritual leader. What he did not know is that the unusual length of his reign was only due to the faithfulness of Yahweh who had promised Jehu that his children would sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation (2 Kings 10:30).

V.25 – One interesting thing is the appearance of “Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher” (a town in Galilee in the inheritance of Zebulun – Josh. 19:13). This is significant because he was the only prophet from the Galilee, but the ignorance of the ‘intelligentsia’ of Christ’s day is astonishing – John 7:52 – “Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.”

## **Ezekiel 4**

Struck dumb by God (3:26), Ezekiel is called upon to give his people a sign in the most excruciatingly painful manner, but before the pain there was to be an elaborate representation of the coming siege of Jerusalem on a tile, or rather, a brick. Sun-dried or kiln-burned bricks were from very early times used for building walls throughout Mesopotamia. The bricks of Nineveh and Babylon are sometimes stamped with what appears to be the device of the king in whose reign they were made, and often covered with a kind of enamel on which various scenes are portrayed. Among the subjects depicted on such bricks discovered at Nimroud are castles and forts. That was Ezekiel’s mission on this ‘tile.’



V.4-8 – “Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of **Israel** upon it... three hundred and ninety days.” This is hardly conceivable as he was not to turn from side to side, but “when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of **Judah** forty days.” Most commentators acknowledge difficulty in explaining the intent of this sign. There are however clear revelations as to what it points to. These include:

- The sign concerns the duration of the siege of Jerusalem which began in the 9th year of Zedekiah (Jer. 39:1 – BC 589). Therefore there is no need to look backwards, although there are some interesting connections in terms of time periods. For example, there was a period of 430 years between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant – Gal. 3:17. Additionally, the 40 days on Ezekiel’s right side may be patterned on the 40 year Exodus under Moses.
- Ezekiel’s minimal carefully weighed diet of mixed low grade grains baked with cow dung as fuel for the fire (dried cow-dung was a common fuel in the Middle East) was a sign of the scrappy diet that the captives would endure, beginning in the final months of the siege of Jerusalem until they were no longer under the heel of foreign powers – “Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.”
- The captives who went to Babylon with Jehoiachin in BC 598-7 did not suffer such privation – Jer. 29:5 – “Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them,” and many returned to the Land some 60 years later. These were the good figs of Jer. 24. Jehoiachin was elevated in Babylon and enjoyed great privileges in the 37th year of his captivity (Jer. 52:31-34), including abundant food. This was because he obeyed the repeated advice of Jeremiah to surrender to the king of Babylon for survival, which he did – 2 Kings 24:12.
- The ‘bad figs’ remained behind during the reign of Zedekiah died by famine and slaughter, or were scattered into foreign lands, like Egypt – Jer. 43 & 44. These were to suffer terrible privations – Jer. 44:12.
- Those privations for the scattered remnant would persist for 430 years from BC 597 (the time of Jehoiachin’s arrival in Babylon with the ‘good figs’) and terminate in BC 167 when Mattathias (father of the Maccabees) declared independence from Greek rule and began the revolt of the Maccabees that provided a measure of relief to oppressed Jews. See **Appendix 3** (page 95) for the exploits of the Maccabees.

Ezekiel’s dumbness and sufferings which began in this chapter were to culminate in him losing his beloved wife after which his tongue was loosed. The contrast between his experience and that of another servant of God is set out in the table below. The contrasts are sharp. One man believed, obeyed and suffered until his mouth was opened (a type of Christ); the other suffered childlessness, disbelieved a promise and was struck dumb until he finally believed.

EZEKIEL	ZACHARIAS
Ezek. 3:26 – “And I will make <b>thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth</b> , that <b>thou shalt be dumb</b> , and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.”	Luke 1:20 – “And, behold, <b>thou shalt be dumb</b> , and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou <b>believest not</b> my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.”

Ps. 137:6 – “If I do not remember thee, <b>let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth</b> ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”	Luke 1:22 – “And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for <b>he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.</b> ”
Ezek. 24:16 – “Son of man, behold, I take away from thee <b>the desire of thine eyes</b> with a stroke: yet <b>neither shalt thou mourn nor weep</b> , neither shall thy tears run down.”	Luke 1:57-58 – “Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how <b>the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.</b> ”
Ezek. 4:1 – “Thou also, son of man, <b>take thee a tile</b> , and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem.”	Luke 1:63-64 – “And he asked for <b>a writing table</b> , and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And <b>his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed</b> , and he spake, and praised God.”
Ezek. 4:3 – “Moreover take thou unto thee <b>an iron pan</b> , and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and <b>it shall be besieged.</b> ”	Luke 1:74 – “That he would grant unto us, that we being <b>delivered out of the hand of our enemies</b> might serve him without fear.”
Ezek. 29:21 – “In that day will I cause <b>the horn of the house of Israel</b> to bud forth, and I will give thee the <b>opening of the mouth in the midst of them</b> ; and they shall know that I am Yahweh.”	Luke 1:68-70 – “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up <b>an horn of salvation</b> for us in the house of his servant David; as he <b>spake by the mouth of his holy prophets.</b> ”

## 2 Corinthians 12 and 13

Having suffered the humiliation of being lowered over the wall of Damascus that demonstrated the folly of boasting of one's status, credentials and trials (as his enemies did, which Paul ironically mimicked), he turns to the most important visions and revelations he had received in harmony with his counsel – 2 Cor. 10:17 – “But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” – Cited generally from Jer. 9:23-24.

In order to prepare him for his mission as the Apostle to the Gentiles he had been given some 14 years prior, a vision that he likens to an “out of body” experience, taken to an “other-worldly” region to witness things and hear words that he describes as “unspeakable...which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (V.2-4), he calls that ‘place’ the “third heaven.” This is clearly the time beyond the Millennium when God will be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28), and sin and death and all human frailties will be eradicated from the earth (a thing too difficult for burdened children of Adam to understand = unspeakable).

Standing back and looking at Yahweh's plan for the earth there are three 'heavens' – an order of things. These are (1) From Creation unto the Kingdom – 6,000 years; (2) The Millennium – 1,000 years; (3) The time beyond the Millennium when God is "all in all" – the "third heaven." This is not to be confused with the 'heavens' or 'ages' of the first 6,000 years of human rule on earth. There have been pre-Flood 'heavens' (Gen. 3:1); Jewish 'heavens' (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2), and Gentile 'heavens' (Isa. 13:13; 34:4; Hag. 2:6,21; Matt. 24:29), and there will also be Millennial 'heavens' (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1) that will give way to the time of which Paul speaks.

2 Cor. 12:7 – "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh." Intuitively, we feel the work of preaching the Gospel is best performed without handicaps and mortal restrictions, but this is not so. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for **my strength is made perfect in weakness**" was the answer Paul received to three earnest beseechings of his God to relieve him of his affliction (most probably Malaria contracted in the swamps of coastal Galatia that invariably impacts the eyes – see hint in Gal. 4:15).

The Apostle ends the chapter with a warning that at his next visit he would deal with the problems and issues outlined in both his recorded epistles – 2 Cor. 12:20-21 – the subject of chapter 13. The way for them to avoid unpleasantness and embarrassment was to "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). The word "reprobates" is *adokimos* – not standing the test, not approved. That is not where Paul wanted any of the Corinthians to end up – V.11.

## September 9

### 2 Kings 15

This chapter contains brief records of seven kings – two of Judah and five of Israel. In V.1-7, the 52 year reign of Azariah (otherwise known as Uzziah) is recorded. Consideration of his significant reign, and its implications for the latter days will be left until 2 Chron. 26.

V.8-12 record the accession of "Zachariah the son of Jeroboam" who reigned over Israel in Samaria for six months. He was doomed because the time was up, and he was as evil as his fathers. God had fulfilled His promise to Jehu – "Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass." The Word of God is always fulfilled.

V.13-16 – The assassin of Zachariah, "Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria." He too was in turn assassinated by Menahem who matched the Assyrians in his brutality – "Then Menahem smote Tiphshah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and **all the women therein that were with child he ripped up.**"

V.17-22 – The account of Menahem's reign is brief but adequate to reveal him as a brutal murderer and a harsh exactor. He assassinated Shallum and then cruelly disposed of his followers in his hometown of Tiphshah. In accomplishing this task he distinguished himself by becoming the only king of Israel or Judah to adopt the Assyrian practice of "ripping up" women carrying children. He committed this abominable crime in the revengeful spirit of a frustrated tyrant "because they opened not to him." Apart from his adherence to Jeroboam's idolatry the other important thing recorded of him is that under the burden of a heavy tribute placed

upon him by Tiglathpileser, he exacted the required sum from the wealthy men of Israel in order to establish himself in power.

V.23-26 – Menahem's son Pekahiah succeeded him and reigned for two years before "Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room." The kingdom of Israel was crumbling under the weight of its insistence of adhering to the religion of Jeroboam "who made Israel to sin" (a statement made 13 times in the record = rebellion).

V.27-31 – "Pekah the son of Remaliah" was distinguished by joining with Rezin king of Syria to attempt to overthrow Ahaz king of Judah as recorded in Isa. 7. Ahaz faithlessly called on the Assyrians to help him and they did in part by invading the north of Israel as recounted in V.29. Like many before him, Pekah was assassinated by Israel's last king – "Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead." It was fitting that the last ruler of Israel was named Joshua as had been the one who had led them into the Land (see Deut. 32:44).

V.32-38 – Jotham the son of Azariah (Uzziah) became co-regent with his father for about 10 years (after Uzziah was smitten with leprosy) and only reigned another 6 years after his father's death. However, he was an upright man and the only adverse thing recorded of him was that the high places were not removed. Consideration of his worthy reign will be left until the record in 2 Chron. 27 where he is presented as a type of Christ.

## **Ezekiel 5**

In another graphic sign to his brethren in Babylon, Ezekiel (who could not speak) took a razor and shaved the hair of his head and beard and divided it into three parts. This sign is related to that of chapter 4 (famine – V.16-17), and demonstrates what would happen to the inhabitants of Jerusalem when it fell to the Babylonians. In the type the prophet represents the Jewish nation; his hair, the people; the razor, the Chaldeans; the cutting of the hair, the calamities and disgrace coming upon them; the balances, the exact distribution of the Divine judgments; the third part of the hair burnt, those destroyed in the city; the third part smitten with a knife, those slain in attempting to escape; the third part scattered to the winds, those who escaped to other countries; the few hairs in his skirt, those left with Gedaliah; and the burning of these, their destruction in Egypt.

Of the last third, a few hairs were to be taken and bound in "the skirts of your robe" (RSV). Of these again he was to take a few hairs and throw them in the fire. As hair in a fire causes it to flail, so the judgements of Yahweh would spread out "into all the house of Israel." So it transpired that those who treacherously murdered Gedaliah and fled from the safety of Jerusalem into Egypt did not escape the "fury" of Yahweh (Jer. 41:1-3; 42:18). But still a few; a very few, remained in safety in Yahweh's "skirts" (*kanaph* – Ezek. 16:8; Ruth 3:9; "wings" in Ezek. 1:3-9; Malachi 4:2).

V.5-17 – The reasons for such judgements are recounted again, and their purpose expressed – "and they shall know that I Yahweh have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them." They must learn that Yahweh's promises for good or for ill, will be fulfilled.

## Luke 1

Gabriel's intervention in the Temple with Zacharias and his subsequent visit to Mary in Nazareth prophesied the imminent births of John the Baptist (forerunner to Messiah) and Jesus of Nazareth (the son of God and Messiah). The disbelief in that promise by Zacharias led to his silence. He was unable to bless the assembled multitude. However, the chapter ends with the birth of John and the song of Zacharias giving expression to his complete conviction in the promises God made to the fathers (Luke 1:64-79). There are times in life when enforced silence that compels rumination on the reasons for it, culminates in praise and glory to Yahweh.

Mary believed in what was humanly impossible (the key to ultimately obtaining eternal life) and became the humble "handmaid of the Lord" – Luke 1:34-38; Ps. 86:16; 116:16.

Two prophecies concerning John and Christ require special comment.

**Luke 1:15-16** – Rotherham – "For he shall be great before the Lord, and, wine and strong drink, in nowise may he drink, and, **with Holy Spirit**, shall he be filled, already, from his mother's womb." There is no definite article before "holy spirit". John performed no miracles – John 10:41. The reference here is to the singular purpose of John's life. He was totally dedicated to one cause, hence, he had a 'spirit' (i.e. attitude) of 'holiness' (i.e. separated to one thing like the life-long Nazarite he was born to be).

The disciples were slow to recognize that John would fulfil one portion of the prophecy of Mal. 4:5-6 in their lifetime – "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." He did turn many unto God – Luke 1:16 – "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God," but more importantly, in so doing he fulfilled Elijah's role in relation to Judea (Judah). This is what Christ had difficulty getting through to the minds of his disciples – Matt. 11:13-15 – "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. **And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**" They didn't get it, so he had to try again in Matt. 17:10-13 – "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things. **But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not**, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. **Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.**" Accordingly, Elijah will not have a work to perform among the Jews in the Land of Israel – John Baptist fulfilled that requirement of the prophecy. Elijah's work leading to the Second Exodus is among Jews scattered through all nations. Consistent with this is the fact that Elijah of old never went anywhere near Judah. His mission was then, and will be in the future, to 'Israel' (also called 'Ephraim' and 'the remnant of Jacob' in prophecy) outside the Land (see Logos Vol. 37 pages 317-324).

**Luke 1:33** – "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and **of his kingdom there shall be no end.**" This is not a reference to time as Christ's Kingdom only lasts for 1,000 years – 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20:4,6. It is an allusion to Isa. 9:7 – "**Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end**, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." How will Christ 'increase' government and peace? Only by conquering one nation after another over 40 years until he fully establishes the Kingdom. When

he has complete control of all nations, then there will be no end to his Kingdom. Wherever you go then, you will be in Christ's Kingdom.

## September 10

### 2 Kings 16

Fuller consideration of the reign of Ahaz will be undertaken in the record of 2 Chron. 28. The following summary of his reign and character will suffice for this chapter.

Ahaz must be rated among the worst of Judah's rulers. He was the complete antithesis of his father Jotham and was so perfidious throughout his reign that there are times when the Divine chronicler appears almost incredulous at the extent of his apostasy. The exclamation, "**This is that king Ahaz**" (2 Chron. 28:22), fully illustrates how far Ahaz went in frustrating and antagonizing Yahweh. In all his ways he was utterly obnoxious to his God. Not only was Ahaz distinguished by such exclamations concerning his personal faithlessness, but perhaps more importantly, he was memorialized as the great defiler of God's ecclesia; "For Yahweh brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked and transgressed sore against Yahweh" (2 Chron. 28:19). This statement is most illuminating because of its reference to Ahaz as "king of Israel," which of course he was not. It is clear that the Spirit guided God's chronicler to refer to Ahaz in this way to reveal that Ahaz had reduced Judah to the level of Israel in his sight. Ahaz was no better, and in many ways was more corrupt, than the wicked kings of Israel. Under his leadership Judah was indistinguishable from Israel which was in its last stages of decay and dissolution.

The phrase "he made Judah naked" provides the key to Ahaz's character. Rotherham translates; "for he had given the rein in Judah." Where there is no faith the flesh completely dominates human life. Ahaz was totally devoid of faith and so gave himself over to the most corrupt forms of idolatry in order to satisfy fleshly lusts. In doing this he opened the flood-gates for the corruption that simmered beneath the surface during his father's reign (2 Chron. 27:2). He gave the people what they sought; open "religion" with no restraints and no fear of redress.

The effect of this wholesale idolatry was to shut the doors upon eternal life for an entire generation, and this was symbolized by his act of shutting the doors of the house of God and curtailing the activities of the Levitical priesthood. Judah's legitimate worship ceased and was replaced by Ahaz's own abhorrent system adopted from Syria. Not only did he shut the Temple doors, but he also ransacked it for the holy vessels in order to induce Tiglathpileser of Assyria to assist him against Syria and Israel. Following reverses in his conflict with the latter and his failure to secure Assyria's help, he sent to Damascus to obtain the design of Syrian altars so that he could establish an altar in Jerusalem to worship Syria's gods! He removed and repositioned the laver and the altar of burnt offering in the Temple court and set up his Syrian altar in their place. His reasoning was that if the gods of Syria had helped them in defeating Judah, they would help him if he worshipped them (2 Chron. 28:23). He was to do even worse when the Assyrians defeated the Syrians (2 Kings 16:10-18). Such was the incredible perfidy of Ahaz.

Before these developments however, the faithlessness of Ahaz in its incipient form was revealed in his encounter with the prophet Isaiah at the Virgin's fountain, described in Isaiah chapter 7. Yahweh sought to convert Ahaz and to encourage him to manifest faith in Him. It was God's intention to protect and defend Judah and no better grounds for faith could have been offered

than the Divine assurances of help against Pekah and Rezin. Ahaz was encouraged to seek a sign from Yahweh to confirm His intention to defend Judah, but Ahaz hypocritically declined the invitation. His rejoinder; "I will not ask, neither will I tempt Yahweh" is not a manifestation of humility, but rather of unbelief. Ahaz simply did not believe in Yahweh, and to ask a sign would have been to acknowledge the claims of a God whose existence and power he doubted. The final words of Isaiah's prophecy concerning Pekah and Rezin had foreshadowed such a denouement; "If you trust not, surely you cannot be trusted." This is a Scriptural principle – the trusting can be trusted; the faithful can be relied upon. The subsequent years were to reveal the truth of this principle.

V.10-18 – Having had an Assyrian altar built and placed in the Temple, Ahaz proceeded to desecrate it by moving the altar of burnt offering, removing the laver and creating an alcove for the king of Assyria. His perfidy is astonishing – "This is that king Ahaz."

## Ezekiel 6

There is a close correspondence between Chapters 5, 6 and 7 – Jerusalem and the Land doomed – A remnant to escape. The progression is Chap. 5 – Punishment for rebellion; Chap. 6 – Punishment for idolatry; Chap. 7 – The impending ruin.

V.1-2 – "Son of man, set thy face toward **the mountains of Israel**, and prophesy against them" – The problem was not the mountains themselves, but what was established thereon – "Then shall ye know that I am Yahweh, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon **every high hill**, in all **the tops of the mountains**, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols" (V.13).

V.7 – "And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and **ye shall know that I am Yahweh**" – There is always purpose in God's affliction of His people – Ezek. 14:23 – "I have not done without cause all that I have done in it" – see also Lam. 3:31-33. The declaration "ye shall know that I am Yahweh" is used 7 times in chapters 6 and 7 (faithfulness to covenant).

V.14 – (RSV) "I will stretch out My Hand upon them, and make the land desolate and waste, throughout all their habitations, from the wilderness (south desert – Moffatt) to Riblah." Riblah thought to have been about 45 miles north of Damascus (2 Kings 23:33; 25:6).

## Luke 2

V.1 – "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." A census was to be taken in Judea and every man had to return to his birthplace (V.3-4). Mary was very close to giving birth to the son of God (V.5). The timing was perfect – Galatians 4:4 – "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

So crowded was Bethlehem due to the imperial order that the only lodging available was in the shepherd's tower beneath which was a stable (V.7-8). The son of God was to be born in the humblest of circumstances (Matt. 8:20; Phil. 2:6-8; 2 Cor. 8:9). It has been speculated that Mic. 5:5 hints that there were 7 shepherds and 8 'wise men' or magi (note the birth of Christ in Bethlehem is prophesied – Mic. 5:2), although Mic. 5:5 is primarily about the saints as king priests at the time of Armageddon. Note too, Mic. 4:8 – "tower of the flock" (Edar) which



Jacob was at when Rachel gave birth to Benjamin (“the son of the right hand”) – Gen. 35:18-21.

The refrain of the angels celebrating the birth of Messiah is heard in carols at the end of every year, but is little understood – V.14 – “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” A better translation is Rotherham’s – “And, on earth, peace, among **men of goodwill**.” Weymouth translates – “And on earth peace among **men who please Him!**” There cannot be peace on earth until men are brought into harmony with Yahweh – Isa. 48:22. The majority of mankind do not glorify God, therefore peace eludes them. What is necessary is “good will,” i.e. good intent; a desire to obey the principles of God and to follow His ways.

V.24 confirms the poverty of Joseph and his family. The minimum that could be offered by the very poor for a male child at birth was two turtle doves or two young pigeons – Lev. 12:8. Mary could not bring a “**lamb** of the first year” as specified by the Law (Lev. 12:6), so she brought “the **Lamb of God**” in his first year of life who would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

There were some in Jerusalem who, like some who saw the fig tree of Israel shoot forth leaves in 1948, would not “pass away” until they saw Yahweh’s Anointed – Luke 21:32. Simeon (“hearing”) waited patiently while keen to rest in ‘sleep’ and received his reward – V.30 – “For mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (V.25-32), although his message to Mary was not something she wanted to hear – V.34-35 – “a sword shall pierce through thine own soul.” She faithfully kept all these things in her heart.

Similarly, Anna, 84 years old and a widow for many decades, entered with praise and a declaration that “redemption” had arrived for those who looked for the Messiah. Sadly, there were so few who shared their faith and understanding.

V.41-50 – Aged 12 (in modern times Jewish boys undergo Bar Mitzvah normally at age 13), Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem for three days. So obedient and responsible was he that neither Joseph or Mary, burdened as they were with other young children, took any concern for his whereabouts for some while. Their frustration on returning suggests that this was completely out of character for him. But he was on his Father’s business (V.49), and his mortal family would have to find their rightful place. Over three days he bamboozled and mystified the doctors of the Law who marvelled at his knowledge and understanding of Divine things.

V.52 – “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” Superior knowledge and understanding to mature doctors of the Law was not adequate for the Son of God. He continued to grow in spiritual things as we all must.

## September 11

### 2 Kings 17

V.1 – “In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began **Hoshea** the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years” – The end had come for the northern kingdom of Israel. The following is a summary of the reign and character of Hoshea.

Hoshea the last king of Israel is distinguished both by his name and his attitude to Jeroboam’s idolatry. It is significant that a Hoshea (or Joshua – an Ephraimite, Num. 13:16) led Israel into the land and another Hoshea led them out of it. It is also ironical that at the end of Israel’s polity a

king should finally emerge who rejected the idols of Jeroboam, when all preceding kings had assiduously pursued it for the same reasons as Jeroboam – political survival, yet Hoshea was the king who presided over the dissolution of Israel.

Nevertheless, Hoshea was worthy of the judgement which fell upon his kingdom. While he may not have pursued Jeroboam's idolatry he was an unrighteous and evil man, not at all disposed to manifest faith in Yahweh. Perhaps his lack of interest in Jeroboam's calf worship was due to the fact that it was now of little consequence in preserving his kingdom from the effect of Israelites going up to Jerusalem to worship. Of far greater import now was the ominous presence of the super-power Assyria to the north which threatened to swallow up the emaciated kingdom of Israel. It is said there were only about 28,000 left in the Land.

As a vassal of Shalmaneser king of Assyria, the only observable characteristic of Hoshea to emerge in the record is his treachery. Having submitted himself to Shalmaneser he undertook covert negotiations with the king of Egypt in an attempt to toss off the Assyrian yoke. The conspiracy was exposed and Hoshea was incarcerated in an Assyrian prison, never to be heard of again.

V.6 – The remnant of Israel were transported to foreign lands, including “Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” The captives of Israel were resettled on the banks of the river Khabour, near Gozan in Assyria. History records that there were less than 30,000 remaining in the land at the time of captivity. “Habor” – The name signifies “united”. It is a river of Mesopotamia identified with the modern Khabur. It flows south through Gozan into the Euphrates. Here they joined the captives of Tiglathpileser's earlier campaign (1 Chron. 5:26). “Gozan” – signifying “a quarry.” Gozan was a province of Assyria. “Medes” – The land of the Medes was further east of Gozan. Rotherham translates the phrase “cities of the Medes” as “mountains of Media.”

V.7-23 – Recounts the oft repeated reasons for the captivity and dispersion.

V.24 – The Assyrians brought peoples from other lands to settle in the vacated land of Israel. Some came from “Cuthah” a province in Babylon; others from “Ava” (“overthrow”) another region in Assyria; more from “Hamath” (“walked”) north of Israel in Syria; and from “Sepharvaim” a region near Hamath in the far north.

V.25-41 – The mixed religion of this conglomeration of peoples who ultimately became known as Samaritans is detailed after a crisis emerged – “And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not Yahweh: therefore Yahweh sent **lions** among them, which slew some of them.” They made representations to their Assyrian masters who released a priest of Jeroboam to teach them the God of the Land! (one marvels). He was installed in “Bethel.” There was irony in a priest of Jeroboam's apostasy returning to Bethel to teach the Gentiles brought into the land. This was the very home of Jeroboam's apostasy. Now it was to again become the centre of education for Jeroboam's misconception of Yahweh and that could only lead to further disasters. Hence, the range of false religions was astonishing –

V.30-31 – “the men of Babylon made **Succothbenoth**, and the men of Cuth made **Nergal**, and the men of Hamath made **Ashima**, and the Avites made **Nibhaz** and **Tartak**, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to **Adrammelech** and **Anammelech**, the gods of Sepharvaim.” “Succoth-Benoth” – meaning “booths of the daughters”, i.e. brothels. Such was the nature of the worship of the strangers brought into the land of Israel. They even recreated Jeroboam's priesthood (V.32 – “lowest” – *qatsah* – an extremity, i.e. from the whole range of the people). The same word is used of Jeroboam's

choice of priests (1 Kings 12:31; 13:33). Israel was gone, but Jeroboam's approach to religion remained.

## Ezekiel 7

V.1-13 – “An end, **the end is come** upon the four corners of the land” – This refrain is repeated in this bracket of verses. The judgements were at hand and well justified.

V.13 – “vision” – *chazon* – mental sight, dream, revelation, oracle. Chap. 7:13,26; 12:22,23, 24,27; 13:16. (In 8:4; 11:24; 43:3 the word is *mar'eh* – a view, the act of seeing. This is the word used in Ezekiel for “appearance.” In 1:1; 8:3; 40:2; 43:3 the feminine form of this word *mar'ah* is used. In 13:7 the word is *machazah* – a vision; found only here and in Gen. 15:1 of Abraham, and Num. 24:4,16 of Balaam).

V.23 – “Make a chain” – The Amplified Bible has “make the chain” (of imprisonment); Rotherham – “Prepare thou a chain, for the land is full of the crime of bloodshed, and the city is full of violence.”

V.26 – Rotherham – “Disaster upon disaster, shall come, And report after report shall arise, Therefore shall they seek a vision from prophet,” but there would be no answer from God.

## Luke 3

V.1-2 – To none of the pompous and tyrannical rulers of Judea did the Word of God come, but to the ragged prophet John the Baptist in the wilderness. This was in harmony with his message drawn from Isa. 40:3-5 – Rotherham for Luke 3:4 – “A voice of one crying aloud! **In the desert, prepare ye the way of the Lord**, straight, be making his paths.” The environment of the desert was a far cry from the luxurious accommodation and way of life of the rulers listed. This is what Christ later noted – Matt. 11:7-8 – “And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in **soft raiment**? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in **kings' houses**.” Prosperity, luxury and fulness of bread do not contribute much to spiritual thinking and direction. It is in seclusion and privacy through quiet reflection that men straighten their path to the Kingdom.

V.7 – “Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of **vipers**, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” These were the ‘serpent's seed’ of Gen. 3:15 who would fulfil the second conflict of that promise – the mutual hostility between Christ and those who would crucify him (Matt. 23:32-33).

V.8 – “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” John was baptizing in the River Jordan near where Israel crossed over in Josh. 4. Twelve stones were laid in the river bed and 12 others brought from the river and placed on the bank – Josh. 4:1-9. These represented the 12 tribes of Israel. If Abraham's natural children refused to repent and be baptized, then the Gospel would go to the Gentiles who would become “the seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:16,29).

V.9 – “And now also the **axe** is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is **hewn down**, and cast into the **fire**.” This is the “wrath” John spoke of in V.7. There was thick growth like a jungle in what is called the

“swelling of Jordan” in Jer. 12:5; 49:19; 50:44. This thick undergrowth harbored snakes and wild animals such as lions. It was cut down and set on fire in the dry season causing the snakes and wild animals to flee. AD 70 was coming and would destroy the unresponsive. This warning is amplified in verses 16-17 because it was Christ himself who would ‘lead’ the Roman army in AD 70 – Dan. 9:26-27; Matt. 24:15.

V.11 – “He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath **two coats**, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” Exhortations are most powerful when delivered without a hint of hypocrisy. John could never be accused of that. He only had **one coat** and it was made out of the skin of a dead camel. Even if he had a second one, who would want it? And, who would want his food of locusts (Lev. 11:22) and wild honey? (Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6).

V.19-22 – John’s imprisonment by Herod Antipas ended his three and a half year ministry (cp. Elijah) and began that of Jesus Christ who had been baptized by John.

V.23-38 – This is the genealogy of Mary (Mary not being mentioned, because the Hebrews never permitted the name of a woman to enter the genealogical tables). That of Joseph is found in Matt. 1:1-16. This demarcation is demonstrated by the son of David being different in each genealogy – Matt. 1:6 – Solomon in Joseph’s line, and Luke 3:31 – Nathan in Mary’s line. Christ came through Nathan, not Solomon – Note Zech.12:12.

## September 12

### 2 Kings 18

V.1 – “And it came to pass, in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign” – Like a breath of fresh air, Hezekiah replaced his corrupt and faithless father on the throne of David. He immediately jumped into action to reverse the desecrations of Ahaz. In just 6 years the northern kingdom would go into captivity. Time was short to redeem some from the neighbouring doomed nation. The following summary of Hezekiah taken from the study notes “The Kings of Israel and Judah” is lengthy but will serve as an introduction to the more detailed record of 2 Chron. 29 to 32.

Hezekiah was the greatest king of Judah and Israel since David the beloved of Yahweh had occupied the throne of Israel 270 years earlier. The fact that he was the son of Ahaz and came to the throne while Judah was steeped in idolatry and moral corruption only serves to emphasize his greatness. Hezekiah is unique among the kings of the divided kingdom and the Divine chronicler provided a full account of his reign and achievements. In the greater part of the three accounts of his reign he is presented as a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the suffering servant of Yahweh.

The singular most important characteristic of Hezekiah that made him stand out from all his predecessors except David was his implicit trust in Yahweh: “He trusted in Yahweh God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.” This indomitable faith in Yahweh carried Hezekiah through many great and severe trials and preserved his integrity to the end of his life. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”, hence it is not surprising to find affixed to the statement concerning his faith quoted above, the following words; “For he clave to Yahweh and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Yahweh commanded Moses.” The word of God was the source of

Hezekiah's faith and it is clear that he had turned to it in spite of the corrupt practices of his father Ahaz.

Hezekiah patterned his life upon his forefather David and waited eagerly for the time when he would have the power to set about reversing Ahaz's apostasy and re-establishing the Temple services and the worship of Yahweh as it existed in the days of David. He utterly repudiated the policies of Ahaz and it is not without significance that his mother's name was Abijah – "Yah his father".

The first thing that Hezekiah did upon ascending the throne, evidently on the first day of his reign was to open the doors of the house of God which Ahaz had shut up. This was an act that symbolized the character of his entire reign. He opened the doors of the ecclesia to all who would enter upon the basis of faith and truth. Hezekiah set out to recover Judah from apostasy and in doing so involved both the stranger and the remnant of Israel in the north. He desired to see all who were willing to respond, brought into fellowship with God and enjoying the benefits of "peace and truth in his days."

Following his accession near the turn of the year Hezekiah immediately assembled and sanctified the priests and Levites in a desperate bid to cleanse and repair the Temple in preparation for the Passover on the 14th of Abib. They had two weeks to perform all the necessary tasks but because of the filthy condition of the Temple and the extent of the damage inflicted upon it by Ahaz, the work was not completed until the 16th of Abib. Too late for the Passover! Undaunted, however, Hezekiah resorted to the provisions of Num. 9:10-14 and planned for a "second Passover" and prepared the people of Judah for it by holding a special service of rededication to Yahweh which resulted in such fervor and zeal on the part of the people that the priesthood proved inadequate to handle the volume of offerings made by them. Spontaneous rejoicing in the things of the Truth gripped the nation "and Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly".

Hezekiah immediately sent messengers to "all Israel and Judah" inviting them to attend the Passover to be kept in the second month. The response from Judah was overwhelming and many from Israel also "humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem". The Passover that followed has gone down in history as the greatest since the time of Solomon for one important reason: the entire nation responded from the heart with gladness that they had rediscovered "Yahweh Elohim of their fathers", and eagerly craved "the good knowledge of Yahweh" taught by the Levites encouraged and instructed by Hezekiah himself. The unity of mind and national zeal produced by Hezekiah's reformation was never seen again after his death. It was one of those rare occasions when the Truth had deeply penetrated the hearts and minds of the people of Judah.

Eradication of idolatry throughout the land and even in Israel by the people themselves quickly followed, while Hezekiah thoroughly reorganized the priesthood, the Temple and its services on the pattern established by David and Solomon. Hezekiah was highly commended for this work and for his uprightness and integrity as he carefully sought to observe every commandment of his God. He was mightily blessed because "in every work that he began in the service of the house of God...he did it with all his heart and prospered." This is a wonderful example to all who work in the service of the "House of God" today.

The great test of Hezekiah's faith came in his fourteenth year. Sennacherib descended upon the land from the north and captured 46 cities of Judah. In this extremity Hezekiah reversed his previous policy towards Assyria and attempted to appease Sennacherib with the treasures of the Palace and Temple. He quickly realized the folly of this policy and diligently set about preparing for a siege while encouraging the people to put their trust in God. The beautiful words of 2 Chron. 32:7-8 stand as a testimony to Hezekiah's faith and complete trust in Yahweh. After receiving the blasphemous ultimatum of Rabshakeh, Hezekiah went up to the house of God and then sent messengers to Isaiah seeking his intercession. Yahweh quickly answered through Isaiah with an encouraging message of support. When Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah warning him not to trust in Yahweh he went up to the Temple and laid it before Yahweh and offered a truly wonderful prayer of faith and confidence in his God.

It was at the height of this crisis that Hezekiah was stricken with a form of leprosy and was informed by Isaiah that it would be fatal. More adverse circumstances can scarcely be imagined—Judah was in the middle of an invasion by the world's most powerful monarch who was about to march on Jerusalem the last stronghold of the nation; the king whose unswerving faith had sustained the nation in the face of this threat was now about to die, and moreover the house of David was on the brink of extinction because Hezekiah had no son who could carry on the Davidic line. In the face of this overwhelming adversity Hezekiah, lying stricken upon his death-bed, turned to the only source of help that he knew could reverse the situation. The spontaneity and intensity of his supplication to Yahweh and the complete genuineness of his words and his bitter tears were only subsequently matched by the last words of the Lord upon the cross. Yahweh immediately responded to Hezekiah's prayer because His suffering servant had revealed absolute integrity and complete trust in Him under the severest trial.

Hezekiah recovered, the Assyrians were overthrown and Hezekiah amassed great wealth and was internationally celebrated as a result of these dramatic developments. Yahweh had done "great things", for Hezekiah "whereof he was glad". "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem". What a wonderful God is Yahweh—His treatment of His servants is predicated upon their response to Him. Hezekiah's plaintive cry for help produced magnificent blessings, but his pride brought Yahweh's wrath upon him and the nation. Hezekiah soon recovered from this lapse into self-reliance and humbled himself so that the wrath came not upon them in his days. He died as he had begun—a man full of faith and trust in Yahweh.

V.4 – "brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made" – See the account of Num. 21:8-9 (cp. John 3:14-15). The brazen serpent was a symbol of the flesh of Christ crucified. There is no reference here to the "pole" on which it was suspended as recorded in Numbers. Hence it became symbolic of the flesh uncrucified. This was truly Judah's spiritual state under Ahaz. The serpent of brass possessed no intrinsic power in itself, but Judah now worshipped it as an idol—not for its past connotations so much as its visible presence. The principle here is expressed by Paul who had "determined not to know anything....save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor.1:2). He called it "Nehushtan" – i.e. something made of copper. Rotherham in his margin says, "a bronze thing." The idea being that it was powerless to save, just like the flesh it symbolized. This was a courageous act by Hezekiah.

## Ezekiel 8

V.1 – The 6th year of Jehoiachin's captivity is referred to (1:1-2), so this is a little over a year from the vision of the Cherubim of chapter 1. Ezekiel had been struck dumb in between (3:26-27), so it is curious that the elders had come to his house and sat before him because they had not been willing to hear him before this (Ezek. 3:7), but he could not speak!

V.2 – Rotherham amends the KJV – “So I looked, and lo! a likeness as the appearance of a **man**, from the appearance of his loins and downward fire.” Ezekiel was taken in vision to Jerusalem to the Temple as “the hand of the Adonai Yahweh” (“He who will be rulers”) fell upon him and he was affiliated with the ‘man’ of the Cherubim (multitudinous Christ) seen in Ezek. 1:4-28 (V.4), and was lifted up by a lock of his head (Nazarite).

V.3 – In vision, Ezekiel arrived at the Temple in Jerusalem and in the inner court towards the north was “the seat of the image of jealousy” (obviously an idol of some kind, perhaps of Tammuz V.13). This is the first of four great abominations he was shown – V.5-6.

V.7-12 – The second abomination was in a secluded place where he saw “every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about” where “Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan” (the latter a faithful servant of Josiah) led the worship of idols. Astonished, he is asked whether he observed “every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, Yahweh seeth us not; Yahweh hath forsaken the earth” (an exhortation for the latter days as well with its extraordinary capability to corrupt with its imagery).

V.13-14 – The third abomination was at “the door of the gate of Yahweh's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for **Tammuz**” (Zoroaster the reincarnation of Nimrod).

**On Tammuz – Peloubet** — The name means ‘son of life’. Originally the sun god, primarily of Babylonia; slain by a wild boar while hunting, and mourned long and vainly by the goddess Ishtar. He is generally identified with Adonis of Greek mythology, whose story is practically the same. According to Sayce, the Canaanites called him Adonai (lord), from which, when the myth reached Greece, came 'Adonis'. A festival in honour of Adonis was celebrated at Byblos in Phoenicia, and in most of the Grecian cities, and even by the Jews when they degenerated into idolatry. It took place in July, and was accompanied by obscene rights.

*Unger* — Tammuz was an ancient Akkadian deity whose worship spread throughout the Semitic world. He was the husband and brother of Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of procreation. In Babylonian legends Tammuz supposedly died in the fall, when vegetation dried up. He departed to the nether world, being recovered by the wailing Ishtar. Bursting buds of springtime marked his return to the upper world. Tammuz cults are thought to be referred to in Jer. 22:19; Amos 8:10; Zech. 12:10. The 4<sup>th</sup> Babylonian month, corresponding to July, was named in honour of this god, which in post-Biblical times, became the name of the 4th month to the Jews. The Tammuz-Ishtar cult was degrading, and thoroughly inconsonant with the chaste worship of Yahweh.

V.15-18 – The fourth abomination was “at the door of the temple of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with **their backs toward the temple** of Yahweh, and their faces toward the east; and they **worshipped the sun** toward the east.” There would be no pity for those who “put the branch to their nose” as the sun rose in worshipping the risen Nimrod in the form of Tammuz. The “branch” refers to



new Spring growth signifying the reincarnation of the sun god – Nimrod. Babylon had taken over the ecclesia. It was Catholic through and through.

## Luke 4

It was necessary that the son of God who bore our nature with all its inherent weaknesses be tempted in all points like as we are – Heb. 4:15. Those ‘points’ were “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). The temptation of Christ is among one of the most debated topics in Scripture in our community. The arguments that go back and forth about whether the temptation was internal or external usually miss the simple truth that it was both. To assert that the son of God would attempt to conjure up in his mind any form of rebellion or mistrust in his Father is quite wrong. Similarly, to argue that he did not process the externally suggested temptations in order to reject them with a “thus it is written” is equally incorrect. The temptations came from without, but had to be processed and rejected within his mind.

It is curious that the tempter (whoever he was) is not identified, except by the word “devil” – *diabolos* (V.3,5,6,13), and the Lord also calls him (clearly a person outside himself) “Satan” (V.8). *Diabolos* means ‘false accuser’ and *Satan* means ‘adversary (one who opposes another in purpose or act)’. It is significant that when the temptation was complete “the devil... **departed from him** for a season.” The bias that is in human nature never departs for any period of time as Paul laments – Rom. 7:21 – “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” As with us, the *diabolos* remained with Christ to be “crucified with its affections and lusts” daily until finally destroyed on the tree – Heb. 2:14.

The reason why the tempter, or tempters, are not named is firstly because we do not need to know in order to appreciate the Lord’s overcoming of temptation with a “thus it is written,” for that is our example in confronting and fending off temptation. We are faced with a myriad of temptations that come from every direction and through the most deviously sophisticated media in the modern world. It, like the tempter, is largely hidden behind a curtain of anonymity. The second reason is that to focus on the identity of the tempter would be to detract from the Lord. It was the triumph of “God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19) that was important, not a lying and deceptive contemporary of Christ.

V.15-29 – Christ was glorified in all the synagogues in the Galilee region he visited (V.15), except for his own synagogue in Nazareth. Here he was well known as a reader of Scripture on the Sabbath (V.16). On this day he read from Isa. 61 (V.17-19) as it was most likely the Day of Atonement (Isa. 61 was read on that day). The effect was negative on an unheeding audience due to their familiarity with him from childhood. The mantra that “no prophet is accepted in his own country” (V.24) proved true again.

The Lord does not complete the reading of Isa. 61:2 – “To proclaim the **acceptable** year of Yahweh (which he cites), and **the day of vengeance** of our God; to comfort all that mourn” (which he does not cite even though **judgement** was coming in AD 70). He was their Messiah. It was a time for “acceptance”; i.e. for them to accept him, and thereby be accepted themselves by God (2 Cor. 6:2). What was required was a hearing **ear**, hence, when he rolled up the scroll, “the **eyes** of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to **say** unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your **ears**” (Luke 4:21). They expected a miracle (V.23), but he simply “preached” (V.18,19,22). Men are not changed for the Kingdom by miracles and signs. Only the Word of God can achieve that – Rom. 10:17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21.

He advanced as witnesses the Gentile widow of Zarephath who **heard a report** of Elijah's miracles and believed without seeing him with her eyes, and the Gentile captain Naaman who **believed a report** of Elisha's miracles and was healed without seeing him. This enraged the townspeople of Nazareth who sought to cast the Lord from a precipice (V.28-29). In so doing, they emulated their foolish ancestors who threw the 'scapegoat' over a cliff so that it would not bring their 'sins' back should it return to its 'home'. Accordingly, the Lord departed and made Capernaum his hometown (V.31; Mark 2:1; John 2:12).

V.33-35 – The healing of the demented man in the synagogue at Capernaum was an enacted parable of what Christ sought to achieve in all of his own people. The bulk of the nation had “a spirit (i.e. attitude or way of thinking) of an unclean devil” (*daimonion* – a contemporary term for insanity). They sensed, like the demented man, that Jesus of Nazareth was special (V.32), but wanted him to leave them alone – V.34 – “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.” The word of Christ rebuking the ungodly spirit is the only cure for human ‘insanity’ (V.35-36). Similarly, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law by the same word is the only way to clear the path towards useful service (V.38-39).

V.40 – “Now **when the sun was setting**, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.” Why didn't they come during the day? Because it had been a **Sabbath**, and that ended at 6 pm. This was another hurdle the Lord had to deal with, the negativity with which his people treated the Sabbath, and it would ultimately lead to him being crucified by them. He was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28), and performed wonderful miracles of healing on seven different Sabbath days. They did not understand that the Sabbath pointed to the redemption of the human race in the Millennium. It was a time for working on behalf of Yahweh, not hiding in the shadows doing nothing while indulging in self-worship (Isa. 58:3-5,13).

V.42 – “And when it was day, he departed and went into **a desert place**.” He sought the solitude and quietness of the wilderness (Luke 3:4) to refocus on preaching the glad tidings of Isa. 61 in all the towns of Galilee (V.43-44).

## September 13

### 2 Kings 19

Chapter 18:13-37 concluded with the invasion of Sennacherib the Assyrian in the 14th year of Hezekiah. This chapter provides some additional details to 2 Chron. 32, and is matched word for word in Isa. 37.

V.1-13 – Having received the report from Eliakim, Shebna and Asaph of their encounter with Rabshakeh, Hezekiah resorted to the Temple in sackcloth. He sent to Isaiah for a response from God. In that message he perhaps unwittingly stumbled on the reason for the invasion, saying, “the **children** are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.” Hezekiah had no children because he had not married, and therefore there was no heir to the throne of David. There were reasons for this unusual fact (canvassed in comments on Isa. 52:13-15 **June** pg. 77). He leaned heavily on the blasphemy of Rabshakeh who was “sent to reproach the living God.” The response from Yahweh was comforting. Sennacherib would be destroyed. For the time being, the Assyrian army was distracted by sieges against two remaining strongholds in Judah – Libnah and Lachish, but Sennacherib compounded the blasphemy by sending an inflammatory letter to Hezekiah – “Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph,

and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?" This was very foolish and was signing his own death warrant. Hezekiah laid the letter before Yahweh.

V.14-19 – Hezekiah's prayer was an appeal for Yahweh to vindicate His righteousness and declare His existence to the entire Gentile world. It was unlikely to be ignored.

V.20-28 – Isaiah's return message confirmed and amplified the previous one. Sennacherib would pay dearly for his blasphemy.

V.29 – "And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof" – Because of the ravages of the Assyrians, crops could not be harvested or were stolen, and the following year was a Sabbath or Jubilee year when no crops could be sown. They would need to trust in their God.

V.30-37 – The language here projects into the future – "the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward" for this invasion is typical of Gog's invasion in the latter days. Just as the Assyrians of old would not "shoot an arrow there," so the latter day 'Assyrian' will not fire cannon or drop bombs on the Old City when they surround it (see comments on Isa. 37 **June** pg. 37). 185,000 Assyrians died through the intervention of an angel and so will Gog experience a similar fate (Ezek. 38 and 39). Sennacherib retired from the invasion and some 17 years later his two sons "Adrammelech and Sharezer" assassinated him "as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god."

## **Ezekiel 9 – The man with a writer's inkhorn**

V.1 – "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, **Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near**, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand" – The "He" here is Adonai Yahweh of chapter 8:1 and those that have the charge over the city are the angels. However, Ezekiel has been brought "in visions of Elohim" (8:3), the same vision he saw in chapter 1 in which he has a part in the future. In Ezekiel's time, it was Yahweh through the angels (*elohim*) who guided the Babylonians against Jerusalem and gave them the victory over it. In the future, it will be Christ (as Yahweh's representative) in the company of the glorified saints (the Cherubim) who will overthrow Babylon the Great whose religion Judah had adopted.

V.2 – "**six men** (*enoshim* – note eSword uses an incorrect Strong's number) came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man (*ish*) a slaughter weapon in his hand" – These six *enoshim* (weak mortal men) represent the princes of Babylon who sat inside the city of Jerusalem on the last day of Zedekiah's reign and were God's 'great men' (*ish*) on that day. In the KJV they are listed in Jer. 39:3 as Nergal-sherezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, the Rabсарis, Nergal-Sherezer, Rabmag, seemingly 6. However, it is likely that other translations are correct; e.g. LITV (Green's Lit.) – "Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, chief of the eunuchs, Nergal-sharezer, chief soothsayer, **and all the rest of the rulers of the king of Babylon**" (for a total of 4 named, **plus**). Therein lies the answer to this apparent problem. Only four are actually named and some are given their titles, but there were others with them not named (see bold above), and we know from Ezekiel's prophecy here that there were **six** present on that day. However, they were not alone for "with them was a man (*ish*) clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist" (ESV). In the

long range prophecy he represents the Lord Jesus Christ who will determine the destinies of all men when he comes again. In the actual fulfillment of Ezekiel's time he was doubtless "the angel of Yahweh's presence" (Isa. 63:9), namely, Michael the archangel (the type of Christ – Dan. 12:1) whose role has always been related to the destiny of Israel and God's promises (that is why there are 7 *ish* involved = covenant).

V.3-5 – Before the six destroyers could undertake the grisly task of dispensing judgement, the 'man' with the "writer's inkhorn by his side" had a special task assigned to him (ESV) – "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and **put a mark on the foreheads** of the men (*enoshim*) who **sigh and groan** over all the abominations that are committed in it." Lot did this in Sodom – "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, **vexed his righteous soul** from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2 Pet. 2:8). The redeemed have (as it were) their "Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1) because they "were not defiled with women" (i.e. other false religions – Rev. 14:4). That is the situation here. All those who were involved in false religions died. Those with God's thinking and attitude towards evil and apostasy (like Ezekiel) lived. So it will be in the day of judgement yet to come.

V.6-11 – "Slay utterly old and young... but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and **begin at my sanctuary**" (1 Pet. 4:17 – "judgment must **begin** at the house of God"). "Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house" on the principle of Heb. 13:17; James 3:1. Astonished at his own survival ("I was left"), Ezekiel pleaded for his people ("wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel"), but is given an answer that makes two salient points: (1) The judgements were just and irreversible; and (2) The major problem was the absence of faith and sensitivity to the reality of God, for they said "Yahweh hath forsaken the land, and Yahweh doth not see" (Rotherham). The issues are no different for us today as Christ warned in Matt. 24:48-51, and Peter confirmed in 2 Pet. 3:3-4 – "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" For them, God has forsaken the earth.

## Luke 5

The Lord's use of Peter's fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee in order to teach unhindered is the backdrop for an enacted parable about his mission – "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (ESV – V.4), but is met with a doubting response from Peter. The name 'Simon' is used because it means "hearing" and he was not hearing yet. The word "master" – *epistatēs* – an appointee over, that is, commander (teacher); implies that Peter is really dismissive of the less experienced fisherman that Jesus was. He is virtually saying "OK boss, I know more about fishing than you do, but we will do what you ask." It is for this reason that Peter is so mortified later in V.8 – "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

This enacted parable is the first in a series of parables that feature fishing nets. The others are Matt. 13:48 and John 21:11. Here the Gospel net is cast into the Sea of Galilee called "Galilee of the nations" in Isa. 9:1. Overwhelming numbers responded to its message among Jew and Gentile (Acts 2:41; 5:14; 6:7; 11:24; 17:6), so that there were not enough labourers to handle the work (Luke 5:7; 10:2). However, the net broke and many 'fish' escaped (V.5). So it has been ever since. The second net refers to the Judgement Seat – Matt. 13:48 – "Which, when it (the net) was full (Rom. 11:25), they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." The third net in John 21:11 does not break because it

contains 153 “great fish” the symbolic number for the glorified “sons of God” (more comments on that later in John 21).

V.12-14 – A cured leper is sent to the priests for the law of Lev. 14 to be applied. They had never seen a case of a cleansed leper and the law had never been invoked. The aim was to stir in the priests’ minds that the Messiah was in their midst. It is evident it didn’t.

V.16-26 – 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 paralyzes 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.

V.24 is one of the 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 automatically 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. That is why he said to the palsied man “thy sins be forgiven thee” and “take up thy bed and walk” as he was delegated to have authority over all carnal things (Ps. 8:6; 80:17).

## September 14

### 2 Kings 20

V.1 – “In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death” – i.e. before the destruction of the Assyrian army (Cp. 2 Kings 20:6 with 19:34). It appears that he was struck down during the siege in the midst of his troubles with Sennacherib, and told “set thine house in order for thou shalt die, and not live” – This edict highlighted to Hezekiah an area of neglect in his life, for it is evident he had not married and had no children at age 39 (cp. 2 Kings 20:6 with 21:1). The need for a son to continue the Davidic line appears to be the back-ground to Ps. 127 which is among the Songs of Degrees assembled by Hezekiah (Psa. 120–134). Both the RSV and Rotherham have, “not recover.” While the disease is not named, V.7 provides a clue. Some kind of “boil” was present.

V.2 – “Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto Yahweh” – Hezekiah with singular purpose and without forethought makes an immediate and spontaneous response to

Yahweh's message. His was a genuine heart in tune with God and to Him he turns in his extremity.

V.3 – “I beseech thee” – The phrase could be literally rendered, “Oh, now.” It is always used as a cry of anguish from men in distress and occurs 13 times (Exod. 32:31; Neh. 1:5.11; Ps. 116:4,16; 118:25; Dan. 9:4; Jonah 1:14; 4:3); he cried “remember” for like Nehemiah he had done things which he knew pleased Yahweh (Neh. 5:19), and could seek for mercy on that basis; having acted “in truth” (*emeth* – stability, figuratively certainty, trustworthiness), and is used of the Divine characteristic of justice in Ex. 34:6, but here of uprightness and integrity; with a “**perfect** heart” (*shalem* – complete, from the root, to be safe). Hezekiah is the only king who claimed this of himself without fear of contradiction for he knew he had served Yahweh with all his heart and not turned to other gods as many had done before him.

V.4-6 – Isaiah was turned around in the “middle court” (the court between the temple and the palace), only having time to pass out of the king's palace and into the open court before the word of Yahweh came to him – “I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of Yahweh,” and “I will add unto thy days fifteen years.” Hezekiah's healing is clearly a typical resurrection on the third day pointing forward to the greater suffering servant of Yahweh (cp. Luke 13:32).

V.7 – “Take a lump (*debelah* – to press together, i.e. a cake of pressed figs) of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.” Secular history attests to the use of figs to draw septic ulcers (e.g. Pliny), but this was a miracle. The “boil” (*shechiyn* – to burn, inflammation, i.e. an ulcer) appears to have been only one boil, probably a carbuncle. This is a very large boil with a number of openings and with large amounts of dead tissue and discharge which being septic can lead to blood poisoning. The same word is used in relation to leprosy in Lev. 13, and Hezekiah's sickness was doubtless a form of leprosy given the use of the word *naga* in Isa. 53:4 which has its basis in these events.

V.8-11 – “What shall be the sign that Yahweh will heal me” – Unlike Ahaz his father who being offered a sign refused it, Hezekiah shows his faithfulness by seeking an assurance (cp. Judges 6:36-40). He was offered two signs in the sun involving “degrees” (*maalah* – elevation; lit. a step or grade mark). Compare the 15 Songs of Degrees (Psalms 120 to 134) compiled by Hezekiah, apparently one for each year of his extension of life. Understandably, it was a “light thing” (RSV – “easy thing”) for the sun to “go down” because it was the order of nature, but not for it to go the other way. Ironically, the sign was to be in the sun “dial (*maalah* – same word as “degrees” V.9) of Ahaz” his father who refused a sign because he didn't believe in Yahweh.

V.12-21 – “At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah” – This name is a variation of Merodach-baladan and means, “Marduk has given a son” (Isa. 39:1). He was the king who welded the fractious Chaldean tribes together and conquered Babylonia, holding it against Sargon in BC 721. He was subsequently defeated by Sargon and fled, only to return later as king of Babylon in BC 702 during the reign of Sennacherib who also defeated him. It seems Merodach-baladan's embassy was sent shortly after his return to power in an attempt to stir up a revolt and gain assistance against Assyria in the west. Hezekiah foolishly “hearkened unto them” (RSV – “welcomed them”). He did more than welcome them. He opened all his kingdom to their scrutiny and is seriously rebuked with judgements that would see his progeny going into captivity into Babylon. However, even in error Hezekiah is absolutely honest. He does not attempt to cover his actions or hide his mistake, and characteristically accepted without

question or complaint the Divine edict, (RSV) “for he thought, why not, if there will be peace and security in my days.” This is not selfishness but a confidence in God that he would be blessed for his trust in Him. The wrath would fall upon his posterity who (as it turned out) would justly deserve it.

### **Ezekiel 10 – The ‘Glory’ departs**

V.1 – What Ezekiel saw when he “looked” was the vision of the cherubim of chapter 1 which concluded with “the appearance of the likeness of a throne.” There have been suggestions that because this is so, Ezekiel 1 was all fulfilled in the judgements poured out on Jerusalem and Judah. This is very shortsighted because those events were not followed by the establishment of the throne of David with Christ sitting upon it which Ezekiel 1 points to. The reason for the involvement of the cherubim in the judgements of the past is because all those historical events were replete with foreshadowing’s (types) of events in the latter days. The figurative transporting of the glory away from Jerusalem by God’s agents of that time is prospective of its return to the House of God (Ezekiel’s Temple) when Christ and the saints enter the completed Temple by the east gate – Ezek. 43.

V.2-22 – The same linen-clothed man (*ish* – great man) is commanded to take **fire** (symbol for judgement) from between the Cherubim (see Chap. 1) and to scatter it over the whole city, indicating that the judgement of the One upon the throne was to be pronounced and executed. He received it from the hand of the “cherub” (here ‘man’ is *adam*: V.8,14,21 – a significant indication of the human origin of the cherubim). It is the same cherubic vision as in chap. 1, but note V.14 where the “ox” face is described as a “cherub” (it is stated in V.22 to be “the same faces”). It is simply a different designation for the same face. All the elements of this vision draw heavily on chapter 1 which can only ultimately be fulfilled in the future.

### **Luke 6**

V.1 – Bullinger comments on “the second sabbath after the first” – All this represents only one word in the Greek (*deuteroprotos*), i.e. the second-first. Occurs only here in the N.T. The first and second sabbaths can occur only in the week of the three great Feasts. The first day of these feasts is a Sabbath “high day” (Hebrew. *porn tov*)), and is the “first” or great sabbath, whatever day of the week it falls on (see Lev. 23:7,24,35), the weekly sabbath then becomes the “second”. This “second sabbath” was therefore the ordinary weekly sabbath, as is clear from Matt.12:1. Not seeing this the current Greek texts solve the difficulty by omitting the word altogether!

V.2 – “And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?” 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 advances 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, men and women) bread and wine as Melchizedek had done (Gen. 14:18). That is why David could eat the shewbread without

condemnation. Jesus Christ was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5). Like David he operated above the Law for a superior and more permanent cause.

V.6-11 set forth the principle of the Sabbath – the open hand symbolizes all that the Sabbath stood for. 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. If only these closed minded law keepers would open their ‘Sabbath hand’ and seek to cure like Christ, and not kill as they sought to do to him (V.11).

V.20-49 – The discourse on the plain follows a night on a mountain. This is the reverse of Matt. 5 to 7. The reason for this is provided in the preamble of both discourses. In Matt. 4:23-24, Jesus came to **preach** the Gospel of the Kingdom, and to **heal** (in that order), but the people flocked to him to be healed. That is why he ascended a mountain to deliver his discourse on the mount (Matt. 5-7). They needed to make an effort to hear his teaching. However, in Luke 6:17 it was different. The people on that occasion “came to **hear** him, and to be **healed** of their diseases.” They had their priorities right. There was no need for Christ to ask of them the effort of climbing towards higher things. They had come to listen. What follows is a discourse that draws heavily on the content of Matt. 5 to 7.

## September 15

### 2 Kings 21

V.1 – “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah” – The following summary of his reign and character is from the study notes “The Kings of Israel and Judah.”

Manasseh the son of Hezekiah was without any doubt the worst king of Judah. The only mitigating factor was that near the end of his life he repented of his idolatry after a brief captivity in Babylon. By then however it was too late to reverse the effect of his idolatry and corruptions upon the ecclesia of God which went into captivity because “Yahweh turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal” (2 Kings 23:26). The effect of Manasseh’s idolatry upon the people was utterly demoralising as the general failure of Josiah’s desperate reformation testifies. The greater part of Judah had become incorrigibly established in immorality and devious superstitions and nothing could be done to salvage them from it.

Not only did Manasseh literally murder thousands of God’s servants during his reign but he must also be held responsible for the eternal loss of many hundreds of thousands of lives as a result of his corrupting and defiling idolatries. A deliberate campaign of corruption and organised idolatry was commenced in Judah aimed at destroying every vestige of Hezekiah’s reforms.



Tragically this campaign was entirely successful and what resistance did remain to it was quickly eliminated by a brutal campaign of murder, as all who stood for the principles espoused by Hezekiah were massacred until blood flowed in the streets of Jerusalem. Tradition holds that one of the victims of Manasseh was Isaiah the prophet who was “sawn asunder” after having taken refuge in a hollow tree trunk. The destruction of the prophets and Yahweh’s servants signalled the end for Judah because the moral fibre of the ecclesia was gone and virtually nothing remained upon which a reformation could be based. The total demoralisation of the people and the complete absence of righteousness outside of the palace and the temple is clear from the words of Yahweh through Jeremiah the prophet in the days of Josiah the reformer; “Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgement, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it” (Jer. 5:1).

As Manasseh came to the throne at the age of twelve it must be assumed that the men who guided him in the early years of his reign were responsible for directing him along an evil path, but that Manasseh responded with alacrity to the influences brought upon him during the formative years is obvious. When he attained to maturity he needed no guidance in undertaking his campaigns of corruption and murder which were only halted by Divine intervention resulting in his incarceration in the dungeons of Babylon. It remains to be seen whether Manasseh’s repentance was genuine and sustained to the end of his life. “The judge of all the earth” may well forgive Manasseh on the principle of Ezek. 18:21-22, but He could not overlook the consequences of his corruptions.

V.12 – “Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle” – i.e. it shall affect his ears like the sharp piercing sound spoken of Eli’s house (1 Sam. 3:11). Jeremiah also used the same expression in his denunciation of Manasseh’s works (Jer. 19:3).

V.19-26 – When the repentant Manasseh died, Amon acceded to the throne and immediately set about restoring the idolatry his father had removed. It may be assumed from the fact that Amon met death at the hands of his own palace courtiers who had also served his father, that he was a disagreeable individual who did not endear himself to his associates. It was as well that such an evil character was removed, before his eldest son, the 8 year old Josiah, was adversely affected by his father’s ways.

## **Ezekiel 11**

V.1-13 – In the same vision that began in chapter 8, Ezekiel is brought to the east gate of the temple where he saw 25 men (*ish*) who were “princes of the people.” It was a different group from the 25 of chap. 8:16 who were priests. Among them was “Jaazaniah” (‘Yah hears’) but he was not the same man as in chap. 8:11. He was evidently a brother of Hananiah, the false prophet with whom Jeremiah contended (Jer. 28:1). Misnomers abounded here – “Hananiah” (‘Yah is gracious’); “Pelatiah” (‘Yah has redeemed or delivered’). While Ezekiel calls them *ish* (V.1), they are described by Yahweh as *enosh* – men, weak, vulnerable. How often is His assessment different from ours! They contended the city would not fall and should be defended at all costs (see Jer. 38:1-4), saying “It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh” using the language of the boiling of peace offerings thinking they were acceptable to God. He turned the figure on them saying, “Your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it (God’s servants slain), they are the flesh,” and the murderers

would be removed from Jerusalem – “This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel.” As a sign of that judgement, when Ezekiel’s tongue was unleashed after (in vision) he was returned to the river Chebar (V.24-25) “Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died.” There was no ‘redemption’ for him.

V.14-25 – A remnant was to be preserved, for Yahweh would “be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come” – to be understood as “a sanctuary for a little while” (RSV). Ezekiel watched as “the glory of Yahweh went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.” Like Christ, the Shekinah glory departed from the mount of Olives to which it will return in the multitudinous body of Christ soon – Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11; Zech. 14:4-5.

## Luke 7

“Capernaum” means “the city of comfort.” It had been that for the palsied man of Luke 5:17-26. Now another palsied man (suffering from the paralysis of human nature) received ‘comfort’ from a distance by the faith of his Gentile master.

V.2 – A distant centurion displayed an unusual compassion towards a slave with palsy (Matt. 8:6). He had not only heard of Jesus, but perceived his delegated authority from God to heal the sick. Thinking himself unworthy of coming into the presence of Christ, he sent some Jewish elders for whom he had built a synagogue in Capernaum (V.2-5). The Jews thought he was “worthy” (*axios* – deserving) because that is how they viewed themselves, but he did not, using a cognate word in V.7 – “worthy” – *axioo* – to deem entitled to, fit. The Gentile knew his position – “Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not **worthy** (*hikanos* – fit) that thou shouldest enter under my roof” (V.6).

He understood the principle of **delegated authority** (*exousia*) because he was in that position of authority himself serving with the Roman auxiliaries under Herod Antipas, who himself was subject to the authority of the Caesar – “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it” (V.8). The Lord had not encountered that kind of perception and faith among his own people – “I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (V.9 = proof he was a Gentile). The centurion’s faith was in the Abrahamic promises. This is evident from the companion account in Matt. 8:10-12. As such he was in “the seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:8,16,29).

V.11-17 presents a totally different enacted parable. No faith is evident in the raising of the widow’s son in Nain. In fact, faith is not mentioned until V.50 when it was seen in the humble submission and earnestness of the sinful woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears seeking forgiveness.

V.11 – “And it came to pass **the day after**, that he went into a city called **Nain** (“beauty” – Thayer); and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.” This statement is revealing. The Lord had begun the trip to heal the centurion’s servant (V.7), but had been stopped by the messengers from the centurion. Being near Nain which is about 30 miles (50 kms) from Capernaum. The Lord may have been heading to Caesarea some 60 miles (100 kms) from Capernaum when he was met by the messengers. Many of those who left Capernaum with him (V.9) were still present. Two companies met at the gate of the town – one a mixed bunch of would-be disciples, and the other a grieving funeral procession (V.12). Both were brought to a standstill in the narrow gate (V.14).

A bereft widow was burying her only son who had died quite possibly about the time the centurion's servant was healed. The Lord had "compassion" (*splagchnizomai* – to have the bowels yearn, that is, feel sympathy, to pity) on her. There is no mention of her faith, or that she even knew who Jesus was. Jesus talked to the dead man who revived and sat up to the astonishment of all present (V.15-17). What could this enacted parable point to in the absence of faith, but to the redemption of faithless latter-day Israel in her widowhood (Isa. 49:14,17-22; 54:1)? Because of the faithlessness of Israel, Yahweh turned to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:17-28; Acts 13:46-47), a fact prophesied in the previous miracle.

The day will come when Yahweh, through His 'only son' will have compassion on His chosen race when with broken hearts "they shall look upon **me** whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for **him**, as one mourneth for his **only son**, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech. 12:10). It is not without significance that the name Nain means "beauty" as does the word "grace" in Zech. 12:10.

There are 16 places in Scripture where a "stranger", "widow" and "fatherless" are seen together as recipients of God's compassion. Three examples are: Deut. 10:18 – "He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger." Deut. 16:11 – "...the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you." Ps. 94:6 – "They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless."

V.18-29 – Even the 'greatest' of men may experience lingering doubts when commonly held expectations do not transpire as they thought they would. All Jews expected Messiah to come and relieve them from Roman oppression and establish the Kingdom. In prison; oppressed by Roman agents, and not seeing any indication of the Kingdom being set up, John the Baptist sent disciples to enquire of Jesus, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" Isa. 61:1 was being fulfilled (V.21-22), and that was to be reported to John with an exhortation – "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." The Lord's worthy forerunner was the greatest born among women, except for himself as he was the only one guaranteed a place in the Kingdom at that time (V.28).

V.30-35 – Christ proceeds to reprove the inconsistency and fickleness of that age of people. He says they were like children – nothing pleased them. He refers here to the "plays" or "sports" of children. Instrumental music, or piping and dancing, were used in marriages and festivals as a sign of joy. Children imitate their parents and others, and act over in play what they see done by others. Among their childish sports, therefore, was probably an imitation of a wedding or festal occasion, and even funerals. One part are represented as sullen and dissatisfied. They would not enter into the play: nothing pleased them. The others complained of it. We have, said they, taken all pains to please you. We have piped to you, have played lively tunes, and have engaged in cheerful sports, but you would not join with us; and then we have played different games, and imitated the mourning at funerals, and you are equally sullen; "you have not lamented;" you have not joked with us. Nothing pleases you. So, said Christ, is this generation of people. "John" came one way, "neither eating nor drinking," abstaining as a Nazarite, and you were not pleased with him. I, the Son of man, have come in a different manner, "eating and drinking;" not practicing any austerity, but living like other people, and you are equally dissatisfied. You calumniate him, and abuse me for not doing the very thing which displeased you in John. Nothing pleases you. You are fickle, changeable, inconstant, and abusive. No wonder they wanted to eliminate him.

V.36-50 – Having made the comment in V.34; “The Son of man is come eating and drinking” the Lord was disinclined to refuse the invitation of the Pharisee who invited him to dine with him. Whatever Simon’s motives were, he was scandalized by the unbidden entry of a woman he knew to be of dubious moral standing who poured ointment on Jesus and washed his feet with tears, saying within himself, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.” Jesus showed himself to be a prophet by reading his mind, and presenting a parable of a creditor with “two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.” Both being remitted of their debt, he asked, “Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?” The Pharisee answered correctly, and Jesus turned to the woman and made a direct contrast between her and Simon (“hearing”) of the treatment he had received, and concluding, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Accordingly, he could then add, “Thy sins are forgiven,” and “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” which those present counted as blasphemy.

## September 16

### 2 Kings 22

V.1 – “Josiah” – Heb. “Yahweh his foundation.” Josiah was one king who lived up to the meaning of his name as later years were to show. If Amon had named him he certainly did not have any control over the matter, for Josiah’s name had been predetermined by God 340 years before (1 Kings 13:2). Having Yahweh as his foundation amidst the apostasy of Judah was most necessary if he was to succeed in the task before him.

The following summary of the life, reign and character of Josiah has been extracted from the study notes “The Kings of Israel and Judah” and will suffice for commentary on this chapter as the more extensive companion record in 2 Chron. 33 and 34 covers all found in this chapter.

Josiah is unique among the kings of Israel and Judah as the only one against whom nothing adverse is recorded. While Solomon’s words are true; “For there is no man that sinneth not”, the Divine chronicler is silent upon the subject of Josiah’s weaknesses and an unblemished record remains a monument to a truly remarkable man. His greatness was not in any way marred by his refusal to heed the warning of Pharaoh-Necho, “Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not”. Why should Josiah be any more disposed to accept the claims of a godless Gentile king than was Hezekiah in the face of the blasphemous claims of Sennacherib? His death at the hands of Necho at the early age of 39 was in fulfilment of the promise made to him that he would be removed before the wrath of Yahweh descended upon Judah and Jerusalem, and was therefore in a sense a manifestation of Divine mercy (Isa. 57:1-2). The motive of Josiah in going out against Necho was clearly to prevent Judah from becoming the ‘meat’ in the political ‘sandwich’ between Egypt and Assyria. This final act of Josiah was true to character for he always put the welfare of the ecclesia before himself and it is this aspect of his character that features most prominently in a study of his life.

Josiah ascended the throne at the age of 8 after the assassination of his father Amon and the purge of the royal courtiers responsible for his death. It is obvious that a child of such tender age could not rule the kingdom alone nor undertake his own education in Divine things, and therefore the guidance and education of the boy-king that was to develop in later years one of the most zealous and single-minded of Yahweh’s servants must be attributed to others. Careful

examination of the record reveals four people who may have played a part in shaping the direction of Josiah's life. Firstly there was his mother Jedidah, "the beloved" "whom Yah had adorned" with the meek and quiet spirit of the holy women of old. Secondly, the influence of Shaphan the faithful scribe is undoubted. He appears to have been very close to the young king and was clearly his most trusted and reliable servant. That he was considerably older than Josiah appears from the fact that he had a son, Ahikam who was a member of Josiah's delegation to Huldah. The subsequent history of Shaphan's sons in relation to the prophet Jeremiah illustrate that the faithful scribe had ruled his own house well and in the process had probably been responsible for the early education of Josiah.

Next to Shaphan was Hilkiah the high priest who was almost certainly the father of Jeremiah the prophet (Jer. 1:1). His faithfulness shines from the record and in view of the fact that much of the responsibility of ruling the kingdom fell upon the high priest in cases such as this it may be assumed that he played an important part in Josiah's development into manhood. Finally, the influence of Zephaniah the prophet cannot be underestimated. The opening verse of Zephaniah's prophecy is peculiar inasmuch as it traces his antecedents back four generations to one "Hizkiah" which is identical in the Hebrew to Hezekiah. It would appear that Zephaniah was a member of the royal household, having descended from Hezekiah, and therefore had easy access to the young king. The purge of idolatry by Josiah in his twelfth year may be partly attributed to the influence of Zephaniah who roundly condemned the idolatry of Judah and the black-frocked Chemarims who promoted it.

Josiah "began to seek after the God of David his father" at the age of 16. It is a credit to him that he should commence a search to find Yahweh at such an early age, but it is even more remarkable when it is considered that his quest was undertaken without a scroll of the Law which was not discovered until 10 years later. At the age of 20 he had gained sufficient knowledge from his mentors concerning the pure worship of Yahweh to realize the nation had slumped dramatically during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon. So he instituted an initial purge of idolatry which was carried on for six years until a watershed event occurred that shook him to his foundations and galvanized him into even more zealous activity.

The discovery of the book of the Law during the cleansing and repairing of the temple in Josiah's 18th year had a profound effect on the young king. Few have ever "trembled" at God's Word as he did when it was read in his hearing by Shaphan the scribe. Josiah immediately sprang into action in a desperate bid to avert the Divine judgements which he feared must fall on a guilty nation. A delegation returned from Huldah the prophetess with a message that confirmed his worst fears. Under the ominous shadow of the impending judgement of God the character of Josiah shone brightly as he feverishly prosecuted a reformation that stood no chance of success, but had as its prime objective the salvation of the nation. Such was the character of Josiah. His own position was secure and his eternal well-being guaranteed, but he did not slacken his efforts to redeem the nation from the judgement that was justly about to fall upon them. A renewed and more widespread purge of idolatry was preceded by a national gathering of the people at which Josiah secured by command and coercion a covenant from them to dedicate themselves to Yahweh. A Passover followed which became renowned for its unprecedented meticulousness in observing the requirements of the Law, but it was all to no avail.

The reformation of Josiah was a dismal failure because it failed to reach the hearts of the people. Circumspection was not accompanied by introspection. Profession was not matched by

performance. The nation's ceremonial observances were hollow, and while human observers may have thought they saw evidence of a genuine spiritual revival, Yahweh was not deceived; "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly (mgn. "in false-hood"), saith Yahweh" (Jer. 3:10). The total lack of genuine response from the nation is beautifully illustrated in the description of the manner in which Josiah secured a covenant to serve Yahweh from the people assembled in Jerusalem. After reading the entire Pentateuch to the people, "the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before Yahweh to walk after Yahweh, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul...!". Note how the word "their" in 2 Kings 23:3 is in italics indicating that it is not in the original text. A comparison with 2 Chron. 34:31 reveals the intended meaning of Yahweh's Chronicler; "with all **his** heart and with all **his** soul". This was Josiah's covenant. The people only entered into it for fear of the king. There were very few who shared Josiah's zeal (Jer. 5:1).

In view of the incorrigibility of the people and the absence of a book of the Law until late in his reign. It is a great irony that Josiah was the only king of whom it could be said he "turned not aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 17:20). The Divine summary of Josiah is truly remarkable; "And like unto him was there no king before him that turned to Yahweh with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him" (2 Kings 23:25). It was inevitable that this profound reverence and love of Yahweh's Word should develop in Josiah a likeness to the Deity himself (Jer. 22:15-16).

There are four significant references to Josiah outside the record in Kings and Chronicles. These demonstrate the impact he had on the nation's history.

1 Kings 13:2 – Josiah was named in a prophecy some 340 years before his birth as being the one who would cleanse the land of the idolatry of Jeroboam.

Jer. 1:2 – Jeremiah commenced to prophesy as a young man in the 13th year of Josiah's reign when Josiah was 21. They were mutually concerned over the parlous state of the ecclesia and were companions in the work of reformation.

Zeph. 1:1 – Zephaniah was a fourth generation descendent of Hezekiah and therefore a kinsman of Josiah in whose reign he prophesied. His influence and prophecies had an important effect on the young king.

Jer. 22:15-16 – Josiah's character was patterned upon Yahweh's character. He did "judgement and justice" and "judged the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith Yahweh."

## 2 Kings 23

Comments on this chapter will be confined to matters not addressed in 2 Chron. 34.

V.4 – "the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and **the priests of the second order** (i.e. the priests ranking under the high priest himself) and **the keepers of the door**, to bring forth out of the temple of Yahweh all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven" – The "keepers of the door" were the Levites whose duty it was to watch the temple (2 Kings 22:4; 1 Chron. 23:5). Their role was to ensure that nothing unclean entered the house and of old time their mentor and guide was Phinehas (1 Chron. 9:20). How ashamed he would be of the porters who had permitted so much pollution to enter Yahweh's house. It was ironic that this class were now commanded to remove every last

vestige of the false worship instituted by Manasseh and Amon. The vessels were burnt and the ash carried to Bethel (the home of Jeroboam's apostasy – V.15-20).

V.5 – “he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained” – Some translators have, “he slew.” Keil has “abolished.” These were the ‘Chemarims’ or black robed priests spoken of in Hos. 10:5 and Zeph. 1:4. Manasseh had introduced the worship of the host of heaven and installed a priesthood based on the Babylonish model.

V.6 – Rotherham – “he brought forth the Sacred Stem out of the house of Yahweh” – This was the image of the Asherah made by Manasseh and subsequently removed by him (2 Chron. 33:15), but later replaced by Amon (2 Chron. 33:22). Installation of this monstrous idol in the Temple was the greatest abomination of Manasseh's reign apart from the shedding of much innocent blood of God's faithful servants. To set up an idol representing human fertility and the worship of immorality, including sodomy, in the very house upon which Yahweh's glory had descended in the days of Solomon and the place in which he had chosen to put his name, inevitably evoked the bitter wrath of God. The Asherah was transported to the valley of the Kidron and burnt. What remained was stamped into powder and strewn upon the graves of the common people who had worshipped it (Jer. 26:23).

V.7 – “brake down (*nathats* – tear down) the houses of the sodomites” – Ellicott has, “the cabins of the Sodomites.” Josiah now turns to the removal of the devotees who seduced the people to immoral worship. The sodomites were male ‘priests’ who offered themselves by prostitution to men and women as an integral part of the worship of the Asherah (1 Kings 14:24); and they did this “in the house of Yahweh” (Rotherham). Probably these cabins or tents had been erected in the court of the house and were the places where the immorality was conducted where “women wove hangings (*bayith* – houses) for the Asherah.” These appear to be small tent temples for the housing of images and the conduct of prostitution.

V.8-14 – Josiah caused all the priests of the high places to migrate to Jerusalem so he could control their activities. These were of the Levitical order (V.9). Once the high places were vacated he commanded their desecration and defilement, including those on the Mt of Olives called here “the mount of corruption” (V.13) because Solomon's apostasy flourished there. He proceeded to defile Topheth in the valley of Hinnom to prevent the immolation of children to Molech, and removed “the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun” and the chariots that were used in solemn processions held in honour of Baal. He destroyed all the visible infrastructure of idolatry and false worship in a thorough purge, but as time would reveal, he could not remove idolatry from the hearts of the people (Jer. 3:10).

V.15-20 – Josiah fulfilled the prophecy of the man of God from Judah in completely desecrating the remnants of Jeroboam's apostasy while preserving the bones of the tragic prophet and his nemesis – the old prophet of Bethel – 1 Kings 13.

V.24-25 – The thoroughness of Josiah's purge of idolatry and all who promoted it in any form is summarized leading to a unique Divine commendation – “And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to Yahweh with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might (Deut. 6:5), according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.”

V.26-28 – For all of his zeal and thoroughness, Josiah's reformation was a failure, except in preserving a remnant who shared his values like Daniel and his friends, and his close allies like Shaphan and some of his sons.

V.31-35 – On the death of Josiah, the people placed Jehoahaz the second oldest son on the throne. He was preferred to the arrogant, treacherous and tyrannical Jehoiakim, but Jehoahaz only lasted 3 months before being carried into Egypt by Pharaoh Necho on his way south from Carchemish.

V.36-37 – Pharaohnechoh installed the rapacious exactor Jehoiakim on the throne knowing he would ruthlessly exact the tribute required by the Egyptian overlord. He did not let him down.

### **Ezekiel 12 – Zedekiah's captivity in sign**

Chapters 12 to 24 – This part of Ezekiel's prophecy consists of visions and prophecies concerning Israel, Judah, Jerusalem; and the people of Israel in general. The messages were given to Ezekiel before and right up to the very day the siege of Jerusalem began, culminating in Ezekiel's personal tragedy, the loss of his beloved wife, as a type of Judah's tragedy. Yahweh had sent His prophets among them, "rising up early and sending them," but they had refused to hear them, and chose instead the prophets and prophetesses of their own choice and kind – those who would 'tickle their itching ears.' The elders had refused to shepherd the people; instead they had fed themselves of the people.

V.1-16 – Still dumb, Ezekiel 'the man of sign' enacted a scenario that portrayed the flight of Zedekiah and his entourage from Jerusalem once the walls had been breached. This story is told in 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:11-21; Jer. 25:8-11; 32:1-5; 39. When his people asked what the sign meant, God opened Ezekiel's mouth to speak only that which he told him to say. Three times in this chapter that happens.

V.17-20 – Ezekiel was commanded to remind the captives in Babylon of the famine and desolation decreed in his sign of Ezek. 4:16-17 – "they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment."

V.21-28 – A mantra of the time was the 'proverb' – "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth." This was the equivalent of 2 Pet. 3:4 – "all things continue as they were from the beginning" – a disbelief of Yahweh's prophecies. Ezekiel's mouth was opened to confirm in no uncertain terms that the vision was certain; the time was at hand (just 5 years away), and not far off as the proverb falsely asserted.

### **Luke 8**

V.1-15 – The companion accounts of Christ's parables are found in Matt. 13 and Mark 4. For those who have heard "the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (V.1), there are only four possible outcomes – **rejection** at the Judgement Seat for (1) Disinterest; (2) Failure of faith and zeal after a brief probation; (3) Allowing the cares of life to choke the Word; or **acceptance** (4) Due to bringing forth "the fruit of the Spirit" in varying degrees, for "the word of God,...liveth and abideth for ever" – 1 Pet. 1:23-25.

The disciples were curious about why the Lord chose to speak in parables. They were doubtless mystified by his response in V.10 – "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; **that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.**" Surely the Lord desired to save everyone like his Father does (Ezek. 18:32; 33:11; Heb. 2:9). However, salvation is dependent on recognition of one's need, and the desire to seek it using God's prescribed method (Rom. 2:7). Christ was confronted by a nation largely given over to rabbinical Judaism. Like Adam, they had created



their own religion – a fig leaf covering (Gen. 3:7; Job 31:33; Mark 11:13), and rejected “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29; Rev. 13:8).

Matthew in his record (writing primarily for Jews) provides a more thorough explanation – Matt. 13:10-17. The citation from Isa. 6:9-10 is significant because the chapter begins with a vision of Christ in glory in the Kingdom surrounded by his glorified brethren (Isa. 6:1; John 12:39-41; Rev. 4 which is based on Isa. 6), but goes on to warn of desolating judgements in V.11-12 that fell on Judea in AD 70.

V.16-18 – “No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a **vessel**, or putteth it under a **bed**; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.” There are two human weaknesses that invariably lead to failure to allow the ‘seed’ of Christ’s teachings to grow and flourish. The first is the “thorns” of V.7 represented by the vessel of commercial and domestic life. The word “vessel” is *skeuos* – a vessel, implement, equipment or apparatus. It is the word used in Luke 17:31 of the “**stuff** in the house” followed by the warning “Remember Lot’s wife.” Allowing the demands of domestic and/or business affairs to set aside attention to the Word is ultimately fatal. The second problem is the antithesis – sheer laziness and disinterest (Prov. 26:14 – “As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his **bed**.” In these matters there is a principle of Divine operation that does not go down well in our Humanistic world – “for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

V.20-21 – Christ’s family consists only of those who hear the Word and do it (James 1:22).

V.22-25 – The calming of the storm on the sea emphasized the need for absolute faith in the Lord’s teachings as we in our time negotiate the violent storms buffeting the ecclesial ship by the ‘winds of doctrine’ (particularly Humanism – Rev. 16:13-14) on the sea of nations (“Galilee of the nations” – Isa. 9:1). Implicit faith in the certainty of the Lord’s soon arrival to calm the storm is required (Ps. 65:7).

The balance of Luke 8 matches Mark 5. Both Mark and Luke wrote for Gentiles, hence, their accounts include enacted parables concerning the involvement of the Gentiles in the purpose of God (a subject not understood by Jews, including Christ’s disciples). The three miracles that follow illustrate the **three classes Christ came to save**, if only they would hear and believe his words.

These three classes were:

V.26-39 – **Gentiles** represented by Legion afflicted with Cysticercosis – the infestation of man by the larval stage of the tapeworm from swine (see comments on Mark 5 – **August 10**).

V.40-42,49-56 – The raising of Jairus’s daughter from death representing the **religious class in Israel** who were ‘dead’ under law without knowing it (Rom. 7:5-6). Only some would respond to his teaching like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea until he was raised from the dead. Even then, many in Israel refused to believe, which is why Jesus “charged them that they should tell no man what was done.” They would not believe even though one rose from the dead – Luke 16:31. However, Legion was instructed to tell everyone (V.39) because many Gentiles would believe.

V.43-48 – The woman with an issue of blood who was ‘unclean’ under the Law had been kept from entering the synagogue for 12 years (12 is the number of Israel) by Jairus whose daughter

had been alive for that same period. She represented that class in Israel who were considered to be beyond salvation – the **tax gatherers and sinners**.

## September 17

### 2 Kings 24

V.1-7 – “In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.” The reign of Jehoiakim was a disgrace and accordingly, nothing went right for him as Yahweh sent against him an array of surrounding nations who harassed his kingdom. At the core of the oncoming judgements was “the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which Yahweh would not pardon.” The following is a summary of Jehoiakim’s character.

As Judah rapidly declined in the growing shadow of Babylon rising in the east, and the territorial ambitions of Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt, the eldest son of Josiah came to the throne and hastened Judah’s demise by his arrogant and cruel tyranny. Jehoiakim who had been passed over by the people as king was installed as a vassal by Necho in the place of his brother Jehoahaz whose reign lasted only 3 months. Necho required a man who would be prepared to harshly exact from the weakened nation the tribute demanded by him; he needed a man who would impassively bleed the nation dry in order to fulfil the obligations of his vassalage. In Jehoiakim he found that man.

The malevolence of Jehoiakim is highlighted in the record of Kings in two incidents. Firstly there was the harsh exaction of tribute from all the people of the land without consideration of the poor and needy, and secondly there was his treachery in his dealings with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. However, it is to the prophecy of Jeremiah that we must turn to see the full extent of Jehoiakim’s wickedness. In Jer. 22, Yahweh condemned Jehoiakim’s wickedness for “building his house in unrighteousness.” He coveted a spacious palace with luxurious embellishments and in order to obtain it cruelly exacted unpaid labour from “the poor and needy”, and even went to the extent of shedding blood to achieve his ambitions.

Only the influential intervention of Ahikam the son of Shaphan saved Jeremiah from the vengeance of Jehoiakim. Urijah, another prophet of Yahweh, was not so fortunate and was pursued and viciously murdered by the king for prophesying against Judah as Jeremiah had done. Cruelty, unrighteousness, covetousness and murder were crowned by arrogance towards Yahweh in the matter of the scroll dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch. The picture of Jehoiakim sitting by the fireside nonchalantly slicing pieces from the scroll and casting them into the fire is the complete antithesis of Josiah’s reverential trembling as the book of the law was read to him by Shaphan. It was fitting therefore that Jehoiakim should die ignominiously, unlamented by his people and that he should “be buried with the burial of an ass” (Jer. 22:19).

V.8-17 – Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim reigned just 3 months and 10 days before Nebuchadnezzar returned and carried away the cream of the nation (the good figs of Jer. 24), including “all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.” He also sacked the Temple and palace and took away everything of value. The sole redeeming feature of Jehoiachin was that he meekly surrendered to the Babylonians as Jeremiah had constantly exhorted them to do (Jer. 21:8-10; 27:12,17; 38:17-19), and as a result was blessed in his last days – Ezek. 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34.

V.18-20 – Zedekiah was the last king to sit on David's throne – Ezek. 21:25-27 – “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord Yahweh; remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” His reign was regarded as being as corrupt as that of his older brother Jehoiakim.

## 2 Kings 25

V.1-21 – The siege of Jerusalem began in the 10th month of the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign and ended with the breaking up of the city in the 4th month of his 11th year. The king and his entourage escaped to the plains of Jericho where Israel had entered the Land under Joshua 1,000 years before. Captured and carted off to Riblah, Zedekiah saw his young sons slain, before his eyes were pierced with an arrow by Nebuchadnezzar. Hundreds of princes, priests and government officials were slain while Jerusalem was sacked of valuable metals before being burnt to the ground. The long foretold judgements had fallen on Judah.

The following is a summary of the character of Zedekiah – The tragic end of Judah, temporarily forestalled by the righteous reign of Josiah, was hastened by the wickedness of firstly, Jehoiakim and then by his younger brother Zedekiah. “For through the anger of Yahweh it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon”. This statement suggests that Yahweh brought the judgement He proposed for Judah (because of Manasseh's evils) upon the head of these two kings who were equally worthy of it (2 Kings 24:20).

Though, the account of Zedekiah's reign is brief, a clear picture of his character emerges from the record. He followed the ways of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24:19) and was as treacherous as his older brother in his dealings with Nebuchadnezzar. A solemn oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar which preceded his installation as king was foolishly broken despite the fact that Nebuchadnezzar “had made him swear by God”. Not only was Zedekiah rebellious to an earthly monarch, he also rebelled against Yahweh. The record states he “humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of Yahweh” (2 Chron. 36:12). He was stiff-necked and hard-hearted in the face of many appeals to turn back to Yahweh and consequently was an ample representative of apostate Judah (2 Chron. 36:13 – cp. V.14-16).

During the persecution of Jeremiah recorded in Jer. 38, Zedekiah is revealed also as a weak man who feared his own people and was more concerned with his own personal safety than the vindication and preservation of a righteous prophet of Yahweh. The final indictment of Zedekiah summarizes in two words the evil of his character; “And thou, **profane wicked** prince of Israel whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end” (Ezek.21:25).

V.22-26 – Gedaliah was appointed governor over the ragged remnant left in the Land, but political machinations, jealousies and fear led to Gedaliah being assassinated and the remaining inhabitants fleeing to Egypt where they met their prophesied doom.

V.27-30 – Thirty seven years after removal to Babylon, Jehoiachin was released from prison and elevated in Babylon by Evilmerodach during an amnesty at the time of his accession to the throne. This was Jehoiachin's reward for obedience in surrendering without resistance to Nebuchadnezzar.

## Ezekiel 13 – False prophets and prophetesses condemned

V.1-16 – “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel” – V.2 cp. Jer. 23:9-32. They did not strengthen the people with truth; rather they encouraged them with false prophecies of safety, so that the people built a (figurative) wall (*chayits* – only occurrence, indicating a slight, even imaginary wall) of confidence and the prophets coloured it with “whitewash” (Rotherham). The Babylonian storm would beat it to the ground (see Isa. 28:2 of Israel earlier).

V.17-18 – “Against the prophetesses” – V.18 (RSV) “who sew magic bands upon all wrists, and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature in the hunt for souls.” The exact practices have been lost to antiquity, but they were pagan witchcraft divinations that destroyed all the moral and spiritual fibre of God’s people. “Pillows” – *kesathoth* – a covering. Also used in V.20. Rotherham renders it as “oracle cases.”

V.20 – (ESV) “Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh: Behold, I am against your **magic bands** with which you hunt the souls like birds, and I will tear them from your arms, and I will let the souls whom you hunt go free, the souls like birds.” The hunting of souls has N.T. counterparts – “the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim. 2:26); and “they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts” (2 Tim. 3:6). Appealing to the baser instincts of flesh and the superstitions of the ignorant is nearly always an effective snare.

V.21 – “I will tear your long veils and deliver My people out of your hand” – the “pillows” (or charms) and “kerchiefs” (or veils) were appliances which the sorcerers used in order to attract attention to their ‘wares’. They were ‘hunting’ men’s souls.

## Luke 9

As Luke writes for Gentiles (Greeks – Acts 1:1), his focus is on their inclusion in the purpose of God in Christ. Accordingly, using the principle of the Jew first, and then the Gentile, Luke 9:1 has the Lord sending 12 disciples (the number of Israel) out two by two first, and then in Luke 10:1 he sends out 70 disciples to similarly preach the Kingdom of God. Seventy is the number of the nations – Gen. 10; Ex. 15:27; Deut. 32:8.

Luke 9 is remarkable for the fact that **Elijah** is mentioned **5 times** in the chapter (V.8,19,30,33, 54), and 8 times in the book. There must be a reason for this. The book begins with matters concerning the birth of John the Baptist, forerunner to Christ as was Elijah to Elisha (a type of Christ). It is the attitude of Elijah that needed changing that is at the core of the frequent use of his name. Rom. 11:2 – “Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel.” He sought the destruction of idolatrous Israel, but Yahweh had preserved a faithful remnant (Rom. 11:3-5).

V.11-17 – Elijah features in the feeding of the 5,000 who were mostly Jews. The multitude was sat down in companies of fifty. It is clear that the Lord had 2 Kings 1:9-15 in mind in so doing. Elijah called down fire from heaven and immolated two captains with their 50 soldiers. He would have done the same with the third band had not Yahweh intervened through an angel. That this incident was on the mind of the Lord (and even perhaps his fiery disciples, the sons of thunder, James and John) is indicated when having been turned away later from a Samaritan village they said – “Lord, wilt thou that we **command fire to come down from heaven**, and consume them, even as **Elijah** did?” (V.54). Christ’s rebuke underscores the theme of this chapter – Luke 9:55-56 – “But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not

**what manner of spirit** ye are of. For **the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.**"

V.18-36 – The principle revealed in the two keys of the Kingdom is shown in this context. First the Lord speaks at length of his coming sufferings (V.22-26), and then of the glory that would follow (V.27-35). Peter later understood this and refers to the two **keys of the Kingdom** many times in his 1st Epistle – 1 Pet. 1:11 – "Searching what, or what manner of time **the Spirit of Christ** which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand **the sufferings of Christ**, and **the glory that should follow.**" See also 1 Pet. 1:1-4,19-21; 3:18,21-22; 4:1,11,13; 5:1.

Elijah appeared "in glory" with Moses at the side of Christ when he was transfigured (i.e. transformed by a vision into the way we shall see him in the Kingdom – Matt. 17:9; 2 Pet.1:16-18). The reason for both Moses and Elijah being present in the vision is because of the great lesson of the Transfiguration, namely, that men are not changed for the Kingdom by miracles and signs, but by the persistent "still small voice" of the Word of God. This is Peter's message in 2 Pet. 1:16-21. We have "a more sure" word of teaching that is able to create and maintain faith and instill over time the characteristics of the God who inspired its writing.

Both Moses and Elijah were taught this lesson probably in the very same cave on Horeb. The mighty power of Yahweh "passed by" in various forms, but it was only His voice that remained. It needed to be persistent because Elijah who had stood by commandment at the lip of the cave was forced out of fear to retreat into its inner recesses. Only after the deafening noise of wind, earthquake and fire had subsided did he hear the persistent "**voice** of a gentle whisper" (Rotherham for 1 Kings 19:12). That **voice** was heard on the mount as the glory was concealed by the cloud and declared – "This is my son the beloved, **hear him**" (V.35). This lesson was driven home when after the healing of the epileptic child at the foot of the mountain at which the people marvelled, the Lord said in V.44 – "Let these **sayings** sink down into your **ears**: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." His words, not his miracles, would save them if they appreciated the purpose of his sacrifice.

V.57-62 – The chapter ends with the Lord encountering three potential disciples, but he sifts their motives by simple facts and searching questions. The first potential disciple is challenged by the loss of the comforts of life. The second is invited by the Lord, but advances family obligations as a delaying tactic. The word "**first**" is important. He had his priorities wrong. The spiritually dead can look after their own. The third is a volunteer, but with a caveat. He too uses the term "first" advancing his obligation to farewell his family. These farewells could sometimes take weeks or months (Judges 18). Curiously, Elijah makes another unnamed appearance because Christ alludes to the anointing of Elisha by Elijah (1 Kings 19:19-21). Elisha was permitted to say farewell to his family because his motive was right. This 'volunteer' was not sincere, and the Lord knew it.

## September 18

### 1 Chronicles 1

The genealogies thought to have been compiled by Ezra the Scribe, have a singular aim and that is to lead to the accession of David to become king of all Israel – Chapter 11:1.

In addressing 1,656 years from Creation to the Flood, no notice is taken of Cain and Abel, or of any of the other progeny of Adam. One line of patriarchs, from Adam to Noah, is what the Divine historian recorded. To have mentioned the posterity of Cain or Abel would have been

pointless, as Noah was not the immediate descendant of either. Besides, all their posterity had perished in the Flood, none remained of the Adamic family but Noah and his children; and from these all the nations of the earth sprang.

### **Ezekiel 14 – The hopelessness of Judah — At home and in exile**

V.1-11 – “these men have set up their idols in their heart” (V.3), cp. Ezek. 20:3. They were not genuine enquirers. Whether they openly worshipped idols was of little consequence, because they had set them up in their hearts, which was far worse. Yahweh would punish them.

V.12-23 – “when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it” – In Ezek. 8 the 4 great sins or abominations being committed in Jerusalem were enumerated. Here the 4 corresponding punishments to be meted out – sword, famine, evil beasts, and pestilence are set out. When Ezekiel saw the survivors and witnessed for himself their practices, he would know that God had been just (V.22-23. cp. Jer. 14:12; 15:2-5). And even the great intercessors of the past – Moses and Samuel (Jer. 15); Noah, Daniel and Job (Ezek. 14) could not hope to turn Yahweh from His declared purpose – they could but save themselves! The mention of Daniel is of special interest as he was Ezekiel's contemporary; his fame as a righteous man had spread far amongst the captives in Babylonia. Here too we have another telling use of Hebrew words regarding mankind. In verses 14,16 and 18 these three men, like the princes in the land and the elders in exile (V.3), are designated as *enosh* – mortals (eSword Strong's number is incorrect). What a contrast there is between those who had set up their own gods and worshipped them, and these who had won the respect and consideration of the only true God, to “deliver their own souls by their righteousness” despite their affliction with the same human disabilities of the others. We can do the same! In verses 13,17,19 and 21, “man” is *adam* i.e. generic mankind.

### **Luke 10**

V.1-12 – Luke wrote for Gentiles (namely Greeks – Acts 1:1), therefore his focus is on their inclusion in the purpose of God in Christ. Using the principle of the Jew first, and then the Gentile, he sent out 70 disciples to similarly preach the Kingdom of God (70 is the number of the nations – Gen. 10; Ex. 15:27). He gave detailed instructions for their mission.

V.13-16 – Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (all local towns) are condemned for their refusal to accept their Messiah. Their judgement would be worse than that on Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, and so it proved to be. Sodom was destroyed in an hour. The towns of Galilee were besieged, starved and ruthlessly overthrown by the Roman legions between AD 66 and 70 – a long drawn out and horrific affair as Josephus testifies.

V.17-20 – When the seventy returned to the Lord excited at the power of God which they had used to heal the sick and demented, he firstly rejoiced at the prospects for the future – the opposer (Satan) in every form will one day be destroyed, and that very quickly. However, he also gently reminded them of the position they occupied in him (V.20) – “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, **because your names are written in heaven.**” At the end of the day, the best we can do for others is to pass on what we have received, but salvation is a matter of individual choice. How many of these 70 maintained their faith all through their life we do not know. The Judgement Seat will reveal that. We need to remember that when we were baptized, our name went into the Book of Life. It remains there while we remain faithful and steadfast. Israel in the wilderness having

been “baptized unto Moses” had their names removed after only two years of probation (Num. 14).

Then Christ advances Ps. 8 as the psalm of relevance to that theme. Ps. 8 was written by David after he slew Goliath. This is indicated in the superscription of Ps. 9 where the words “To the chief Musician upon Muthlabben” (‘On the death of the giant’) are actually the subscription of Ps. 8. David saw in the death of Goliath the sacrifice of Christ to “crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts,” which is why Ps. 8 is cited in Heb. 2 in the context of Christ’s sacrifice and its aim – the establishment of the Kingdom and its attendant reward to his faithful followers.

Ps. 8 begins and ends with the same words – “O Yahweh our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!” Spelt out this is “O’ **He who will become rulers**, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.” Two things should be noted here. Firstly, the title “Lord” (*adon* – singular meaning ‘ruler’ if you look it up in Strong’s Concordance) is actually *adonynuw* in the Hebrew text in both V.1 and 9. *Adonynuw* is first person plural in number and refers to the glorified saints who will share with Christ the privilege of setting up the Kingdom. That is why the Apostle says in Heb. 2:5 – “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world (*oikemene* – the inhabited world) to come, whereof we speak.”

Secondly, it is obvious that the ‘earth’ we live in does not reflect the excellence of Yahweh’s name. It lies in wickedness and is defiled by man – 1 John 5:19. Ps. 8 is a Kingdom psalm.

V.17-24 – Six words are used of ‘sin’ manifested in human nature – “devils,” “satan,” “serpents,” “scorpions,” “enemy,” “spirits.” Six was stamped all over Goliath who represented all that was in human nature (note the prevalence of brass). So, the Lord draws heavily on Ps. 8 in this discourse. In V.21 he alludes to Ps. 8:1-2 – glorifying his Father’s name and noting the “babes and sucklings” who praise it. Then in V.22 he uses the phrase from Ps. 8:6 “all things” which points to his role in the Kingdom – 1 Cor. 15:24-28. In the process, the Lord uses the term “Father” 5 times. There is no accident in that. David selected 5 smooth stones (representing the mind of God) to kill Goliath. Christ’s victory over sin and death was won by the mind of God manifested perfectly in him – 2 Cor. 5:19; Heb. 2:14; 5:7-9; John 1:14-18 (a gift of grace by Yahweh).

V.25-37 – The parable of the good Samaritan was induced by a self-righteous lawyer quibbling over who constituted his neighbour. Many things in the N.T. have their roots in the O.T. and that is the case with this parable. In 2 Chron. 28:8-15 there is a record of Pekah king of Israel carting off 200,000 men, women and children of Judah into captivity after defeating Ahaz. Some wise heads in Israel prevailed and the captives were sent back to **Jericho** after being clothed, shod, fed and having their wounds treated. The feeble were carried on asses. This is the background to the well-known parable of the good Samaritan. It is aimed at the self-righteous attitudes of the leading class in Israel (represented by this doctor of the Law) who frowned upon tax gatherers and sinners in their ‘misfortune,’ and hated the Samaritans (John 4:9).

The man travelling ‘down’ from Jerusalem to Jericho who “fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him” represents the class in Israel Christ came to save. They were certainly not going to be saved by the Law, because its representatives, priest and Levite “passed by on the other side.” But the Samaritan was different. He followed the example of his forebears who had treated Judah’s 200,000 captives so kindly. He represented Christ who was regarded as a Samaritan by the ruling class of the nation – “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan” (John 8:48).

V.38-42 – The strife in the kitchen as “Martha was cumbered about much serving” was very quickly settled when in public Christ commended Mary for choosing “that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” The lesson would have been etched on Martha’s mind – the most important food doesn’t come from the kitchen, but from the Word of God – John 4:31 (Rotherham) “the disciples were requesting him, saying—Rabbi! eat. But, he, said unto them—I, have, food, to eat, of which, ye, know not.”

## September 19

### 1 Chronicles 2

As previously noted, these genealogies aim at the accession of David to the throne of Israel in the wake of Saul. David was of the tribe of Judah destined for royalty (Gen. 49:8-12). Hence, this chapter largely deals with the tribe of Judah.

V.1 – Records the six sons of Leah to Jacob consistent with Gen. 49 where they appear up front in Jacob’s prophecies of the last days, and not in their order of birth. This was an overdue admission by Jacob that Leah was his God-given wife.

V.2 – Curiously, Dan is placed before Joseph and Benjamin, the two sons of Rachel. Dan was the first son of Bilhah Rachel’s handmaid who was forced upon Jacob in her frustration at being childless. Bilhah’s second son comes next, and then the two sons of Zilpah Leah’s handmaid.

V.55 – It is also curious that “the house of Rechab” should appear at the end of the chapter. They were Kenites (an original tribe in Canaan when Abraham entered it), and therefore Gentiles. When David’s dynasty came to an end with the captivity of Zedekiah, the Rechabites were assured that they would always have a place in the land promised to Abraham – Jer. 35.

### Ezekiel 15 – The parable of the fruitless vine

V.2 – “What is the vine tree more than any tree” – The vine is a symbol for Israel. See Chap. 17; Psalm 80:8-16; Isaiah 5:1-7, and compare John 15:1-11 where Christ draws on this chapter. The wood of the vine, when cut, was of little use and Israel, symbolized by the vine, is of no more value when cut from the source of its being and was fit only for the fire, so to the fire it shall go. The exhortation is that we, like Israel, are called to bring forth fruit. That is not possible if the branches are not connected to the stock of the vine. Departing from Yahweh or Christ renders the branch fruitless and fit only for the fire (judgement).

### Luke 11

The presentation of the Lord’s Prayer in this chapter is different from that in Matt. 6. In V.1 the disciples understood their deficiency in the matter of prayer. Though the Lord had told them to seek a private place to pray (Matt. 6:6), there was no chance of that with the Lord who was accompanied by multitudes wherever he went. He needed to pray, and when they saw him pray felt compelled to ask him “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (V.2). The repetition of the phrase “And he said unto them” which occurs again in verses 5,8, and 9 should be noted as in V.14 the Lord casts out a “dumb” spirit. Men are born “dumb” (i.e. unable to communicate anything spiritual). Only the teachings of Christ can change that – John 6:63.

The Lord’s Prayer in Matt. 6:9-13 has **10** clauses. In Luke 11 it has **seven** clauses. There must be a reason for this. Seven is the Spirit number (“But seven is the Divine Number of the Spirit” – Eureka Vol. 3 Logos Edition page 206) inter-alia, as it is also the number for completeness



and covenant. Each clause of the Prayer matches the significance of its number. **One** is the number for God and certainty (Gen. 1:1); **two** is the number for separation and division (Gen. 1:6-8); **three** is the number of fruit or result (Gen. 1:11-12); **four** is the number of righteousness and God manifestation (Gen. 1:16-19; Mal. 4:2); **Five** is the number of grace (John 5:2); **six** is the number of man (Gen. 1:26,31). See below.

The seven clauses of the prayer are considered and amplified as **a way of life** each in turn in the following context from verses 13 to 36. Here is a summary:

V.13 – Clause 1 (God) – “Our **Father** which art in heaven” is matched by “your heavenly Father.”

Clause 2 (separation) – “**Hallowed** be thy name” is matched by “give a spirit (i.e. attitude) of **holiness** (separation) to them that ask Him.” There is no definite article before the word “holy” as it is the same construction as Luke 1:15 where there is no def. art. We are called to be manifestations of a holy God – 1 Pet. 1:15-16.

Clause 3 (fruit, result) – “Thy Kingdom come” is matched by three references to “**kingdom**” in verses 17,18 and 20. There will no greater outcome or result than the establishment of the **Kingdom**. His enemies had tried to derail him, but the Lord sticks firmly to his plan to expand on the principles of the prayer as a way of life.

Clause 4 (righteousness, God manifestation) – “Thy **will** be done, as in heaven, so in earth” is matched by verse 23 – “He that is not **with me** is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” The Lord provided a clue as to where his mind was in V.20 – “But if I with the **finger of God** cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.” This is an allusion to Ex. 8:19 (the 3rd plague) where the magicians of Pharaoh confessed their powerlessness to mimic the plague of lice. Hence, V.21 begins a parable based on the **Exodus**. A paraphrase may help.

V.21-22 – “When a **strong man** (Pharaoh) armed keepeth his **palace** (Egypt), his **goods** (Israel) are in peace: But when a **stronger than he** (Yahweh) shall come upon him, and **overcome him** (in the plagues), he taketh from him all his **armour** wherein he trusted (in the Red Sea), and divideth his **spoils** (Israel spoiled the Egyptians).”

V.24 – “When the **unclean spirit** (Egypt’s ways) is gone out of a man, he walketh through **dry places** (the wilderness of Sin), seeking **rest** (the promised Land); and **finding none** (through lack of faith), he saith, I will **return** unto my house whence I came out (“Let us make a captain, and let us **return** into Egypt” – Num. 14:4).

The insertion of V.23 is to emphasize the choice that his disciples, like Israel, had to make – **Yahweh’s will** or **Pharaoh’s will**. The choice remains the same today.

Clause 5 (grace) – “Give us, day by day, our **daily bread**” is matched by the Lord’s response to a woman who made reference to his mother’s milk – “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the **word of God**, and keep it” (V.27-28).

Clause 6 (man, sin) – “And **forgive** us our **sins**; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us” is matched by verses 29-32 and mention of Jonah (3 times), and the “men of Nineveh.” **Jonah** had a problem – he **would not forgive** even though God had forgiven (Matt. 6:14-15).

Clause 7 (the Spirit) – “And **lead** us not into temptation; but **deliver** us from evil” is matched by verses 33-36 where the light of the Spirit Word illuminates the whole life (“body”) and shines on a path that eschews evil – Eph. 5:8-14; Ps. 119:105.

V.37-54 – This section is the equivalent of Matt. 23. See comments on **July 22** page 65.

## September 20

### 1 Chronicles 3

V.1 – “the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron...the second Daniel, of Abigail” – In 2 Sam. 3:3, Abigail’s son was named Chileab (“like his father”). The Targumist says he was “called Chileab, because he was in every respect like his father.” Clearly, he had a second name like many in Scripture.

V.5 – (Young’s Lit.) “these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon—four, of Bath-Sheba daughter of Ammiel.” The interest here is that Solomon was the fourth son of Bathsheba. He was named Solomon (“peaceful”) and David gave him a second name – Jedidiah (“beloved of Yahweh”) because at that point he felt that his relationship with God had been fully restored. It seems it was a few years before he felt that way. Sin severs our relationship with God. We can be forgiven, but like David we may feel unworthy and uncomfortable in conscience – “and my sin is ever before me,” and it takes time to recover the sense of confidence and comfort in the relationship.

The remainder of the chapter lists the progeny of David and his sons.

### Ezekiel 16

In a figure, Jerusalem the city is represented as a ‘wife’ with a disadvantaged and dubious beginning, and after being favoured by Yahweh prospered greatly, but did not return the favour, and through persistent ‘adultery’ turned out worse than Sodom. Ultimately, after the severest punishment, Jerusalem’s future will be bright because of Yahweh’s covenants of old.

V.2 – “Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations” – The “abominations” of Jerusalem are the grievous sins of the covenant nation, which were worse than the abominations of Canaan and Sodom. In this chapter, Jerusalem’s conception, birth, growth, espousal, marriage, adultery, and punishment is shown to be worse even than her sister cities, Samaria and Sodom.

V.3 – “Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite” – This is clearly figurative language. Before being captured by David, the city had been in the territory of the Canaanite, Amorites, and Jebusites (Gen. 15:16-21). The early Amorite had occupied the East and the North to Hermon, and the Hittite the South in Hebron, so the nation was born of their “father” and “mother” territory, in the midst of a hostile people. Jebus was first a Canaanitish city.

V.4-5 – Though Judah fought it, and took it, and gave it to the Benjamites, they do not appear to have occupied it for very long (Judges 1:8,21).

V.6-14 – “I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments” – Dramatic growth under David and Solomon was blessed by Yahweh who chose Jerusalem to place His name (Deut. 12:5), and became her redeeming “husband” (V.32; cp. Ruth 3:9-14 “spread my skirt over thee” – Jer. 3:14; Isa. 54:5).

V.15-34 – From this ‘union’ children were born, but the wifely and motherly duties toward them were abused, and they had not been brought up with true filial respect for their Father; many being “sacrificed” on their mother's extravagances. Meanwhile, she herself played the harlot with the Assyrian and the Egyptian, and others; even taking of her ‘husband's’ wealth to bribe them to consort with her. So she was worse even than the harlot, who accepted hire for the bestowal of her favours (V.32-33).

V.35-43 – “Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of Yahweh” – The vengeance of an outraged husband would be exacted by her ‘lovers’ being turned against her and delivering savage judgements and retribution.

V.44-58 – “As is the mother, so is her daughter” – This is a revealing proverb involving Sodom, Samaria and Jerusalem as ‘sisters’, the daughters of the Canaanite Hittites (from Heth the second son of Canaan). The early Amorites occupied the land East and North to Hermon; the Hittites were in the South to Hebron. All three cities were included in that territory. One hint that may provide an insight into the attitudes of Lot's wife in Sodom is the statement – “Thou art thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children.” The character of Sodom is revealed in the revelation that is so relevant to our times which Christ said would be like the days of Lot – “this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, **pride, fulness of bread**, and abundance of **idleness** was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were **haughty**, and committed abomination before me.”

V.59-63 – “Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant” – The future of Jerusalem is bright because of Yahweh's faithfulness to His covenants.

## Luke 12

V.1-3 – Hypocrisy both in the form of ‘play acting’ or following wrong doctrine (Matt. 16:11-12) is inimical to salvation. All secret motivations will be revealed in the day of account – 1 Cor. 4:5.

V.4-7 – “Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” – One of the persistent problems that Christ encountered was the feeble capitulation of ordinary Jews to the overbearing influence of their religious leaders. This is illustrated by the parents of the ‘man born blind’ (John 9:19-23). They feared the repercussions of supporting Christ who had healed their son. ‘Politics’ prevailed over principle.

V.8-12 – “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God” – Failure to acknowledge Christ through fear or embarrassment will not play well at the Judgement Seat. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which the Pharisees foolishly did in saying Christ healed through Beelzebub, cannot be forgiven.

V.13-21 – Prompted by a dispute between brothers over an inheritance, the Lord delivered the parable of the rich fool – “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” The parable speaks for itself and the lesson is obvious – “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

V.22-34 – “do not be anxious about your life” – This segment is much the same as Matt. 6:25-34. There are two phrases with great relevance to the final generation who have enjoyed decades of unbroken prosperity likened to the days of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-28) – “For

where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,” and “but rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

V.35-41 – Readiness for that day of judgement is critical to acceptance – “And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. **Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching**: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat (in the eastern outer halls of the Temple), and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, **blessed** are those servants.” The promised reward far exceeds the deservedness of its recipients, but that reward is also heavily dependent on **a lively spirit of expectation** of the appearance of Christ. The unwatchful jeopardize their hope of sharing it.

V.42 – “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to **give** them their portion of meat in **due season**?” One lesson for stewards of the latter days is Ps.145:15-16 – “The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou **givest** them their meat in **due season**. Thou **openest thine hand**, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.” The Lord draws on this passage here and in Matt. 24:45-51. The open-handed attitude, and gracious gifts of God, are an example to all who are stewards in the “household” of God (it is the Sabbath principle at work – Isa. 58). The meaning of the word for “household” – *therapia* – is ‘medical service: curing, healing’; hence we get the English word ‘**therapy**’ from it. The ecclesia (God’s house – 1 Tim. 3:15) should be a place of **spiritual therapy**. It ceases to be so when impatient stewards who lose their faith decide that Christ will not return soon, and close their hand and ‘smite’ their fellow servants in one form or another.

V.48 – “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” This principle is also critical in determining salvation. It is balanced by the principle of Mark 4:25 – “For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” Great things are promised; a meaningful response is expected. The common vernacular is “Use it, or lose it.”

V.49-53 – “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?” This harks back to V.1-12 where the Lord warned that it would be necessary to turn against the religious leaders of the nation and attach themselves to him. This would create division in families leading to violent outcomes – Matt. 10:21-22.

V.54-56 – The Lord returns to the theme of hypocrisy of V.1-3.

V.57-59 – This is a balancing principle. There was a need to resist the impositions of hypocritical Judaisers who demanded allegiance to their apostate religion, but if one was found in a situation where the principles of God are not impacted, then submission is the best policy. This is what Christ called upon the man of V.13 to do.

## September 21

### 1 Chronicles 4

V.1 – “The sons of Judah; Pharez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal” – Only Pharez was a son of Judah. The others are grandsons or extended relatives. The reason for

this appears to be setting the scene for the ‘family branches’ of Judah’s progeny listed below. As in chapter 2, the names of towns (places) are mingled with the names of descendants of Judah (see V.4 e.g. “These are the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Bethlehem”).

V.9-10 – Jabez is abruptly introduced in the record, seemingly not as part of the genealogy of Judah, but as a remarkable story within its framework. Jabez means “sorrow”; from a root meaning to grieve; be sorrowful. The name occurs 4 times in Scripture – 3 of the man in this chapter, and once of a place most likely named after him. V.55 is illuminating and critical in understanding the story of Jabez. See **Appendix 4** (page 96) for 12 slides for a full exposition of the subject. The following is only a brief summary.

The sorrow of Jabez’s mother was most likely because her husband had been murdered by the Amalekites who dwelt in their region before Jabez was born. This is why Jabez asks for God to “enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!” That this request was not motivated by self-interest is proven by the fact that Jabez “was more honourable than his brethren.” His request was for release from the constant oppression of the Amalekites. Significantly, this chapter records the elimination of the Amalekites by the Simeonites who lived close to Jabez (V.38-43). The result was the granting of his request – “And they found fat pasture and good, and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable.”

V.14 – “Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the valley of Charashim (“valley of craftsmen”); for they were **craftsmen**” (*chârâsh* – craftsman, artisan, engraver, graver, artificer). The tribe of Judah was known for its craftsmen beginning with “Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur” (Ex. 31:2), and according to Jewish legend, Jesse was responsible for the manufacture of the Vail of the Temple. That claim may be dubious, but it is clear that craftsmen were found all through the tribe – V.21 – “the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen” and V.23 – “These the potters, and those who lived among plants and hedges they lived there with the king for his work” (LITV). Hence, when Judah went into captivity – 2 Kings 24:14 – “And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the **craftsmen** and **smiths**.” On the return of the exiles the valley of the craftsmen was revived – Neh. 11:35 – “Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.” The importance of this fact is seen in Zech. 1:18-21 where the prophecy of the future overthrow of the “horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” by Christ and the saints is accomplished when “Yahweh shewed me Four **Craftsmen**” (Rotherham). The “Judah first” principle comes to the fore.

## Ezekiel 17

This chapter can be divided as follows: V.1-10 – The enigma; V.11-21 – The solution in Ezekiel’s time; V.22-24 – The extended application.

V.2 – “put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel” – “riddle” = enigma. Hebrew *chidah* = a difficult or perplexing problem put forth for solution. This was a test to the elders of Israel as to whether they had hearkened to Jeremiah.

V.3 – “A great eagle with great wings” – Refers to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 48:40; 49:22; Dan. 7:4) who “came unto Lebanon, and took the **highest branch** of the cedar” i.e. king Jehoiachin he took captive to Babylon. “Came unto Lebanon” = came against Judah. The “cedar” represents the Jewish state and its king.

V.4 – “He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick” – The princes of Judah are the “young twigs” carried off to Chaldea where Babylon is “a city of merchants.” This city was the most celebrated of all the cities of the east. Its situation procured it innumerable advantages; its two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and the Persian Gulf, gave it communication with the richest and the most distant nations.

V.5 – “He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field; he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree” – Zedekiah is “the seed of the land” (V.13-14; 2 Chron. 36:11-21) who was enthroned by Nebuchadnezzar and swore allegiance to him. “Planted it in a fruitful field” means he made him king of Judah in place of his nephew Jehoiachin; and “placed it by great waters” signifies placing him under the protection of Babylon, situated on the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates where (as it were) he was set “as a willow tree” thus making him dependent on this city of great waters, as the willow is on water. Thus as a low spreading vine, he was sustained by Babylon, but he foolishly and treacherously rebelled (2 Chron. 36:13).

V.6 – “it grew, and became a spreading vine of low stature, whose branches turned toward him” – Judah enjoyed no height of dominion, but had to abide under the wings or branches of the Chaldean king. Zedekiah was wholly dependent on Nebuchadnezzar, both for his elevation to the throne, and his support on it.

V.7-10 – “There was also another great eagle with great wings and many feathers” – This was Egypt (V.15); not so magnificent as the first eagle. Pharaoh Hophra, who temporarily relieved Jerusalem’s siege (Jer. 37:1-11) offered help that would soon dry up. Similar language is used of Judah’s relationship with Egypt, but that it would not prosper, for “it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring.”

V.11-21 – The solution to the riddle is now outlined. The oath Zedekiah had made with Nebuchadnezzar when “he had given his hand” and was made to “swear by God” (2 Chron. 36:13) was broken when he sought help from Egypt. You cannot despise Yahweh’s name in that way by breaking an oath without serious consequences. It led to Ezek. 21:25-27.

V.22-23 – Then comes an allegory for the future – The Babylonian eagle had taken a twig and planted it to produce a low-spreading vine, but Yahweh promises “I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain” (ESV). This is an undoubted prophecy of Messiah who would come from the house of David and claim his throne (“whose right it is” – Ezek. 21:27).

V.24 – This verse may be paraphrased as follows: “And all the Gentile nations (trees of the field) shall know that I, Yahweh, have brought down the glory of Israel under David and Solomon (the high tree) to a state of poverty; and I will revive it to a state of moderate standing (the low tree) under Ezra and Nehemiah, but I will dry it up again (the dried up green tree) for its unfaithfulness (cp. Luke 23:29-31). But yet again will this dry tree sprout and flourish when My Kingdom shall be established and My son as its king (Isaiah 53). I Yahweh have spoken and will perform it” (NASB); “will do it” (RSV). The future tense indicates a far reaching prophecy.

## Luke 13

V.1-5 – The Lord took the opportunity to say that the slaughter of some Jews by Pilate in Galilee was unexceptional. All will perish without the acceptance of Christ in baptism. His

reference to the **18** on whom the tower of Siloam fell is an introduction to an important healing that illustrates the Sabbath principle. It is, like many miracles, an enacted parable.

V.10-17 – A woman with Osteoporosis for **18** years (mentioned again V.16) was bowed over with her head pointing towards the ground. This was the extremely slow version of what happened to the **18** beneath the tower of Siloam who were instantly thrust into the ground (head first if their backs were to the wall). All men are heading into the ground sooner or later. This woman was a microcosm of the human race. The Lord used open hands to lift her up. It was a Sabbath. The open hand is the symbol for the Sabbath principle – Isa. 58; 59:1 (see previous notes on Luke 6). This healing pointed forward to the ‘healing’ of the human race in the Millennium.

V.6-9 – The Lord's frustration with the fruitlessness of his own people is shown in the parable of the fruitless fig tree (one symbol for Israel). He had walked among them for three years without acceptance. One more opportunity would be given in the lead up to his crucifixion and then AD 70 would cut down the ‘fig tree’.

V.20-21 – “And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” Leaven is normally associated with corruption (e.g. 1 Cor. 5:6), and for that reason it was included in the peace offering (Lev. 7:13) to indicate the sin that had broken fellowship with God. However, it is not the corrupting influence of leaven that Christ is referring to here, but the ability of leaven to spread through “the whole lump” as will the Kingdom of God the whole earth.

V.28-30 – When speaking about the Judgement Seat, Christ uses Esau as a representative of the rejected. Weeping and gnashing of teeth (Gen. 27:34; Heb. 12:16-17); “there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last” (Gen. 25:23 – “the elder shall serve the younger”). He clearly has in mind the Abrahamic promises which Esau rejected, choosing the present (Luke 17:33).

## **Luke 14**

V.1-6 – Another trap is set for “the Lord of the Sabbath.” A man afflicted with dropsy is planted in the house of the Pharisee (against his will, for Christ “let him go” – V.4) as a snare. They knew he couldn’t resist healing on the Sabbath because that was his mission (to prepare for the greater Sabbath – the Kingdom – John 5:16-17). So, he challenged them first and they remained silent. Then he pillories their hypocrisy to which they have no answer (V.5-6).

Dropsy is a swelling of parts of the body, usually legs and feet, due to the retention of fluid that indicates serious problems with the vital organs of the body – heart, liver, kidneys, etc. As such, this man, forced into a Pharisee’s house, is a representative of all Jews locked up in Judaism with a serious problem in the most vital organ of the body – the brain (= thinking). There is no mention of this man having faith as in John 5:5-15 in the enacted parable of the healing of Israel in the future. Christ will release the Jews from the prison of rabbinical law when he comes, then he will heal them by faith in “the Lord of the Sabbath.”

V.7-14 – Having been invited to dine with a Pharisee, and seeing their reaction to the healing of the man with dropsy, the Lord continued with a parable criticizing the pride and arrogance that marked the behaviour of the Scribes, Pharisees and Lawyers (doctors of the Law). The parable excoriates their hypocrisy by the excuses made. No one bought a piece of land in those days without first inspecting it. No one bought five yoke of oxen (hugely expensive) without testing

them. No one in their right spiritual mind would reject marriage to Christ in the future for the temporal benefits of present day marriage. So many Judaistic Jews did, that there was only one option – the Gospel would have to go to the tax gatherers and sinners (V.21) and to the Gentiles (V.23).

V.25-35 – Two parables conclude this chapter that challenged those who followed him at that time. They equally apply to us. The classic “catch 22” situation is presented.

The parable of the tower builder is a warning that men need to count the cost of following Christ. To make the commitment and start, only to stumble along the way through lack of resources, will lead to rejection at the Judgement Seat and the scorn of others.

The parable of the rebellious king illustrates the folly of opposing the invitation and will of Christ that we should ‘bear his cross’ (V.26-27) and follow him. A king with 10,000 soldiers has no hope opposing another king with 20,000 and more in reserve (Bro. Carter points out that the Greek implies that). The only sensible policy is to submit and seek “conditions of peace.” That peace can only be secured by taking up the cross daily and following in the steps of Christ (Luke 9:23), and “crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).

V.34-35 – The problem with Judaism is that, like salt that has lost its potency, it could not preserve from corruption (Rom. 7:5-11), nor did it have the zest (zeal) and ‘taste’ (attitude) that Yahweh desires in His servants (Mark 9:49-50).

## September 22

### 1 Chronicles 5

V.1-2 – The introduction of the descendants of Reuben is significant. Reuben was the first tribe to be granted an inheritance east of Jordan, followed by Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. Though there were periods of success when faith produced remarkable victories as recorded in what follows, sadly, due to a long history of apostasy, the time came when “the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the **Reubenites**, and the **Gadites**, and the half tribe of **Manasseh**, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan” (V.25-26). Accordingly, they were the first to go into captivity.

The issue of the right of the firstborn is next considered. The firstborn had a threefold blessing from God: (1) Priesthood of the family – Ex. 13:2; 22:29; Num. 3:45; (2) Authority in the family – 2 Chron. 21:3; Gen. 4:6-7; (3) Inheritance (double portion) – Deut. 21:15-17. We learn here that through corrupt behavior Reuben was bypassed and the double portion was given to Joseph by his two sons each having a tribe in Israel, and we know the priesthood was given to Levi, so “the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.” Moreover, “Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler” (initially David, but clearly pointing to Jesus Christ), hence, authority was given to Judah.

### Ezekiel 18 – The eating of sour grapes – Inherited and individual responsibility

V.2 – “What mean ye, that ye use this **proverb** concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?” The import of their proverb was – “God is not righteous in punishing us for the sins of our fathers.” The import of God’s reply was – “While it is true that the misdeeds of one generation are felt often ‘unto the third and fourth generation’, it also is true that every man



is rewarded or punished for his own deeds and you are punished for your own misdeeds as well as for any of the past.” The chapter elaborates this point. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” and conversely, “the righteous soul shall live.” Three touchstones are given: (1) Worship of Yahweh, or of idols; (2) Filial duties – faithful or unfaithful; (3) Social and community duties – generosity or oppressiveness.

V.20 summarizes the issues involved – “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

V.21-24 – Very important principles concerning God’s forgiveness are considered here. If the wicked completely change their ways and do what is right, then “all his transgressions that he hath committed, **they shall not be mentioned unto him**: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.” Conversely, “when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity,” then “**all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned**: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” The wording projects to the Judgement Seat. For example, David’s sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah will not be mentioned by the interviewing angel when the judgement process is undertaken. Similarly, those who did well, but then turned to unrighteousness will not have mentioned the good they did. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” – Gen. 18:25.

## Luke 15

This chapter contains two of a series of 5 parables that are linked and culminate in Luke 17:1-5. The audience of “the publicans and sinners” (V.1), and “Pharisees and scribes” (V.2) provide the two distinct classes found in the parables.

The five parables are:

1. The parable of the lost sheep – Luke 15:3-7
2. The parable of the lost coin – Luke 15:8-10
3. The parable of the lost sons – Luke 15:11-32
4. The parable of the unjust steward – Luke 16:1-14
5. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31

Each parable supports and expands those following. The sheep was lost **outside** the house as was the lost son, but finally became a ‘Lazarus’ who represented the sinners and tax-gatherers who were brought back into the ‘house’. However, the coin was lost **inside** the house as was the elder son whose situation is then amplified by the unjust steward and the rich man (representing the high priest). There is a progression reaching to the top of the Judaistic Theocracy of Christ’s day that culminated in the development of the Catholic apostasy and the papal system. Bro. Thomas demonstrates this progression in Eureka. The Apostasy came from the corrupted Brotherhood through the infiltration of Judaism.

It is important to recognize that the “rich man” of both parables in Luke 16 is the high priest (see notes for Luke 16).

The stumbling-blocks of Luke 17:1 culminate in the final destruction of the Catholic system that has caused so many to lose their chance of eternal life. Compare Luke 17:2 – “It were better for him that a **millstone** were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these **little ones**”, with Rev. 18:21 – “And a mighty angel

took up a stone like a great **millstone**, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Note that the self-appointed judge Abimelech ("father-king" – a type of the papacy) is killed with a **millstone** (Judges 9:53). Reference to the "little ones" is not accidental either. Drawn from Zech. 13:7 where the shepherd (Christ) would be killed and the flock scattered, "Howbeit I will turn back my hand over the **little ones**" (Rotherham) said Yahweh (i.e. He would protect them). It is also no accident that the context of Zechariah 12 to 14 dealing with Armageddon and the redemption of the remnant of Israel is adjacent to Zech. 11:15-17 where "a foolish shepherd", also called "the **idol** shepherd that leaveth the flock" assumed idol status after offering 30 pieces of silver for the betrayal of "the good shepherd" (Zech. 11:13). That system finally morphed into the papacy who sits "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

## September 23

### 1 Chronicles 6

This chapter contains a comprehensive list of the descendants of Levi, their cities and the cities of refuge. It draws together a range of former Scriptures from Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua 21 in particular. Samuel the Levite makes an appearance in V.28.

### Ezekiel 19

This chapter consists of a lamentation in two sections; V.1-9 – The lioness and her whelps; V.10-14 – A further parable of the vine.

V.1 – "the princes of Israel" – These had been Jehoahaz (2<sup>nd</sup> son of Josiah), Jehoiakim (1<sup>st</sup> son of Josiah), and Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim) to the time of this chapter.

V.2 – "What is thy mother? A lioness" = Judah, which possessed strength, courage, and sovereignty – "she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions" – Judah had confederacy with neighbouring kings, and learned their manners. Josiah died aged 39 years of age; his 3 sons were but "whelps."

V.3-4 – This must be Jehoahaz, who was enthroned by the people (2 Chron. 36:1). He was deposed by Pharaoh-Necho after only 3 months (2 Chron. 36:2-4; 2 Kings 23:31-33).

V.5-9 – Here we have a difficulty. Jehoiakim succeeded, but he was enthroned by Pharaoh, and not by the people, as V.5 seems to require. After 11 years he was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar "to carry him to Babylon" (2 Chron. 36:6). But did he go there? It is suggested that he committed suicide, and 2 Kings 24:6, seems to lend credence to this. Jehoiachin followed, enthroned by the people (or so it seems). He lasted only 3 months and was taken to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:9-10). So whether Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin is intended here is open to question – the likelihood is that it is Jehoiakim, because of the shortness of Jehoiachin's reign.

V.10-14 – The symbol of the vine (Ezek. 17:5-6) is taken up again in a more comprehensive sense. It had been strong and healthy; it had borne "strong rods" as sceptres for such as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah. But now it was broken, withered, dried, consumed by fire; and its surviving off-cuts were struggling "in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground" (i.e. in Judah which had been wasted, and in Babylon where they were cut off from the source of their spiritual and national sustenance). V.10 is better understood as "in a vineyard" (RSV) rather than as "in thy blood" (there is no question about the meaning of the Heb. *dam* – it means "blood"; but Strong gives it a secondary meaning "by analogy the juice of

the grape"). Judah had been a vine planted by abundant waters, and fruitful; now she was "plucked up" and transplanted, and struggling to remain alive. Whereas in more prosperous times the rulers (e.g. David) had "strong rods" (*matteh* – branches, e.g. Solomon) to carry on the kingdom and to hold the sceptre (*shebet* – symbol of rulership in this place); now from those who ruled had the fire of national destruction flared up to destroy the fruit (people), and even the very kings themselves. With the weak, faithless Zedekiah the vine was destroyed, until Yahweh's promise should have its fulfilment – "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1; Ezek. 21:27).

## Luke 16

Two parables allied to the three that precede them in chap. 15 make up this chapter, with an interlude for the condemnation of dishonesty and betrayal due to greed and lust.

The "certain rich man" of verses 1 and 19 refers to the **high priest Caiaphas** at the time. He was made high priest by the Roman authorities because his father-in-law Annas was too influential. Annas however, remained the true power behind the office as is illustrated in the trials of Christ – John 18:13,24. The proof of this assertion lies in the words put in the mouth of the rich man in Luke 16:28 – "For **I have five brethren**; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Annas had 5 sons, all of whom became high priest in their turn later. So, Caiaphas had five brothers-in-law (the power was kept in the family).

The Pharisees (whose name means 'strict') were in many cases notoriously dishonest – Matt. 23:14; Luke 20:47; 18:3. They were covetous – Luke 16:14. The unjust steward represents them. There is one requirement of stewards – "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). Dishonesty disqualifies.

The key exhortations are found in the behaviour of the unjust steward in writing down the amount his master's servants owed to their master, namely, the high priest (V.4-7). Oil and wheat are both symbols for the Word of God. We all owe 100% to it, for it is the 'staff of life' to all who serve our 'Master'. There is much 'writing down' or granting of 'discounts' on Divine statutes nowadays. The Humanistic age in which we live has no problem in granting 20% or 50% discounts on God's principles. You just need to "sit down quickly" (i.e. don't think about it for too long), and the discount will be attractive to the flesh.

It is critical therefore to understand Luke 16:8 – "And **the lord** commended the unjust steward, because he had done **wisely**: for the children of this world (*aion* – age) are in their generation **wiser** than the children of light." The 'lord' here is not Christ, but the "rich man" (the high priest) who was just as corrupt as his steward. The word "wisely" is *phronimos* – prudently. It is not about integrity, but rather the consistency of human nature. You can trust human nature to be consistent with its evil ways. The problem for the "children of light" is that they are all too often inconsistent with the higher ways they have chosen to follow.

It is Christ who speaks of the learnings of this parable when he says – V.9 (Rotherham) – "And, I, unto you, say—For yourselves, make ye friends, with the unjust riches, in order that, as soon as it shall fail, they may welcome you into the age-abiding tents." He then explains in verses 10 to 13 what he means. Faithful use of the things that belong to this life, in matters small or large, with money or obligations, is the training and proving ground for our preparation for the Kingdom. If we cannot show integrity and honesty in the things of the present, it is unlikely God will grant us the things of the future that belong to Him.

V.18 – The covetousness of the Pharisees was not confined to avarice (“the love of money is the root of all evil”), but extended to immorality. They were notorious for dismissing their wives so they could marry a more attractive woman (Matt. 5:27-32), and for adultery without consequences to themselves – John 8:3-5 (where was the male partner in this crime? Obviously, he was a fellow Pharisee). This is why Christ extends the condemnation of their covetousness to divorce and remarriage.

V.22-31 – “the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” – The Pharisees, like the Sadducees, had become very Hellenized in their doctrinal views on what happens at death. They believed that the soul of an accepted individual went to what they termed “Abraham’s bosom.” The Pharisees taught that there were three places of prospect for them by echelon: (1) Abraham’s bosom; (2) “under the throne of glory”; (3) and, in the garden of Eden (Greek ‘Paradise’). Speaking of death, they would say “this day he sits in Abraham’s bosom.” Christ uses their doctrinal corruption against them (Matt. 16:12) and paints a picture of Lazarus in ‘Abraham’s bosom’ while the rich man roasts in the fire of Hades (another Greek myth). The ludicrous scenario of discourse across the divide and the prospect of interchange demonstrates the baselessness of the doctrine. All of this was designed to lead to one conclusion, that it was a waste of time and effort to send a resurrected individual to the Scribes and Pharisees and their compatriots because if they believed not Moses and the prophets, they would not believe that either. The proof lay in the fact that they tried to kill Lazarus within weeks of this incident – John 12:10-11.

## September 24

### 1 Chronicles 7

V.1-5 – The descendants of Issachar are listed. The tribe became known for its valiant fighting men who “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron. 12:32). The numbers recorded here probably came from the number returned by Joab and his assistants, when they made the census of the people with which God was displeased.

V.6-12 – The descendants of Benjamin come next. They too provided many valiant soldiers “fit to go out for war and battle.”

V.13-19 – The descendants of Naphtali and Manasseh are listed.

V.20-29 – The descendants of Ephraim are listed with the sad story of the loss of Ephraim’s sons and the compensatory birth of Beriah (“in trouble”). In V.27, “Nun his son, Joshua his son” notes the most important descendant of Joseph pointing to the greater Yahshua.

V.30-40 – The descendants of Asher also included “mighty warriors” who were “for service in war.”

### Ezekiel 20

V.1-4 – “And it came to pass in the seventh year (of Jehoiachin’s captivity), in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of Yahweh, and sat before me” – Another year had passed from chapter 8, and now “the elders of Israel” are before Ezekiel again as they had been in chapter 14:1. Ezekiel is told again “I will not be enquired of” by them, but if you will speak, then detail for them their iniquities! “Wilt thou judge them, son of man?” The word “judge” is *shaphat* – usually rendered as “judge” but sometimes as “plead” (see Ezek. 17:20; 20:35-36; 38:22). Ezekiel

speaks only that which Yahweh revealed to him, and so their past and present abominations were outlined.

V.5-32 – The rebellious history of Israel is outlined in 5 periods: V.5-8 – In Egypt; V.9-12 – In the Exodus; V.13-27 – In the Wilderness; V.28-29 – In the Land; V.30-32 – In the present.

V.6 – “a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands” – Yahweh had ‘preceded’ the 12 spies Moses “sent to spy out the land” (Num. 13:1-20). The spies reported the truth that it was a land “flowing with milk and honey,” but 10 of them turned the hearts of Israel away from it. Now, the elders of Israel wanted to return to the Land from captivity, but the same problem existed – lack of faith and integrity.

V.11 – “And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them” – This does not mean the Law could bestow eternal life, but that keeping it had great benefits as a way of life. The Sabbath was one of those (V.12-13).

V.25 – “Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live” – Only in the sense that they brought death because they did not keep them (Rom. 1:18-32; 7:12-13; James 2:10).

V.29 – “Bamah” means “the high place.” Israel had followed the despicable practices of the nations around them, including the immolation of children to Molech.

### The Second Exodus of Israel

The prophecy now turns to the future and the redemption of scattered Israel through the work of Elijah in the Second Exodus. It is important to note the use of the name “Israel” in this chapter. It is probably not without purpose that “Israel” occurs 12 times in the chapter. But why this name and not Judah? Israel as a nation had gone into captivity in BC 722. Ezekiel was prophesying to the captives of Judah in BC 592 (130 years later). The name “Judah” only occurs 15 times in Ezekiel, and not at all in chapter 20. What is the reason for this? The answer is that in the prophets there is a formula that is essential to understand for proper interpretation. When the people (not the Land) are the subject “Judah” refers to Jews in the Land at the time of Armageddon, while “Israel,” “Ephraim,” and “the remnant of Jacob” are the names applied to Jews outside the land at Armageddon. The subject of this section is the Second Exodus of Israel, therefore, the name “Israel” is used.

V.33-44 – He who will become rulers declares – “surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you” – This will be at the Second Exodus (Isa. 11:11-12; Mic. 5:7-9; 7:14-17; Zech. 9:14-16; etc.). Scattered Jewry will be gathered by Elijah into Europe – “I will bring you into the **wilderness** of the peoples” (ESV). This is the “wilderness” of Rev. 17:3 – “So he carried me away in the spirit into the **wilderness**: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” This is where the ‘Harlot’ system of Catholicism will be in full rebellion against the rule of Christ post-Armageddon (Rev. 17:14-15), and “Israel” will be used as the weapon of vengeance against that system – the “horse” of Rev. 14:20; 19:11.

The word “plead” in V.35 is *shâphaṭ* – to judge, govern, vindicate, punish (used 3 times in V.35-36). This process will use a “rod” of correction to “**purge out from among you the rebels**, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and **they shall not enter into the land of Israel.**” This will be a repeat of

the first Exodus under Moses. All came out of 'Egypt' but only a handful of the older generation entered the Land under Joshua, so it will be that the younger generation who have only known the warfare and tribulations of 40 years in the "wilderness of the peoples" will enter the Land promised to Abraham. Only then will the nation's 'idolatry' be purged and shame and loathing be felt for the sins of the past, and Yahweh will be sanctified in them – "And ye shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake" (a theme repeated throughout this section – V.8-9; 13-14; 21-22).

V.45-49 – These verses are introductory to chapter 21. Ezekiel is instructed to "set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field" – i.e. towards Judah, which lay south of Mesopotamia, where the prophet now dwelt, and the "forest," namely, the city of Jerusalem, as full of inhabitants as the forest is of trees – Jer. 13:19; 22:7; Zech. 11:1-2. Destruction awaited the cities of Judah, and that was now only 4 years away – "I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein." If only they had understood the "parables" that Ezekiel spoke.

## Luke 17

V.1-4 – "Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" – The "offences" (stumbling-blocks) the Lord has in mind culminate in the final destruction of the Catholic system that has caused so many to lose their chance of eternal life. Accordingly, that judgement is severe – "It were better for him that a **millstone** were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these **little ones**", and compares with Rev. 18:21 – "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great **millstone**, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Reference to the "little ones" is drawn from Zech. 13:7 where the shepherd (Christ) would be killed and the flock scattered, "Howbeit I will turn back my hand over the **little ones**" (Rotherham) said Yahweh (i.e. He would protect them). The context of Zechariah 12 to 14 dealing with Armageddon and the redemption of the remnant of Israel is preceded by Zech. 11:15-17 where "a foolish shepherd", also called "the **idol** shepherd that leaveth the flock" assumed idol status after offering 30 pieces of silver for the betrayal of "the good shepherd" (Zech. 11:13). That system finally developed into the papacy who sits "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

V.7-10 need to be highlighted at a time when 'grace' is used as a vehicle to deny the importance of works (meaning works of faith). We will be judged according to our works – Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; Rom. 2:6-11. When after having done all that is required of us we say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do," it is not a devaluing of the works pertaining to those duties, for we are required to bring forth much fruit (John 15:1-2). It is our attitude that is important. We are sinful creatures and any fruit of value we produce is the work of God (John 15:3-6; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 2:10). We should take the Apostle's advice to Roman brethren "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." It is a faithful saying that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

V.16,18 are useful in demonstrating that Christ regarded Samaritans as Gentiles. It is a hint that the Gentiles would be far more responsive to his work of salvation than his own people.

The KJV translation of V.21 bears a whiff of Orthodox doctrine. The ESV does better – “behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (as it was in the person of Jesus).

V.22-37 present a vivid picture of the circumstances existing when the Lord comes to judge the household. There will be prosperity right up to the last day before Christ comes unseen to the world to raise the dead and take the responsible living to the Judgement Seat. This is proven by the likeness to the times of Noah and Lot where prosperity ended only after the servants of God were removed from danger and hidden away – V.26-30. That will be repeated again. Otherwise, his exhortation “Remember Lot’s wife” (V.32) would have no meaning. She wanted to retain the present with all its prosperity regardless of its moral depravity (V.33). The Lord does expect to find faithful people who are watching when he comes because he speaks of some being on the **housetop** which was used in those days for prayer and meditation. That aspect of their lives takes precedence over “the stuff in the house.”

Then comes reference to the Judgement Seat in V.34-37. Leaving out the italicized words, it is clear the Lord is referring to a married couple, like Lot and his wife. The proof of this is in the fact that he shifts from speaking about days – ESV – “I tell you, in that **night** there will be two in one bed. One will be **taken** and the other **left**.” The Lord has used the word “day” **5** times and “days” **5** times in this discourse. If the **days** of opportunity are used wisely, then **grace** will be received in the **day** of judgement. He now turns to **night** because that is when the angels came to Lot’s house to collect them (Gen. 19:1). They can similarly be expected by us in the evening, for that is when most are likely to be at home.

All responsible people go to judgement. No one will be left behind. To be “taken” means to be taken into the marriage of Christ to his bride. The word is *paralambano* – to receive near, that is, associate with oneself (in any familiar or intimate act or relation). The word is first used in Matt. 1:20 when the angel said to Joseph “fear not to **take unto** thee Mary thy wife” (also in Matt. 1:24). However, the word “left” is *aphiēmi* – to be dismissed from a marriage, hence Paul uses it in 1 Cor. 7:11,12,13 of being put out of a marriage.

To the question “Where Lord?” (i.e. where are they left), the answer is – where they really wanted to be. That was true of those who ignored Christ’s warning to flee from Jerusalem when the Roman armies with their eagle banners arrived in AD 68; it was true of Lot’s wife who wanted to “save” her life (V.33 – i.e. preserve her present way of life). She was left there after her ‘judgement’.

## September 25

### 1 Chronicles 8

The descendants of Benjamin are set out with the genealogy of Saul intertwined (V.33). There are some curiosities. For example, after a long list of names it is stated, “These dwelt in Jerusalem.” Jerusalem was captured by the tribe of Judah (Judges 1:8), and they bequeathed it to Benjamin as it was in the territory allotted to that tribe (the border between Judah and Benjamin ran through the valley of Hinnom). However, Jerusalem was lost to the Jebusites (Judges 1:21) at some point thereafter and remained in their hands until David captured it nearly 500 years later. The habitation of Jerusalem by Benjamites would seem to be prior to that, but the connection between “the son of the right hand” and Jerusalem is eternal.

V.34-40 – Had David not kept his oath to Jonathan to preserve his posterity, the lengthy list of Jonathan’s progeny through Mephibosheth (called Meribbaal in V.34) may never have

materialized. There were hundreds who could trace their heritage back to Jonathan thanks to David's care for Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9).

## **Ezekiel 21**

V.1-7 are explanatory of chapter 20:45-49. Compare "drop thy word toward the holy places" (V.2) with "drop thy word toward the south" (20:46); and "from the south to the north" (V.4) with the same phrase in chapter 20:47. Clarification is given of the "parable" as to whom the judgements are against – "set thy face toward Jerusalem... and prophesy against the land of Israel." Yahweh would "draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked," and the prophet would sigh with bitterness in the sight of the elders. When asked the reason he would respond – "For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water." It was only 2 years before Nebuchadnezzar would lay siege against Jerusalem.

V.8-17 – The sword is sharpened and polished so it glittered in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, Yahweh's sword wielder. An unusual statement is made in V.10 (Rotherham) – "shall we flourish the royal rod of my son which despiseth every tree?" The rod is the scepter of royal dominion assigned to Judah (Gen. 49:10). The destroying sword of Babylon despised the scepter of Judah, and despised every tree (person) who stood in its way.

V.18-27 – More sign language is deployed to be fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar's present march. He had two objectives in view, namely, to subdue the rebellions of both Jerusalem and Rabbath of Ammon. But which would he accomplish first? He came to the parting of the ways. Should he go left to Rabbath, or right to Jerusalem? He divined by shaking arrows in the quiver. Pagan warring kings wrote on several arrows the names of the cities they intended to assault; put them in a quiver and shook it (ESV – "He shakes the arrows"), then they drew one out as lots are drawn; and that city whose name was written on the arrow was the city they first made war on. They also consulted teraphim; and looked in the liver of a slain animal for guidance. What Nebuchadnezzar didn't know was that the outcome for him was already decided. It would be Jerusalem, and so the siege began in Zedekiah's 9th year. The 'glory' was about to leave, and it will not return until V.25-27 is fulfilled – "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."

V.28-32 – Ammon would not escape Yahweh's 'sword' either. Ezekiel was to deliver a more detailed prophecy concerning its future in chapter 25:1-7.

## **Luke 18**

The warning about impending judgement in Luke 17:34-35 is the source for the following parable of the unjust judge and the oppressed widow of V.1-8. In this parable Christ provides the antidote to the days of Lot as noted by Bro. John Carter in his book "Parables of the Messiah" page 252 – "The background of the parable is the idea of a time of waiting, of apparent delay, which would be perplexing to men of faith in every age. The conditions of the world would be conducive to disappointment and despair, when disciples might lose hope in his coming again. Jesus therefore prescribes the antidote to counteract the effects upon the disciples of the conditions prevailing around them. Men must pray – must keep in touch with God...." "Prayer, earnest and continual 'in faith expressed', keeps the mind fixed on divine things....."



V.1 – “And he spake a parable” – In the Greek the preposition *kai* (“and”) occurs after the word “spake.” Lit. “And he spake also a parable”; i.e. the parable was to reinforce the previous words in Luke 17; “to this end” – *pros* – toward (this end); “that ~~men~~ ought” – *dein* = it is necessary; “always” – *pantote* – at all times, constantly, consistently; to pray and not “to faint” – *ekkakeo* – to lose one’s courage, to lose heart, be faint-hearted.

V.2 – “There was in a city a judge” (Lit. “in a certain city a certain judge”) who “feared (*phobeo* – to frighten; to be in awe of; revere) not God, neither regarded (*entrepo* – respect) man.” This may be a reference to a Roman judge – a godless pagan.

V.3 – “a widow” – She is the exact opposite to the judge – a pathetic, totally dependent figure; often oppressed by the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23:14; Luke 20:47); “and she came” (Lit. “and she was coming”); i.e. continually and repeatedly; desperately appealing to him to “Avenge” (*ekdikeyo* – vindicate, retaliate) her of the “adversary” (*antidikos* – opponent at law).

V.4 – “he said within himself” – i.e. in contrast to his proud boast of V.2.

V.5 – “troubleth me” – *kopos* – a cut; wear out with toil; hence to cause one trouble; “lest by her continual coming” (*eis telos* – Lit. – “unto the end”. Rotherham – “persistently coming”); she “weary me” (*hupopiazo* – to hit under the eye; buffet, beat and bruise. The only other occurrence is in 1 Cor. 9:27 – “keep under”). This is clearly hyperbole for emphasis.

V.6 – “And the Lord said” – There is a distinct pause providing time for the lesson to sink in. “Hear what the unjust” (*adikias* – unrighteous) judge saith,” i.e. do you get the point?

V.7 – “shall not” – *ou me* – the intense negation in Greek; God “avenge” (Lit. – “shall execute the avenging”); for His “elect” (*eklektos* – chosen ones – Rotherham); “though he bear long with them” (*makrothumeo* – long-spirited; i.e. forbearing). God delays, not to frustrate, but only to fulfil His predetermined plan.

V.8 – “the Son of man” – This is the title of Christ as judge in the exercising of dominion over all carnal things (John 5:22,27); “shall he find faith” – The definite article is present but the AV translation gives the correct sense. Lit. – “**shall he find this faith**”; i.e. the kind of faith displayed by the widow of the parable. Christ will find faithful believers when he returns – see Ezek. 47:22-23, Rev. 16:15; Luke 12:37; 1 Thess. 4:17. That is not the question. Will he find the kind of faith that cries out to Him “day and night?” Only we can answer that question.

The simple message of the parable is that persistence and constancy (otherwise known as importunity) in prayer is absolutely essential to overcome in the days of Lot which are upon us. Bro. Carter comments – “We prevail with men by importunity because they are displeased with it, but with God because He is pleased with it.”

V.9-14 – The parable of the prayers of the Pharisee and the ‘publican’ sets forward contrasting attitudes toward God. The repeated use of the pronoun “I” by the Pharisee shows that he is his own God. He is praying to **himself** – Rotherham – “these things **unto himself was praying**.” So, if the five “I’s” are added to “himself” there are six = man/flesh. However, the publican uses 6 words in the Greek text translated “God be merciful to me a sinner,” but out of embarrassment and remorse he could not even look up to heaven because he really believed in “the God” (as the text has it) that was there.

V.18-27 – The encounter with the rich young ruler whom Jesus loved will be considered in more detail when commenting on Mark 10, but a key to understanding is noting the particular commandments of the **10** that Christ refers to, namely, commandments 5,6,7,8,9. Omitted are 4, the Sabbath (taken for granted for a strict Jew); 1,2,3,10. Like the Pharisee in the previous

parable, this zealous and upright young man had **another god** in his life – his wealth. It displaced Yahweh (1st commandment); created objects of adoration (2nd); undermined his service to God (the word “take” is *asah* – to lift, bear up, carry; i.e. to accept the responsibilities of bearing the Name – 3rd). Similarly, commandment 10 is not mentioned because he didn’t have any need to covet the things of others. He was self-dependent.

V.31-34 – The disciples had no concept of a crucified Messiah. Such was a mystery and dichotomy to them. They expected the Kingdom to be established by Christ immediately (Luke 24:21). He is preparing them for a huge shock that would test their faith and loyalty to him.

V.35-43 – 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 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 ever since.

## September 26

### 1 Chronicles 9 – A genealogy of the returned exiles

V1 – “So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression” – The ‘book’ is not the existing books of Samuel and Kings, but another book, being a collection of matters from them referred to in 2 Chron. 16:11; 25:26; 27:7; 28:26; 32:32; 35:27; 36:8.

V.2-34 – It is generally accepted that this section of the genealogy refers to the returned exiles under Zerubbabel and Jeshua in BC 536. As the margin of the KJV shows there are many connections with the book of Nehemiah.

V.17-28 – Of real importance was the role of the “porters” in the first, and afterwards rebuilt Temple. Their primary role was to guard all the entrances to the temple to ensure nothing unclean entered. Other roles included guarding “the chambers and treasuries of the house of God,” and opening and closing the gates at the appointed times. Additional duties included “the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale.” These were important tasks and their cohort had been instructed and guided from their earliest days by “Phinehas the son of Eleazar (who) was the ruler over them in time past, and Yahweh was with him.” His timely and courageous actions in Num. 25 saw him receive from God a “covenant of peace; and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.” There are similar obligations for ecclesial “porters” today.

V.35-44 – The chronicler (most likely Ezra) now repeats the genealogy of Saul found in chapter 8:29-40 as the next subject is the death of Israel’s first king and his sons on Mt Gilboa. It is all heading in the direction of David.

### Ezekiel 22

In this chapter the judgements on Jerusalem are couched in three ‘sayings’ – “the word of Yahweh came unto me, **saying**” – V.1-16 – Blood was shed in idol-worship, false judgement

abounded, murder was rife; pollution of moral attitudes was universal; adultery and fornication commonplace; V.17-22 – The nation's moral corruption was so bad that no purity remained when metals were fused by intense heat (Divine judgement), they were all dross; V.23-31 – Priests were apostate; princes oppressed; prophets spoke falsely; the people were evil; none were righteous. In every aspect of life, in every group, there was abomination, 'Therefore have I recompensed their own way upon them.'

## Luke 19

V.1-10 – The salvation of Zacchaeus (Thayer – “pure”) presages the conversion of the Gentiles. Zacchaeus was doubtless a Jew, but was regarded as a ‘Gentile’ by his Jewish compatriots because he was so closely allied with their hated Roman masters. He was “the chief among the publicans” (tax-gatherers), meaning that he was the manager of all the local agents of the Roman authorities to collect tax for Caesar. They were hated. Herod had a palace on the road to Jerusalem from Jericho. It was a little distance from ancient Jericho, hence there were two parts to Jericho. Zacchaeus obviously lived in the administrative suburb towards which the Lord and his company were heading. So small of stature was he that he had to climb a sycamore tree along the route to see Jesus.

Hearing the criticism of the locals about the Lord abiding in his home, Zacchaeus provided evidence that the meaning of his name (“pure”) aligned with his character (V.8). “This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” Cast out and considered lost by his own people, he is nevertheless confirmed to be a son of Abraham whose faith was manifested by his works (James 2:21-24).

V.11-27 – The parable of the pounds is based on the experiences of Archelaus who was hated by his subjects. Bullinger comments – “This parable is peculiar to Luke. The point of it was that Herod the Great and his son Archelaus had actually gone from Jericho (where the parable was spoken; and where the latter had just rebuilt his palace (Josephus, *Antiquities* xvii. 13,1) to Rome to receive the sovereignty (see Josephus, *Antiquities* xiv. 14. 3,4; xvii 9 4). Herod Antipas subsequently did the same thing (Josephus, *Antiquities* xviii. 7:2).”

The ‘pounds’ differ from the ‘talents’ of Matt. 25:14-30 inasmuch as the talents represent opportunities, abilities and other individual advantages of Christ's disciples and therefore differ accordingly for each one. Each of the servants in this parable receives exactly the same amount. It therefore stands for the Gospel message (the seed of the Word). Some make good use of the ‘deposit’, others do not. The accusation that the master was too harsh (“austere”), and unfair compared Christ to Archelaus. If that had been true, then fear should have motivated protective action by depositing the ‘pound’ in the “bank” (the ecclesia). Whether we simply have the Truth, or just a single ‘talent’ there is always a repository for it to prosper – the ecclesia of similarly endowed fellow servants.

(The entry of Christ into the city on the Sabbath will be considered in the record of Mark 11)

V.41-48 is based on a prominent theme of Jeremiah. The word *paqad* translated mostly as “visit” is used 49 times in Jeremiah. A cognate word *pequdah* translated “visitation” occurs 9 times. These words which foretell a time of Divine



judgement are associated with the laying of a **siege** (Jer. 6:6); a cry from false prophets “**Peace, peace**; when there is no **peace**” (Jer. 6:14; 8:12); spiritual **blindness** (Jer. 5:21); the destruction of **families** (Jer. 6:11), and the bitter **weeping** of Jeremiah (Jer. 9:1; 13:34-35; 14:17). Jeremiah, as a priest, had inspected Yahweh’s leprous house twice (Jer. 2 to 14; 16 to 29). The time had come for the third inspection (Lev. 14:36,39,44) when the decree would be to dismantle the leprous house **stone by stone** (Lev. 14:45). Christ delivers that decree here.

Luke 19:41-44 – “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and **wept** over it. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy **peace**! but now they are **hid from thine eyes**. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall **cast a trench about thee**, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy **children** within thee; and they shall not leave in thee **one stone upon another**; because thou knewest not the time of thy **visitation**.” It is not surprising therefore that the Lord cites Jer. 7:11 in V.46.

## September 27

### 1 Chronicles 10

This chapter is a virtual mirror image of 1 Sam. 31 with one or two minor differences, except for the final two verses of this chapter which record the reason for the disaster.

V.13-14 – “So Saul died for his **transgression** which he committed against Yahweh, even **against the word of Yahweh**, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and **enquired not of Yahweh**: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”

The over-arching purpose of the beginning of this book has been reached – to introduce David as God’s anointed king – “a man after his own heart.”

### Ezekiel 23 – Aholah and Aholibah – A parable of infidelity

V.2 – “there were two women, the daughters of one mother” – Two sisters, representing respectively Samaria and Jerusalem. The following snippet from The Expositor’s Bible is useful.

The allegory of chapter 23 adds hardly any new thought to those which have already, been expounded in connection with chapter 16 and chapter 20. The ideas which enter into it are all such as we are now familiar with. They are: the idolatry of Israel, learned in Egypt and persisted in to the end of her history; her fondness for alliances with the great Oriental empires, which was the occasion of new developments of idolatry; the corruption of religion by the introduction of human sacrifice into the service of Yahweh; and, finally, the destruction of Israel by the hands of the nations whose friendship she had so eagerly courted. The figure under which these facts are presented is the same as in chapter 16, and many of the details of the earlier prophecy are reproduced here with little variation.

V.4 – The name “Aholah” means “she has her own tent (or tabernacle)” – 1 Kings 12:28; and “Aholibah” means “My tent (tabernacle) is in her” – 1 Kings 8:29. These names were chosen to express that after the division of the kingdom, Israel had set up her own tabernacle in Bethel and Dan in lieu of the temple in which God dwelt (1 Kings 12:32), while with Judah the Temple of God still remained in Jerusalem.

V.5-35 – Both Samaria and Jerusalem, espoused to one Husband, had played the harlot – Samaria with Assyria and its idols (2 Kings 16 and 17), and Jerusalem with the Assyrians, Babylonians and the Egyptians (2 Kings 18 to 25). Samaria had been betrayed and destroyed by the Assyrians (V.1-10), yet Jerusalem refused to be warned; her sins were even greater and she would drain the cup from which Samaria had drunken - “Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her cup into thine hand.”

V.23 – Some unfamiliar nations appear – “Pekod” — An Aramean tribe dwelling in the plain East of the Tigris, near its mouth (see Jer. 50:21); “Shoa” – Probably the Sutu, mentioned in the Armana letters; they were Syrian nomads who invaded the East Tigris country, and joined with the Arameans; “Koa” – The Kutu, located East of the Tigris, and South of the lower Zab (Unger’s Bible Dictionary).

V.25 – “they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears” – Alluding to the barbarous custom of mutilating prisoners in the east (Dan. 2:5). An Egyptian law prescribed this punishment for an adulteress.

V.36-49 – A repetition for emphasis of the sins of both cities; and the punishments to be exacted to cleanse the land. Again we find the challenge “Will you still plead (*shaphat* – chap. 22:2) for them?” Even if Ezekiel did, Yahweh would not hear him. Rather, his obligation was “to declare unto them their abominations” as follows.

V.40 – Echoes of Jezebel who initially thought she could seduce Jehu – (V.40) “for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments” – cp. 2 Kings 9:30.

## Luke 20

V.1-8 – “Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?” – The way Christ deals with the disingenuous question about authority is an example of how to handle dubious interactions with those seeking to undermine truth. If they are not prepared to make a genuine response to a reasonable question due to ‘political’ considerations, they are unlikely to accept anything more challenging. Christ counselled – Matt. 7:6 – “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

V.9-18 – The Lord draws heavily on Isa. 5:1-7 when delivering the parable of the vineyard, and on Isa. 28:16 when citing Ps. 118:22 in V.17. He also seems to have in mind Dan. 2:45 in V.18 – “Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

V.19-26 – It is not difficult for deceivers to “feign themselves just men” (V.20). What follows are three attempts to undermine the Lord by subtle questions. His ability to fend off hypocritical questions by advancing simple facts lays down an example for all time – there is nothing complicated about truth. Just state the simple facts (as did the blind man in John 9:24-27).

The mealy-mouthed introduction by the Pharisees on the propriety of paying taxes to the Romans, receives a surprising response – “Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?” Stunned, they have no option but to say, “Caesar’s” and were blown away when he said, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.” What could they say? – “they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.”

V.27-30 – The Sadducees, seeing the Pharisees humiliated, thought they could do better. They laid out a scenario involving the Levirate law about a woman who ends up having seven brothers as husbands who all die childless. “Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife,” they asked, doubtless confident they had Jesus stumped. 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 – “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him,” for He calls “those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17). Even the Scribes marvelled at his response because they knew the Scriptures – “after that they durst not ask him any question at all.”

V.41-44 – Finally, the Lord uses straight-forward Scripture on his dishonest interlocutors. Ps. 110 is the most quoted O.T. passage in the N.T. David in that psalm called his son ‘Lord’. That was totally unacceptable to a Jew with a Biblical heritage – the father was always superior in authority than a son (John 14:28). His detractors were stymied.

V.45-47 – “Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples” – The time had come to publicly expose the proud Scribes who had commended his response to the Sadducees. They were motivated by pride and covetousness even to the oppression of widows, and cloaked their evil with hypocritical “long prayers.” These were not to be honoured or followed.

## September 28

### 1 Chronicles 11

This chapter runs parallel with 2 Sam. 5 as far as V.9, after which it is to be compared with 2 Sam. 23:8-39 as far as V.40, the remainder V.41-47 being an addition, to which Samuel has nothing corresponding.

V.1-3 – David was proclaimed king in Hebron by the tribe of Judah. This record skips the seven and a half years before David was made king over all Israel and immediately set about capturing Jerusalem from the Jebusites (V.4-9). This was essential to implement his plan to bring the Ark to Zion and house it in his own tent to introduce a Melchizedek ‘order’ to his kingdom. Yahweh was pleased with this plan – V.9; Acts 7:46 – “David, who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob” because it saw the incorporation of Gentiles into His purpose outside of the Law of Moses.

V.10-47 – Unlike the list of David’s mighty men in 2 Sam. 23 which contains 37, including David himself, this list which is of the same era has many more. It is clear from the inclusion of such as Asahel the brother of Joab and Abishai who was killed in the early years of David’s reign in Hebron, that these were the mighty men who had gathered to him during the long years of Saul’s pursuit of David (V.15-16; 12:1). There was an echelon of captains consisting of a preeminent group of three mighty men (called the first), and another group of three under them. There is good reason for us to aspire to be the ‘beloved’s mighty men’ during his absence from the throne, so that when he comes to sit upon David’s throne we might be with him in that day.

## Ezekiel 24 – The year of the siege – Parables of boiling pot and mourning prophet

V.1 – “Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of Yahweh came unto me” – This was the ninth year of Zedekiah, and the day is the very day in which Nebuchadnezzar began the siege of Jerusalem (V.2). This was a milestone year for Ezekiel and his people.

V.3-5 – “utter a parable unto the rebellious house...Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it: gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones.” A parable indeed, taking up the boast of the “princes of the people” in chapter 11:3 (it has come back to bite them). Those who remained now in the city could not hope to escape for the pot would come to the boil, and they would be the flesh within it (“pot” is *cirah* as is “caldron” in chap. 11. “Bones” in V.4,5 and V.10 is the Hebrew *etsem* – bones; substance). In V.10 “wood” is *ets* – a tree, wood – the fuel to “kindle the fire.”

V.6 – “Scum” – *chel’âh* – rust or scum (this word only occurs 5 times and all are in this chapter). RSV “rust.” This appears to be the detritus of fierce heat on the pot and its contents and points to the terrible wickedness of the nation – V.11-12. The outcome would be “bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it” (i.e. as the RSV – “without making any choice”; i.e. all to be involved). In the captivity of Jehoiakim and in that of Jehoiachin, some were taken, others left. Now all would be removed from Jerusalem.

V.7-14 – RSV “for the blood she has shed is still in the midst of her” – The blood of Jerusalem’s crimes was, as it were, poured upon a bare, dry, rock where it could not be absorbed or go unnoticed. The irreversible judgements for Jerusalem’s “filthiness” and “lewdness” are reiterated.

V.15-18 – A huge personal blow is dealt to the faithful prophet – the premature death of Ezekiel’s wife – “I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.” He was a priest, and the restrictions of Leviticus 21:1-5 rested upon him, and though a wife is not included in the enumeration there, the Hebrew *she’er* (“kin”) would include her and he would be permitted under the Law to weep and mourn and lay her to rest. But now, as a further “sign” to the people, he was forbidden to show publicly his grief. The curiosity of the people was surely aroused, and the message of doom of V.19-24 could be driven home.

V.19-24 – “And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so?” – Having delivered the message of V.3-14 in the morning, Ezekiel returned home and in the evening his wife died. He lay beside her until the morning; arose and put on his mitre (the “tire” was the priest’s mitre) and without breakfast did as he was commanded. The meaning of all this was sought and provided. The Temple, the city and their progeny, **the desire of their eyes** would be destroyed. This event was to signify to the people that Yahweh would take from them all that was most dear to them; and owing to the extraordinary nature of the times, quiet lamentation for the dead, according to the usual forms of mourning, would be impossible. Then would they recognize how wrong they had been, and mourn for their iniquities (a scenario that is to be repeated – Zech. 12:10-14). Ezekiel would prove to be a man of sign in an extraordinary and most painful way – James 5:10 – “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” There is no reason for us to complain of our “light afflictions” (2 Cor. 4:17).

V.25-27 – “he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?” – When the messenger came some two years later to report the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel’s tongue would finally be loosed (see Chap. 3:24-27; 33:21-22) and then they would know that he was a prophet! Consider the cost of all this to Yahweh’s faithful prophet – like the Apostle Paul of whom Christ said – “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16).

## Luke 21

The harmony of the three records of the Olivet Prophecy in **Appendix 5** (page 98) will assist understanding. It is important to see that events prophesied concerning AD 70 go to V.24. The persecution and tribulations referred to in V.12-19 occurred in the first century. The latter days just prior to the return of Christ will be days of prosperity and not persecution (at least for the vast majority) as V.34-35 show. “Remember Lot’s wife” can only mean that. If she and her family were being persecuted, she would not want to have stayed.

V.24 – The capture of the Old City of Jerusalem by Israel in June 1967 saw the fulfillment of Dan. 8:13-14. To the question how long were “both the sanctuary and the host to be **trodden under foot?**” – the answer was 2,300 day/years (on the day for a year principle). When Alexander the Great entered Jerusalem (circa BC 332-3) to its freeing of armies ‘treading it down’ (meaning of the name Jebus) was 2,300 years. The ‘cleansing’ is not about a moral cleansing (Christ will do that), but rather a freeing from Gentile control. Zech. 14:2 is clear that Jerusalem will not be fully trodden down again.

V.25 refers to events that were to follow 1967. It is universally accepted that **1968** was the year that “severed the past from the future” (to quote Time Magazine in 1988). Governments, ecclesiastical systems and notable leaders represented by sun, moon and stars were shaken in a way not experienced before. The “sea and the waves” of humanity roared in endless protests and riots.

V.29-33 – A critical element is the sign of the fig tree (symbol of Israel – Joel 1:7,12; Hos. 9:10) – “Behold the **fig tree**, and **all the trees**.” When Israel became a nation in 1948 there were 57 nations in the U.N. There are now 193. Israel was not the only nation to appear.

V.28 – “**look up**” – *anakupto* – to raise oneself up (fig. being elated in joyous expectation). See use in John 8:7,10 – “lifted up himself” (4 occs. N.T.). This is essentially about standing ready at the door (Song 5:4-5), for the arrival of Christ’s messengers; “**lift up**” – *epairo* – to lift up, to raise. This is about lifting up our head to look into the future – i.e. looking beyond the present (Luke 17:33).

V.35 – “For as a snare shall it come on all them that  **dwell** on the face of the whole earth.” The word “dwell” is *kathemai* – to **sit**. There are 89 occs. in the N.T. and it is always rendered “sit” or “sat” except here! There is a theme of **standing** versus **sitting** here, and it concludes in V.36 – “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to **stand** before the Son of man.” Readiness to leave behind the present, a world wholly given to ‘sitting’ in one form or another, is a key to finding acceptance in the presence of Christ, and holding one’s position before him. “I will give thee **places** to walk among these that **stand by**” – Zech. 3:7.



## September 29

### 1 Chronicles 12

The books called Chronicles were evidently compiled by Ezra hundreds of years after the time of David. Accordingly, the record (inspired along with all Scripture) is selective, as this chapter clearly shows. It lists all the mighty men and supporters of David who came to him over a lengthy period of time probably around 17 years. Brief mention is made here of his 10 years on the run from Saul and in Ziklag, and no mention is made of the seven and a half years of his reign over Judah in Hebron. From V.23 onwards, the list of the tribes who came to make David king over all Israel is enumerated. The matters considered seem designed to highlight the total difference between the reign of Saul with that of David always with a strong eye on the one of whom he was a forerunner, the son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. The decline of Saul and the rise of David is highlighted in a number of ways, not the least being the defection of prominent captains of the fighting men of the tribe of Manasseh at the very time that David was in the army of the Philistines heading north to fight with Saul (V.19-20).

### Ezekiel 25

Part 3 of the Book of Ezekiel from chapters 25 to 32 are prophecies delivered before the fall of Jerusalem in the 'Glory's' absence, and deal with the destiny of offending nations.

It always has been the lot of the nation of Israel to be surrounded by hostile nations anxious to see its destruction and ready to do everything possible, openly and actively, or furtively and clandestinely to bring it about. This animosity in some cases, went right back to the beginnings of the various races – some came from Lot, some from Esau, and consequently the distrust and hatred was bred into them. The rise to pre-eminence of Israel under David and Solomon fanned the flames of hatred. David's military campaigns had weakened, even decimated some of them; and Solomon's commercial ventures had prevented their recovery. They rejoiced, therefore, to see the nation divided; then the northern section destroyed by the Assyrian; and now the southern section under attack by the Babylonians. But Yahweh pronounced judgements against them for their hatred of His people. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel each have a section of their prophecies devoted to this theme.

V.1-7 – Ammon (from youngest daughter of Lot) is the first to be condemned for taking pleasure in the misfortune of Judah. They too would suffer at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel
Ammon		49:1-6	21:28-32; 25:1-7
Assyria	10:5-19		
Babylon	13; 14:1-28	50; 51	
Damascus (Syria)	17	49:23-33	
Edom	34:5-8; 63:1-4	49:7-22	25:12-14; 35
Egypt	19	46	29 to 32
Elam (Persia)		49:34-39	
Moab	15	48	25:8-11
Philistia	14:29-32	47	25:15-17
Tyre	23	47:4	26 to 28:19
Zidon		47:4	28:20-24
Nations in general		25:15-26; 27:2-3	

V.8-11 – Moab was the son of Lot's oldest unmarried daughter (Gen. 19:37), and was allied with Edom (Seir) against Judah. It too was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

V.12-14 – Edom was from Esau (Gen. 36:1,43). They were always unfriendly to Israel as Esau was the first Antisemite. Edom suffered at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, but outlasted Ammon and Moab, for King Herod was an Idumean. John Hyrcanus (Maccabeus) conquered Edom and incorporated it into Judah (note V.14). See also Chap. 35.

V.15-17 – About the 12th century BC the Philistines moved from Greece or Crete, and endeavoured to settle on the coast of Egypt. They were repulsed, and then settled along the eastern coastal plain of the Mediterranean, becoming known as Philistines (immigrants or wanderers). Generally, they were a thorn in the side of Israel. They virtually disappear after the time of Ezekiel, but have latter day counterparts.

V.17 – “And I will execute **great vengeance** upon them with **furiously rebukes**; and they shall know that I am Yahweh, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them” – This did not occur in the past as the Philistines simply fizzled out as a nation. There is no record of “furiously rebukes” being dished out to them. It must have an application in the latter days, and taken together with Joel 3:4 and Zeph. 2:4-11 speaks of the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip region prior to Armageddon which will become the recipients of fierce Divine wrath because of their treatment of Israel. The name ‘Palestine’ came into being when the Romans after the Bar-Kochba rebellion of AD 135 in their hatred and contempt for the Jews called them ‘Philistines’ (in Latin Palestina). So if this prophecy is of the latter days, the name Palestine is interchangeable with Philistine. The events of 7 October 2023 could not have been better described than V.15 – “Because the Philistines (Palestinians) have **dealt by revenge**, and have taken vengeance with a **despiteful heart**, to destroy it for the **old hatred**.” Judgement is pending for the Palestinians who will have their state and be at peace with Israel at the time of Armageddon because they will continue to harbour hatred for their neighbours who have ruled over them – “Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims (“executioners”), and destroy **the remnant of the sea coast**.” This last phrase is important because all three of the passages referred to above include a sea coast. The West Bank doesn’t have a sea coast, but the Gaza Strip does. A longstanding (though secret) plan for a Palestinian State in the Gaza Strip with additional Sinai land provided by Egypt is the likely outcome to fulfill this prophecy.

## Luke 22

This chapter contains the preparation for, and the holding of the memorial supper; the Lord resorting to the garden to pray and wrestle with the awful prospects before him; his arrest and the healing of Malchus; and the first three of the six trials Christ underwent before his crucifixion. It largely speaks for itself, but some things prompt additional comment.

V.10-13 – This was Christ’s Passover (“With desire I have desired to eat **this passover** with you before I suffer” – the Jews’ Passover was the next day), so he had already prepared for it through the “goodman” (housemaster) of a somewhat unique character – “bearing a pitcher” (the work of women normally). The room and the ‘supper’ were ready when the disciples arrived. Christ has prepared everything for us. We need to join him with humility and gratitude in the ‘**upper** room’ and not be hatching betrayal like Judas (V.3), or jousting with others about our importance in the community as his disciples did (V.24).

V.19-21 – Some have questioned whether Jesus would have fellowshiped Judas Iscariot by partaking bread and wine with him. These verses put an end to that debate. It is short-sighted to think that way. We all share the emblems regularly with some who may at some point forsake and/or betray their Lord. Fellowship is with the Father and Son (1 John 1:3). There was still a chance (though unlikely) that Judas could be turned around. He had the free will to do so. Our obligation to refuse fellowship is when the apostasy/departure is in the open and declared – 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-5.

V.54-62 – The three denials by Peter are chilling reminders of the weakness of the flesh. All the loud assertions of loyalty and aspersions on the loyalty of others comes back to haunt him. Hurtful as it may be, it was a necessary phase in the life of Peter. His spontaneous zeal and enthusiasm needed to mature and produce a humility that was absent it seems from all the disciples who strove along the way over their importance (V.24; Rom. 12:3; Matt. 18:1-4).

## September 30

### 1 Chronicles 13

Ever since his teenage years, David had planned to bring the Ark to Zion and place it in a tent of his own erecting (i.e. not in the Tabernacle). This is evident from Ps. 132 discussed in the comments made on 2 Sam. 6 on July 21 and that is repeated here. David wrote Ps. 132 when bringing the Ark to Zion, and it is a revelation. In V.1-5, David vowed to give the Ark rest. In V.6 he revealed he had comprehended the rightful place for the Ark while in Bethlehem as a teenage shepherd (see hint Ps. 78:70-71). While on the run from Saul “in the fields of the woods” he decided its destiny. He found it in Kirjathjearim (“city of forests” – 2 Chron. 1:4). Perhaps David’s ‘Melchizedek’ related vow elicited Yahweh’s vow to His as yet unborn son – Ps. 110:4 – “Yahweh hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” The Tabernacle of David was to play a massive role in the future (e.g. Amos 9; Acts 7 and 15) regarding the inclusion of Gentiles in the purpose of God.

V.1-4 confirm the above. This was the first project to occupy David after being declared king of all Israel and capturing Jebus.

V.5-14 record the tragedy of Uzzah through the improper means of transporting the Ark (see comments for July 21).

### 1 Chronicles 14

V.1-7 are a mirror image of 2 Sam. 5:11-16 (see comments July 20).

V.8-17 – The ascension of David to rulership stirred the Philistines into action. David went down to Adullam (2 Sam. 5:17) and enquired of Yahweh, and was given permission to deal with the threat (V.10; 2 Sam. 5:19). The Philistines assembled “in the valley of the giants” (Rephaim), and were defeated there – “God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place Baalperazim” (“possessor of breaches”). A second incursion of the Philistines was handled differently, again as a test for David. Rather than a frontal assault (emphasizing man’s own courage and ability), David was to circle around and **wait** until the evidence of angelic activity in the mulberry trees was heard. The word “going” in V.15 is *tse’ádâh* and means a march. Yahweh ‘marched’ before David and the Philistines were routed and quieted for some time.

### Ezekiel 26

Chapters 26 to 28:19 deal with Tyre. It may seem strange that this small city-state should receive almost as much attention as the mighty power of Egypt. But Tyre had very close associations with Israel, especially in the reigns of David and Solomon, when a very real friendship existed. But the situation had greatly changed since then. Tyre was a great trading city; in many ways the trading mart where East met West. And much of its Eastern trade had therefore to pass through Israel’s territory, with the consequent payment of tolls.

V.1 – The eleventh year was the year of Jerusalem's fall. The month is not given, and it is not possible to be certain. It would seem from the words ascribed to Tyre, that it was after the fall of Jerusalem in the 5th month.

V.2 – With the fall of Jerusalem, Tyre hoped for easy and toll-free passage for trade.

V.3 – Situated on the shore-line, Tyre had experienced the destructive power of the sea (another passage indicating the sea to be symbolic of nations)..

V.4-21 – The judgements declared against Tyre began to be accomplished immediately, for Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre after Jerusalem fell in BC 587 and it held on for 13 years with enormous disruption to its way of life. He was not able to subdue it entirely, but he ruined its trade. At the same time he attacked and devastated Egypt – referred to by Yahweh as Nebuchadnezzar's "wages" for performing Yahweh's punishment upon Tyre (Ezek. 29:17-21 some 16 years later). Tyre had an advantage over mainland cities. Half a mile off-shore was an island fortress, and even when Nebuchadnezzar had entered mainland Tyre (V.7-13), he lacked the maritime equipment or experience to attack the island to which the populace had fled. But where he failed, Alexander the Great of Macedonia succeeded some 250 years later, and in the process completed the fulfilment of the prophecy. He used the stones, timber, and even the dust of the streets of the mainland city to build a causeway to the island, although the causeway was not finished until Tyre fell from the ocean side by maritime invasion. Mainland Tyre became "a place for the spreading of nets" and it is claimed that three attempts to rebuild the old city have failed (V.5,14,21).

## Luke 23

This chapter contains the last three trials of the six that the Lord faced before being crucified – Pilate, Herod and Pilate again.

V.27-31 – The encounter with the weeping women reveals where the mind of the Lord was as he stumbled towards Golgotha. It was in Hosea. Grieved, but not surprised by his complete rejection by the leaders of Israel, Christ's mind went right back to **"the days of Gibeah"** when Israel having not dealt with the brazen manifestations of idolatry by Micah, supported by Moses' grandson, then allowed a portion of the tribe of Dan to set up that apostasy in Dan breaking Yahweh's covenant (Deut. 31:16,20). They then failed to keep their own oaths when reacting to the dreadful sin of Gibeah (Judges 19-21). Christ's rejection and message to the weeping women had been prophesied in Hosea, hence the citations and allusions in Luke 23:28-31. Gibeah was the place where covenants were made and broken in Israel's history – Judges 19-21; Saul of Gibeah was a serial breaker of oaths (1 Sam. 19, etc.).

V.30 – "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." This direct citation of **Hosea 10:8** by Christ seals the matter. His mind was on the incredible perfidy of a people who could reject the very promises that were the basis of their existence.

### Gibeah and Christ

- ❖ **Hos. 9:9** – "They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah."
- ❖ **Hos. 9:10** – Israel likened to the fruit of the vine and fig tree. Cp. **Luke 13:6-7** – "a fig tree planted in his vineyard."
- ❖ **Hos. 9:12,14,16** – "Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them." Cp. Christ's warning - **Luke 23:28-29** – "...weep for yourselves and your children.... Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare..."

*Gibeah of Saul*

### Gibeah and Christ

- ❖ **Hos. 9:16** – “...their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit...” Cp. **Luke 23:31** – “For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”
- ❖ **The Future - Hos. 14:6-8** – “Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree.” The day of Israel's redemption will come.

*Gibeah of Saul*

### Gibeah and Christ

- ❖ **Hos. 10:8** is cited by Christ on the way to Golgotha - **Luke 23:30**.
- ❖ **Hos. 10:9** – “O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah...”
- ❖ The context of **Hos. 10** is apposite:
  - ◆ **V.3** - “We have no king...” - Cp. **John 19:15** – “The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.”
  - ◆ **V.8** - “thorn and thistle” - Cp. **John 19:2,5** – “...the soldiers platted a crown of thorns...”

*Gibeah of Saul*

In John 19:15 the leaders of God's people repudiated the Davidic covenant when they said, “We have no king but Caesar.” The accompanying slides show how deeply the Lord had been impacted by the rejection, not only of him as their Messiah, but by the total rejection of the covenants of promise by the spiritual leaders of Israel. It could not get worse than that, except for them to crucify their king.

V.38 – “And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**” The mention of Greek first is consistent with the assertion by commentators that Luke used the Greek form of the inscription; Mark the Latin; Matthew and John the Hebrew. This is because of the respective audiences of each Gospel writer – Matthew for Jews; Mark for Romans; Luke for Greeks, and John for the spiritual (note in John 19:20 “Hebrew” is ranked first).

### The ultimate repudiation John 19:15

**“We have no king but Caesar.”**

These words, uttered by the chief priests, are very significant. These chief representatives of the theocratic government of Israel thus formally and expressly renounce it, and declare their allegiance to a temporal and pagan power. This utterance is “the formal abdication of the Messianic hope.”

**Vincent's Word Studies**

*Gibeah of Saul*

V.43 – Rotherham – “And he said unto him—Verily, **I say unto thee this day**: With me, shalt thou be in Paradise.” This translation removes the Orthodox concept that the thief was promised heaven that day. His future will be Christ in the Kingdom.

V.44-49 – “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour” – At midday (6th hour) darkness descended giving the Lord some respite from the abuse hurled at him over the first 3 hours on the cross. The crowd dispersed except for the Roman soldiers and their centurion who heard the final words of Christ on the cross at 3 pm (9th hour) when the evening sacrifice was made. These final words (the seventh saying on the cross) were a citation from Ps. 31:5 – “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (it is fitting that right to the very last moment of his life it should be a “thus it is written” from the mouth of our Lord and Master). But this citation also strongly suggests the very first words that Christ said when he was awakened in the tomb and the head wrapping was removed – (Rotherham) “thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh God of truth.” At least the centurion got it right – “Certainly this was a righteous man.”

V.50-56 – Before the sun went down “a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just” who had not consented to Jesus’ condemnation by the Sanhedrin, requested of Pilate the release of the body and gave the Lord a decent burial in his own tomb. Another prophecy was fulfilled – “he made his grave with...the **rich** in his death” – Isa. 53:9. Wound in graveclothes and laid in Joseph’s new tomb, the three days and three nights of his sleep began, closely monitored by the women from Galilee who had ministered unto him.

## APPENDIX 1

### THE CONDITION OR NATURE OF THE RESURRECTED BODY

In "Anastasis" Bro. Thomas states on a number of occasions that the resurrected body will be in condition and nature like the body of Adam before he transgressed and was made subject to death. The following quotations will suffice to reveal the Doctor's mind on this point in 1866 (refer also Eureka vol. 1, pg. 63).

"This is our present life, intermitted at death, and restored when we awake from our sleep in the dust of sheol. We are then as Adam was when he came from the Creator's hand. The life is organic and terminable; and liable to disturbance from any cause operating judicially."

".....so that far as body is concerned in the matter, the one character on record in the Lamb's Book of Life, when glorified, will have been related to three bodies, more or less intimately connected - the first, the body of sin; the second, a body like Adam's before he sinned: the third....."

"The crowd before him in this stage of resurrection, which is simply ANASTASIS, or standing up, are in corruption, dishonour, weakness, and naturality; for those physical qualities are constituents of all bodies begotten or conceived in dust - "Dust of the earth, earthy"; yet 'very good' bodies, in the sense that the first Adam's was 'very good' before he sinned."

It would appear that Bro. Thomas adopted this view on the basis of the context of Paul's quotation of Gen.2:7 in 1 Cor.15:45 but as pointed out in previous notes, it seems obvious that the apostle is simply contrasting the natural with the spiritual, the earthy with the heavenly and the terrestrial with the celestial. It is evidently not his intention that we should assume that the resurrected body will be in the 'very good' state but rather in a natural and earthy condition in contrast to the belief of some that the body would emerge immortal and incorruptible.

#### In relation to destiny

It has been suggested that Bro. Thomas's view is correct if seen from the point of view of Adam's relation to destiny. Adam, before he sinned, was not subject to death and his destiny depended upon the intervention of the divine edict or sentence acting upon him judicially to grant him immortality or consign him into mortality or subjection to death. This is said to be the state in which the dead having been raised will stand before Christ. They will be raised in a 'very good' state having paid their debt to the Law of sin and death and experienced the consequences of mortality.

There seems to be little evidence for this view however. Of the many cases of resurrection in the scriptures there are some where dissolution of the body had occurred (e.g. Matt. 27:52-53) and some where corruption had set in (e.g. John 11:39). In all the cases of resurrection it is evident that every one, except the Lord himself, died again in due time and experienced corruption. It is clear therefore that the resurrected body remains subject to death. This

conforms to the pattern observed in the typical resurrection of Daniel and of the Lord himself who had to receive "a change of raiment" before exaltation to his Father's side (Zech. 3:1-5).

### **Bro. Thomas in Eureka Volume Three**

As time went on, subsequent to the publication of Anastasis it appears that Bro. Thomas modified his understanding on the subject of the condition of the resurrected body. A few quotations from Eureka volume three adequately demonstrate this point.

"This would not have been affirmed of him (Christ) while dead. But the dead body was made to live again. It was thus restored to its former life; brought back to what it was before; .....the risen Jesus waited to be changed, or transformed, into what he was not on emerging from the tomb. The true believers who hope not to die, knowing that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom, are also waiting to be changed or transformed into what they are not. The position of Jesus and this remnant is identical" (page 383).

"This coming forth of the future constituents of the perfect man from the graves, restores them to an equality with the few among the living, who may attain perfection with them. In this co-equality they are intellectually, morally, and materially alike" (page 586).

"But, passing through the grave cleanses no one. They who emerge thence, 'Come forth' with the same nature they carried into it; and therefore their coming forth is resurrection. If the same kind of body did not come forth that was buried, it would not be resurrection, but only surrection, as in the case of the first man.....He (Jesus) rose again the same Jesus that was buried, only that instead of being dead, he was alive again. He was buried under the curse of the Law, which 'made him a curse for' our benefit (Gal.3:13): He came forth while that same Law was in force and operation, his coming forth upon the arena of his execution did not relieve him from the curse of that Law, which sentenced him to continuous and everlasting death; so that, if they could have recaptured him, the Mosaic authorities would doubtless have returned him into death" (page 587).

"I have been rather particular in the exposition of the things connected with the body of Jesus, which being made subjectively to know, 'the way of lives' became the 'way' (John 14:6), illustrative of the manner in which all his brethren will experimentally pass from the humiliation of death to the exaltation of eternal life and glory. They, as he, come forth from the unclean house of death earthy, and, therefore unclean bodies" (page 589).

"All that comes out of the ground is cursed, and unclean; so that even the body of Jesus, and the bodies of the approved saints in resurrection, require to be justified, rectified, purged or perfected, by all-absorbing spirit: which makes every atom of their substance instinct with incorruption, and life; in other words, transforms it into spirit" (page 705).

If the context from which these quotations have been made is examined, it will be seen that Bro. Thomas is emphasizing that in nature and condition the resurrected body will be identical to those who are 'alive and remain' unto the return of Christ.

## APPENDIX 2

### Bible Marking Notes on Ezekiel 1

Bro. Thomas writes in Eureka Vol. 1 page 75-76 concerning the Cherubim – “In the first and tenth chapters of his prophecy, Ezekiel shows what they typify or represent. Let the reader peruse these chapters in connection with Apoc. 4 and 5; and he will find that the cherubim are representative of *the Spirit corporealized and manifested in the Saints*, the Elohim of Israel—the One Eternal Spirit in multitudinous manifestation.”

#### Ezekiel 1

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass in <sup>1</sup>the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of <sup>2</sup>Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of <sup>3</sup>God.

<sup>2</sup> In the fifth day of the month, which was <sup>4</sup>the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

<sup>3</sup> The word of the LORD <sup>5</sup>came expressly unto <sup>6</sup>Ezekiel the priest, the son of <sup>7</sup>Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and <sup>8</sup>the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

The year mentioned by Ezekiel is almost certainly a jubilee, a fiftieth year of release—see Lev. 25:8-16. It is generally assumed that the solemn passover of the eighteenth year of Josiah (2 Chron. 35) was a jubilee.

<sup>4</sup> And I looked, and, behold, a <sup>1</sup>whirlwind came <sup>2</sup>out of the north, <sup>3</sup>a great cloud, and a <sup>4</sup>fire infolding itself, and a <sup>5</sup>brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the <sup>6</sup>colour of <sup>7</sup>amber, out of the midst of the fire.

From this testimony, it is evident that when the things exhibited in the Ezekiel vision become accomplished facts, Ezekiel will be there, and take a prominent part in the organisation of the Temple worship. He thus stands forth as a representative of the *resurrected* class, and therefore is a man of sign to the Spiritual House of Israel, as he was to the natural descendants of Abraham. From this, it would follow that the injunction given to Ezekiel is also intended for *every prospective constituent of the spiritual house*, of which he forms a part.

The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy Chap. 2

<sup>5</sup> Also out of the midst thereof came the <sup>1</sup>likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a <sup>2</sup>man.

<sup>6</sup> And every one had <sup>3</sup>four faces, and every one had four <sup>4</sup>wings.

<sup>7</sup> And their feet were <sup>5</sup>straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a <sup>6</sup>calf's foot; and they sparkled like the colour of <sup>7</sup>burnished brass.

#### V.1-3 – The timing of the vision of the Cherubim

<sup>1</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> year is also the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiachin's captivity (V.2). Refer to Chapter 2 of “The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy” by Henry Sulley for exposition of the Jubilee Period (50 years from the Resurrection to the inauguration of Temple worship).

<sup>2</sup> “Length”, “far-off”.

<sup>3</sup> *Elohim* – “mighty ones”. Refers to the saints in glory.

<sup>4</sup> Proof that the 30<sup>th</sup> year is not a reference to Ezekiel's age. It was 30 years since Josiah's 18<sup>th</sup> year – a year of destiny.

<sup>5</sup> *hayah hayah* – Lit. “becoming became”. Sig. to exist, become. Ezekiel is a man of sign – representative of all saints.

<sup>6</sup> “Whom El will strengthen”.

<sup>7</sup> “My contempt”, “despised”.

<sup>8</sup> Synonym for Spirit upon him – occurs 7 times – Ezek. 3:14,22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1. A figure for being transported into the future. Speaks in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person – cp. Paul 2 Cor. 12:1-7.

#### V.4 – The vision of the Saints in glory

<sup>1</sup> *ruach se'arah* – “a spirit of a whirling wind” or “a spirit storm”. See use of *se'arah* – Isa. 40:24; 41:16; Jer. 23:19; 30:23; Zech. 9:14; and with *ruach* – Ps. 107:25; 148:8.

<sup>2</sup> *tsaphon* – the hidden or secret place. To Hebrews the place of the unknown. Dan (judgement) to the north – Num. 2:25; speaks of judgement out of the north by the Spirit (eagle). Cp. Isa. 41:25; Ps. 75:6-7.

<sup>3</sup> A vast multitude – Heb. 12:1 of Elohim (Saints) – Dan. 7:13-14; Luke 21:27; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7.

<sup>4</sup> Lit. “a fire flashing itself”, i.e. self-sustaining = the Spirit. A symbol for wrath and judgement – Heb. 12:29; Isa. 30:30; 31:9.

<sup>5</sup> *nogahh* – shining as of fire, sun. Cp. V.13, 27-28; 10:4.

<sup>6</sup> *ayin* – eye, fountain, outward appearance. Occs. 1:7,16,18,22,27 (“colour”, “eyes”).

<sup>7</sup> *chasmal* – mixture of gold (= tried faith) and silver (= redemption) symbolising immortality. Lxx – “electron” basis of the word “electricity”.

#### V.5-14 – The glory of the Cherubim

<sup>1</sup> *demuwth* – resemblance, model, shape.

<sup>2</sup> *adam* – The saints are incorporate in the “last Adam” (Christ) – 1 Cor. 15:45.

<sup>3</sup> See V.10 – standards of the camp of Israel = the perfect Israel – Rev. 4:6-8; 21:16.

<sup>4</sup> Symbol of overshadowing power – Ps. 17:7-9; 36:7; Isa. 8:7-8; 18:1. Represents the saints as extension of the Christ body.

<sup>5</sup> *yashar* – upright, straight.



<sup>8</sup> And they had the <sup>8</sup>hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.

<sup>9</sup> Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one <sup>9</sup>straight forward.

<sup>10</sup> As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on <sup>10</sup>the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the <sup>11</sup>left side; they four also had the <sup>12</sup>face of an eagle.

<sup>11</sup> Thus were their faces: and their wings were <sup>13</sup>stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and <sup>14</sup>two covered their bodies.

<sup>12</sup> And <sup>15</sup>they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

<sup>13</sup> <sup>16</sup>As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like <sup>17</sup>burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of <sup>18</sup>lamps: <sup>19</sup>it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire <sup>20</sup>went forth lightning.

<sup>14</sup> And the living creatures <sup>21</sup>ran and returned as the appearance of <sup>22</sup>a flash of lightning.

<sup>15</sup> Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one <sup>1</sup>wheel upon the earth <sup>2</sup>by the living creatures, with his four faces.

<sup>16</sup> The appearance of the wheels and their <sup>3</sup>work was like unto the colour of a <sup>4</sup>beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

<sup>17</sup> When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

<sup>18</sup> As for their <sup>5</sup>rings, they were so high that they were <sup>6</sup>dreadful; and their rings were <sup>7</sup>full of eyes round about them four.

<sup>19</sup> And when the living creatures went, <sup>8</sup>the wheels went by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

<sup>20</sup> Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up <sup>9</sup>over against them: for the spirit <sup>10</sup>of the living creature was in the wheels.

<sup>21</sup> When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

<sup>6</sup> *egel* – calf, heifer. A threshing instrument at Armageddon – Mic. 4:13; Mal. 4:1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Symbol of purified flesh – Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:15.

<sup>8</sup> Singular “hand”. Symbol of power to perform.

<sup>9</sup> *el eber paneh* – Lit. “on the side of their face”, i.e. in the direction their face pointed. See V.12; 10:22. Principle – Heb. 12:1-2; Prov. 4:25-27.

<sup>10</sup> Each lion face pointed east. Man faces pointed south.

<sup>11</sup> Ox faces pointed west.

<sup>12</sup> Pointed north.

<sup>13</sup> *parad minney* – to spread, expand a part. The two wings on each living creature spread out to join with wings of other living creatures to form a square. Indicates movement, but not by flying – V.12.

<sup>14</sup> For protection and defence. See Ps. 36:7; 57:1.

<sup>15</sup> Lit. “in their going”.

<sup>16</sup> Lxx – “And in the midst of the living creatures there was an appearance as of...”

<sup>17</sup> Symbol of the Spirit – Lev. 9:24; Ex. 24:17; Ps. 18:8,12.

<sup>18</sup> *lappid* – torch or flame (Sing.). Used Gen. 15:17; Judges 7:16,20; Dan. 10:6; Zech. 12:6 of the Spirit – manifestation of the Divine presence.

<sup>19</sup> *halak* – to walk. Lit. “It was continually circling.”

<sup>20</sup> *baraq* – Used Ex. 19:16; Deut. 32:41; Ps. 18:14; Dan. 10:6; Zech. 9:14. Symbol of swift execution of Divine judgement.

<sup>21</sup> Lit. “kept running and returning”.

<sup>22</sup> *bazak* – to lighten. Only Occ. Indicates speed of movement.

### **V.15-21 – The unanimity and movement of the Cherubim**

<sup>1</sup> *ophan* – to revolve; a wheel. The chariot of the Cherubim. Two wheels of equal size joined at right angles provide rapid motion in any direction. See V.16; Ezek. 10:9.

<sup>2</sup> *etsel* – joining; a side, near. Translated “with”. Roth. & RV – “beside”.

<sup>3</sup> *ma’aseh* – an action, workmanship (I.B.).

<sup>4</sup> *tarshish* – A sea-green stone. From *rahshah* – to break, destroy. Identified as topaz. Represents Dan (judgement) on the breastplate of judgement – Ex. 39:9-14. The Saints work as judges – Rev. 2:26-27.

<sup>5</sup> *gab* – rims.

<sup>6</sup> *yirah* – fearful. I.B. – “awesome”.

<sup>7</sup> *male ayin*. The eye is a symbol for spiritual intelligence – Matt. 6:22; 13:15-17; Ps. 19:8; Eph. 1:17-18. Also of intelligences (angels and saints). Speaks of Yahweh’s omniscience – Zech. 3:8-9; 4:9-10; Rev. 4:8.

<sup>8</sup> “by” is *etsel* (see note V.15). Roth. – “beside them”. The wheels symbolise rapidity of movement in any direction and also eternity.

<sup>9</sup> I.B. – “along with them”.

<sup>10</sup> Note the singular here and V.21. The four living creatures are one, so living creatures and wheels are also one – unified and motivated by the same spirit.



<sup>22</sup> And the likeness of the <sup>1</sup>firmament <sup>2</sup>upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the <sup>3</sup>terrible <sup>4</sup>crystal, stretched forth over their heads <sup>5</sup>above.

<sup>23</sup> And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

<sup>24</sup> And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like <sup>6</sup>the noise of great waters, as the voice of the <sup>7</sup>Almighty, the <sup>8</sup>voice of speech, as the noise of an <sup>9</sup>host: <sup>10</sup>when they stood, they let down their wings.

<sup>25</sup> And there was a voice <sup>11</sup>from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

<sup>26</sup> And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a <sup>1</sup>throne, as the appearance of <sup>2</sup>a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a <sup>3</sup>man above upon it.

<sup>27</sup> And I saw as the <sup>4</sup>colour of amber, as <sup>5</sup>the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had <sup>6</sup>brightness round about.

<sup>28</sup> As the appearance of <sup>7</sup>the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of <sup>8</sup>the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, <sup>9</sup>I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

### **V.22-25 – The firmament of Cherubic glory**

<sup>1</sup> *raqiya* – expanse. Used Gen. 1:6,7; Ps. 19:1; Dan. 12:3. Symbol of the political heavens of the future. Cp. Rev. 4:1-2.

<sup>2</sup> The Cherubim support these heavens having introduced them through judgement.

<sup>3</sup> *yare* – to be feared, revered, frightening. Root of *yirah* V.18.

<sup>4</sup> *qerach* – ice, frost. See use of Greek equivalent – Rev. 4:6; 21:11; 22:1. Symbol of righteousness.

<sup>5</sup> I.B. – “from above”.

<sup>6</sup> Commotion of Saints at war. Cp. Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:15. Waters being a symbol of many people – Rev. 17:15.

<sup>7</sup> *shaddai* - almighty, most powerful. The nourishers or destroyers. Here their work is judgement.

<sup>8</sup> *qol hamulah* – voice of rushing roaring rainstorm.

<sup>9</sup> *macheneh* – an army.

<sup>10</sup> I.B. – “in their standing still”. In motion were destructive. When still, at peace and rest.

<sup>11</sup> RV, RSV, Ygs. Lit. – “from above the firmament”.

### **V.26-28 – The rainbow throne in the firmament**

<sup>1</sup> The throne of David. Cp. Rev. 4:2-11. Established by judgements.

<sup>2</sup> A transparent sky-blue stone. Cp. Ex. 24:10; Ezek. 10:1. Blue = heaven (i.e. God - Num. 15:37-41), therefore a Divine throne.

<sup>3</sup> *adam* – The ‘last Adam’ = Christ – 1 Cor. 15:45. Cp. Dan. 10:5-6; Rev. 1:12-16; 4:9-10.

<sup>4</sup> See note V.4.

<sup>5</sup> Likened to rainbow V.28. Not the fire of judgement but of the Spirit – Acts 2:3.

<sup>6</sup> *nogahh* – brilliancy. Used 2 Sam. 23:4 “clear shining”; Prov. 4:18 “shining”; Isa. 60:3; 62:1; Hab. 3:4.

<sup>7</sup> Rainbow seen in the cloud of V.4. Cp. Rev. 4:3; 10:1. Symbolises the consummation of Yahweh’s purpose through covenant – Gen. 9:9-17.

<sup>8</sup> A theme of the book. See Ezek. 3:12,23; 10:4,18; 11:23; 43:4,5; 44:4. Also called “the glory of the God of Israel” – Ezek. 8:4; 9:3; 10:19; 11:22; 43:2.

<sup>9</sup> A typical death requiring the prophet to be resurrected to see the glory – Dan. 10:8-9.

### **Abbreviations**

RV – Revised Version

RSV – Revised Standard Version

Roth. – J.B. Rotherham’s Emphasised Bible

I.B. – Interlinear Bible

Ygs. Lit. – Young’s Literal Translation

Lxx – The Septuagint – A Greek translation of the Hebrew O.T. by 70 scholars in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

Cp. – Compare

Lit. – Literally

Only occ. – The only occurrence of this word in O.T.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **THE EXPLOITS OF THE MACCABEES**

In 167 BCE, a company of Greek soldiers appeared in Modi'in with orders to enforce Antiochus' ordinances of sacrificing to the Greek gods. Mattathias, being an esteemed member of the community, was asked to serve as an example and lead the village in the sacrifice to the pagan deities, while being promised riches and the prestigious title of "Friend of the King" in return. Mattathias refused, and when another Jew stepped forward to do so, Mattathias slew both him and the government official overseeing the sacrifice, and rallied his supporters. Upon the dramatic killing of the official and the Jew, he and his five sons fled to the wilderness of Judea where they began to build a guerilla force of followers.

This was the first step in the Maccabean Revolt, the result of which was Jewish independence, which had not been enjoyed for more than 400 years. The events of the war of the Maccabees form the basis for the holiday of Hanukkah, which is celebrated by Jews on the 25th of Kislev (on the Hebrew calendar, corresponding to mid-November to late December in the Gregorian calendar).

## APPENDIX 4

### Jabez – 1 Chron. 4:9-10

- ❖ Jabez is abruptly introduced in the record – seemingly not as part of the genealogy of Judah, but as a remarkable story within its framework.
- ❖ Jabez = “sorrow”; from a root meaning to grieve; be sorrowful.
- ❖ The name occurs 4 times in Scripture – 3 of the man in 1 Chron. 4:9-10 and once of a place most likely named after him.
- ❖ 1 Chron. 2:55 is illuminating and critical in understanding the story of Jabez.

*JuLah First*

### Was Jabez a Kenite?

- ❖ The town of the scribes who were evidently Kenites may have been named after him (1 Chron. 2:55). There is only one!
- ❖ Jabez is not named in the genealogy of Judah, though his story is recounted.
- ❖ Implied proof lies in 1 Chron. 4:10 – “Jabez called on the God of Israel.”
- ❖ This formula sometimes points to origin; e.g. Matt. 15:31 – “...and they glorified the God of Israel.” Examine the context of Matt. 15. These were Gentiles.

*JuLah First*

### 1 Chron. 2:55

And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.

- ❖ “scribes” – *saphar* – to score with a mark as a tally or score; recount, enumerate.
- ❖ Jabez a town named after their most notable and influential inhabitant.
- ❖ “Kenites” – The family of Jethro who came with Israel into the land.
- ❖ “Rechab” – Forefather of the Rechabites.

*JuLah First*

☆ Jer. 35

### The significance of Gedor

- ❖ 1 Chron. 4:4,18,39 – Name of a town in Judah’s south – see end V.4 (Bethlehem).
- ❖ It was from Gedor (“wall”, “inclosure”) that the Simeonites began their campaigns to expand pastureland – V.39.
- ❖ V.40 – The Simeonites sought “fat pasture and good, and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable” but had to remove Hamites to succeed.
- ❖ V.43 – Encouraged by success they then destroyed the Amalekites – and Jabez’s prayer was answered!

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Yahweh had heard – Simeon = “hearing”

### The Kenites

- ❖ Num. 10:29-32 – Moses asked Hobab his brother-in-law to accompany Israel from Sinai into the Land. He refused!
- ❖ Judges 1:16 – Moses persuaded Hobab to change his mind and they finally settled in the extreme south of Judah.
- ❖ 1 Sam. 15:6 – They eventually dwelt among the Amalekites in this area through the inability of Judah and Simeon to hold back Amalekite intrusion.
- ❖ 1 Chron. 4:30 – Hormah (Num. 14:45) and Ziklag (1 Sam. 30:1) – Amalekite targets!

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### Final destruction of the Amalekites – 1 Chron. 4:43

- ❖ 1 Chron. 4:41 – The Simeonites finally complete Saul’s commission in the days of Hezekiah = “strengthened of Yah”.
- ❖ V.42 – “Simeon” = “hearing” (with acceptance – Gen. 29:33).
- ❖ “Pelatiah” – “Yah has delivered”.
- ❖ “Neariah” – “Servant of Yah”.
- ❖ “Rephaiah” – “Yah has cured” (Rt. *rapha*).
- ❖ “Uzziah” – “Strength of El”.
- ❖ “Ishi” – “Saving”; rt. *yasha* = saviour.

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### The cause of grief

- ❖ The context of 1 Chron. 4 and the clues provided in 1 Chron. 2:55 suggest it.
- ❖ 1 Chron. 4:9 – “his mother called his name Jabez” – Hence, she was alive after the birth to name him on reflection.
- ❖ “Because I bare him with sorrow” – All children are born with ‘sorrow’ – Gen. 3:16 – “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.”
- ❖ The cause was most likely the recent murder of her husband by Amalekites.

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### Godliness with contentment...

- Isa. 5:8 – “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!”
- Prov. 28:22 – “He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”
- 1 Tim. 6:7-9 – But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

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### The request of Jabez – Motivated by self interest or truth-interest?

- Roth. – “Oh that thou wouldst, indeed bless, me, and enlarge my boundary, and that thy hand might be with me,—and that thou wouldst work to deliver me from evil, that it be not my pain.”
- ❖ 1 Chron. 4:10 – “enlarge my coast” – To provide protection from oppressive Amalekites for himself and others.
  - ❖ Asked for God to work in his life to deliver from evil – Matt. 6:13.
  - ❖ “grieve” – *atsab* – carve, vex, torture.

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### So, why was Jabez more honourable than others?

- ❖ This honour could only come in his spiritual maturity and is clearly related to the tragic circumstances of his birth.
- ❖ V.9 – “honourable” – *kabed* – heavy, be weighty, hence honourable.
- ❖ Christ’s ‘rule’ – Matt. 23:11 – “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.”
- ❖ Jabez saw the grief of his mother as he grew up for it was memorialized in his name – his prayer sought to relieve him and his community of such awful pain.

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### Should we ask for an increase in our land or possessions?

- ❖ Will God happily grant such requests?
- ❖ **Impure motivation** – Luke 12:13 – “And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”
- ❖ **Christ taught** – Luke 12:15 – “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”
- ❖ God similarly repudiates materialism!

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### The lessons for us

- ❖ The Amalekite is the symbol for the serpent in political manifestation – Ex. 17:8-16; Rev. 20:8 – the deadly enemy of unwary Israelites – Deut. 25:17-19.
- ❖ Earnest prayer seeking deliverance from the grief that ‘Amalekites’ deliver will be answered by God, especially on behalf of others close to us – James 5:16-20.
- ❖ V.10 – “God granted” – *bo* – to go in, come, enter in. Yahweh entered the scene and provided deliverance.

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## APPENDIX 5

## The Olivet Prophecy

The Olivet Prophecy – AD 70 (Mostly)		
<b>Matt. 24:1-28</b>	<b>Mk.13:1-23</b>	<b>Luke 21:5-24</b>
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 <u>the end</u> of the world? (3.)		
4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive <u>you</u>	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 <u>many</u> shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive <u>many</u> (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 <u>the end</u> 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 <u>the end</u> 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 <u>the end</u> 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
<b>9</b> Then shall they deliver <u>you</u> up to be afflicted	<b>9</b> 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	<b>12</b> 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
	<b>10</b> And the gospel must first be published among all nations	<b>13</b> And it shall turn to you for a testimony.
	<b>11</b> But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up,	
	take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate	<b>14</b> Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer
	but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye	<b>15</b> 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	
	<b>12</b> Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son and children shall rise up against their parents	<b>16</b> 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.	<b>13</b> And ye shall be hated of all men for my names sake	<b>17</b> And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake
<b>10</b> And then shall <u>many</u> be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another		
<b>11</b> And <u>many</u> false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive <u>many</u> .		
<b>12</b> And because iniquity shall abound, the love of <u>many</u> shall wax cold.		
<b>13</b> 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	
		<b>18</b> But there shall not an hair of your head perish
		<b>19</b> In your patience possess ye your souls
<b>14</b> 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.		



<b>Matt. 24:1-28</b>	<b>Mk.13:1-23</b>	<b>Luke 21:5-24</b>
<b>15</b> 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).	<b>14</b> 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)	
		<b>20</b> And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.
<b>16</b> Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains	then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains.	<b>21</b> Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains
		and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto
		<b>22</b> For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.
<b>17</b> Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house	<b>15</b> And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house.	
<b>18</b> Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.	<b>16</b> And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment	
<b>19</b> And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!	<b>17</b> But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!	<b>23</b> But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!
<b>20</b> But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.	<b>18</b> And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.	
<b>21</b> For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be	<b>19</b> 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
<b>22</b> And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened	<b>20</b> 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	
<b>23</b> Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there; believe it not.	<b>21</b> And then if any man shall say to you Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, he is there believe him not.	
<b>24</b> 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.	<b>22</b> For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall shew signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible,	



<b>Matt. 24:1-28</b>	<b>Mk.13:1-23</b>	<b>Luke 21:5-24</b>
	even the elect	
<b>25</b> Behold I have told you before	<b>23</b> But take ye heed Behold, I have foretold you all things	
<b>26</b> 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.		
<b>27</b> 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.		
<b>28</b> For whithersoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together		
		<b>24</b> 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
<b>The Olivet Prophecy – The Latter Days (Mostly)</b>		
<b>Matt.24:29-36</b>	<b>Mark 13:24-32</b>	<b>Luke 21:25-33</b>
<b>29</b> Immediately after the tribulation of those days	<b>24</b> But in those days, after that tribulation	
shall <b>the sun</b> be darkened	<b>the sun</b> shall be darkened	<b>25</b> And there shall be signs in <b>the sun</b>
and <b>the moon</b> shall not give her light	and <b>the moon</b> shall not give her light	and in <b>the moon</b>
and <b>the stars</b> shall fall from heaven	<b>25</b> And <b>the stars</b> of heaven shall fall	and in <b>the stars</b>
		and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. <b>26</b> Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth
and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken	and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken	for the powers of heaven shall be shaken
<b>30</b> And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven; and then shall all the		

<b>Matt.24:29-36</b>	<b>Mark 13:24-32</b>	<b>Luke 21:25-33</b>
tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory	<b>26</b> And then shall they see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.	<b>27</b> And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
		<b>28</b> And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.
<b>31</b> 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	<b>27</b> 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.	
<b>32</b> Now learn a parable of the fig tree	<b>28</b> Now learn a parable of the fig tree	<b>29</b> And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree and all the trees
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	when they now shoot forth Ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand
<b>33</b> So likewise ye when ye shall see all these things know that it is near, even at the doors	<b>29</b> So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass know that it is nigh, even at the doors	<b>31</b> So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand
<b>34</b> Verily I say unto you, <b>This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled</b>	<b>30</b> Verily I say unto you, that <b>this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.</b>	<b>32</b> Verily I say unto you, <b>This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled</b>
<b>35</b> Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.	<b>31</b> Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.	<b>33</b> Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.
<b>36</b> But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven	<b>32</b> 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	