

*Know Your Bible  
in 50 Days*

*A Guide to All 66 Books*

**Indispensable Knowledge  
Series, Book 2**



**ANDREA P. SUTHERLAND**

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# Books By Andrea P. Sutherland

Indispensable Knowledge Series

*Victory in Christian Warfare – 2nd Edition (Book 1)*

*Know Your Bible in 50 Days: A Guide to All 66 Books (Book 2)*



*To “the most high God” (Genesis 14:20) whose  
“understanding is infinite.” Psalm 147:5. “To him  
be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18.*



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# Preface

God had called me to write and I realised that a book(s) was needed with indispensable knowledge for every human being. After writing Book 1 of the series, entitled *Victory in Christian Warfare* (now in its second edition), and after much consideration, the idea was for a book to guide people so they could understand the Bible and apply it to their lives.

For, I believe, the vast majority of people who read the Bible never progress beyond reading small portions of it. Certainly, many have no understanding of the Bible as a whole. Therefore, to meet this overwhelming need, I have summarised and analysed all 66 books of the Bible in this book. Thus, you can get an initial grasp of the entire Bible in 50 days, as opposed to taking a year or more, by reading this book at the easy rate of about 11 pages a day.

I pray that this book will help you grow in your knowledge of God, and so be led into a close, intimate relationship with God.

*Andrea P. Sutherland*

*Jamaica*

*June, 2022*

# *Acknowledgments*

I would like to acknowledge God for inspiring me with the topic for this book, for being my never-failing resource in writing this book, and my guide in my research for this book. God has once again given me time and opportunity to write. For all this I give God praise, glory, and honour. Thanks be to God for His wonderful blessings!



*“That thy trust may be in the LORD [God], I [God] have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” Proverbs 22:19-21.*

# Prologue

**T**HE DESIRE TO READ and understand the Bible is a worthy desire. After all, it is the world's best-selling book of all time with over 5 billion copies printed. If you are a beginner just starting out to read the Bible, or even if you have read it many times already, this book is for you. However, there are a few things you should know before attempting to master the Bible.

## **Who is God?**

The very first sentence of the Bible introduces God, and so a few words about God as He is revealed in the Bible should be helpful to you. God is a divine Family of three Persons, namely, the Father, the Son called Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Bible calls this Family "the Godhead." All three Persons of the Godhead have a character of love.

## **Introduction to Chronology**

In this book, I have given the (approximate) period in human history that each book of the Bible covers. For example, the first book, Genesis, covers the period, Creation (approx. 3958 B.C.) to

1589 B.C.

But what does B.C. mean? First, we need to know that the year 2022 is properly known as the year 2022 A.D. The abbreviation A.D. means *Anno Domini* in the Latin language. It is translated as “in the year of our Lord.” The year, 1 A.D. is intended to designate the year when Christ was born on earth in human flesh as a baby boy named Jesus. We can see then that our current calendar has started the count of the years from 1 A.D.

The years before 1 A.D. are referred to as B.C. meaning “before Christ” was born. Note that in this method of designating the years, 30 B.C. is a later date than 52 B.C. Also note that after the year 1 A.D. was established, it was later discovered that Christ was, in fact, born a few years earlier in approximately 5 B.C.

## About the Bible

The Bible has been translated from the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in which it was originally written into many languages. There are many English Language versions of the Bible and I recommend that you read the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. The KJV is written in an older form of the English language but it is nevertheless highly readable and understandable. This book uses the KJV as the preferred Bible version.

The King James Version of the Bible is a collection of 66 books. Each book in the Bible has one or more chapters and these chapters are divided into numbered sections called verses. The first 39 books are called the Old Testament, and the remaining 27 books are called the New Testament. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew with small sections written in Aramaic. On the other hand, the New Testament was written in Greek.

There is a convention for referring to the Bible that we will use in this book. For example, “Genesis 1:5” refers to the book of

Genesis, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, and the 5<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter 1. Another example of this convention is “John 12:3” which means the book of John, the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse of chapter 12.

The Bible was written over a period of about 1,600 years starting in approximately 1465 B.C. and ending in approximately 96 A.D. The first part of the Bible, was written by the Jewish people and so it is known as the Hebrew Bible, and it corresponds to the Old Testament of the KJV. The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) was written over the approximate period 1465 B.C. to 410 B.C. On the other hand, the New Testament was written over the approximate period 45 A.D. to 96 A.D.

I will now give just a brief note on two translations of the Hebrew Bible which are relevant to this book. The Septuagint (abbreviated LXX), which was completed about 150 B.C., is the earliest existing Greek translation of the books from the Hebrew Bible along with other non-biblical books. Jerome’s Latin Vulgate, completed about 400 A.D., is a translation of the Hebrew Bible and other non-biblical books into the Latin language.

For the purpose of this book, note that the titles of the books in the King James Version (KJV) of Bible have come down to us today from the one or more earlier translations, namely, the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint (LXX), and Jerome’s Latin Vulgate.

## **Purpose of the Bible**

The Bible, also known as the Scriptures, has much to say about its purpose. Let us then look at one statement of its purpose. The Bible says, “The holy scriptures...are able to make thee wise unto salvation [the saving of humanity by God from annihilation to instead give them eternal life] through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly [fully]

furnished unto all good works.” 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

Note that the three consecutive dots, ..., in the verses quoted above are called an ellipsis and they indicate that one or more words of the verse have been omitted from the quotation. I have used ellipses to render complex verses conveying more than one thought in a simpler form for the purposes of our discussion. Also, note that the pair of square brackets, [], used in the verses quoted above contain my own explanatory note/personal translation for the older English word “throughly” occurring in these verses.

It is an exciting journey to encounter, understand, and live according to God’s thoughts as given in the Bible. If you do so, you will become “transformed” (Romans 12:2) into a new Christlike person, qualified to receive eternal life from God. Now many of the apostles, prophets, and ordinary people, suffered and died a martyr’s death so we could have the Bible, so make it the guide, counsel, and study of your life. Eternal life depends on it.

It is important to understand that God intends that the Bible will lead those who read and study it into a loving relationship with God. Thus, the Bible is not a substitute for a personal relationship with God.

## **What is Necessary to Understand the Bible**

The Bible “[is] not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.” 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Therefore, the Bible is a book like no other. For it contains millions of God’s thoughts which you will become aware of when you are a mature student of the Bible. That is, the Bible is a spiritual book because it is the production of the mind of the infinite God.

How then do we go about understanding the Bible? We do so through prayer, having a humble and teachable spirit, by believing what God says in the Bible, and by obeying God’s instructions given in the Bible. Let us look one by one at each of these four

things necessary for understanding the Bible.

First of all, prayer is necessary. What is prayer? It is a two-way communication between God and ourselves. God speaks to us and we listen and, in turn, speak to God. Now God rarely speaks to us in an audible voice, but He can and will impress your mind with His thoughts and by referring you to the Bible. Never should the Bible be read without prayer.

God says, "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." Ezekiel 11:5. So, in our speaking to God, we should preferably pray silently so that God's enemies and humanity's enemies, Satan, the angel who is the originator of sin (evildoing), and his evil angels, cannot hear our prayers. In this way, our prayers are truly secret since only God knows what we have said to Him in prayer.

Second, God says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord [God]." James 4:10. "Be not wise in your own conceits." Romans 12:16. We must be humble and put aside our preconceived notions if we are to be able to understand the Bible.

Third, God is "a God of truth and without iniquity [without wickedness], just and right is he." Deuteronomy 32:4. We must believe what God says in the Bible, for otherwise we make God out to be a liar.

Fourth, God says, "If any man [or woman] will do his [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine [teaching]" (John 7:17) in the Bible. We must be willing to obey what God says if we wish to understand the Bible.

If we do not do these four things, we will find that we will read the Bible and not understand its meaning, and thus have a wrong interpretation of the Bible.

## **Bible Reading and Study Plans**

As was said before, the Bible contains millions of God's thoughts.

Therefore, you will need to make plans to read and study it if you are to digest its contents. Reading the Bible daily is absolutely essential. In fact, the Bible is intended to be read through from the beginning to the end over and over again during one's lifetime.

Bible study is also necessary and is a distinct activity from reading the Bible. Both are necessary. How do you study the Bible? The answer is that you need to put forth effort in an effective way and to be taught by God. The exact steps you should take to successfully study the Bible are outside the scope of this book which is Book 2 in a series of books.

In Book 1 of the series, entitled *Victory in Christian Warfare (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*, I have explained in some detail how to study and understand the Bible. *Victory in Christian Warfare (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* is available as a free Ebook on my website to read online as text and to download free as a PDF document at [onlyrepairer.com/start-here-victory-in-christian-warfare-chapter-1/](http://onlyrepairer.com/start-here-victory-in-christian-warfare-chapter-1/). (The web address of my website is [onlyrepairer.com](http://onlyrepairer.com).) The book is also available for sale at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and all other Amazon marketplaces worldwide. Also, read my Bible study blog for insights into how to study the Bible at [onlyrepairer.com/blog/](http://onlyrepairer.com/blog/).

## The Format of This Book

Sixty-six of the 67 chapters of this book have the following six sections, with some chapters having additional sections as required to understand that specific book of the Bible:

- **Authorship** – This gives a brief note on who is the author of a specific book in the Bible.
- **Summary** – The content of the specific book of the Bible summarised with some analysis.
- **Themes** – The major themes in the specific book of the Bible which highlight the main thoughts of the book.

- **God as Revealed in the Book** – A note on the different ways that the specific book of the Bible reveal who God is and what He is like, intended for you to see God in the whole Bible.
- **Connections with the Rest of the Bible** – A note giving related Bible verses to show that the whole Bible is interconnected in thought.
- **Spiritual Applications** – A note intended to help you see how the specific book of the Bible applies to your life.

## **Important! How to Make Spiritual Applications**

First of all, there are in total three divine Persons, namely, “the Father” (Matthew 11:27), “the Son” (Matthew 11:27) “who is called Christ” (Matthew 1:16), and the “Holy Spirit.” Psalm 51:11. This divine Family of three Persons is known as “the Godhead.” Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9. “Jesus” (Matthew 1:21) is the name given to Christ when He was born as a baby boy on earth.

### ***God Teaches Us***

Now, God says, “For the grace of God [which is God’s blessings and enabling power to obey God] that bringeth salvation [that leads to the saving of humanity from eternal death (annihilation) because of their wickedness] hath appeared to all men [to all humanity], teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour [our Deliverer from sin (from evildoing)] Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us [by dying for the sins (the evildoing) of the whole world], that he might redeem us from all iniquity [from all wickedness], and purify unto himself a

peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:11-14.

That is, God’s grace teaches us *how* to live holy lives, lives where we do good, and only good, at all times. Furthermore, Christ says, “Without me [transforming you in character] ye can do nothing [good].” John 15:5. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13. That is, God must work in us on our character in order for us to become holy. But we must be *willing* to be taught by God, for God will not force anyone to be holy.

## ***Repentance***

It is the Holy Spirit who teaches the way of holiness, that is, the way of salvation. As we begin to see our own sinfulness, the Holy Spirit works in us to give the gift of repentance from God so that we have deep remorse for our sins. In this work, the Holy Spirit draws us to see the infinite love of God in giving Christ to die “for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John 2:2. As we view the pure, spotless character of Christ, we are deeply affected and afflicted by our own acts of sinfulness in making void God’s law of love.

So, by bringing to our mind the purity, goodness, and love of Christ in comparison to our own depravity, the veil is taken away and we see ourselves as we truly are, which is that we are evil-minded. And God says, “Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe [loathe] yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities [for your wickedness] and for your abominations.” Ezekiel 36:31. This repentance is the very first step toward reaching God’s ideal for mankind, which is for the individual to “be holy and without blame before him [God] in love.” Ephesians 1:4.

The heart of the individual who has received the gift of “repentance” (Acts 5:31) from God will be melted with tenderness and contrition *as they comprehend* the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made on behalf of mankind. Such an individual will “seek

righteousness” (Zephaniah 2:3) *through Christ*. In other words, they will *seek* for the cleanness of heart that is in harmony with God’s law of love which is a perfect transcript of Christ’s character of love.

### ***Confession***

“A broken and a contrite [remorseful] heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17. The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will in true penitence bring all their sins before God. That is, we will confess our sins making no excuses for our wrongdoing. For God says, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13. True repentance then will lead us *to confess our sins* to God *and to turn away from our sins*, thus meeting God’s requirements.

If we have not with true humbleness and brokenness of spirit because of our remorse confessed our sins, despising our wickedness, we have never truly sought God for the forgiveness of our sins. For God says, “If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

### ***Surrender***

Our healing from the corruption of sin requires an entire transformation, a “renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2) and, hence, we must yield ourselves completely to God. God says to all humanity, “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.” Proverbs 23:26. So, God declares that the whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change by which we are restored to the likeness of Christ’s character of love can never be accomplished in us.

“For the flesh” (Galatians 5:17), the sinful nature “with the affec-

tions and lusts” (Galatians 5:24), “lusteth” (Galatians 5:17), that is, wars, “against the [Holy] Spirit, and the [Holy] Spirit [wars] against the flesh” (Galatians 5:17), against the sinful nature, “and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Galatians 5:17. The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, the surrendering all to the will of God, requires of us a struggle.

But God says, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16), practice the truths brought to light by the Holy Spirit, “and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16. In other words, God says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7. The individual must submit to God before they can be renewed such that they become holy. We must be willing to be made willing by God to do the will of God.

Here we need to understand the true force of the will. It is the governing power in the nature of mankind, the power of decision, the power of choice, which God has given to all humanity, and it is theirs to exercise. Everything, even our salvation, which is our saving from annihilation by God because of our sins, depends on the right action of the will. In choosing not to sin anymore, you can give God your will. That is, you can *choose* to serve God in living according to God’s law of love. Then your whole nature will be brought under the control of “the Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9) and your affections will be centred upon Christ, your thoughts will be in harmony with Christ.

How is this so? The answer is that having brought conviction of our sinfulness, and presented before our mind, Christ, the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from “the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15) and fills us with a desire for holiness, a desire to be like Christ in character. Through a right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. For we cannot change our heart, neither can we of ourselves give to God the affections of our heart. The only thing

that lies within our power is the power of choice in that we can *choose* to serve God by doing God's will.

By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with His power which is above all the "principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:15) of Satan. Hence, you will have strength from God to hold you steadfast in doing God's will. This is true surrender to the will of God.

### ***Faith and Acceptance***

You cannot atone, which is to say, make amends or give satisfaction to God, for your past sins. You cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this, to forgive your sins and cleanse you, through Christ. Now there are those of whom God says, "ye...repented not...that ye might believe." Matthew 21:32. Unless we repent, we cannot believe the gospel of Christ, otherwise known as the plan of salvation. Why? The reason is that without conviction of sin which leads to repentance, we will not feel the need of a Saviour, that is, a need of Christ who saves. And if we do not feel a need, we will not believe in Christ as our Saviour from the bondage of sin and its penalty.

Now, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3) and, therefore, God says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him" (John 6:29), that you believe in Christ. So, the ability to believe God, our faith in God, is a gift from God. And this faith, this gift from God, is yours if you yield to the Holy Spirit. For "this is the word of the LORD [God]...saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 4:6. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit]." 1 Corinthians 12:3.

Therefore, take God at His word, in other words, *believe* His promise to forgive you of your sins and cleanse you through

Christ. So then, you have confessed your sins, and in your heart put them away from you. You have resolved to give yourself to God. You *will* to serve God. Just as surely as you *do* this, God will fulfill his word to you. “For he [God] is faithful that promised.” Hebrews 10:23. The important thing to grasp here is that you *must believe* God’s promise. If you *believe* God’s promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact and you *are* healed from your sins. It *is* so *if* you *believe* it. To disbelieve God is to make God out to be a liar and, hence, God cannot work in us to make effective that in which we do not have any faith.

God says, “I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe* that ye receive them, and ye *shall* have them.” Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. Therefore, we may ask for these blessings, and *believe* that we receive them from God, and *thank* God that we *have* received these blessings.

It is our God-given privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before God’s law of love without shame or remorse. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1.

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26. It is by giving ourselves to God and believing His promises, that we become His children, “the children of God.” Galatians 3:26. Through the simple act of giving ourselves to God and believing His promises, the Holy Spirit has created a new life in your heart and you are “born again.” John 3:3. You are now as a child born into the family of God, and Christ says of the Father, “thou...hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:23.

You have now received “the gift of righteousness” (Romans 5:17), the gift of the righteousness of Christ, for Christ is “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jeremiah 23:6. The moment you

as a penitent sinner believe in Christ, you stand without any condemnation in the sight of God because at that instant the righteousness of Christ is yours. In other words, Christ's perfect love and obedience has been implanted in you for you have now received "a new heart" (Ezekiel 36:26), you have been "renewed in...your mind." Ephesians 4:23.

You are now "accepted [by God] in" (Ephesians 1:6), Christ, "the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6) for you are now among those individuals who have become "partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4. Now God's decree for you, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith [such] that ye...[are] rooted and grounded in love." (Ephesians 3:17), has come to pass. For now "the love of God is shed abroad" (Romans 5:5), supernaturally poured, "in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] which is given unto us." Romans 5:5.

Therefore God has written His law of love in your heart thus enabling you to have a character of love just like God's own character. Now you may say of yourself, in truth, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8.

Now when Christ dwells in your heart by faith, you will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that you will cleave to Him. Moreover, in the contemplation of Christ, self will be forgotten. For you may now say, in truth, "all my springs are in thee" (Psalm 87:7), O God. In other words, love for Christ will be the spring from which flows all our actions.

In addition, all your past sins are now forgiven, just as a man named Abraham "he believed in the LORD [God]; and he [God] counted it to him [Abraham] for righteousness." Genesis 15:6. How is this so? Well, because of your repentance and faith in God's promises, God has accepted Christ's death for your sins in the place of your death for the sins you have committed. And God now treats you as if you had never sinned.

Thus, you have now met both conditions required for justification, which are "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21. One or the other is not sufficient for

justification; both steps must be taken. And genuine faith is only possible when there is a *prior* repentance. As one who has been justified, you have now become a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ. You are now among those “whose names are in the book of [eternal] life.” Philippians 4:3.

### *Sanctification*

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but each day say, “I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him,” and ask Him to give you His Holy Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” Colossians 2:6.

For as we go along in life from day to day, we are in a struggle with our old sinful nature’s acts of sin which we can only overcome by faith in God’s keeping power and earnest effort on our part to abstain from sin. So we *need to pray sincerely* and *ask* God to work in us so that we accept His teaching and do His will, believing that God *will* help us. “And this is the confidence that we have in him [God], that, if we ask any thing according to his [God’s] will, he [God] heareth us: And if we know that he [God] hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have [we are granted] the petitions that we desired of him [God].” 1 John 5:14, 15. Now a prayer for God to work in us to transform our character *is* according to God’s will. Thus “all [such] things, whatsoever ye shall ask [God] in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive [from God].” Matthew 21:22.

Then, *act* according to your prayers going forward in faith to do God’s will, knowing that God’s unconquerable will when aligned with your fickle human will, will keep you *steadfast* in God’s ways of love. Thus, you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted in each of the following chapters of this book

that you are now reading. This then is the lifelong process of “sanctification” (1 Corinthians 1:30) which will be complete when we have overcome *all* temptations to sin. “But the God of all grace [all blessings], who hath called us unto his eternal glory [eternal character of love] by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish [establish], strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10) in God’s ways of love.

### **Get an Overview of the Bible in 50 Days!**

The Bible can take at least a year to be read from beginning to end, so this book allows one to get a grasp of the whole Bible in, say, 50 days, reading at a rate of about 11 pages a day. This book does *not* contain *all* that the Bible says for there are millions of God’s thoughts in the Bible, but it *does*, I believe, enable one to get a good foundation for understanding the Bible.

My prayer is that you will be blessed by this book. Happy reading!



## CHAPTER ONE

# *Genesis: Creation (Approx. 3958 B.C.)–1589 B.C.*

**G**ENESIS IS THE FIRST book of the Bible and is a part of the Pentateuch, the name given to the first five books of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Bereshith* which is the first word of the book, and which is translated “in the beginning.” The English title “Genesis” meaning “birth” or “origin” comes from the Septuagint (LXX).

### **Authorship**

Genesis, and the rest of the Pentateuch, was written by a man named Moses who was a leader of the Hebrew (Jewish) people. The book was written in the forty years between 1485 B.C. to 1445 B.C.

### **Summary**

The Bible begins with the account of God creating the earth, all living things in the air, on land, and in the sea, and the human

race in six days. The Creation occurred in approximately 3958 B.C. according to the Bible data given in the book of Genesis.

After these six days of creation, “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:3.

It was on the sixth day that God created the first human pair, a male and a female named Adam and Eve, respectively. God made Adam and Eve husband and wife and placed them in their home, the garden of Eden.

Into the garden came a third person who hid himself from sight and made it seem as if a serpent could speak. He thereby tempted Eve to disobey God’s command and Eve fell into sin, which is evil and wrongdoing. Adam then joined Eve by himself falling into sin.

After their sin, God came to the garden and spoke to all three persons there. God then clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins and He cast them out of the garden of Eden, thus removing their access to the tree of life. Subsequently, Adam and Eve have many sons and daughters.

Sin spreads among the people on the earth. But a ray of hope in the midst of wickedness appears. A man named Enoch pleased God and so God took Enoch from the earth to live with Him in heaven.

After this, because of widespread wickedness, God sends a worldwide flood and so destroys all human beings and all living things in the air, and on land. Only a godly man named Noah and his family were spared. After the flood, Noah and his family multiply and fill the earth with their offspring.

Once again, because of the evil of the people on earth who had one language, God causes them to start speaking different languages. So, one language group of people could not understand the other language groups and thus the people separated themselves and were dispersed all across the earth.

The rest of the book of Genesis follows the family of a godly man named Abram, whose name God later changed to Abraham.

God called Abraham to leave his home and go to a land that God would show him and Abraham obeyed God not knowing where he was going.

To Abraham God made the promise to make of Abraham a great nation through which all humanity would be blessed. God also promised to give the land of Canaan to which God had led Abraham to Abraham's descendants.

After some time, Abraham who had no children had a son named Ishmael with one of his wife's servants. Eventually, Sarah, Abraham's wife gave birth to a son named Isaac according to God's promise to them both.

After this, God destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by raining fire and brimstone from heaven upon them. Only Abraham's nephew Lot and Lot's household were saved from the destruction of Sodom.

In the course of time, Sarah died and Abraham in his old age sought a wife for Isaac. So, Isaac married Rebekah who gave birth to twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Subsequently, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a meal which Jacob had prepared. Thus, Esau despised his birthright. Again, after this, Jacob conspired with his mother, Rebekah, and deceived his father, Isaac, into giving to Jacob the blessing Isaac meant for Esau.

Esau's hatred of Jacob for cheating him of the blessing caused Jacob to flee to Rebekah's family who lived in a distant land named Mesopotamia. There Jacob spent 20 years in exile from his father and mother. In exile, Jacob raised a large family and acquired considerable wealth. Eventually, Jacob fled his uncle, Laban, who had deceived and cheated him over many years and returned to the land of Canaan.

By this time, God had changed Jacob's name to "Israel." On returning, Jacob made peace with Esau and found his father, Isaac, still alive but that his mother, Rebekah, had died.

Jacob had twelve sons, including Joseph, who was his favourite son. Because of their hatred and jealousy of Joseph, Joseph's

brothers sold Joseph into slavery and so Joseph came to Egypt.

There in Egypt, Joseph went from being a trusted, and highly favoured servant of a high official to being a prisoner. While Joseph was in Egypt, a famine came upon Egypt and surrounding lands. Through God's providences, Joseph was then elevated to second ruler in Egypt in charge of food supplies.

Because of the famine in the land of Canaan, Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy food. Thus, Joseph was reunited with family. Jacob and his entire family then migrate to Egypt. The book of Genesis ends with the death of Jacob and later, the death of Joseph in 1589 B.C.

## Themes

- The existence of God.
- Humanity created to live forever by eating from "the tree of life." Genesis 2:6.
- The seventh day of the week is a holy day set apart from the rest of the week by God.
- The third person in the garden of Eden casts doubt on God's words and arouses distrust of God and so is the enemy of God and humanity.
- Humanity as free moral agents, the possessors of a free will. They are free to do as they choose.
- The disposition of humanity to speak lies because of fear of death, which leads people to attempts at self-preservation.
- The disposition of humanity to seek to direct their own lives rather than allowing God to direct their lives.

- The sacrificial system established by God.
- Access to the tree of life is taken away from the human race and so all humanity is subject to death.
- God communicates to humanity either in person, or by a voice, or by a dream.
- The existence of angels who travel between heaven and earth.
- The universality of sin among the human race.
- There is a reward of eternal life for obedience to God and the punishment of eternal death (annihilation) for sin.
- The sacredness of the marriage institution, the home, and family relations.
- The tracing of one family line from Seth, a son of Adam and Eve, to Noah, a descendant of Seth, to Shem, a son of Noah, to Abraham, a descendant of Shem.
- God's setting Abraham apart as one through whom all families of the earth would be blessed. God's setting apart of Abraham's son, Isaac, and Isaac's son, Jacob, as ones through whom God's promises to Abraham would be fulfilled, in that, through Isaac and Jacob all families of the earth would be blessed.
- Jacob's prophecy that through his son, Judah, Shiloh, meaning the "Peace Giver," would come. Specifically, that Shiloh would come before the "sceptre," that is, royal authority, or legislative authority, should pass away from the descendants of Judah.
- Abraham's unquestioning obedience to God's call and his

faith in God's promises. "And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD [God]; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Genesis 15:6.

- God's requirement that Abraham and every male child among his descendants be circumcised as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and Abraham's family line.
- Humanity's original diet consisting of the natural products of the earth and excluding the flesh of dead animals.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God created the institution of marriage.
- God is the One who makes the seventh day of the week holy.
- God is the Life Giver in that God creates life in the womb and causes humanity to give birth to children.
- God is all-powerful, that is, God is omnipotent, since God made the earth, the human race, and the stars. The implication is that God is the Creator of the universe and all that is in it.
- At least two divine Persons, God and the Holy Spirit, are mentioned as responsible for Creation. However, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26), indicating that there could be more than two divine Persons.
- God's overruling providence on earth.

- God's desire to lead every human being in right paths.
- God Himself would "put enmity" (Genesis 3:15), that is, would cause humanity to hate God's enemy, the third person in the garden of Eden, and, therefore, to hate sin.
- God will take those who are obedient to live forever with Him in heaven, and will punish the disobedient with eternal death (annihilation) for their sin.
- God as the shaper of human society with its families consisting of a male husband and a female wife and their children.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

There are in total three divine Persons, namely, "the Father" (Matthew 11:27), "the Son" (Matthew 11:27) "who is called Christ" (Matthew 1:16), and the "Holy Spirit." Psalm 51:11. This divine Family of three Persons is known as "the Godhead." Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9.

The third person in the garden of Eden who is God's enemy is "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." Revelation 12:9. He is "the tempter" (Matthew 4:3), an enemy who tempts humanity to sin. He is an angel whose name was originally "Lucifer." Isaiah 14:12.

The question then is what caused Lucifer to become God's enemy? God gives us an insight into this when he warns every human being, saying, "lest being lifted up with pride...[you] fall into the condemnation of the devil." 1 Timothy 3:6.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and his angels fought against the dragon [Lucifer]; and the dragon [Lucifer] fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon [Lucifer] was cast

out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out...and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:7-9.

So, Lucifer's, that is, Satan's pride led to open revolt in heaven which resulted in Lucifer (Satan) and his angels being cast out of heaven.

God says to humanity, "Your iniquities [sins] have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you." Isaiah 59:2. Thus, humanity is "alienated from...God." Ephesians 4:18. However, "there is...one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 2:5.

Jesus is the name given to Christ when He was born into the world in human flesh in approximately 5 B.C. "For the wages of sin is [eternal] death [which is annihilation by God]; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23. So, Christ is the Representative of the Godhead who stepped in and saved Adam and Eve from instant death when they sinned.

God's statement in Genesis 3:15 to Satan, in the presence of Adam and Eve, is the first revelation of "the gospel" (Matthew 4:23) to humanity. The gospel is God's plan to save humanity from eternal death by putting enmity in their hearts for sin and Satan, and by Christ's dying "for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2. The death of Christ would exhaust the penalty of eternal death for sins for all humanity, so that humanity could receive "the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7) from God.

This was foretold by the sacrificial system whereby an animal, an innocent victim, was slain instead of the sinner, signifying the future death of Christ, who would be "the just [dying] for the unjust." 1 Peter 3:18. God instituted the sacrificial system when, for the first time ever on earth, animals were killed.

So, the gospel would provide for the forgiveness of past sins and would cause humanity to cease from sinning in the present and in the future because they hate sin. Wonderful and amazing is God's provision for the forgiveness of sins through what is known as the

“imputed righteousness of Christ”!

That is, a substitution would be made in that, for those persons who meet the necessary conditions, God would accept Christ’s death in place of the death of the sinner for their sins, and would also ascribe (credit, impute) Christ’s righteousness to the sinner. On this basis, God would forgive the sins of such persons and treat them as if they had never sinned. Marvellous and gracious God! The Innocent One, Christ, would die and the guilty sinner go free having received what is known as the “atonement” from God.

Moreover, the gospel would cause there to be “division” (Luke 12:51) between “the children of God...and the children of the devil” (1 John 3:10), that is, between the followers (seed) of Christ and the followers (seed) of Satan, respectively.

“God is love” (1 John 4:8) and “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved” (Ephesians 2:4) humanity has, therefore, devised the gospel to save all humanity from eternal death (annihilation). The gospel was founded upon “the everlasting covenant” (Hebrews 13:20), which was a contract between Christ and the Father wherein Christ promised to be humanity’s Sin Bearer.

Now God says to all humanity, “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose [eternal] life, that...thou...may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19) eternally. So, we see that humanity is not to be saved from eternal death against their will. They are free to choose their eternal destiny.

Thus, the only requirements, the necessary conditions, God made for humanity to be saved, that is, for their salvation, was that their sins be forgiven by Him, in that, they receive the atonement (the substitution of Christ’s death) for their sins, and that they “cease from sin.” 2 Peter 2:14. But how can humanity cease from sinning? This is possible only when, for those who have received the atonement, “the love of God is shed abroad [supernaturally poured] in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] which is

given unto us.” Romans 5:5.

“When we were enemies [of God], we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son [Christ].” Romans 5:10. “For he [Christ] is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14), the Peace Giver who has opened the way that humanity “may make peace with me [God].” Isaiah 27:5.

So, God preached the gospel to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and, thus, it is believed that both Adam and Eve became followers of Christ, who are known as “Christians.” Acts 11:26. Adam and Eve passed on a knowledge of the gospel to their offspring and this knowledge was passed on from generation to generation.

Therefore, Noah, “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5), was not among them “that obey not the gospel of...Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8. Noah then was a Christian. “God...preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Galatians 3:8. So, Abraham was a Christian.

“For if Abraham were justified [declared righteous by God] by [his, Abraham’s, own] works [to save himself from eternal death (annihilation)], he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture [the Bible]? Abraham believed God [that Christ’s death would be a substitute for Abraham’s death for his, Abraham’s, own sins], and it was counted unto him [Abraham] for righteousness.” Romans 4:2, 3.

“Even as [a man named] David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth [ascribes] righteousness without works [by which a person attempts to do the impossible which is to save himself], saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities [sins] are forgiven, and whose sins are covered [hid from God’s eyes]. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute [ascribe] sin.” Romans 4:6-8.

“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision [Jews] only, or upon the uncircumcision [non-Jews] also? for we say that faith [in Christ’s substitutionary death] was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in

circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.” Romans 4:9, 10.

“And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith [in Christ’s substitutionary death] which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed [ascribed] unto them also.” Romans 4:11.

“And the father of circumcision [of, figuratively, the operation of God’s hands to cut away selfishness from human hearts] to them who are not of the circumcision [Jews] only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.” Romans 4:12.

“He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief [in Christ’s substitutionary death]; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he [God] had promised, he [God] was able also to perform. And therefore, it was imputed [ascribed] to him for righteousness.” Romans 4:20-22.

“Now it was not written for his [Abraham’s] sake alone, that it was imputed [ascribed] to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed [ascribed], if we believe on him [God] that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered [who died] for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Romans 4:23-25.

Thus, Abraham was “justified [declared righteous by God] by faith [in Christ’s substitutionary death]” (Romans 5:1) to put it briefly. In other words, to explain the full process leading to Abraham’s justification, it was because Abraham had repented (had deep sorrow and remorse for his own, Abraham’s, sins) and because of Abraham’s faith in Christ’s sacrificial death, that God forgave Abraham’s sins and, in addition, God “put enmity [hatred]” (Genesis 3:15) in Abraham’s heart for sin and Satan. This enmity (hatred) for sin and Satan enabled Abraham to cease from sinning.

For, God putting enmity (hatred) in the heart of a person for sin and Satan is the same as God pouring His love into their heart. All of this meant then that righteousness was ascribed to Abraham, that is to say, that Abraham was justified (declared righteous by God).

So then, Abraham came into a right standing before God, or in other words, he made peace with God. This too will be the status of every human being “who also walk in the steps of that faith of...Abraham.” Romans 4:12. They too will come into a right standing before God.

Abraham’s “justification” (Romans 4:25) was instantaneous at the moment he believed God. Now justification makes individuals “partakers of the divine nature.” 2 Peter 1:4. So, the justified person now has two natures—the sinful nature with which they were born, and the divine nature—both in constant conflict with each other. Must this forever be the state of the individual? The answer is, No!

Justification was but the first step in Abraham’s salvation, his saving from eternal death (annihilation). Abraham, like every other human being, needed to undergo the second and final step to salvation known as “sanctification.” 1 Corinthians 1:30.

Sanctification is a lifelong process whereby the person learns to overcome every temptation to sin through God’s “divine power [over temptations to sin].” 2 Peter 1:3. A person who becomes sanctified (holy) is saved by God to eternal life.

Now when Christ was born into the world in human flesh as a baby boy, He was born as “Jesus Christ...the son [descendant] of Abraham.” Matthew 1:1. That is, “Abraham begat [was the father of] Isaac; and Isaac begat [was the father of] Jacob; and Jacob begat [was the father of] Judas [Judah].” Matthew 1:2.

And Judah was an ancestor of “Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Matthew 1:16. Furthermore, God’s “Son Jesus Christ our Lord...was made [born] of the seed of David according to the flesh,” in that, Christ was

born of the virgin Mary, who was a descendant of David. Romans 1:3. So then, God's promised blessing, Jesus Christ, did indeed come to humanity through Abraham.

Now, God says, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Proverbs 28:26. That is, when we follow our own ways and our own counsel instead of accepting God's ways and God's counsel, we are fools and not wise. In other words, God says our prayer to God should be, "Shew [show] me thy ways, O LORD [God]; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." Psalm 25:4, 5. Thus, we should allow God to direct our lives so that we may be led to repentance and faith in Christ, and thereby becoming justified such that we are able to go on to the perfection of being sanctified (being made holy).

"Forasmuch then as the children [humanity] are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil [Satan]; And deliver them [humanity] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:14, 15. It is the fear of death and the selfishness of the human heart that leads to humanity's attempts at self-preservation. This placing of one's own welfare above the welfare of others is sin, for it is a manifestation of selfishness and not love.

So, Jesus Christ by His own death made secure God's plan of salvation for all humanity. According to this plan, if the individual consents, God will put enmity (hatred) in their heart for evil and, therefore, change the individual's heart from selfishness to love. And "God is love" (1 John 4:8), therefore those persons who have a character of love will be saved by God to eternal life.

On another note, "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication [sexual intimacy between persons who are not married to each other], and going after strange flesh" (Jude 1:7), that is, being them that

“lie with mankind, as with womankind” (Leviticus 18:22), in other words, being homosexuals, “are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 1:7) that burnt them to ashes.

Further, Jesus Christ said, “Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin...these ought ye to have done.” Matthew 23:23. Thus, God indicates that humanity should return to God a tithe, which is a tenth, of all that God gives them. This tithing serves God’s purposes of providing support for those who labour in the cause of God on earth, and of teaching us not to be selfish and covetous with what God gives us.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Believe in the existence of God.
- Resist the temptations to sin from Satan, the enemy of God and humanity.
- Believe the promises of God and, hence, believe the gospel.
- Walk with God as Enoch did so that we may please God and receive eternal life from God.
- Do not violate the institution of marriage which God established as being between a man and a woman.
- Abstain from fornication and homosexuality.
- Return a tithe or tenth of all your increase in wealth to God.
- Trust God with all your heart and, therefore, be free from

fear of death and attempts at self-preservation.

- Allow God to direct your life.



## CHAPTER TWO

# Exodus: 1589 B.C. – 1444 B.C.

**E**XODUS IS THE SECOND book of the Bible and is a part of the Pentateuch, the name given to the first five books of the Bible. The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible comes from the opening words of the Hebrew text, *we'elleh shemoth*, which is translated “and these are the names.” The English title, “Exodus,” meaning “exit,” “departure,” or “going out” comes to us from the Septuagint (LXX).

### **Authorship**

Exodus was written by Moses. Exactly when he started to write Exodus is not known, but it must have been after 1445 B.C. It is probable that Moses finished writing Exodus in 1444 B.C.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Exodus continues the story of the book of Genesis. In Genesis we find Jacob’s (Israel’s) family welcomed into Egypt

to which they had migrated. However, Exodus begins with the account of the Egyptians many years later making slaves of the “children [descendants] of Israel [of Jacob]” (Genesis 32:32), “the Israelites.” Exodus 9:7.

Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, decrees that all of the Israelites’ male children are to be killed. However, the Israelite baby, Moses, is saved from death by Pharaoh’s daughter who adopts him as her son. Moses is raised as an heir to the Egyptian throne.

When Moses is about 40 years old, he kills an Egyptian in an attempt to begin freeing His people, Israel, from slavery. As a result, he loses favour with Pharaoh and so Moses flees from Egypt to a land called Midian. There in Midian, Moses kept sheep, got married and had two sons.

After 40 years in Midian, God called Moses to go back to Egypt and to tell the Pharaoh to let Israel go free. Pharaoh rejects Moses’ request and so God sends ten plagues upon the land of Egypt.

The night of the tenth and last plague, Israel obeyed God’s instructions and celebrated their first Passover and prepared themselves to leave Egypt. God declared that this month, when the Passover was first celebrated, would be, from that time forward, the first month of the year to Israel.

The tenth plague sent by God was the death of all the firstborn persons and animals in Egypt, except for those of the Israelites. As a result, Pharaoh sent the Israelites away from Egypt in haste. This was in 1445 B.C.

Not long after this, Pharaoh changes his mind about letting the Israelites go and he chases after the departing Israelites. But God rescues Israel from the Egyptians by parting the Red Sea so that Israel was able to pass through the Red Sea on dry ground. The Egyptians following after Israel into the path through the Red Sea were drowned when God caused the waters of the Red Sea to come together again.

Under God’s leadership through their visible leader, Moses, Israel travels through the wilderness. Then Israel complains about

hunger and thirst and God gives them manna (food prepared by angels that fell from heaven to the earth) and water to drink in the wilderness.

God also rebukes Israel for violating “the seventh day [of the week], which is the sabbath” (Exodus 16:26) and which is the day God had set apart at Creation as a holy day.

Having arrived at Mount Sinai, Israel hears God speak the “ten commandments” (Exodus 34:28) to them in an audible voice and God Himself wrote these ten commandments on two tables of stone. Israel then enters into a covenant with God to obey His commandments.

God then institutes three yearly feasts to be kept by all Israel. These were (1) “the feast of the passover” (Exodus 34:25) with its accompanying “feast of unleavened bread” (Exodus 23:15), (2) “the feast of harvest” (Exodus 23:16), and (3) “the feast of ingathering.” Exodus 23:16.

God next gives Moses detailed instructions for building a sanctuary where God may dwell among Israel. God also gave instructions for making garments for the priests who would be Moses’ brother, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons, and instructions for the consecration ceremony of the priests. In addition, God gives Israel statutes and laws, which amplified the ten commandments by spelling out how to keep these commandments under certain circumstances.

Shortly after this, Israel breaks their covenant with God by worshipping an idol which they had made. Nevertheless, when Moses intercedes for Israel with God, God forgives them and renews the covenant with Israel.

The people of Israel then willingly offer more than enough for the construction of the sanctuary. So, Israel obediently builds and raises up the sanctuary according to God’s specifications after almost a year at Mount Sinai. The sanctuary was set up on the first day of the first month of 1444 B.C.

## Themes

- God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt in 1445 B.C.
- The covenant between God and Israel.
- Satan at work to cause Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to make slaves of the people of Israel and to kill all the male children of the Israelites. Thus, Satan attempted to thwart God's plan that Christ would be born as a baby boy and an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Satan at work to lead Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in unbelief and bold opposition to God so that He would not let Israel go free.
- Satan at work to lead Israel in unbelief and distrust of God.
- Israel designated by God to be "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Exodus 19:6.
- The establishment of the priesthood of Aaron and his sons by God.
- The sanctuary built by Israel made after the pattern which God showed Moses. It was the place where God dwelt among the people of Israel and where God met with Israel's leader, Moses.
- God's statutes and laws.
- The seventh-day Sabbath as a holy rest day, as a sign that God is the Creator, and that it is God *alone* who makes Israel holy.

- The daily offerings in the sanctuary in the mornings and in the evenings.
- The setting apart of the tribe of Levi, who were the descendants of Jacob's son named Levi, because they did not participate in the idolatrous worship of the Israelites.
- Moses wrote all that God spoke to him in a book.
- Hebrew, that is, Israelite, slaves allowed to go free after six years of service.
- God giving manna to Israel as food in an effort to turn them back to His original diet for humanity.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God's overruling providence.
- God is in control of the size of the world's population.
- When God blesses anyone, no one can reverse it.
- God can appear in any form that He chooses.
- God desires to be the One who chooses the world's leaders.
- God seeks those whom, as God's messengers, He can teach what to say to the world.
- God is in control of nature.
- God determines the lifespan of an individual, in that, they *only* die whenever God chooses.
- God is able to feed the world.

- God's holy day, the seventh-day Sabbath, remains unchanged since Creation.
- God institutes special days to be observed by all humanity in the way that He specifies.
- God is the One who specifies what is right and what is wrong.
- God is willing to forgive sin despite humanity's repeated unfaithfulness to Him.
- God desires to dwell among the human race, thus restoring to humanity face-to-face communion with Him because He takes pleasure in them.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Literal Israel was a symbol, that is, a type, of "the Israel of God." Galatians 6:16. This invisible "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16) is known only by God "for thou [God], even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men [of all humanity]." 1 Kings 8:39.

They are those among humanity who have been justified by God. These are they who have allowed God to "put enmity" (Genesis 3:15) in their hearts for sin and who have, therefore, been forgiven of their sins by God. "So all [the] Israel [of God] shall be saved" (Romans 11:26) from eternal death (annihilation).

The "ten commandments" (Exodus 34:28) are "God's law" (Nehemiah 10:29) and "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Romans 7:12. Therefore, the law is a transcript of the character of God who is "a God of truth and without iniquity [without sin], just and right is he." Deuteronomy 32:4.

"The law prophesied" (Matthew 11:13) what humanity could become through "the gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17), which

is the enmity against sin placed in the individual's heart by God. This "gift of righteousness" (Romans 5:17) was made sure by the death of Christ "for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2.

The gift is the righteous character which Christ manifested in His life on earth. The gift of enmity against sin was promised to Adam and Eve, and they and all who lived before the birth of Christ in human flesh looked forward by faith to the actual death of Christ for sins. But when Christ died and rose from the dead to life again, the promise which is the prophecy of His death, was fulfilled. Since then, all who have lived look backward by faith to the death of Christ.

Now when "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3) he received "the gift of righteousness." Romans 5:17. That is, Abraham believed the gospel and, therefore, he was justified by his faith in the promises of God.

"God is love" (1 John 4:8) in that He has a character of love. This love is displayed by the righteousness of Christ. So, the law states that humanity must have a character of love in order to be saved by God from eternal death. This is what God said to Abraham when "God...preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Galatians 3:8.

All humanity then, in anticipation of eternal life, can say to God, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied...with thy likeness [with having a character of love like God's]." Psalm 17:15. For only those who become like God in character will be saved to eternal life.

Moses wrote down the instructions God gave him in a book which the Bible describes variously as "the book of the covenant" (Exodus 24:7), "the book of the law of Moses" (Joshua 8:31), "the book of the law" (Joshua 8:34), "the book of Moses" (Ezra 6:18), and "the book of the law of God." Nehemiah 8:18.

God reveals the work of Satan in humanity. For God says of all humanity, "Ye [have] walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit

that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Ephesians 2:2.

So, God says, “Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” 2 Peter 2:19. Here God indicates that every human being is in bondage to Satan in that they do Satan’s will. This is true of every human being unless they are “delivered from the bondage of corruption [by God] into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Romans 8:21.

God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt is a symbol, a type, of Christ’s deliverance of humanity from the bondage of sin. It is this deliverance that is the goal of the gospel, God’s plan of salvation, His plan of saving humanity from eternal death (annihilation).

The foundation of the gospel is “the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Hebrews 13:20) between God and Christ. This was the understanding which Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had that their salvation depended on the promise of the death of Christ, and that only God could make a human being holy.

Israel through lacking an understanding of the everlasting covenant, said to God, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood [of cows], and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.” Exodus 24:7, 8.

Thus, Israel entered into a covenant with God based on their *own* promises and their *own* works. Not long afterwards Israel broke their covenant with God by worshipping an idol which they had made. This proved that the good intentions of humanity are insufficient to make them holy, to make them righteous. *Only* through God’s intervention can any person be “transformed” (Romans 12:2) from sin to holiness.

So, “finding fault with them [Israel], he [God] saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord [God], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.” Hebrews 8:8. “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old.” Hebrews 8:13. Thus,

the covenant which Israel made with God is known as the “old covenant,” which covenant Israel broke.

The new covenant is called “new” because it was confirmed, made sure, by the shed blood of Christ after Israel’s first covenant, the old covenant. This new covenant is really the same as the “everlasting covenant.” Hebrews 13:20.

God said to Israel, “The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” Exodus 31:16, 17.

Thus, the seventh-day Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel that God is “the Creator.” Isaiah 40:28. Likewise, the Sabbath is a perpetual sign to “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) that God is the Creator.

God also said to Israel, “Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it [keep it holy], as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.” Deuteronomy 5:12. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence [from there] through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” Deuteronomy 5:15.

So, we see that the seventh-day Sabbath was a memorial between God and Israel of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Similarly, the Sabbath is a perpetual sign to “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) that God through Christ is their Deliverer from the bondage of sin. In other words, it is God *alone* who makes any person holy.

Jesus Christ died on a Friday “and that day was the preparation [day], and the sabbath drew on [was coming].” Luke 23:54. On Friday they “beheld the sepulchre [tomb], and how his [Jesus Christ’s] body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the com-

mandment.” Luke 23:55, 56.

“Now upon the first day of the week [on Sunday], very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre [tomb], bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre [tomb].” Luke 24:1, 2. Note then that the seventh-day Sabbath starts at sunset on Fridays and ends at sunset on Saturdays.

“And they entered in [to the tomb], and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.” Luke 24:3. Then two angels told them, “He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:6) from the dead and is alive again. The seventh-day sabbath then is a memorial to the whole world, and especially to “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) of the day when Jesus Christ rested in the tomb having made secure the everlasting covenant.

God says to all humanity, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his [God’s] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” Hebrews 4:9, 10. Here God means a spiritual rest of which the seventh day, “the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD” (Exodus 16:23) and which God calls “my holy day” (Isaiah 58:13), is a sign.

What is spiritual rest? An example of spiritual rest is that of “Abraham [who] believed God, and it was counted [ascribed] unto him for righteousness.” Romans 4:3. Abraham did not seek by his own works to be justified, instead he rested on God’s promises to bring about his “justification.” Romans 4:25. Spiritual rest then is a state of confidence and trust in God and an associated peace of mind regarding one’s salvation, one’s saving from eternal death by God.

In practice, the seventh-day Sabbath is a taste of heaven on earth and God intends this holy day to be welcomed and observed with joy. It is a special time set aside each week for holy fellowship with God, and so God says, “If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD [God], honourable; and

shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD [God]; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father [of the Israel of God]: for the mouth of the LORD [God] hath spoken it." Isaiah 58:13, 14.

That is, the seventh-day Sabbath is the high point of the week and it in no way takes away from our duty to worship God every day. For God's people "do always those things that please him [God]" (John 8:29) when "they seek me [God] daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: [when] they ask of me the ordinances of justice; [and] they take delight in approaching to God." Isaiah 58:2.

The sanctuary which Israel built was "a worldly sanctuary" (Hebrews 9:1) in that it was located on earth. But there exists another sanctuary which is "the temple of God...in heaven." Revelation 11:19. This sanctuary in heaven is "the true tabernacle, which the Lord [God] pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:2.

The earthly sanctuary then was a copy of the heavenly sanctuary which is the great original. For "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle [on earth]...See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed [shown] to thee in the mount [mountain]." Hebrews 8:5.

In many ways the things of the sanctuary were a symbol, a type, of Christ. For example, Israel was to "bring...[to the sanctuary] pure oil olive [olive oil] beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." Exodus 27:20. Thus spoke "Jesus [Christ symbolically of Himself]...saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of [eternal] life." John 8:12. Light and darkness in the Bible represent truth and error, respectively.

Another symbol, type, of Christ was given in God's command that "Aaron shall burn thereon [on the Altar of Incense] sweet

incense every morning...and...at even [evening].” Exodus 30:7, 8. Thus, God prophesied that “the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints [the justified], ascended up before God out of the angel’s [Christ’s] hand.” Revelation 8:4.

The smoke of the incense, ascending to God with the prayers of the saints, represented the merits of Christ’s sacrifice, His intercession, His perfect righteousness which through faith is ascribed to the saints, all of which can alone make the worship of sinful people acceptable to God.

Yet another symbol, type, of Christ was given in God’s command to the priests, Aaron and his sons, that “thou shalt set upon the table shewbread [showbread] before me always.” Exodus 25:30. This “bread of the presence” which was ever before the face of God was an acknowledgement of humanity’s dependence on God for both temporal and spiritual food, which could be received from God only by the mediation of Christ.

Both the “manna” (Exodus 16:15) and the showbread pointed to Christ, the “living bread” (John 6:51), who “is...entered... into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24.

Here also Christ is “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8) in contrast with Satan who is “the bread of wickedness.” Proverbs 4:17.

So, Christ said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:51.

Christ then “the living bread” (John 6:51) causes those who eat this bread to “serve...[God] in sincerity and in truth.” Joshua 24:14. These are they who “have purified...[their] souls in obeying the truth through the [Holy] Spirit unto unfeigned [sincere] love of the brethren [of fellow saints].” 1 Peter 1:22.

Of such persons, God says, “They shall be mine, saith the LORD [God] of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I

will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Malachi 3:17. In other words, God will spare such persons from eternal death and will instead grant them everlasting life.

Now God declared Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. For God said to Israel through Moses, “Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments...Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” Deuteronomy 4:5, 6.

Israel was to say of themselves, “What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh [near] unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?” Deuteronomy 4:7. For God said, “What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” Deuteronomy 4:8. So, Israel was to attract the other nations to God by their holiness. Therefore, Israel was to grow in number until they embraced the whole world.

Similarly, God says of the Israel of God, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” 1 Peter 2:9. The Israel of God then is to make God attractive to the rest of the world and thus lead people to God.

As priests, if any stranger, that is, any foreigner, was a guest among ancient Israel and they desired to keep the Passover, all their males were first to be circumcised as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, and then they could be allowed to keep it. Israel then would, by this means, teach the gospel to the foreigner, in that, the foreigner would come to have faith in salvation through Christ.

Likewise, the Israel of God is to preach the gospel and “he that believeth and is baptized [is immersed in water then brought up out of the water in a public ceremony of consecration to God]

shall be saved.” Mark 16:16. Symbolically, this means that sincere believers “are circumcised with the circumcision made without [human] hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh [the sinful nature] by the [spiritual] circumcision of Christ.” Colossians 2:11.

Those though who falsely profess themselves to be believers in Christ are not, symbolically, circumcised “by the [spiritual] circumcision of Christ.” Colossians 2:11.

God speaks to the Israel of God, saying, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the [Holy] Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

Thus, God desires not just to dwell among the Israel of God which is made up of those who are holy, just as God had indicated His desire to dwell among ancient Israel, but also to dwell *in* the Israel of God. Now God dwells in a person when they have God’s character of love.

God takes pleasure in such persons for “the LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear [have reverence for] him, in those that hope in his mercy.” Psalm 147:11. These persons “they shall see his face.” Revelation 22:4. That is, face-to-face communion with God shall be restored to them.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Believe in the gospel of Christ.
- Obey God’s ten commandments and resist the temptations of Satan to sin.

- Allow God to lead you in your life.
- Trust God to provide all your needs, both physical and spiritual.
- Welcome and rejoice in God's presence with you in your life.
- Give freewill offerings to God for His cause on earth.



## CHAPTER THREE

# *Leviticus: 1444 B.C. to Christ's Second Coming*

**L**EVITICUS IS THE THIRD book of the Bible and is a part of the Pentateuch, the name given to the first five books of the Bible. The title in the Hebrew Bible is *Wayyiqra* taken from the opening word and is translated “and (he) called.” The English title comes to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the Latin title *Leviticus*.

### **Authorship**

Leviticus was written by Moses in the first 30 days of the year 1444 B.C.

### **Summary**

The events in the book of Leviticus belong to the period of 30 days immediately following the setting up of the sanctuary at Mount Sinai on the first day of the first month of the second year, 1444 B.C., since Israel departed from Egypt. This period ended on

the first day of the second month of 1444 B.C.

Leviticus begins with a description of a number of offerings which were a part of the sanctuary services. These offerings were, namely, the burnt, meat (grain), peace, sin, and trespass offerings.

Next comes a description of the consecration ceremony of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood and their first offerings to God on behalf of the people of Israel. At the end of this ceremony a fire comes out from God and consumes the burnt offering on the altar as an indication of God's approval of their offerings.

What follows in Leviticus is an account of the sin of two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who used "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1) to offer incense before God. This "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1) was ordinary fire and not sacred fire taken from the altar of burnt offering whose fire God Himself had kindled.

In punishing the sin of Nadab and Abihu, God sent forth a fire which devoured them both and so they died. God then admonished Aaron and his sons not to drink wine and strong drink so that they "may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." Leviticus 10:10.

In the confusion that followed the death of his sons, Aaron and his remaining two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, omitted to eat their portion of the sin offering. Moses was angry with them because of this, but then Moses accepted Aaron's explanation for Aaron and his two sons' omission.

Next, Leviticus gives criteria "to make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten." Leviticus 11:47.

After this in the book of Leviticus, are criteria for determining the impurity of persons, garments, and houses, and the steps to be taken for their cleansing.

Then comes a description of the sanctuary service known as "a day of atonement." Leviticus 23:27. Following this, God specifies the location where the sacrificial offerings to God are to be made.

Next in Leviticus is a description of what God considers sexual

sins as well as a number of moral instructions, and ceremonial and sacrificial ordinances. God then prescribes the penalty of death for certain sins.

After this God gives laws concerning the conduct of the priests and those descendants of Aaron who were ineligible to enter the priesthood because they had a physical defect. Further, God specifies the acceptable handling by the priests of the things dedicated by the people to God, which things became holy. In addition, God prescribes the acceptable physical condition of the animals used as sacrificial offerings to God.

God then reiterates His commandment concerning the weekly Sabbath which is the fourth of the ten commandments. Next, God prescribes seven yearly feasts. These annual feasts were Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Feast of Weeks, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles.

Then God gives laws concerning violence against persons, murder, and the killing of an animal belonging to another.

After this God specifies that every “seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD” (Leviticus 25:4) when they neither sowed seed in the field nor pruned their vineyards.

In addition, every “fiftieth year” (Leviticus 25:10) the people of Israel were to proclaim a Year of Jubilee. At that time God forbade all sowing and harvesting, all Israelite slaves were to be freed, and all lands sold between two Jubilees were reverted to their original owners.

After this in Leviticus, God prescribed laws which required that compassion be shown to the poor, and laws regarding the ownership and redemption (buying back) of slaves.

God then specifies blessings from Him for obedience to His commandments and curses for disobedience. For those who repent of their sins and turn again to worship God, He promises not to cast them away, but instead to remember His covenant with their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Next, God gives laws prescribing what should be done in the case of a person making a vow to God which they could not perform.

Lastly, in Leviticus God addresses whether the tithe or tenth of all increase in wealth of an individual could be redeemed (bought back with money) or not.

## **Themes**

- The holiness of God and that the worship of God is sacred.
- The holiness of the sanctuary.
- God's requirement that the priests and the people of Israel be holy.
- The body of regulations pertaining to the priesthood and to the sanctuary services.
- The centrality of the sanctuary in the worship of God.
- The gospel taught through the sanctuary services.
- The need for sanctification of the sinner through their repentance and confession of sins to God and their faith in the gospel of Christ.
- The pardon of sin and the transfer of sin from the repentant sinner to the sanctuary through the blood of the sin offering. Thus, the sinner was reconciled to God.
- The special service of the Day of Atonement at the end of the year symbolising, that is, typifying, the removal of sin from those in Israel who had repented of their sins. The ceremony of the Day of Atonement symbolically cleansed the sanctuary from the sins which had accumulated there

during the year.

- Satan, symbolised by the scapegoat, as the one upon whom all the sins of the saints which are recorded in the sanctuary will be transferred. Satan will then die for his own sins and the sins of the saints.
- Putting a difference between the clean and unclean, the holy and the unholy.
- God specifying clean and unclean animals as an accommodation of humanity's lust for the flesh of dead animals.
- God's requirement that the animal sacrifices be perfect and without blemish.
- The close relationship between sin and eternal death symbolised by the continual use of the blood of sacrifices in the sanctuary.
- The priests, the Levites, that is, Aaron and his sons and their descendants, as mediators between the sinner and God.
- The special role of the high priest once a year in the cleansing of the sanctuary.
- Seven annual feast days ordained by God.
- Health laws.
- An economy that allowed for compassion to the poor, the Year of Jubilee when there was the release of slaves, the resting of the land from farming for a year, and the reverting of property that was sold to its original owner.
- One law for both the foreigner and the Israelite.

- The weekly seventh-day Sabbath to be kept holy.
- Blessings from God for obedience to His commandments and curses for disobedience.
- Laws concerning vows made to God.
- Laws concerning tithes.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God is holy and it is God *alone* who can make a person holy.
- God specifies how sinners are to approach Him.
- God accepts the worship of repentant sinners.
- God is concerned about how human beings treat each other.
- God has a plan to finally do away with sin in humanity.
- God is concerned about the health of human beings.
- God who teaches the gospel to humanity.
- God as the One who will annihilate Satan.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Here are some points on how the book of Leviticus is connected to the rest of the Bible.

### *Lessons Taught by the Sanctuary*

The conditions under which a person becomes justified by God is their “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:21. For God says, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:15.

Every person may know that “if we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. So, the lesson taught by the sanctuary services, that is, by the Ceremonial Laws, was the pardon of sin, and the imparting by God of spiritual power to obey God’s law to the sinner who meets the necessary conditions.

God says, “Love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” Romans 13:8. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10. Thus, “God’s law” (Nehemiah 10:29) is a law of love in keeping with the fact that “God is love” (1 John 4:8), meaning that God has a character of love.

The blood of the sin offering was a symbol, a type, of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” Hebrew 13:20. For God says, “without shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness]” (Hebrews 9:22) of sin. So then, without the shedding of the blood of Christ no human being could be saved.

The sin offering was a type of Christ, humanity’s Sin Offering, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away [purges] the sin of the world.” John 1:29. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away [purge] sins.” Hebrews 10:4.

“For the [ceremonial] law [embodied as sanctuary services] having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things...[could] never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect [in love].” Hebrews 10:1.

“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because

that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.” Hebrews 10:2, 3.

“But this man [Jesus Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:12. “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:14. Persons are made perfect “through sanctification of the [Holy] Spirit, unto obedience and [the] sprinkling [the merits] of the blood of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:2.

Sanctification then is the lifelong process whereby the sinner overcomes their sinful nature and becomes holy, obedient to God’s law of love and secure against all temptations to sin.

So, since Christ sanctifies the individual, the sanctuary services, the Ceremonial Law, need not be observed anymore. These Ceremonial Laws were temporary laws to be kept until the death of Christ abolished them.

For the sanctuary was a teaching tool regarding the gospel and the associated Ceremonial Laws, rightly understood, led people to Christ. But when Christ came to live on earth and die for humanity’s sins the symbols of the Ceremonial Laws, the type, met the reality, the antitype, which was Christ.

God says, “Consider the...High Priest...Christ Jesus.” Hebrews 3:1. “We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.” Hebrews 4:14. “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25. Moreover, God says, “Sin not. And if any man sin...[you] have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” 1 John 2:1.

### ***The Sanctuary and the Feast Days***

The seven annual feasts instituted by God were types of future events, that is, they were prophetic as shown below.

TYPE (SYMBOL)	ANTITYPE (REALITY)
1. Passover	Death of Christ (31 A.D.)
2. Unleavened Bread	Christ in the Grave (31 A.D.)
3. First Fruits	Christ's Rising from the Dead to Life (Resurrection) (31 A.D.)
4. Feast of Weeks	Pentecost – A Harvest of Souls for the Kingdom of God (31 A.D.)
5. Trumpets	Great Religious Awakening (1820s A.D. to 1844 A.D.)
6. Day of Atonement	Pre-Advent of Christ (Investigative) Judgment (1844 A.D. Until the Second Advent of Christ)
7. Tabernacles	Harvest of Souls Gathered in to Heaven at Second Advent of Christ (Future)

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come [in Jerusalem in 31 A.D.], they [the disciples of Christ] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” Acts 2:1, 2. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues [languages], as the [Holy] Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4.

“Now when this was noised abroad [when this sound was heard], the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.” Acts 2:6. “[The apostle (a disciple specially chosen by Christ)] Peter, standing up with the eleven [other apostles], lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken [listen] to my words.” Acts 2:14.

So, Peter preached to the multitude. “Then they that gladly received his [Peter’s] word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them [to Christ’s disciples] about three thousand souls [persons].” Acts 2:41.

To reiterate, What is baptism? It is a ceremony where the person is submerged under water and brought up again out of the water thereby pledging their allegiance to the Father, Christ the Son of God, and the Holy spirit. This signifies that “we are buried with him [Christ] by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4.

So, water baptism is intended to signify that we have experienced a change of heart from selfishness to love, in that, “the love of God is shed abroad [supernaturally poured] in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5. This what it means to be “baptize[d]...with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit].” Matthew 3:11.

On Pentecost then in 31 A.D., three thousand persons were added to disciples of Christ, a harvest of souls (persons) signifying the future growth of the Christian church. Today, in the year 2022, there are an estimated 2.4 billion Christians in the world. How mightily has the church grown in almost 2,000 years!

In Revelation 14:6-12 in the Bible are to be found the Three Angels’ Messages, the last warning messages to be given to the world from God before the second coming of Christ to the earth. For after Revelation 14:6-12 comes a prophecy of Christ’s second coming.

The Feast of Trumpets prophesied of the time when there would be a great religious awakening in the world. At that time, The First Angel’s Message of Revelation 14:6, 7 would be proclaimed all across the globe.

The First Angel’s Message states: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,

and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear [Reverence] God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Revelation 14:6, 7.

This First Angel’s Message was to prepare the world for the soon to start Investigative Judgment, at the end of which Christ comes to the earth a second time. Now “advent” means “coming” and so the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles, looked forward to the second coming of Christ. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13.

### ***The Sanctuary and the Record of Sin***

God said to Moses, “And let them [Israel] make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew [show] thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.” Exodus 25:8 9. Thus, the Israelites constructed a portable sanctuary in the year 1445 B.C. while they were in the wilderness.

Later in their history, in 955 B.C., they constructed a permanent building known as Solomon’s Temple according the pattern given by God. Solomon’s Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C. when Israel went into Babylonian captivity because of their sins. A Second Temple was constructed in 515 B.C. after the Jews returned to their homeland. Starting in 37 B.C., about 500 years later, the Second Temple was renovated and rebuilt by king Herod and so came to be known as Herod’s Temple. This Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.

In the sanctuary in all its forms on earth from 1445 B.C. to 70 A.D., the sanctuary services remained the same. Thus, there was a daily transfer of sins from the sinner, through the sprinkling of the shed blood of an innocent animal, to the sanctuary. This, in reality, was the transfer of sins from the repentant sinner to Christ,

humanity's Sin Bearer, and was the means by which the sinner received the atonement (reconciliation to God).

Now, the "worldly [earthly] sanctuary" (Hebrews 9:1) was "the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Hebrews 8:5. In other words, the earthly sanctuary was a copy of "the true tabernacle [sanctuary], which the Lord [God] pitched, and not man." Hebrews 8:2. This sanctuary then which God made is known as "the heavenly sanctuary."

And just as the sins of the repentant sinner were transferred to Christ and forgiven, so there was a record kept in the heavenly sanctuary of all these sins that had been repented of and been forgiven by God. In effect then the heavenly sanctuary was polluted by sins.

### *The Four Decrees*

"And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it [the Second Temple], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment [decree] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia." Ezra 6:14.

That is, Cyrus originated the decree in 537 B.C., Darius reaffirmed it in 520 B.C., and Artaxerxes completed the decree in 457 B.C., bringing it to the perfection required by the prophecy of Daniel Chapter 9: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment [decree] to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [Jesus Christ] shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." Daniel 9:25.

"Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe...Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto

Ezra the priest...I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel...in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.” Ezra 7:11-13. Thus, a company of Jews left Persia to go Jerusalem with the permission of king Artaxerxes.

So, taking 457 B.C., the time when the decree was completed, that is, as the date of the commandment “to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:25), it will be shown in Chapter 27 of this book that every specification of the prophecy concerning the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 have been fulfilled. Now after the three decrees by the three kings, another decree, a fourth decree, was later given by Artaxerxes in 444 B.C. concerning the completion of the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. However, neither this date of 444 B.C., nor the dates 537 B.C. or 520 B.C., meet *all* the specifications of the 70-week prophecy.

### *The Cleansing of the Sanctuary*

Now God prophesied saying, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the [heavenly] sanctuary be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14) of sin. This prophecy began in 457 B.C., at the same time that the 70-week prophecy began, the time when king Artaxerxes of Persia completed the decree concerning the return of the Jews in his kingdom to Jerusalem.

God had said to Israel, “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.” Numbers 14:34. Thus, God gave the day-for-a-year principle to be applied in interpreting some of His prophecies.

According to this principle, the prophetic “two thousand and three hundred days” (Daniel 8:14) are literal 2,300 years. Therefore, 2,300 years from 457 B.C. is 1844 A.D. so, 1844 A.D. was the beginning of the Pre-Advent (Investigative) Judgment. For Christ, on His ascension to heaven from the earth in 31 A.D. “by his own

blood he entered in once into the holy place” (Hebrews 9:12) of the heavenly sanctuary.

In 1844 A.D. at the end of the 2,300-year prophecy, the antitypical (the reality of the) Day of Atonement began when the heavenly sanctuary was to be cleansed of sin. At that time, Christ as humanity’s High Priest entered into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin the judgment of all persons who had ever lived.

This judgment will end with Christ’s second coming to the earth. Christ says, “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12.

This then answers the question, “How should man be just with God?” Job 9:2. God says, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.” 1 Timothy 5:24. Those whose sins go before them, having been transferred to Christ, humanity’s Sin Bearer, which sins are then recorded in the heavenly sanctuary, will be found righteous by God. These only, the sanctified, will be saved and have eternal life from God.

In the sanctuary then, before veil of the “most holy place” (Exodus 26:34), was an altar of perpetual intercession and, before the “holy place” (Exodus 26:33), an altar of continual atonement. By blood and incense, God was to be approached. These were symbols, types, pointing to Christ the great “mediator” (1 Timothy 2:5) through whom *alone* sinners may approach God, and through whom *alone* the repentant, believing person may receive mercy and salvation.

When Christ returns to the earth at His second coming, God will separate the sanctified persons from those who are wicked. Then the righteous dead will be raised to life and taken to heaven with the righteous living. On the other hand, at that time, all the living wicked on earth will die and join the wicked dead in the grave.

The righteous who are taken to heaven are those persons of whom God says, “He [or she] that overcometh [sin]...I will not blot out his [or her] name out of the book of life.” Revelation 3:5. These are those persons who were found to be holy in the Pre-Advent (Investigative) Judgment of all human beings who had ever lived.

The Feast of Tabernacles then was a symbol, a type, of the time when the all the righteous who had ever lived, the saints, are in heaven with God. What a joy that will be for the saints!

### ***Tithes***

Now God says, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me.” Malachi 3:8, 9.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat [food] in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:10.

Tithes provide sustenance to those who “give...[themselves] continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4) of God. In addition to tithes, God requires “freewill offerings” (Leviticus 22:18), and those offerings must be given with a willing heart. These offerings are meant to pay the expenses of the church such as utility bills.

### **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Have reverence for God.
- Consecrate yourself to God every morning and evening.

- Repent and confess your sins to God and believe the gospel.
- Acknowledge God as your Provider of your spiritual and physical needs and thank God for His many blessings.
- Enter into a deep, lifelong, loving, special relationship with God.
- Seek to be holy by repenting of and confessing your sins to God, asking His forgiveness of your sins and His cleansing you from your sins by faith in Christ.
- Make restitution, where possible, for the wrong done to others.
- Love others as you love yourself.
- Do not drink alcohol in any form.
- Eat no meat, that is, do not eat the flesh of dead animals.
- Obey all of God's commandments which are to be found in the Bible.
- Abstain from that which is unholy by discerning the difference between the holy and unholy.
- Keep yourself and your surroundings clean.
- Quarantine the diseased as necessary, and separate the leper from all others.
- Do not eat animals that die of themselves or are killed by other animals.
- Do not commit any sexual sin as defined by God, for example, incest and homosexuality.

- Do not have any tattoos on your body.
- Do not mistreat a foreigner, but instead love them as yourself.
- Do not perform human sacrifice.
- Do not have anything to do with Satan and his evil angels, who are known as demons.
- Share what you have with the poor and the needy.
- Do not do violence to anyone.
- Allow your land to rest from farming one year in every seven years.
- Pay all your vows to God.
- Return a tithe or tenth of all your increase in wealth to God.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Numbers: 1444 B.C. – 1405 B.C.

**N**UMBERS IS THE FOURTH book of the Bible and is a part of the Pentateuch, the name given to the first five books of the Bible. The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible comes from the opening word of the Hebrew text, *Bemidbar*, which is translated “In the wilderness.” The English title “Numbers” comes down to us through the Septuagint (LXX) title *Arithmoi* which is translated in Jerome’s Latin Vulgate as *Numeri*.

### **Authorship**

Numbers was written by Moses no earlier than 1444 B.C. It is probable that Moses finished writing Numbers around 1405 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Numbers continues the record of Israel’s history beginning at Mount Sinai, on the first day of the second month of 1444 B.C., a month after the erection of the sanctuary at Sinai.

The intervening month after the sanctuary was set up seems to have been devoted to the establishment of the sanctuary services as outlined in the book of Leviticus.

Numbers opens with a census at Mount Sinai of all the males of Israel that were able to go forth to war, and the Levites. Next comes a description of the arrangement of Israel's camp and the order of the people's march when Israel was on the move. God then specifies the responsibilities of the Levites regarding the dismantling, transportation, and reassembling of the portable sanctuary.

Numbers continues with the sanctuary's dedication, and the consecration of the Levites for the work of the sanctuary. After this comes an account of the celebration of Israel's second Passover in the first month of 1444 B.C. which was the second year after Israel's departure from Egypt.

Next is a description of God's guidance of Israel by a cloud covering the sanctuary by day and which cloud had the appearance of fire by night, and by two silver trumpets.

Israel then departs from Mount Sinai and they soon begin to complain about the journey and the food which was manna from God. So, God satisfies the people's lust for the flesh (meat) of dead animals, but sends a plague among them. Moses himself complains to God about being the sole leader of Israel. So, God appoints seventy men to be set as officers over the people as a help to Moses.

Miriam and Aaron, the sister and brother of Moses, then rebel against Moses. God punishes Miriam by striking her with leprosy and restores her when Moses interceded for her.

By God's command, twelve spies, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, were sent to search the land of Canaan. Ten of the spies bring back a false, unfavourable report thus discouraging the people, but two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, give a good and true report.

So, the people rebel against Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, deter-

mining to return to Egypt. God intervenes and the ten false spies die immediately and God declares that Israel would spend forty years in the wilderness until all but Caleb and Joshua had died.

The people of Israel then presumptuously went up to enter into Canaan and were driven back by the inhabitants. Since Israel had already spent two years in the wilderness, the rest of the book of Numbers covers the remaining 38 years.

After this Numbers relates the revolt of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 men against Moses and Aaron, which revolt God puts down. Nevertheless, the next day the entire nation of Israel rises up against Moses and Aaron and God intervenes and causes the people's murmuring against Moses and Aaron to cease at that time.

Next in Numbers God gives commands regarding the duties of the Levites and their sustenance through the tithes and offerings of the people.

Miriam then dies and because of a lack of water the people gather themselves yet again against Moses and Aaron. God commands Moses what to do but Moses disobeys God, having the approval of Aaron. Therefore, God declared that both Moses and Aaron would die in the wilderness. After some time, Aaron dies and his son, Eleazar, takes his place as high priest.

On nearing the end of their 40 years in the wilderness, Israel seeks passage through the lands of Edom and Moab but they are refused passage. Yet again Israel complains against God and Moses and God sent poisonous snakes which bite the people. However, God provides a remedy for snake poisoning and death for those who would comply with God's condition.

Next Israel seeks passage through the land of the Amorites and through Bashan but they were refused passage. This time Israel makes war against them, defeat them, and take possession of their lands. Israel then encamps in the plains of Moab.

The people of Moab and Midian hire Balaam, a false prophet, and ask him to curse Israel. But God puts words of blessing in Bal-

am's mouth so that he cannot curse Israel. However, Israel incurs God's displeasure by committing whoredom with the women of Moab and Midian and by worshipping their gods. God responds by sending a plague upon Israel.

Next is a record of a second census, God's instructions regarding the method of dividing the lands which they had conquered among the people of Israel. It was found that none of the people who had been counted in the first census were alive except for Caleb and Joshua. Thus, it was Israel's second generation who would enter into Canaan, the Promised Land.

Israel now being at the end of their 40-year journey through the wilderness, God gives instructions that Joshua would be the new leader of Israel after Moses dies. Israel then goes to war against Midian and defeats them. Moses next divides the conquered territory east of the Jordan River among two and a half tribes of Israel.

Numbers then records the places through which Israel journeyed from Egypt to the plains of Moab. In addition, Numbers records God's commands to Israel to set aside six cities of refuge, where anyone who killed someone unintentionally could flee for safety from the avenger of the dead person.

## Themes

- God seeking to draw humanity to Himself in love.
- Humanity's disposition to unbelief, lack of faith, lack of trust in God.
- Humanity's disposition to murmur and complain.
- Humanity's disposition to rebel against God.
- The controlling power of fear of death among all humanity.
- The faithfulness of the few to God in the face of trials and

danger.

- The power of intercession with God.
- Divine presence and divine guidance.
- God's dealings with those who sin.
- God's displeasure at humanity's lust for the flesh of dead animals.
- The failures of leaders chosen by God.
- Those who lose their salvation when they are within reach, that is, not far from, the heavenly Canaan, the Promised Land.
- The people who are jealous of the leaders chosen by God.
- People cannot be overcome by their enemies when they are in God's favour.
- Satan at work to oppose God's plan by inciting unbelief, lack of faith, lack of trust, murmuring, rebellion, fear, idolatry, whoredom, jealousy, among humanity.
- The ease with which Satan ensnares humanity with idolatry and whoredom.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God's unfailing mercy and faithfulness to His covenant in the face of humanity's unfaithfulness and sins.
- God's anger towards humanity because of their sins.
- God is a God of order.

- God responds favourably to intercession for sinners.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, “How oft [often] did they [Israel] provoke him [God] in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” Psalm 78:40, 41.

“They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy. How he had wrought [did] his signs [miracles] in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.” Psalm 78:42, 43. Therefore, “the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel.” Judges 2:20.

“Yea, they despised the pleasant land [Canaan], they believed not his word. But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto [did not obey] the voice of the LORD [God]. Therefore he [God] lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness.” Psalm 106:24-26.

“For as the girdle [belt] cleaveth to the loins [waist] of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel...saith the LORD [God]; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.” Jeremiah 13:11. “But my people would not hearken to [obey] my voice; and Israel would none of me.” Psalm 81:11.

“The LORD [God] hath...[said,] Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3. “O taste and see that the LORD [God] is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” Psalm 34:8. “For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.” Psalm 107:9.

God was seeking to draw Israel close to Him in love, but they would not come to Him. Is humanity any better than ancient Israel? For God’s message to Israel is also His message to all hu-

manity. "The LORD [God] hath...[said to all humanity,] Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3.

So, "the LORD [God] looked down from heaven upon the children of men [upon humanity], to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Psalm 14:2, 3. Thus, humanity's response to God's desire to draw them to Himself in love is the same as that of ancient Israel.

"And he [God] said unto Abram [Abraham], Know of a surety that thy seed [descendants] shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Genesis 15:13. "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither [here] again: for the iniquity [sins] of the Amorites is not yet full." Genesis 15:16.

Therefore, God would not allow Israel to destroy the Amorites, or any other nation, until these people had filled up the cup of their iniquity, the cup of their wickedness.

For example, Abraham pleaded with God for the righteous in Sodom when God was of the mind to destroy them. "And he [Abraham] said, Oh let not the Lord [God] be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten [righteous] shall be found there. And he [God] said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." Genesis 18:32.

Now "when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest [to prevent the possibility that] thou be consumed in the iniquity [wickedness] of the city." Genesis 19:15. So, ten righteous persons could not be found in Sodom and so God saved only four people out of the city before He destroyed it.

Likewise, all the nations of Canaan had, by the end of Israel's 40-year journey through the wilderness, filled up their cup of wickedness. Thus, God foreseeing this had previously said to Moses, "I am come down to deliver them [Israel] out of the hand

of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.” Exodus 3:8.

“For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I [God] will cut them off.” Exodus 23:23. Israel then was to destroy these nations and occupy their land.

“For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness” (Psalm 11:7), “but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.” Psalm 11:5. Therefore, God says, “Say among the heathen [the non-Jewish nations] that the LORD reigneth...he [God] shall judge the people righteously.” Psalm 96:10. No one then is treated unfairly by God.

“For there is no respect of persons [favouritism] with God.” Romans 2:11. “In every nation he that feareth [has reverence for] him [God], and worketh [does] righteousness, is accepted with him [with God].” Acts 10:35.

So, Israel’s destruction of the Amorites who were under their two kings, Og and Sihon, was just and fair. The Amorites were a curse to humanity and, therefore, God made “a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.” Zephaniah 1:18. This was to prevent their corrupt influence from spreading across the world.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Respond to God’s love for you by loving God with your whole heart.
- Trust in God with your whole heart.

- Do not murmur or complain about anything for God is in control.
- Do not rebel against God.
- Do not indulge in fear about anything.
- Be faithful to God even in the face of trials and danger.
- Intercede with God for everyone.
- Let God lead you and guide in your life.
- Be careful not to lose your salvation when you are within reach, that is, not far from, heaven, the Promised Land.
- Do not be jealous of anyone.
- Believe in God's protection from evil according to His everlasting covenant, especially for those who have God's favour.
- Do not allow Satan to ensnare you with his numerous temptations to sin.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# Deuteronomy: 1405 B.C.

**D**EUTERONOMY IS THE FIFTH book of the Bible, and is a part of the Pentateuch, the name given to the first five books of the Bible. The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible comes from the opening words of the Hebrew text, *Elleh haddebarim*, which is translated “These [are] the words.” The English title “Deuteronomy” comes down to us through the Septuagint (LXX) title *Deuteronomion*.

### Authorship

Deuteronomy was written by Moses in the last two months of 1405 B.C., the fortieth year after Israel’s departure from Egypt. The closing verses were probably written by Joshua after the death of Moses in 1405 B.C.

### Summary

The book of Deuteronomy records the last five addresses of Moses to Israel before he died in 1405 B.C. The generation that had come out of Egypt 40 years before in 1445 B.C. had died in the

wilderness and a new generation had come on the scene. Moses as his farewell, therefore, seeks to give them guidance before they should enter the land of Canaan, the Promised Land.

Israel is now encamped in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River and opposite the city of Jericho on the west of the river. Moses' first address is primarily a review of events over the past 38 years since Israel's departure from Mount Sinai, as well as instructions for the people.

Moses first recounts God's command to leave Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb) and to set out for Canaan, the Promised Land. Next, he speaks of the incident that resulted in God punishing Israel with 38 more years of wandering in the wilderness.

Then Moses speaks of events that took place during these 38 years, including the conquest of the regions east of the Jordan River. This land was distributed to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who were to assist their brethren in the conquest of the land to the west of the Jordan River.

Moses then tells of God's denial of his request to cross over with the people into Canaan and encourages them to be faithful to God as an example to all the other nations. He then reports the setting aside of three cities of refuge in the land to the east of the Jordan River.

After this Moses addresses the people a second time. First Moses tells the people the Ten Commandments, also known as the Decalogue. He stresses the importance of Israel's obedience to these commandments.

Moses then points out to the people their unique, covenant relationship with God. He forbids them to make marriages with the Canaanites as this would lure them away from the true God to worship the gods of the Canaanites.

Moses then tells Israel that victory over the Canaanites is assured if they remain loyal to God. He encourages them to keep God uppermost in their affections and also in their daily life. He then speaks of the Israel's repeated apostasy, which is turning

away from God, in the past since their departure from Egypt. Again, Moses urges their humility, loyalty, the love of God, and obedience to God from the heart.

Moses then tells Israel to destroy every trace of Canaanite worship and to establish a special centre for the worship of the true God. The people are to avoid Canaanite customs and to faithfully support the worship of God with their tithes and offerings. He next makes provisions for the observation of every seventh year, known as the sabbatical year, and the major religious feasts of the year.

Moses then says judges are to be appointed and a monarchy, when established in Israel, is to be conducted based on the laws he is about to set forth and the principles of their covenant with God. In Israel, as a nation under God's direct rule, that is, as a theocracy, leadership is to be vested in the Levites and God's appointed prophets. Moses then gives regulations to prevent the miscarriage of justice. He next gives various civil and social laws and returns to Israel's covenant with God and the need for them to be loyal to God.

Moses addresses Israel a third time. He gives them a command to erect a permanent monument in Canaan upon which the provisions of the law are to be written. At a solemn ceremony the people are to renew their vows of obedience to their covenant with God. Moses then outlines in detail the blessings that are to follow obedience and the curses that are to accompany disobedience.

Next, Moses addresses Israel a fourth time. He briefly reviews the events since the people left Egypt and encourages them to be obedient to God's law. Moses then gives them God's promise of mercy if they return to God after their apostasy. He then appeals to Israel to remain loyal to God and to love God from the heart.

In his fifth and final address to Israel, Moses makes arrangements for the preservation of the law which he had written down and charges the leaders with the responsibility of teaching the law to the people. He then makes arrangements for Joshua to succeed

him.

Moses then praises God with the words of a song for God's gracious mercy and guidance. God then calls Moses to go up Mount Nebo where he will die. Before he does so, Moses speaks to Israel giving his final blessing upon the tribes of Israel.

He then ascends Mount Nebo where God gives him a view of Canaan, the Promised Land. Moses then dies and God buries him in a secret place. Israel mourns the death of Moses for 30 days and Joshua succeeds Moses as the new leader of Israel.

## **Themes**

- God seeking to draw humanity to Him in love.
- God's faithfulness to His covenant with humanity.
- God appeals to humanity to love Him and to be obedient to His law.
- God's promise of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- God is able to give humanity success in all their undertakings.
- God's guidance for a holy life.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God loves humanity unconditionally.
- God knows the spirit of rebellion in human hearts.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God's promise to circumcise the heart means that it is Jesus Christ "in whom...ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without [human] hands, in putting off...sins...by the [spiritual] circumcision of Christ." Colossians 2:11. This is the *only* way that humanity can cease from sinning.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Enter into a loving relationship with God.
- Obey God's law of love.



## CHAPTER SIX

# Joshua: 1405 B.C. – Approx. 1364 B.C.

**J**OSHUA IS THE SIXTH book of the Bible. The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible is *Yehoshua* which is translated “Yahweh is salvation.” The English title comes down to us through Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber Josue*, “The Book of Joshua.”

### **Authorship**

It is believed that Joshua wrote the book of Joshua. The book’s record of Joshua’s death is believed to have been written by Eleazar, Aaron’s son. Also, the book’s record of Eleazar’s death is believed to have been written by Phineas, Eleazar’s son.

### **Summary**

The book of Joshua picks up the narrative of Israelite (Hebrew) history near the end of 1405 B.C. where the book of Deuteronomy leaves it. It is chiefly the record of events occurring under Joshua,

Israel's new leader, up to Joshua's death in approximately 1375 B.C. The two brief additions to the book which were probably made by Eleazar and Phineas takes the book up to about 1364 B.C.

The book opens with God's charge to Joshua to go into the land of Canaan which God had promised to give Israel. Joshua, therefore, gives Israel preparatory instructions and sends out two men to spy out the city of Jericho on the opposite side of the Jordan River.

The spies enter Jericho and are saved from being discovered by a prostitute named Rahab. As a result, they promise Rahab that she and all those in her house would be saved from destruction by Israel when Israel conquered the city of Jericho.

After the spies return to Israel, God miraculously parts the waters of the Jordan River and Israel crosses over the river on dry ground to the west side. In accordance with God's commands, all the males are then circumcised and Israel celebrates the Passover. The manna ceases shortly after this.

Israel obeys God's instructions and God miraculously caused the walls of the city of Jericho to fall down. Thus, Israel conquered Jericho saving only Rahab and those in her house.

Next Israel suffers defeat in the attempt to conquer the city of Ai because one person, Achan, had taken some of the spoils for himself contrary to God's commands. Achan is put to death for his sin and Israel is then successful in conquering Ai.

The people of the city of Gibeon in the land of Canaan then act deceitfully and thus succeed in getting a peace treaty with Israel. On hearing of this treaty, five kings of the Amorites in Canaan gather themselves to make war against the Gibeonites. However, Joshua defeats these kings and rescues the Gibeonites.

This left Israel in effective control of the central mountainous region of Canaan. Joshua then makes military expeditions in Canaan which bring a large part of the south country under Israel's control. In addition, he defeats a coalition of Canaanite kings, and conquers much of the north country and other regions.

With the preliminary conquest of Canaan now completed, Joshua proceeds to make allotments of the land of Canaan to the nine and a half tribes. For the remaining two and a half tribes had already received their allotment on the east side of the Jordan River. Six cities are also set aside as cities of refuge and certain cities are allocated to the Levites.

At this time, the men of war of the two and a half tribes returned to their homes east of the Jordan River. However, the people of Israel to the west of the river accuse those to the east of rebelling against God and sought to make war against them. It turns out that there was a misunderstanding and so the matter was settled peacefully.

The book of Joshua closes with Joshua's farewell address to Israel, the renewal of Israel's covenant with God, the record of both Joshua's death and the death of Eleazar, Aaron's son.

## **Themes**

- The faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises.
- The necessity of loyalty and obedience to God, and of seeking God's wise counsel if any person or nation is to have victory over their enemies.
- The blessings which God bestows upon those who walk in God's ways and follow His plans.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God's desire to rule the earth through a theocracy, that is, as the supreme Ruler governing humanity through His appointed leaders.
- God's desire for humanity to trust and obey Him.

- God as the One who will root out the wicked among humanity from the land of the living.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD [God].” Proverbs 21:30. “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” Psalm 32:8.

So then, “Every purpose is established by [God’s] counsel: and with [God’s] good advice make war.” Proverbs 20:18. It was at God’s command that Israel made war.

For Satan was at work to cause the Canaanites to “offer their sacrifices unto devils” (Leviticus 17:7), that is, to Satan and his “evil angels” (Psalm 78:49) and “not to God.” Deuteronomy 32:17. God says, “They [the Canaanites] have built...the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake [spoke] it, neither came it into my [God’s] mind.” Jeremiah 19:5.

Now, in naming those who were saved by God from eternal death and who will receive eternal life from Him, God speaks of Rahab, the harlot (prostitute). For God says, “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” Hebrews 11:31.

Moreover, in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, we read “And Salmon begat [was the father of] Booz [Boaz] of [through] Rachab [Rahab].” Matthew 1:5. That is, Salmon and Rahab were the parents of a son named Boaz. So, Rahab was honoured by God in that she was an ancestor of Christ.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will,

believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Be sure to ask God for His counsel in everything you do.
- Follow God's plan for your life and not your own.
- Delight in the blessings of God when you walk in His ways and follow His plans for you.
- Have confidence and assurance of your salvation by God when you do His will at all times.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

*Judges: Approx. 1364  
B.C. – Approx. 1079 B.C.*

**J**UDGES IS THE SEVENTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Shophetim* which is translated “judges.” The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber Judicum*, “The Book of Judges.”

### **Authorship**

Ancient Jewish tradition is that Judges was written by Samuel, the last judge and a prophet of Israel. It was either written before Samuel’s death which occurred before 1011 B.C. or, as indicated by the book’s internal evidence, no later than 1004 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Judges covers about 300 years of the history of Israel starting from Joshua’s death in approximately 1375 B.C. and going up to approximately 1079 B.C.

The book opens with an account of the efforts of the tribes to

drive out the remaining Canaanites in the land and the resulting failure due to their unfaithfulness to God. After this is the statement that all of the generation that crossed over the Jordan River died and there arose a new generation that knew not God nor what God had done for Israel.

Judges then records that this new generation did evil in God's eyes and forsook God. They followed the gods of the Canaanites such as Baal and Ashtaroath, thus provoking God to anger. God, therefore, allowed the Canaanites to oppress Israel and the Israelites were greatly distressed.

Notwithstanding Israel's unfaithfulness to God, and because of the groanings of the people of Israel under their oppressors, God raised up judges who delivered Israel from their enemies all the days of the life of these judges.

But when the judge was dead, the people corrupted themselves more than before by following other gods and they would not turn from their own doings and their stubborn way. Therefore, God would not drive out the Canaanite nations in the land hastily, but left the nations to test Israel to prove whether they would obey God's commandments or not.

This then is the summary by the author of Judges of Israel's history over the period covered by the book and the interpretation of this history. After this is an account of repeated cycles of relapse by Israel into idolatry, followed by the consequent oppression by their enemies, the rise of a judge to deliver them and judge them until his death, when the cycle of sin would begin again.

The first judge recorded by the book of Judges is Othneil who delivers Israel from the Mesopotamians from the northeast. Next comes Ehu who delivers them from the Moabites from the southeast. After this was Shamgar who delivered them from the Philistines from the southwest.

He is followed by Deborah and Barak who throw off the oppression of the northern Canaanites. Then comes Gideon who repels the Midianites from the east.

After Gideon's death, his son Abimelech by his concubine, kills 70 of his brothers with only Jotham, Gideon's youngest son, escaping death. Abimelech is made king and he rules for three years, when a rebellion rises up against him.

Abimelech attempts to quell the rebellion and in the siege of a city, a woman severely wounds him in the head. To prevent anyone from saying that a woman killed him, Abimelech orders his attendant to kill him and so he dies.

Then comes the judges Tola and Jair. They are followed by the judge, Jephthah, who defeats the warring Ammonites from the east. Before the battle, Jephthah vows that if God gives him victory, he would offer to God as a burnt offering the first thing from his household that meets him on his return. His daughter, an only child, meets him first on his return and Jephthah does to her according to his vow.

During the reign of Jephthah, the tribe of Ephraim are dissatisfied with his arrangements for war with the Ammonites and a civil war breaks out between the tribe of Ephraim, west of the Jordan River, and the tribes east of the river. Jephthah was the victor over Ephraim.

Then comes the judges Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. They are followed by the judge, Samson, who possessed unusual physical strength given him by God. Samson through his sinful ways had a number of encounters and escapades with the Philistines who eventually captured him and blinded him in his two eyes.

In the end, Samson repents of his sins and takes revenge on the Philistines by taking hold of the two middle pillars of their temple and pulling them down so that the temple collapses upon him, killing him along with more than 3,000 Philistines.

The book of Judges ends with an account of two events. The first event is the record of the idolatry of an Israelite man named Micah, and the departure of the Levite, his priest, with people from the tribe of Dan who take Micah's objects of worship. Also, in this account is the killing of the inhabitants of the city of Laish

by the Danites who then settle there in their place.

The second event is the sexual abuse of a Levite's concubine by the people of the tribe of Benjamin from the city of Gibeah, and her consequent death. Also, in this account is Israel's war with Benjamin regarding the death of the Levite's concubine. This war resulted in leaving only six hundred men of Benjamin alive, and thus Israel circumvents their own oath so that they obtain wives for the men of Benjamin, in order to prevent the tribe of Benjamin becoming extinct.

The book of Judges concludes with the observation that there was no king in Israel and everyone did that which was right in their own eyes.

## **Themes**

- The tendency of all humanity to idolatry.
- The pervasiveness of humanity's lack of sincere repentance.
- God's forgiveness and mercy towards humanity.
- Satan at work to cause Israel to be disobedient to God.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God's gives godly leaders to humanity to bring about pure worship of God.
- God's attentive ear to the distress of humanity.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God's desire for humanity is that "they...do no iniquity [wickedness]: [but] they walk in his [God's] ways." Psalm 119:3. However, Israel, like all humanity, "tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies [about how sinful human beings can become holy]: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers." Psalm 78: 56, 57.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Worship God and do not be turned aside from God to idolatry.
- Sincerely repent of your sins.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

*Ruth: Approx. 1364  
B.C. – Approx. 1079 B.C.*

**R**UTH IS THE EIGHT book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is “Ruth” which is the name of a woman who is a main character in the book. So, the English title comes down to us from the Hebrew Bible.

### **Authorship**

According to ancient Jewish tradition, the book of Ruth was written by Samuel. If so, it was written no later than 1011 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Ruth opens with the statement that there was a famine in Israel in the days that the judges ruled. Thus, the events recorded by the book occurred in the approximate period 1364 B.C. to 1079 B.C.

According to the book, because of the famine, an Israelite man named Elimelech went to live in the country of Moab with his

wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Then Elimelech died in Moab. Naomi's two sons marry Moabite women and then both of these sons die in Moab.

After this Naomi hears that God has blessed Israel by giving them bread, that is, that the famine had ended. Naomi, therefore, decided to return alone to her homeland, Israel, for she recommended to both of her daughter-in-laws that they should remain in Moab.

One daughter-in-law, Orpah, took Naomi's advice and stayed in Moab but the second daughter-in-law, Ruth, decided to go with Naomi to Israel. Ruth declared that she would never leave Naomi and that Naomi's people would be her people and Naomi's God would be her God.

The two, Naomi and Ruth, arrive in Israel at the time of the barley harvest. In order to provide herself and Naomi with food, Ruth goes out to glean, that is, to gather what was left by the reapers in a barley field. This field happened to belong Boaz, a man of great wealth. He had received a good report of Ruth from his chief servant and had also heard a good report of Ruth's conduct towards her mother-in-law, Naomi.

Boaz, therefore, treated Ruth kindly and suggested that she glean in no other barley field but his. In the evening, Ruth returned home to Naomi with her gleanings and also food she had received from Boaz. When Naomi hears that Ruth had encountered Boaz, she explains that he was a near kinsman, that is, a close relative.

Naomi then forms a plan for Ruth to make known to Boaz that he was a near kinsman and Ruth's interest in entering into marriage with Him. Ruth obeys Naomi, and Boaz is delighted to learn of Ruth's interest in him. Boaz informs Ruth though, that there is a nearer kinsman than him who has first right to carry out the requirements for marriage to Ruth.

Boaz approaches the nearer kinsman about his redeeming the deceased Elimelech's land and also his marrying Ruth according to Jewish requirements and this nearer kinsman waives his right.

So, Boaz marries Ruth and together they had a son named Obed.

The book of Ruth ends with a genealogy including the fact that Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David, who was to become a king of Israel.

## **Themes**

- The faith of a non-Jew in God in the midst of repeated Jewish unfaithfulness to God.
- Devotion to God.
- Humble industry.
- Genuine love.
- Caring.
- Kindness.
- Loyalty.
- Constancy.
- A wise choice.
- God's providence.
- Obedience to wise counsel.
- Generosity.
- Uprightness of character.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God's love for all humanity including the non-Jewish na-

tions.

- God's equal love for women as well as for men.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Speaking of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, God says, "Booz [Boaz] begat [was the father of] Obed of [by] Ruth; and Obed begat [was the father of] Jesse; and Jesse begat [was the father of] David the king." Matthew 1:5, 6. Thus, Ruth became an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

It is true of Ruth that as God says, "Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes [once] were far off are made nigh [near] by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:12, 13.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints" (Ephesians 2:19), who are those in right standing before God, "and [are a part] of the household of God." Ephesians 2:19. In other words, the grace of God triumphed in the conversion of Ruth from unbelief in God to belief in God.

God is "a friend [that] loveth at all times, and [Christ is] a brother [who] is born for adversity." Proverbs 17:17. That is, because of their sin, humanity faced misery and woe in their lives and eternal death (annihilation by God). But just as Boaz was a kinsman redeemer for Ruth in her time of adversity, Christ was born into the world to redeem humanity from their troubles and eternal ruin.

"For thy [humanity's] Maker is thine husband; the LORD [God] of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of [the] Israel [of God]; The God of the whole earth shall he be called." Isaiah 54:5. "I [God] that speak in righteousness, [am] mighty to save" (Isaiah 63:1) from eternal death (annihilation by God) and instead

give eternal life.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Respond positively to God's drawing you to Himself.
- Be devoted to God.
- Be diligent in providing for the necessities of life.
- Have genuine love for all humanity.
- Be kind and show care for others.
- Be loyal to those who are worthy.
- Make wise choices.
- Obey wise counsel.
- Be generous.
- Be upright in character.



## CHAPTER NINE

# 1 Samuel: Approx. 1100 B.C. – 1011 B.C.

**F**IRST SAMUEL IS THE ninth book of the Bible followed by 2 Samuel, the tenth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title “Samuel”. The Septuagint (LXX) divided Samuel into two books. The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber I Samuelis* which is translated “The First Book of Samuel.”

### **Authorship**

According to Jewish tradition the first 24 chapters of the book, 1 Samuel, were written by Samuel, with the remainder of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel written by the prophets Nathan and Gad. Nathan lived to at least 931 B.C.

### **Summary**

First Samuel records the transition of Hebrew (Jewish) govern-

ment from judges to the death of the first king of the single, united monarchy of Israel. This period runs from about 1100 B.C. to 1011 B.C.

The book opens with the account of a man named Elkanah who had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. As it happened, Peninnah had children but Hannah had none. Hannah mourned about her barrenness and on a visit to the Temple she prays to God and makes a vow to God that if God gave her a son, she would give him to God all the days of his life.

God answers Hannah's prayer and she gives birth to a son, Samuel. When Samuel is weaned, she takes him to the Temple and dedicates him to God, leaving Samuel at the Temple with the high priest, Eli. Hannah subsequently had other children.

Hophni and Phineas, two sons of Eli, were priests and they did evil, but Eli did not restrain them. God called Samuel when he was yet a young child and told Samuel what He would do to Eli, Eli's sons, and Eli's descendants. When asked by Eli what God had said, Samuel tells Eli all that God had said to him.

God establishes Samuel as a prophet in Israel. It happens that the Philistines and Israel make war, during which the Philistines capture the Ark of the Covenant which Israel had taken from their own Temple. Hophni and Phineas die in the war, and Eli, when he hears all the news of the war, falls backward and breaks his neck so that he dies.

However, God plagues the Philistines for having the Ark in their possession and so they return the Ark to Israel. After this, The Philistines again make war against Israel but God delivers Israel when Samuel prays for them.

When Samuel is old, he makes his sons judges over Israel but these sons do evil and, therefore, the people reject them. The people then ask Samuel to make them a king like all the other nations. God says to Samuel that, by Israel's request, Israel had rejected God Himself but, nevertheless, God chooses a man named Saul to be king over the Israel. Samuel anoints Saul as king as

commanded by God.

Saul has an initial victory in saving Israel's ally, the Gibeonites, from the Ammonites who had made war against the Gibeonites. However, when the Philistines gather themselves to once again war against Israel, Saul sins by usurping Samuel's role as the priest of Israel.

While Israel cowers in fear of the Philistines, Saul's son, Jonathan, engages the Philistines and achieves a victory over them. Saul and Israel then go into battle with Saul declaring that anyone who eats anything before evening should die. But Jonathan did not know of Saul's command and he, therefore, eats honey that day. Thus, Saul wants to kill Jonathan for disobeying his command, but the people saved Jonathan from Saul's hands.

After this God sends Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, but Saul disobeys God and saves their king, Agag, alive as well as the best of the Amalekite's sheep and oxen. God, therefore, rejects Saul as king and sends Samuel to secretly anoint a young man named David as king of Israel. The Holy Spirit then departs from Saul and an evil spirit, that is, an evil angel also known as a demon, troubles Saul.

The Philistines then gather themselves for war against Israel with a giant named Goliath going before them. The people of Israel are afraid of Goliath and the Philistines, but David bravely kills Goliath. The Philistines, therefore, flee and Israel chases after them killing many of them. Saul then takes David and sets him over the men of war of Israel, and David marries one of Saul's daughters.

But when the people sing and give more praise to David than to Saul, for the victory over the Philistines, Saul becomes jealous of David. Jonathan, however, loves David and acknowledges David as Israel's future king. But Saul persecutes David, trying to kill him numerous times. Thus, David flees from Saul and hides himself, and notwithstanding this, David refuses to kill Saul when he has the opportunity. David also marries again.

After this, Samuel dies and the Philistines make war once more against Israel. God does not answer Saul's prayers regarding the war, and so Saul visits a woman with a familiar spirit, that is, a demon, and Saul believes that he receives an unfavourable message about the war from Samuel who is dead. Shortly after this, Saul, Jonathan, and two other sons of Saul, are killed in battle by the Philistines in 1011 B.C.

## **Themes**

- The sin of parental indulgence of children.
- Leaders who disobey God.
- Satan at work to cause nations to reject God as their King.
- Satan at work to cause anger, envy, and murderous intent, in people's hearts.
- Satan at work to cause repeated wars against God's people.
- Bravery.
- Waiting for God's timing to bring relief from persecution.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as humanity's King, counsellor, and defence, against evil.
- God's rejection of those who do evil.
- God's acceptance of those who worship Him and honour Him.
- The supremacy of God's will over the will of humanity.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?” Proverbs 27:4. “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” James 3:16. Thus, Saul yielded himself to Satan, and so had unending anger and envy toward David, God’s choice as the future king of Israel.

David on the other hand, obeyed God’s command, “Say not thou, I will recompense [repay] evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.” Proverbs 20:22. So, David exhibited much patience and love in his dealings with Saul, believing God was his defence.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Exercise godly restraint and discipline of your children.
- Be obedient to God’s commandments and do not reject God.
- Keep yourself from anger, envy, and murderous intent.
- Be brave and do exploits for God.
- Always wait on God’s timing in the affairs of your life.



## CHAPTER TEN

# 2 Samuel: 1011 B.C. – Approx. 971 B.C.

**S**ECOND SAMUEL IS THE tenth book of the Bible following 1 Samuel, the ninth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title “Samuel”. The Septuagint divided Samuel into two books. The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber II Samuelis* which is translated “The Second Book of Samuel.”

### **Authorship**

According to Jewish tradition, 2 Samuel was written by the prophets Nathan and Gad. Nathan lived to at least 931 B.C.

### **Summary**

The second book of Samuel begins with king Saul’s death in 1011 B.C. and covers most of David’s life up to just before his death in 971 B.C.

The book opens with the account of a young man who brings news of Saul and his son, Jonathan's, death, and the young man claims to have killed Saul. David mourns for Saul and Jonathan and puts the young man to death for killing Saul. The tribe of Judah then anoints David as king over Judah. But Abner, the captain of Saul's army, makes Saul's son, Ishbosheth, king over the remaining tribes of Israel.

After this comes seven and a half years of war between Israel and Judah during which both Abner and Ishbosheth are murdered. Also, David takes the city of Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites, he defeats the Philistines twice, and he decides to build a Temple for God to replace the portable sanctuary built by Moses.

God, however, forbids David to build Him a Temple but promises David that after his death, one of his sons will indeed build the Temple. In addition, God promises David to make a dynasty of his family that would last forever, and so David praises God.

David then defeats a number of the surrounding nations in war and dedicates their treasures and the gifts he received from a king named Toi to God. After this, David becomes king over all Israel and he brings Saul's son, Mephibosheth, to live with him at Jerusalem. David next defeats Ammon and Syria in war.

David then commits adultery with the Bathsheba, the wife of one of his chief soldiers, Uriah. Bathsheba becomes pregnant and when David's schemes to conceal his sin fails, David causes Uriah to be murdered and he marries Bathsheba.

Nathan, the prophet shows David his sins and God's displeasure with David, and David repents of his sins. God accepts David's repentance but tells David that from henceforth David's family was cursed.

Bathsheba gives birth to a son which dies shortly after being born. She then has another son named Solomon. David's son, Amnon, then rapes his sister Tamar, and Absalom, another son of David, murders Amnon in revenge and Absalom flees. After two

years, Joab, the captain of David's army, orchestrates the return of Absalom and his reconciliation with David.

But Absalom, who covets David's throne, rebels against David, and David and those loyal to him have to flee Jerusalem. Absalom raises an army and goes against David and his followers, and the rebellion ends with the death of Absalom and the restoration of David and his followers to Jerusalem.

A man named Sheba then rebels against David and the rest of Israel are turned away from David to follow Sheba. Joab and David's army, however, pursue Sheba and the rebellion ends with the death of Sheba and the reconciliation of Israel with David.

God then curses Israel with a three-year famine because of Saul's killing of the Gibeonites, who were allies of Israel and under Israel's protection. David makes amends to the Gibeonites and God takes away the famine from Israel.

The Philistines again make war with Israel and David defeats them. David then sings a psalm (a sacred song) of thanksgiving to God. David next speaks words of encouragement to Israel and the book of 2 Samuel then records the exploits of David's mighty men of valour.

After this, David angers God with his counting of the people of Israel. David afterwards repents of his sin and God gives David a choice of three punishments for his sin. David chooses to fall into the hand of God and so God sends a pestilence upon Israel. As a result, 70 thousand men of Israel die.

The prophet, Gad, then tells David to raise up an altar to God in the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. David purchases the threshing floor, builds an altar there, and God takes away the plague from Israel.

## Themes

- Trust in God's help and guidance.

- Satan at work to cause repeated wars against God's people.
- Satan at work to cause rape, incest, and adultery.
- Satan at work to cause rebellion against God's appointed leaders.
- Satan at work to cause leaders to sin.
- God's forgiveness when any person repents of their sins.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as humanity's help and guide in the affairs of life.
- God as the One who knows the future.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, "I [God] have made a covenant with my chosen, I [God] have sworn unto David my servant." Psalm 89:3. "His [David's] seed [descendants]...will I [God] make to endure for ever, and his [David's] throne as the days of heaven." Psalm 89:29.

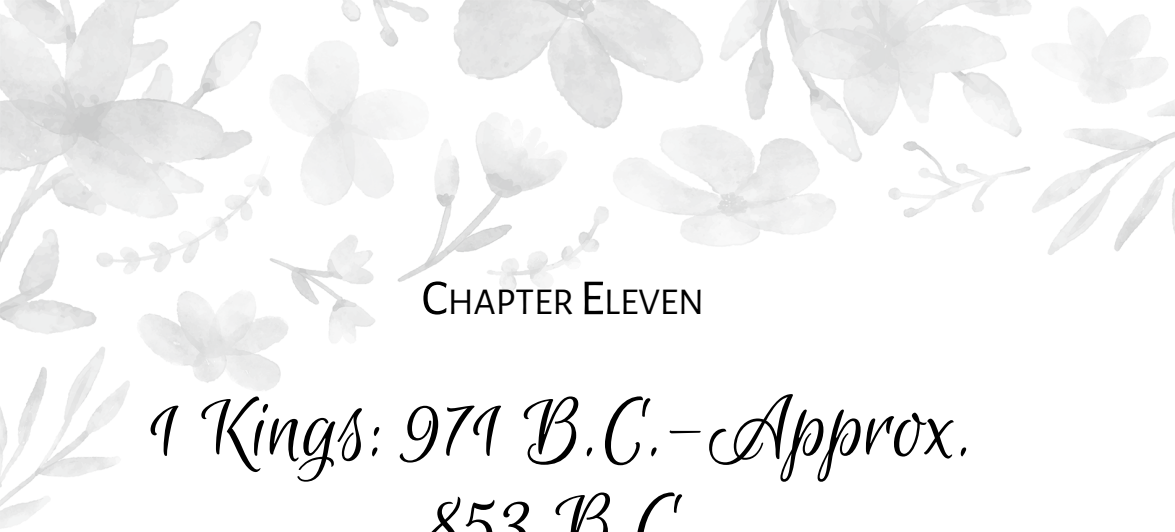
In fulfilment of this promise, it is "Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made [born] of the seed [descendants] of David according to [in] the flesh." Romans 1:3. For David belonged to the tribe of Judah and so, just as was prophesied, Christ came to the earth as a descendant of Jacob's son, Judah, and of David.

Christ "was caught up [ascended] unto God [in heaven], and to his throne." Revelation 12:5. Furthermore, it is "Christ...who is over all [creation], God blessed for ever" (Romans 9:5) and of whom God the Father says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Psalm 45:6. Thus, through Christ, a descendant of David, David's throne will endure forever.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Trust in God's help and guidance.
- Do not commit sexual sins such as rape, incest, and adultery.
- Do not rebel against God's appointed leaders.
- Repent of your sins, trusting in God's forgiveness of sins.
- Follow God's plan for your life.
- Give thanks to God for His wonderful blessings.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1 Kings: 971 B.C. – Approx.  
853 B.C.

**F**IRST KINGS IS THE eleventh book of the Bible followed by 2 Kings, the twelfth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title *Melechim* which is translated “Kings.” The Septuagint divided Kings into two books. The English titles became 1 Kings and 2 Kings.

### **Authorship**

The book of 1 Kings is a compilation of material from a variety of Jewish (Hebrew) sources brought together by an inspired editor. Jewish tradition is that the editor was the prophet Jeremiah whose ministry began about 626 B.C. and extended beyond 586 B.C.

### **Summary**

First Kings covers the period from just before king David’s death in 971 B.C. up to the reign of king Ahaziah of the northern kingdom, Israel, in 853 B.C. in the time when the original single, united

monarchy of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The name of the southern kingdom was Judah and the northern kingdom was called Israel.

The book opens with David being ill and being cared for by a young woman. David's son, Adonijah, makes an effort to seize the throne but fails when David makes Solomon, another son of David, king. Solomon as king spares Adonijah's life. David gives a farewell charge to Solomon and he dies after this.

Solomon then puts Adonijah to death for once again attempting to seize the throne. Solomon also puts to death Joab, captain of David's army, for murders he had previously committed, as well as Shimei, who had cursed David as David fled from Absalom. For Shimei disobeys Solomon's restrictions on his movements. Next, Solomon puts Abiathar out of the priesthood for his part in Absalom's rebellion against David.

Solomon then marries the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. After this God appears to Solomon in a dream and gives Solomon the opportunity to ask anything he wishes from God. Solomon asks God for an understanding heart to rule Israel and God gives him a wise and understanding heart and promises to also give Solomon great riches and honour.

Next, comes an account where Solomon displays the wisdom given to him by God. Solomon then organises the government of Israel, and people come from all over the world to hear his wisdom. After this, is an account of the construction of the temple and Solomon's house which take seven years and thirteen years, respectively, to be built.

The book of 1 Kings then records that when the ark was placed in the newly-built Temple, the glory of God filled the Temple. Solomon then prays before all the congregation of Israel and the people rejoice in God for His blessings. Next, God appears to Solomon a second time in a dream and repeats God's promise to establish David's throne forever.

After this is a record of various enterprises of Solomon, in-

cluding the visit of the Queen of Sheba, who comes to Solomon bearing gifts to hear his wisdom and see his lavish, royal court.

After this, the record is that Solomon marries many foreign wives, contrary to God's command, and these wives turn away his heart from worshipping God to worship other gods. Therefore, God rebukes Solomon and tells him that God will take almost all the kingdom away from him.

God then stirs up adversaries against Solomon, including his servant, Jeroboam. God also sends a prophet to tell Jeroboam that God would take ten tribes away from Solomon and instead give Jeroboam rule over them. Solomon seeks to kill Jeroboam for his uprising against Solomon and Jeroboam flees to Egypt. Solomon then dies.

The evil Rehoboam, Solomon's son, then seeks to rule over all Israel but his harsh treatment of the people leads to the revolt of ten northern tribes. So, Rehoboam rules over only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the south.

Jeroboam, known as Jeroboam I, becomes king over the ten tribes making up the northern kingdom, Israel, while Rehoboam reigns over the southern kingdom, Judah. Evil Jeroboam I institutes idol worship in Israel.

Successive kings of Judah after this are the evil Abijam, godly Asa, and godly Jehoshaphat. The successive kings of Israel after Jeroboam I are the evil Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, Ahab, and Ahaziah.

During Ahab's reign, God raises up the prophet Elijah to announce a drought to Ahab. God hides Elijah from Ahab, feeding Elijah by a raven, and then hides him with a widow and her son, providing food for them all by a miracle. The widow's son dies and God does a miracle through Elijah to bring widow's son back to life.

After three and a half years of drought, God sends Elijah to challenge Ahab, the false prophets, and their gods. Israel gathers to see the contest, and the false prophets fail to have their gods

bring down fire from heaven. But God answers Elijah's prayer by fire and, so, Israel turns to God. Then Elijah kills the defeated false prophets, rain falls, and Elijah runs for his life from the enraged Jezebel, Ahab's wife.

At God's command, Elijah calls Elisha to join him in ministry. After this Elijah prophesies of Ahab's death for Ahab's murder of a man named Naboth in order to gain possession of Naboth's vineyard. So, Ahab dies in battle and his son, Ahaziah reigns.

## **Themes**

- Wisdom from God.
- Polygamy.
- Extravagance and worldly display.
- Apostasy, that is, a turning away from God, leading to idolatry.
- Godly and ungodly leadership.
- Faithfulness to God.
- Satan at work to lead people away from God's commandments.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as the One who can give wisdom, riches, and honour.
- God can communicate with humanity through dreams.
- God speaks to humanity through his prophets.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

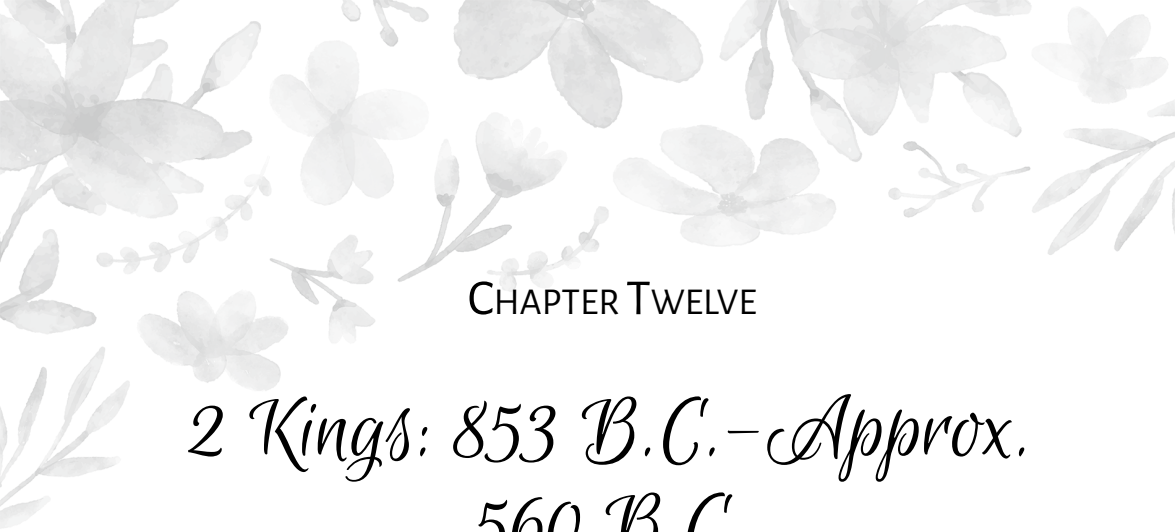
In marrying ungodly, foreign wives, God says, “Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish [idolatrous] women cause to sin.” Nehemiah 13:26.

When Solomon was old, he repented of his sins and he said, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear [Reverence] God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” Ecclesiastes 12:13. God accepted Solomon’s repentance and, thus, three books of the Bible, namely, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon, consist of the writings of Solomon.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Ask God with a sincere heart for wisdom.
- Avoid extravagance and worldly display.
- Do not marry anyone who is ungodly.
- Be careful not to be led astray from God by ungodly leaders.



## CHAPTER TWELVE

# 2 Kings: 853 B.C. – Approx. 560 B.C.

**S**ECOND KINGS IS THE twelfth book of the Bible following 1 Kings, the eleventh book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title *Melechim* which is translated “Kings.” The Septuagint divided Kings into two books. The English titles became 1 Kings and 2 Kings.

### **Authorship**

The book of 2 Kings is a compilation of material from a variety of Jewish (Hebrew) sources. Jewish tradition is that the editor was the prophet Jeremiah whose ministry began about 626 B.C. and extended beyond 586 B.C. The last few verses of 2 Kings were probably written by someone else.

### **Summary**

Second Kings covers the time of the divided kingdom from the reign of king Ahaziah of the northern kingdom, Israel, in 853 B.C.

up to the release of king Jehoiachin of the southern kingdom, Judah, from prison in Babylon in 560 B.C.

The book opens with an account of evil king Ahaziah's injury, the prophet Elijah's prophesy of Ahaziah's death, and Ahaziah's attempts to kill Elijah. Ahaziah dies and his evil brother, Jehoram, reigns. Elijah is then translated, that is, God takes Elijah to heaven without Elijah experiencing death.

The prophet Elisha succeeds Elijah and 1 Kings records a number of miracles that God performs through Elisha. These miracles included the parting of the Jordan River so that he could cross over it, the healing of undrinkable waters so that it becomes drinkable, the cursing of mocking children who are then mauled by bears, the provision of water for an army, the increase of a poor widow's oil, and the raising of a dead child to life.

Other miracles were the removal of poison from a pot of soup, the multiplication of food, the healing of Naaman the leper, the striking of his covetous servant Gehazi with leprosy, causing an iron axe head to float in water, the disclosing of the king of Syria's secret war plans to the king of Israel, striking the Syrian army with blindness, and the fulfilled prophecy of plenty of food for the famine-stricken city of Samaria.

The story of Elisha's miracles also caused the restoration of land to a Shunammite woman by the king, and Elisha prophesied that Hazael would become king of Syria. Next, is the record of the reign of evil king Jehoram in Judah, his death, and the ascension of his evil son, Ahaziah, to the throne.

Joram (Jehoram) king of Israel is wounded in battle and so Ahaziah, king of Judah visits Joram. Elisha commands a young man of the prophets to anoint Jehu as king of Israel. Jehu then executes Joram, Ahaziah, Jezebel, the wife of deceased king Ahab, Ahab's sons, Ahab's government, relatives and close acquaintances, his priests, and all the worshippers of the idol, Baal. Nevertheless, Jehu continues in the sin of idol worship, which was instituted by Jeroboam I, in the worshipping of golden calves.

After Jehu's death, his son Jehoahaz reigns in Israel. In Judah, Athaliah, the mother of king Ahaziah of Judah whom Jehu killed, seizes the throne. She kills all the royal heirs leaving only Joash (Jehoash), who was hidden by his nurse, alive.

Athaliah's reign ends when Joash ascends to the throne and Athaliah is put to death. Joash does right in the sight of God while Jehoiada, the high priest, lives, but he afterwards does evil. At his death his son, Amaziah, reigns in Judah.

Elisha dies and it happens that in burying a man in Elisha's tomb, when the dead body touches Elisha's bones, the person comes back to life by a miracle of God.

After the death of evil king Jehoahaz of Israel, a series of evil kings reign in Israel. These kings were Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, defeats Hoshea taking Israel captive in 722 B.C., scattering them in Assyria, and bringing in foreigners to take their place in Israel, thus ending the northern kingdom of Israel.

After evil king Amaziah of Judah, evil Azariah (Uzziah) reigns, then good king Jotham, and then evil king Ahaz. Next, comes godly king Hezekiah who destroys idolatry in Judah. God saves Hezekiah from the invasion of king Sennacherib of Assyria by killing 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a night, and God heals Hezekiah from his sickness. After Hezekiah, evil kings Manasseh and Amon reign in Judah.

Next, comes godly king Josiah of Judah who destroys idolatry in Judah, observes the Passover, and makes widespread religious reforms. Josiah is killed in battle by Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt. After his death, evil kings Jehoahaz, Jehoakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah reign in Judah.

The southern kingdom of Judah comes to an end when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, takes them captive to Babylon in three stages, namely, in 605 B.C., in 597 B.C., and in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar leaves Gedaliah as governor in Judah, but Gedaliah is

killed and the people, in fear of retribution from Nebuchadnezzar, flee to Egypt. After 37 years, Jehoiachin is released from prison in Babylon in 560 B.C. and is free for the rest of his life.

## **Themes**

- Ungodly leaders and godly leaders.
- Miracles from God.
- Captivity to enemies because of turning away from God.
- Satan at work to lead people into sin.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God sends His prophets into the world as a godly example.
- God punishes ungodly leaders and evil nations.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach [disgrace] to any people.” Proverbs 14:34. This was exemplified by the evil kingdoms of Israel and Judah which God allowed to go into captivity.

Now, when Christ was on earth, it happened that “Jesus [Christ] taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment [clothing] was white as the light.” Matthew 17:1, 2.

“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias [Elijah] talking with him [Christ].” Matthew 17:3. “Who appeared

in glory” (Luke 9:31), being honoured by God, “and spake of his [Christ’s] decease [death] which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” Luke 9:31.

That is, Moses who had died was resurrected, in other words, brought back to life by God, and taken to heaven. So, at the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, both Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Christ.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not be turned away from God by ungodly leaders.
- Follow the godly example of the true prophets sent by God.
- Believe that God is able to do miracles.
- Trust God even in difficult times.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# 1 Chronicles: Approx. 3958 B.C. – Approx. 400 B.C.

**1** CHRONICLES IS THE thirteenth book of the Bible followed by 2 Chronicles, the fourteenth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title *dibre hayyamim* which is translated “Events of the days.” The Septuagint divided it into two books. The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Chronicorum Liber*, “Book of Chronicles.”

### **Authorship**

The book of 1 Chronicles is an original work incorporating material from numerous Jewish (Hebrew) sources under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Early Jewish writers generally agree that 1 Chronicles was written by the priest, Ezra, by about 400 B.C.

### **Summary**

First Chronicles covers the period from creation in approximately

3958 B.C. to about 400 B.C. It does so by first selectively tracing genealogies from Adam, the first human being created by God, in about 3958 B.C. to the generation living in about 400 B.C.

The rest of 1 Chronicles overlaps the contents of 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, and 1 Kings, beginning with the death of king Saul and ending with the death of king David. While the book contains some events in the history of Saul and David, it also stresses the moral and spiritual aspects of these events.

So, after the genealogies in the book, there is the record of king Saul's death and that he died for the sins he committed against God. Then comes an account of the anointing of David as king, and David's capture of the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites. David grows greater and greater because God is with him.

Next, comes the exploits of the mighty men of David's army and a list of the other valiant men of his army. After this comes David's attempt to move the Ark in a new cart from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. In the process of removal, Uzza incurs God's anger and dies. So, David leaves the Ark with the family of Obed-edom and God blesses this family while the Ark was with them.

David's house and household are then described and his victories over the Philistines. Next, is the record of how David brings the Ark to Jerusalem with joy, accompanied by music, with the Levites bearing the Ark according to God's commandments. The psalm (a sacred song) of praise which David wrote and delivered to the singers and musicians on that day is recorded next.

After this is the account of David's purpose to build a Temple for God, God's message that He would not allow David to build it, but David's son would build the Temple. Also, God tells David that He would establish David's throne forever and so David prays a prayer of praise to God.

Next, is the record of David's victories over the Philistines, Syria, Edom, and the Ammonites. Satan then tempts David to count Israel, and David yields to Satan's temptation and counts Israel. God gives David three choices for punishment for this sin,

and so there was a plague upon Israel. God then tells David to build an altar to Him in the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite. David does so and the plague ceases.

Next, is the record that David prepares much material for the building of the Temple, and that David gives a charge to his son, Solomon, and the leaders of Israel. When David is old, he makes his son, Solomon, king of Israel.

After this is an account of David organising for the worship service in the Temple to be built, the officers among the Levites to praise God with the musical instruments that David had made, as well as the 24 divisions of the descendants of Aaron as musicians. Also is a record of the Levites as gatekeepers, officers over the treasury, and officers over work outside the Temple, in addition to captains and stewards.

Next, is David's charge to Israel and to Solomon, and David gives to Solomon the pattern which God gave him of the Temple to be built. David then outlines to Israel the precious things that he had set aside for the building of the Temple and asks the people who among them is willing to consecrate themselves to the service of the Temple. In response, the leaders and rulers offered to God willingly.

David then blesses the people and prays a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Solomon then sits on the throne of David instead of his father and prospers with all Israel obeying him. After this, the record is that God magnified Solomon exceedingly and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as no other king before him in Israel had.

The book closes with the record that David reigned forty years over Israel and that he died in a good, old age full of riches and honour, and his son, Solomon, reigned in his stead.

## **Themes**

- Genealogies.
- The organisation of the worship of God.
- The organisation of musicians and the singing of sacred songs.
- Prayers of praise and thanksgiving.
- The blessings of God.
- God's guidance.
- Punishment for disobeying God's commandments.
- The life history of a godly leader.
- A spiritual view from God of one person's life experience.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God can give humanity His plans for any work to be done.
- God is with those who please Him.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God said to king Saul of Israel, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD [God] hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD [God] hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD [God] commanded thee." 1 Samuel 13:14. Thus, God rejected Saul

as king, and chose David to be king over all Israel.

Now, “David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD [God] loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah [beloved of God], because of the LORD [God].” 2 Samuel 12:24, 25.

Thus, both David and his son, Solomon, were loved by God because they repented of their sins, had faith in the promises of God, and because they had a heart of love like God’s heart, for “God is love.” 1 John 4:8.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Be careful to worship God in an acceptable way.
- Delight in singing and listening to sacred songs.
- Pray prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Obey God so that you may receive His blessings.
- Follow God’s plan for your life and not your own plans.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# 2 Chronicles: 971 B.C. – 536 B.C.

**2** CHRONICLES IS THE fourteenth book of the Bible following 1 Chronicles, the thirteenth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title *dibre hayyamim* which is translated “Events of the days.” The Septuagint divided it into two books. The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Chronicorum Liber*, “Book of Chronicles.”

### **Authorship**

The book of 2 Chronicles is an original work incorporating material from numerous Jewish (Hebrew) sources under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Early Jewish writers generally agree that 2 Chronicles was written by the priest, Ezra, by about 400 B.C.

### **Summary**

Second Chronicles covers the period from the beginning of king

Solomon of Israel's reign in 971 B.C. to the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia, in 536 B.C. The book overlaps the contents of 1 Kings and 2 Kings, focussing mainly on the southern kingdom of Judah, and it stresses the moral and spiritual aspects of the events it records.

The book opens with God appearing to Solomon in a dream and telling him to ask what He wants God to give him. Solomon asks for wisdom and knowledge to rule Israel and God gives him these and also promises to give Solomon riches, wealth, and honour.

Next, is a record of Solomon's wealth, the construction of the Temple, the placement of the Ark in the completed Temple, the dedication of the Temple with music and singing, at which the glory of God fills the Temple.

Solomon then prays consecrating Israel to God, fire comes down from heaven and consumes the burnt offering on the altar, the glory of God fills the Temple, and they celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

God again appears to Solomon confirming that Solomon's throne would endure forever if Solomon and Israel obey God. Otherwise, God would curse Israel. Solomon then makes fortifications in Israel, makes servants of the Canaanites, organises officers and men of war in Israel, and brings gold from Ophir to Israel via ships.

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon bearing gifts and Solomon answers all her questions, sending her away with gifts. Next, is a record of Solomon's wealth, his death, and his son, Rehoboam's reign, resulting in the kingdom being divided into two kingdoms—the northern kingdom called Israel and the southern kingdom called Judah.

Rehoboam forsakes God and all of the northern kingdom, Israel, with him forsake God's law. So, God brings Shishak, king of Egypt, against Jerusalem. After this, is a record of the kings of Judah. Thus, after Rehoboam, evil Abijam reigns in Judah. Godly king Asa then reigns and turns the people of Judah and many of the people of Israel to God.

Next reigns godly king Jehoshaphat, who prays to God when many nations come against Judah and God delivers Judah from their enemies. After Jehoshaphat reigns evil king Jehoram, against whom God causes Edom and Libnah to revolt because he had forsaken God.

After this, evil king Ahaziah reigns and his death at the hand of Jehu was of God. Next Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, reigns and she kills all the royal heirs except Joash (Jehoash) who escapes from her.

Athaliah is put to death when Joash ascends the throne of Judah. And Joash does right while Jehoiada the priest lives, but Joash later murders Jehoiada's son, Zechariah. God, therefore, causes Judah to be defeated by the Syrians.

Next, evil king Amaziah reigns. He defeats Edom but afterwards worships Edom's gods, hence, God determines to destroy Amaziah. Azariah (Uzziah) then reigns who does right and is helped by God till he is strong. But Azariah (Uzziah) lifts himself up in pride and God strikes him with leprosy because he sought to usurp the role of the priests.

Good king Jotham then reigns whom God gives victory over the Ammonites because he set his heart to follow God's ways. After Jotham, evil king Ahaz reigns and, because of the sins of Ahaz, God brings Judah low. Next, reigns godly king Hezekiah who brings Judah as well as some of the people of the northern kingdom, Israel, back to God.

After Hezekiah, wicked king Manasseh reigns, who repents of his sins when he is taken captive by the king of Assyria, and whom God restores to the throne of Judah. Evil king Amon then reigns followed by godly king Josiah, who initiates religious reform in Judah and who dies at the hand of Necho, king of Egypt.

Next four evil kings, Jehoahaz, Jehoakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, reign. God allows Judah to go into captivity to king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, because they had sinned in the same manner like the other nations. For Judah had polluted the

Temple of God, mocked the messengers of God, despised God's words to them, and misused the prophets of God, so that the anger of God arose against Judah till there was no remedy.

God, through Jeremiah the prophet, had declared that Judah would remain in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. At the end of the 70 years, in 536 B.C., Cyrus, king of Persia, issues a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

## **Themes**

- Prayer.
- The glory of God manifested to human eyes.
- God's judgments on ungodly leaders.
- Captivity because of turning away from God.
- Satan at work to lead people into sin.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God sends His prophets into the world to turn people to Him.
- God punishes ungodly leaders and evil nations.
- God gives victories to those who pray in sincerity.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“Thou, O Lord [God], art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” Psalm 86:15.  
“There is forgiveness with thee [God], that thou mayest be feared


[reverenced].” Psalm 130:4. Thus, God was willing to forgive Israel of their sins.

So, God said, “Oh that my people had hearkened unto [obeyed] me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD [God] should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.” Psalm 81:13-15.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Although God is invisible, believe in God and worship Him.
- Pray to God in sincerity at all times and He will bless you.
- Praise God at all times.
- Avoid God’s judgments by not following ungodly leaders.
- Be vigilant to prevent Satan from leading you into sin.
- Obey the words God sends to you by His true prophets.



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# *Ezra: 537 B.C. – Approx. 457 B.C.*

**E**ZRA IS THE FIFTEENTH book of the Bible followed by Nehemiah, the sixteenth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title “Ezra” which is the name of a man who is a main character in the book. The Septuagint divided it into two books. The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber Primus Esdrae*, “The First Book of Ezra.” The English title is “The Book of Ezra.”

### **Authorship**

According to Jewish tradition, the combined book of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Hebrew Bible had Ezra, the priest, as its chief author with Nehemiah being the one to complete the work. The book of Ezra was written by about 400 B.C.

## Summary

The book of Ezra covers the period 537 B.C. to 515 B.C., followed by a gap of 57 years from 515 B.C. to 458 B.C. for which nothing is recorded, and ending with a record of events in 457 B.C.

Ezra opens with a decree of Cyrus, king of Persia, allowing the Jews in Persia to return to their homeland to the city of Jerusalem in the province of Judah. Cyrus' decrees that the Temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt, he restores the vessels that had been taken from Solomon's Temple, and encourages the Jews who remained behind in Persia to give freewill offerings to those Jews returning to Jerusalem.

So, God raises up a company of Jews to return from Persia and these Jews take with them the vessels of the Temple and the offerings from their fellow Jews in Persia. Zerubbabel leads to Jerusalem 42,360 Jews made up of leaders, ordinary people, priests, Levites, as well as 7,337 servants of the Jews.

In Jerusalem, some of the leaders give gifts for the new Temple to be built and the people disperse to live in various cities in the province of Judah. After this, the daily burnt offerings in Jerusalem are restarted and the Jews hire masons and carpenters from Zidon and Tyre to bring cedar trees from Lebanon by sea according to a grant given by Cyrus, king of Persia.

Next, the Jews lay the foundation of the new Temple and they celebrate with music, singing, and shouts of joy. But those elderly people who had seen the magnificence of the first Temple, Solomon's temple, wept with a loud voice.

The adversaries of the Jews offer to help them in building the new Temple and are rejected by the Jews. These adversaries then trouble the Jews in their building of a new Temple, all the days of Cyrus until the reign of Darius, King of Persia, thus seeking to frustrate the Jews' purpose.

After this, in the beginning of the reign of king Ahasuerus of Persia, the enemies of the Jews write an accusation of the Jews to the king. Later, in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia these enemies write to the king who responds with a command for them to stop the work of the Jews in building a new Temple. So, the adversaries force the Jews to stop work on the Temple.

God then raises up two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, through whom God encourages the Jews to resume building the Temple. As a result, Zerubbabel leads the people in building the house of God, the Temple.

Tatnai, the governor, opposes the Jews and he and others write to king Darius asking him to advise them of his will in the matter of the building of a Temple by the Jews. Darius responds in favour of the Jews and instructs Tatnai and the others to give the Jews all that they need at the king's expense. Tatnai obeys Darius and, so, the Temple is completed in 515 B.C., it is dedicated to God, and the Jews celebrate the Passover.

The book of Ezra then skips a period 57 years and next picks up with the account of another group of Jews returning to Jerusalem from Persia in 457 B.C. These Jews are led by Ezra, to whom king Artaxerxes of Persia gives gifts and a letter authorising Ezra to complete the work of restoration of Jerusalem. Ezra then praises God for His blessing in making Artaxerxes favourable to the Jews.

Next, is a listing of those men totalling 1,754, who were about to return to Jerusalem from Persia. There were no Levites among them, so Ezra sends for some of the Levites to join him. Ezra then proclaims a fast to seek God's protection on their journey from Persia and God does indeed bless them. They arrive safely in Jerusalem.

Ezra is distressed to learn that the Jews in Jerusalem and the province of Judah have married foreign wives, who have introduced idolatry to the Jews. In response, Ezra prays to God confessing the sins of the Jews. Then many of the men, women, and children of the Jews, come to Ezra weeping, confessing their

sins, and saying that they will put away the foreign wives and the children that were born to them.

Ezra then makes a proclamation that all Jews should gather themselves to him or suffer the consequences. All the Jews assemble and agree to put away their foreign wives and their children and this they do willingly within three months. Lastly, there is a list of the priests, Levites, and people who had sinned in this matter of marrying foreign wives.

## **Themes**

- The good favour of foreign rulers to God's people.
- The return from captivity to the homeland.
- Trust in God.
- Prayer.
- The building of a new Temple in Jerusalem.
- Satan at work to raise up opposition to God's people.
- The efficiency of recordkeeping and communications between remote areas in ancient times.
- Godly leaders.
- The sin of marriage with the ungodly.
- Repentance.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as the One who grants His people favour with the ungodly.

- God as He who raises up prophets.
- God as He who stirs up the hearts of people to do His will.
- God who blesses human enterprises according to His will.
- God as He who overrules the schemes of Satan.
- God as He who gives to humanity skill in writing and recordkeeping.
- God who raises up godly leaders.
- God as He who forbids His people to marry the ungodly.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God prophesied of the Jews through the prophet, Jeremiah, “That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I [God] will visit you.” Jeremiah 29:10. Thus, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon which began in 605 B.C. ended in 536 B.C.

The decree of king Artaxerxes of Persia in 457 B.C. concerning the Jews is the start of the 70-week prophecy of Daniel Chapter 9 in the Bible. “Seventy weeks are determined upon [allotted to] thy people [the Jews] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression [evildoing], and to make an end of sins.” Daniel 9:24.

Let us now consider the day-for-a-year principle given in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.” Numbers 14:34.

“And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Ezekiel 4:6.

The day-for-a-year principle applies to the interpretation of some time prophecies such as the 70-week prophecy. According to this principle, 70 prophetic weeks = (70 weeks x 7 days per week) = 490 prophetic days is actually to be interpreted as 490 literal years in the 70-week prophecy.

Now we want to calculate when the 490 years which started in 457 B.C. ended. Since there is no year zero between 1 A.D. and 1 B.C., then the number of years from 457 B.C. to the beginning of 1 A.D. is 456 years and not 457 years. Thus, the 490 years from 457 B.C. is 456 years + 34 years = 490 years. So, the 490 years starting in 457 B.C. ended 34 A.D.

The year 34 A.D. marks the end of the Jews' probation given by God for them to accept Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah and to become Christ's followers. From the beginning, when God chose Abraham, God intended that Abraham's descendants would be holy and would cooperate with God in sharing the gospel with the world. But the Jews failed to do this. In fact, they refused to believe the gospel and they were guilty of putting Jesus Christ to death.

The 70-week prophecy of 490 years starts at the same time as the 2300-day prophecy in Daniel Chapter 8 in the Bible. The latter prophecy states, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. It refers to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary from sins by means of God's Investigative Judgment.

Now God says, "Some men's [people's] sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men [people] they follow after." 1 Timothy 5:24. So, the Investigative Judgment would only consider every human being who had ever repented of their sins prior to the expiration of the human race's probation from God.

The sins of such persons went before them to the Investigative Judgment and God looks to see if they remained repentant to the end of their lives on earth. If so, they will be acquitted in

the Investigative Judgment and destined to receive eternal life from God. If not, they will be judged guilty and be condemned to eternal death (annihilation by God) along with those persons whose sins did not go before them to the Investigative Judgment.

Now, applying the day-for-a-year principle to the 2300-day prophecy, we find that it is to be interpreted as 2,300 literal years. Since this prophecy started in 457 B.C. when the 70-week prophecy of 490 years did, then  $(2300 \text{ years} - 490 \text{ years}) = 1810$  years remaining after the end of the 70-week prophecy in 34 A.D. So,  $(34 \text{ A.D.} + 1810 \text{ years}) = 1844 \text{ A.D.}$  is the end of the 2300-day prophecy.

In 1844 A.D., the Investigative Judgment began: “The judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:10. These books contain a record of the deeds, good or evil, of every human being who would ever live. The Investigative Judgment begins with the dead and then passes to those living and then humanity’s probation ends. At that time, Jesus Christ comes to the earth a second time.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Follow God’s opening providence in your life.
- Pray when opposed by Satan, and trust in God to deliver you.
- Do not marry the ungodly.
- Repent of your sins.
- Praise God when He grants you favour with the ungodly.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# Nehemiah: 445 B.C. – Approx. 410 B.C.

**N**EHEMIAH IS THE SIXTEENTH book of the Bible following Ezra, the fifteenth book of the Bible. These two books appeared in the Hebrew Bible as one book with the title “Ezra” which is the name of a man who is a main character in the book. The Septuagint divided it into two books. The English title comes down to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber Nehemiae*, “The Book of Nehemiah.”

### **Authorship**

According to Jewish tradition, the combined book of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Hebrew Bible had Ezra, the priest, as its chief author with Nehemiah being the one to complete the work. The book of Nehemiah was written by about 400 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Nehemiah covers the period 445 B.C. to approxi-

mately 410 B.C.

The book opens with news coming to Nehemiah in Persia about the condition of the Jews in Jerusalem. Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer, weeps, fasts, and prays, asking God to grant him favour with the king of Persia.

Nehemiah asks king Artaxerxes of Persia for permission to go to Jerusalem, for letters to grant him a safe journey, and letters regarding timber from the king's forest to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. So, God causes the king to grant Nehemiah all his request.

In Jerusalem, Nehemiah inspects the walls by night. He then encourages the Jews to build the walls and the people rise up to build. Amid the scorn of their adversaries, Nehemiah had faith in God.

Next, comes the names of the builders and the work they did. Their enemies ridicule them and threaten to attack but prayer was made to God for His protection. So, Nehemiah set a watch day and night. The Jews express fear and Nehemiah encourages them to trust in God, arms the people, plans for battle, and so the work continues.

The people then complain of debts, mortgages, and their bondage to their fellow Jews. Nehemiah rebukes the usurers and causes them to make restitution. He also points the people to his own example of not taking an allowance as governor and his own hospitality.

The adversaries send messages to Nehemiah that he should meet with them, but Nehemiah refuses because he knows that they mean to harm him. Next, the adversaries come to Nehemiah with an open letter containing accusations which Nehemiah denies. After this, a Jew urges Nehemiah to hide with him in the Temple for fear. But Nehemiah knows God had not sent this Jew to him, that he had been hired by the Jews' enemies.

The wall is completed in 52 days. There are secret communications between the nobles of the Jews and the Jews' adversaries,

who send letters to Nehemiah to put him in fear.

Nehemiah then plans a census based on a register of the genealogy of the Jews who had previously returned from Persia. The census is taken. Nehemiah next puts some of the priests out of the priesthood because their record was not found in the register. The people then give gifts to the Temple.

Next, the people gather together and ask Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses. So, Ezra reads from it in their hearing. The people understand the reading and they go away celebrating this. On the second day, Ezra again reads to the people, who on hearing of the feast of the seventh month, celebrate it.

After this, the people assemble for a fast, confessing their sins and the sins of their ancestors. Some of the Levites encourage the Jews to bless the Lord, to remember God's goodness to them, and to remember their own sins. The princes, Levites, priests, and the people, then make a covenant with God to live according to God's law which was given to them by Moses.

The Jewish rulers then dwell in Jerusalem. Lots are cast to select the remaining dwellers of Jerusalem and the rest who will dwell in the other cities of the province of Judah. The Jews then dedicate the walls of Jerusalem to God and organise the priests and Levites in the Temple.

After this, the Jews separate themselves from the mixed-race multitude of people. Next, Nehemiah cleanses the Temple from the household stuff of an enemy of the Jews which were in one of the outer rooms. Nehemiah then returns to the king of Persia and after certain days he again obtains leave from the king to go back to Jerusalem. There Nehemiah causes the people to re-establish the portions given to the Levites.

Nehemiah then finds that the Jews are violating the Sabbath day by doing work, bearing burdens, and buying and selling on the Sabbath. So, he shuts the city gates before the start of the Sabbath and he chases away the foreign merchants lodged outside the city walls.

After this, Nehemiah finds that the Jews had intermarried with the surrounding nations contrary to God's command. He, therefore, contends with the people and causes them to reform. Lastly, is the record that Nehemiah appoints the priests and the Levites to their work.

## **Themes**

- Prayer by a godly leader who trusts in God.
- Satan at work to cause opposition to God's people.
- A determination to work according to God's will.
- A desire to hear God's words.
- Disobedience to God's commands.
- Repentance.
- The rich taking advantage of the poor.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God grants His people favour with the ungodly.
- God answers the prayers of those who trust in Him.
- God gives people a heart to do His will.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God said of the Jews, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Mark 7:9. So, God said to them, "Ye are cursed with a curse." Malachi 3:9. "Nevertheless

he [God] left not himself without witness” (Acts 14:17) for God has always had a few faithful and godly people, that is, a “remnant.” 2 Kings 19:4.

The Bible gives no record of the Jews after the book of Nehemiah’s account ends in 410 B.C. until the book of Matthew resumes the narrative starting in approximately 5 B.C. God describes this period of roughly 400 years by saying, “For a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without [God’s] law.” 2 Chronicles 15:3.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Be determined to work according to God’s will.
- Have a desire to hear God’s words.
- Do not take advantage of the poor.
- Do not fear nor be discouraged by opposition from Satan.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# *Esther: 483 B.C. – 473 B.C.*

**E**STHER IS THE SEVENTEENTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Ester* which is the name of a woman who is a main character in the book. The English title comes down to us from Septuagint which has the title, *Esther*.

### **Authorship**

The author of the book of Esther is unknown. The author could have been Ezra, Nehemiah, or Mordecai, who is one of the main characters in the book of Esther.

### **Summary**

The book of Esther covers the period 483 B.C. to 473 B.C. It opens with a feast made by Ahasuerus, king of Persia, lasting 180 days followed by another feast lasting seven days. On the last day of the second feast, the king sends for queen Vashti to show her beauty to the gathered princes and people, but the queen refuses to come.

Therefore, the king puts away queen Vashti and starts a search

in all his provinces for a new queen. So, young women are gathered including a Jewish woman named Hadassah, who is also known as Esther. The king loves Esther and makes her queen instead of Vashti. Esther does not reveal to the king that she is Jewish.

Mordecai, a Jew, who had taken the orphan Esther as his own daughter reveals a plot to murder the king to Esther, who tells it to the king. The conspirators are put to death.

After this, the king promotes Haman above all his princes and all the king's servants bow and reverence Haman, except Mordecai. Haman becomes angry with Mordecai and he seeks to kill all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, in the whole of the king's kingdom.

So, Haman goes to king with a request to make a law to kill the Jews because they do not keep the king's laws. The king agrees and he gives his authority to Haman, who makes a decree in every province to kill all the Jews on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

Mordecai and the Jews mourn on hearing of the decree with fasting, weeping, and wailing. Mordecai tells Esther about the death decree and asks her to intercede with the king. Esther hesitates but then decides to approach the king knowing that she could die for approaching the king uninvited.

Esther asks Mordecai to cause the Jews in the city to fast for her for three days, and she and her servants likewise fast. Afterwards, she goes before the king who receives her and Esther requests that the King and Haman to come a banquet she has prepared.

Meanwhile Haman returns home and calls his wife and friends and boasts about many things, including the banquet with queen Esther and the king the next day. At his wife's suggestion, Haman has gallows made on which to hang Mordecai, planning to put this request to the king the next day.

That night the king could not sleep and his servants read to him and it was found written how Mordecai had saved the king's life and that nothing was done for Mordecai. Haman was then

commanded by the king to parade Mordecai through the streets of the city and to proclaim the honour that the king had bestowed on Mordecai. Haman does so, he returns home mourning, and is hastened by the king's servants to Esther's banquet.

Haman and the king attend the banquet and Esther arranges another banquet the following day. Haman and the king attend the second banquet at which Esther reveals that she is a Jew and that the death decree made by Haman is against herself and her people, the Jews. The king is enraged and he hangs Haman on the gallows that Haman had prepared for Mordecai.

Mordecai is then promoted by the king and Mordecai writes a new decree to all the king's provinces. This decree allows the Jews to avenge themselves on their enemies on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. The Jews rejoice and on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month they put all their enemies to death, but they take no plunder.

At Esther's request to the king, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month the Jews put more of their enemies to death but again they take no plunder.

So, all the Jews in the provinces make the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the twelfth month, days of rest, feasting, and gladness, and call these days Purim. The Jews in the king's city of Shushan, celebrate their victory on the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth day.

The Jews ordain that Purim be kept by every generation of Jews. So, Mordecai is elevated to next in rank to the king and is great among the Jews, seeking the wealth and peace of the Jews.

## Themes

- Self-indulgence in food, wine, and merrymaking.
- Anger towards God's people.

- Pride.
- Satan at work to kill all the Jews, the people through whom Christ should come into the world.
- Courage.
- Fasting.
- The defeat of the enemies of God's people.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God's favour towards His people.
- God's providence in thwarting Satan's plans.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Mordecai is a type, a symbol, of Christ who said, "If the world hate you [my disciples], ye know that it hated me [Christ] before it hated you." John 15:18. Haman is a type, a symbol, of Satan. So, in the last days, Satan will "cause that as many as would not worship [him, Satan, by worshipping] the image of the beast should be killed." Revelation 13:15.

Just as Mordecai triumphed over Haman, Christ by His death on the cross, "having spoiled [plundered] principalities and powers [of Satan], he made a shew [show] of them openly, triumphing over them [over Satan and his evil angels] in it." Colossians 2:15. Moreover, in the end of the conflict between God and Satan, Satan's "mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate [own head when Satan is annihilated by God]." Psalm 7:16.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not indulge in ungodly merrymaking and revelry.
- Do not be angry without a just cause.
- Do not be prideful but instead be meek and lowly.
- Seek God, and God will deliver you from evil.
- Learn to fast and so control your appetite.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*Job: Approx. 2000  
B.C. – Approx. 1700 B.C.*

**J**OB IS THE EIGHTEENTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Iyyob* possibly meaning “Persecuted One.” The English title comes down to us from the Septuagint which has the title *Iob*, “Job.”

### **Authorship**

Some early Jews assigned Moses as the author of the book of Job. However, much of the material may have been written by Job himself, his descendants, or others who knew Job personally. According to an inspired writer, it seems that the last five chapters of Job were written by Moses by about 1445 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Job covers the approximate period from 2000 B.C. to 1700 B.C. The book opens with Job who is a perfect and upright man living in the land of Uz. He is wealthy and has seven sons and

three daughters.

On a certain day, the sons of God present themselves before God and Satan comes among them. Satan accuses Job of serving God only because of special favours from God. So, God gives Satan permission to afflict Job, but not to touch Job himself. Satan then causes Job to lose all his wealth and he kills all of Job's ten children in one day. Nevertheless, Job worships God and does not accuse God foolishly.

Again, on another day, the sons of God present themselves before God and Satan comes among them. This time, Satan accuses Job of serving God only because Job has good health. So, God gives Satan permission to afflict Job's body. Satan then brings a horrible disease upon Job. As a result, Job's wife tells Job to curse God and die but still Job does not sin with his lips.

Three friends of Job, namely, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, come to visit Job to mourn with him and to comfort him. For seven days they keep silent because they see that Job's grief is very great.

What follows next is a series of dialogues between Job and his three friends in three cycles. In each cycle, Job gives three speeches interspersed with speeches by his three friends, except that in the third cycle Zophar does not speak.

In the first cycle, Job expresses his deep discouragement. Eliphaz reproves Job and Job speaks of the seriousness of his affliction. Bildad then accuses Job of being a sinner and Job responds with a complaint about God's dealings with him. Zophar then appeals to Job to repent of his sins.

In the second cycle, Job maintains that he himself is righteous. Eliphaz reproves Job for his claim of righteousness and Job accuses his friends of being unmerciful. Bildad then says that calamities only come upon the wicked and Job expresses his belief he will be resurrected (brought back to life) by God in the end of the world. Zophar then describes the present and future punishment of the wicked.

In the third cycle, Job maintains that the wicked sometimes

prosper. Eliphaz urges Job to repent and Job states his desire to appear before God. Bildad then says that humanity cannot have right standing before God and Job reviews his own experience and maintains that he himself is innocent.

Elihu, a young man who has been standing by listening to the dialogue between Job and his three friends now speaks. Elihu presents a new philosophy of suffering, seeks to vindicate God, gives reasons why God has not given attention to Job's suffering, and presents God as the God of thunderstorms.

God then answers Job out of a whirlwind, and God asks Job about the mysteries of the physical universe and of animal life. Job is speechless and confesses his presumptuousness, and God asks Job if he can save himself from annihilation by God for his sins. God then presents the mysteries of two strong animals, namely, the behemoth and the leviathan and asks Job if he understands these things. Job then abhors himself and repents.

God then rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for their foolish words and commands them to offer sacrifices. Job prays for his three friends and because he does this, God restores wealth to Job giving him twice what he had before. So, Job has more children, seven sons and three daughters, and he lives another 140 years seeing his descendants to the fourth generation. Then Job dies.

## Themes

- Prosperity dependent on God's blessings.
- Satan as the accuser of humanity before God.
- Satan as a destroyer of life, wealth, and health.
- Satan allowed to work his will *only* with God's permission.
- Satan an intruder in God's assembly of all the intelligent beings in the universe.

- God sometimes tests human character by allowing suffering to come upon them.
- Steadfastness of trust in God in the face of suffering.
- Ignorance of the existence of Satan and of his malice.
- Death and the resurrection (the raising to life from the dead).
- Incorrect understanding of God's character and his dealings with humanity.
- The sin of misrepresenting God's character of love.
- Forgiveness.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as Ruler of the universe taking an interest in human affairs.
- God's love and praise for the godly among humanity.
- God limiting Satan's ability to work his will on earth.
- God as Creator whose works are beyond human comprehension.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [in Israel], they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 14:14.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure [temptations]. Ye

have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end [the goal] of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Praise God for His blessings of prosperity.
- Know that Satan and his unsleeping malice are real.
- Know that Satan accuses you before God.
- Trust in God’s love even in the midst of loss, suffering, and death.
- Do not sin by misrepresenting God’s character of love.
- Forgive all those who harm you.



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

*Psalms: Approx. 1445  
B.C. – Approx. 586 B.C.*

**P**SALMS IS THE NINETEENTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Tehillim* meaning “Praises.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Psalmoi*, “Songs of praise to be sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments” or “Psalms.”

### **Authorship**

A total of eight persons are mentioned in the superscription to the various psalms as authors, compilers, or musicians as follows: 73 psalms attributed to David, 11 to Korah, 12 to Asaph, 1 to Heman, 1 to Ethan, 2 to Solomon, 1 to Ezra, 1 to Moses. The author of the remaining psalms is uncertain.

### **Summary**

The book of Psalms covers the period 1445 B.C. to 586 B.C. and consists of 150 of ancient Israel’s worship songs, each known as

a psalm. They are essentially prayers to God and the record of the psalmist's (the author's) own intimate conversation with God. The psalms contain the whole range of human experience as the psalmist pours out his heart to God and joyfully hears from God in return.

Many attributes of God such as His being eternal, His being Judge over the earth, His rule over the universe, His holiness, wisdom, love, majesty, power, mercy, goodness, hatred of evil, infinite knowledge, and creative power, are on full display in the psalms.

Almost every psalm expresses praise and adoration of God. So, there are psalms in which the saint of God (one who is a true disciple of Christ) joins the vast assembly of worshippers in the great congregation, and to the accompaniment of all kinds of musical instruments, shouts aloud the praise of God with their whole heart.

There is a psalm for every mood, every need: Psalms for the disappointed, the discouraged, the aged, the despairing, the sick, the sinner, the youthful, the hopeful, the faithful, the believing child of God, the triumphant saint.

There are psalms that reflect faith in the reality of the world to come, that deal with various aspects of nature, and the experiences in Israel's history. Some denounce the enemies of God and of His people and bring down curses upon their heads.

There are psalms that deal with the wicked, contrasting them with the godly, that look at the delay in their punishment, their prosperity, their trust in riches, and their ultimate fate.

Some psalms deal with penitence, pardon, conversion to God, consecration to God, trust, teachableness, prayer, longing for God, worship, affliction, the vanity of life, the home, and homesickness. Other psalms deal with God's law, the word of God, the missionary outlook, and the duty of rulers.

Some psalms take the individual sinner in secret into the very presence of God and help them to pour out their soul in confes-

sion of sin, while some express national confession of sin. There are psalms where the writer cries out to God from the depths of disaster, defeat, and conviction of sin.

Many psalms anticipate the coming of the Messiah, the title of the promised King and Deliverer of Israel, which was Christ who was born in human flesh in approximately 5 B.C. as a baby boy named Jesus. They testify of the Messiah's, that is, of Christ's coming to save His people from their sins and to usher in His eternal reign of righteousness.

These psalms speak of the Christ's deity, His Sonship to God the Father, His incarnation, priesthood, betrayal, rejection, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven.

## Themes

- The devout person can imagine no greater blessing than being in God's presence, and no greater calamity than to be shut away from His presence.
- True religion is an intensely joyful experience, abundant in all manner of expression, and requiring the consecration of the individual and the praise of God.
- Petition and thanksgiving go hand in hand, and so do prayer and praise.
- The contemplation of nature always leads the individual to have reverence for God and to praise Him.
- It is the privilege and responsibility of the genuine Christian to share their experience with God with others.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as humanity's Comforter, hope, confidence, strength, triumph, defence, refuge, Saviour, joy.
- God is exalted as the solution to all of humanity's problems, the One who is All in all.
- God, who is the Creator and Ruler of the universe, is at the same time the loving Father of his human children, the tender Shepherd of humanity, who are the sheep of His pasture.
- God as One who always blesses His people abundantly.
- Righteousness is rewarded by God, while wickedness will ultimately reap God's justice in the annihilation of the wicked.
- All life's problems—trouble, pain, and sickness—will ultimately be solved by the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." James 5:13. "Be filled with the [Holy] Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Ephesians 5:18, 19.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Read the book of Psalms to gain an intimate knowledge of who God is, to hear God speak, to see God's heart, and to learn how to pray.
- Read the book of Psalms to receive the blessings they impart of courage, hope, strength, the certainty of forgiveness by God, faith, trust, joy, peace, thanksgiving.
- When you ask God for a blessing, praise God and thank God at that time for the abundance of His blessings as if these blessings were already received.
- Contemplate nature, though blighted by sin, as God's second book by which He, as Creator, speaks to humanity and praise God for His excellent greatness.
- Be confident that God will bless you if you are a true Christian.
- Share your knowledge of God with others and seek to win them to Christ.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

# Proverbs

**P**ROVERBS IS THE TWENTIETH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Mishle Shelomoh* meaning “Proverbs of Solomon.” The English title comes from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Liber Proverbiorum*, “Book of Proverbs.”

### **Authorship**

King Solomon of Israel wrote the book of Proverbs. In the last two chapters we have the words of Agur, a symbolic name for Solomon (Chapter 30), and king Lemuel, another name for Solomon (Chapter 31). Proverbs was written in the early part of Solomon’s reign which started in 971 B.C. and ended in 931 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Proverbs is a collection of moral instructions in the form of short, wise sayings, often making comparisons and contrasts.

The first nine chapters consist of “the proverbs of Solomon

the son of David, king of Israel” (Proverbs 1:1) is in the form of counsels and warning from a father to a son. Chapters 10 through 24 are entitled “The proverbs of Solomon.” Chapters 25 through 29 are the “proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.”

Chapter 30 consist of “the words of Agur the son of Jakeh,” a symbolic term for Solomon. Chapter 31 is attributed to “king Lemuel,” also a symbolic name for Solomon, which for the most part describes an ideal, virtuous wife.

The topics discussed in Proverbs include: Anger, benevolence, the correction of children, enticers, God’s ways, the fear of God, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, fools, friendship, indolence, oppression, pride, scorners, strife, temperance, the tongue, unjust gain, wealth, deceit, evil, prayer, the wicked, the righteous, evil women, and godly women.

## **Themes**

- Diligence.
- Honesty.
- Thrift.
- Temperance.
- Purity.
- Godliness.
- Wickedness.
- Wisdom.
- Knowledge of God.

- Understanding, that is, turning away from evil.
- Truth.
- Deceit.
- Holy speech and evil speech.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God loves the righteous, but He hates the wicked.
- God loves those who are truthful, but hates liars and their deceit.
- God loves the prayers of the upright.
- God blesses the righteous with eternal life, but will reward the wicked with eternal death (annihilation by God).
- God knows the heart of every human being.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

The book of Proverbs is largely symbolic. Its “dark sayings” (Proverbs 1:6) which are puzzles or riddles require, as also does the entire Bible, the help of the Holy Spirit to solve and understand them.

Topics covered by this symbolism include the conflict between God and Satan, Christ, Satan, the Christian church, the word of God which is the Bible, and salvation. We will now look at some of the literal and symbolic connections of Proverbs with the rest of the Bible.

God says, “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his

goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils [plunder]." Luke 11:21, 22.

Here in this prophecy regarding the conflict between God and Satan, Satan is the strong man and Christ is the man stronger than he. For the world is caught in "the snare of the devil [Satan], who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Timothy 2:26. But "if the Son [Christ] therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36) and, so, cease from sinning.

Satan's captives among humanity have Satan as their spiritual father. So, God says to these captives, "Ye are of your father the devil [Satan], and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

"Christ Jesus, [is He] who of God is made unto us wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:30) such that we belong to "the church of God...to them that are sanctified [made holy] in Christ Jesus, called to be saints [true followers of Christ, that is, true Christians]." 1 Corinthians 1:2.

For God says, "Come, ye children, hearken unto [obey] me: I will teach you the fear [the reverential awe] of the LORD [God]." Psalm 34:11. "I [God] will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalm 32:8. And God desires that all humanity should say in response to Him, "O thou [God] that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh [every human being] come." Psalm 65:2.

Now "the righteous LORD [God] loveth righteousness" (Psalm 11:7), "but the wicked and him that loveth violence his [God's] soul hateth." Psalm 11:5. Thus, God has given the Bible to humanity and they all should be able to say of themselves in truth, "Thy [God's] word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee [God]." Psalm 119:11.

That is, every human being should obey God's command, "Give diligence to make your calling and election [by God] sure [secure]." 2 Peter 1:10. "Watch ye [be vigilant] therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things [God's judgments] that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man [Christ]" (Luke 21:36) without condemnation.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Obey God's instructions given in the Bible.
- Learn wisdom from God and so be able to discern good and evil.
- Get to know God through the Bible and a personal experience.
- Depart from all evil, including pride.
- Do not lie.
- Be diligent in studying the Bible.
- Avoid all unjust gain.
- Economise and save so that you can give to the cause of God.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Do not commit adultery and so violate your marriage vows.
- Do not allow others to entice you into sin.

- Do not hate your fellow human being, but instead love them.
- Do not engage in strife.
- Do not be angry without a just cause.
- Correct your children and do not permit them to continue in evil.
- Do not speak evil.
- Pray to God every day.
- Let your thoughts be holy and pure.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

# *Ecclesiastes*

**E**CCLESIASTES IS THE TWENTY-FIRST book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Qoheleth* meaning “Speaker” at a public assembly, or “Preacher.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *ekkesiastes*, “Preacher.”

### **Authorship**

From the most ancient times, by universal consent, king Solomon of Israel has been considered the author of Ecclesiastes. The book was written in Solomon’s old age prior to his death in 931 B.C.

### **Summary**

Solomon walked in the ways of God in his youth and younger adult years. However, in later years he drifted away from God until his apostasy was complete. It was only in his old age that he came to himself and came back to God repenting of his evil ways.

Ecclesiastes largely relates the experience and reasoning regarding Solomon’s years of apostasy. It is a sober warning against

the wrong kind of thought and action and in no way represents the mind and will of God. The book also records the clearer insights and holy thoughts that came with Solomon's repentance.

It should be noted that in Ecclesiastes, Solomon uses the word "wisdom" to refer to both worldly wisdom and godly wisdom. So, in reading the book it is important to differentiate between the two uses of this word.

Ecclesiastes opens with Solomon dwelling on what he saw as the futility of life. For he says generations of people come and go, seemingly in vain. Also, the cycles of nature appear to be endless and purposeless and he asks, Is there anything new under the sun?

Solomon then describes his quest for happiness. In this quest, he finds that knowledge of all the works that are done under the sun, pleasure, mirth, and material possessions, are vanity and futile. Also, death comes alike to both the wise and the fool and, so, he hated life. He finds that hard labour is in vain and that satisfaction only comes from being content with God's providence.

Solomon then says that there is a season for everything. A time for various human activities, a time for God's judgment, and a time allowed for human injustices. He next refers to four ideals—the value of companionship, the value of wisdom, the value of reverence for God, and the value of justice.

After this, Solomon reflects on what he saw as the folly of life. That is, the folly of materialism, the incomprehensible nature of suffering, and the futility of effort. He next gives consideration to things worth living for, such as reputation and character formation, wisdom to understand God's dealings, and a godly outlook on life. He then notes that every human being is a sinner.

Solomon next describes his search for wisdom, the disappointments, the attempts at resolving what he saw as life's conflicts, and his inability to understand God's mysterious ways. He also recommends that we be content amid the circumstances of life, and warns that every deed will have its due reward from God.

Solomon then ends by describing old age, and by saying that the

whole duty of humanity is to have reverential awe for God and to keep God's commandments. For God will bring every work into judgment, along with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.

## **Themes**

- Worldly wisdom is vanity and godly wisdom is desirable.
- The quest for happiness and the perceived futility of life.
- The mortality of the human race.
- An awakened conscience to see one's folly as is it is in God's sight.
- Warning lessons against a life wasted in pursuit of folly.
- Advice to the young to seek God in one's youth.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as Judge of all humanity.
- God who blesses good people with wisdom, knowledge, and joy.
- God who gives the sinner's gain from labour to those who are good before God.
- God who makes everything beautiful in His time.
- God whose works are forever and none can change it.
- God who requires humanity to pay every vow made to Him.

- God who gives to humanity food and drink and labour to enjoy.
- God who created Adam and Eve upright (holy) in their ways.
- God who does not instantaneously punish every sin.
- God to whom your spirit (mind) returns when you die and “sleep the sleep of death” (Psalm 13:3) being then in an unconscious state.
- God who judges every deed and rewards the person accordingly.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Solomon “had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.” 1 Kings 11:3, 4. We see then that Solomon sought happiness in sensuality among other things.

But God declares where true happiness is to be found: “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.” Job 5:17. “Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.” Psalm 144:15.

“Happy is the man that feareth [has reverence for God] always.” Proverbs 28:14. “He that keepeth the law [God’s law of love], happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18) “and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.” Proverbs 16:20.

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that get-

teth understanding.” Proverbs 3:13. “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” Proverbs 3:18. “He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.” Proverbs 14:21.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not seek to be happy apart from God.
- You cannot take away anything from this world when you die, so, lay up treasure in heaven by doing good deeds for God.
- Whatever is worth doing in God’s eyes, do it with all diligence and might.
- Know that since, as God says, there is nothing new under the sun, all wisdom necessary for our salvation is to be found in the Bible.
- Keep all the vows you have made to God.
- Be an ambassador for Christ to your fellow human beings.
- Seek God early in life, preferably in your youth.
- Be careful not to speak evil.
- Have reverence for God and worship Him.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

# *Song of Solomon*

**S**ONG OF SOLOMON IS the twenty-second book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Shir Hashirim* meaning “the song of songs.” The English title “Song of Solomon” comes from the fact that Solomon is mentioned in Chapter 1, verse 1.

### **Authorship**

The book Song of Solomon claims Solomon as its author. It was probably written in the early part of his reign as king of Israel, which lasted from 971 B.C. to 931 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book Song of Solomon opens with the statement that the song was written by Solomon. It is the story of the courtship and marriage of king Solomon and a young country woman. At the time, Solomon had 60 wives and 80 concubines, but the young woman, whose marriage the Song celebrates, surpasses them all.

The marriage of King Solomon and the young woman is implied

in the opening dialogue. The young woman expresses her admiration for Solomon, the bridegroom, and the ladies of the king's court, called "the daughters of Jerusalem," (Song of Solomon 1:5) respond. Solomon then enters and he and the young woman exchange mutual expressions of love.

Next, in the book comes the fond recollections of Solomon and the young woman of the visit of Solomon to the bride's home in springtime. The bride then recounts a joyful dream.

After this, is both Solomon's and the young woman's recollections of their betrothal and marriage. There is an account of Solomon's royal procession, Solomon's offer of marriage, and the young woman's acceptance of his offer.

Next in the book, the bride is harassed by an unhappy dream in which it seems that love is lost. But she awakens and goes in search of Solomon and finds him and confirms that their love is unchanged, and Solomon extols the beauty of his bride. After this is a dialogue between the young woman and the daughters of Jerusalem, where the young woman's beauty is again extolled. Also, Solomon is enraptured by the beauty of his bride.

The book then describes the young woman's yearning to visit her parental home. Then comes an account of the arrival of the royal pair at her former home. Lastly, there is a dialogue between the bride, her brothers, and Solomon.

## Themes

- Marriage as a holy and happy union of a man and a woman who love each other.
- Expressions of love and affection between husband and wife.
- Dreams.

- Courtship.
- Love's triumph over all circumstances.
- Approval and support of family and friends for a marriage.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as He who delights in the happiness of marriage.
- God whose love for humanity is as strong as death.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“So God created man [humanity] in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 1:27. This means that God created Adam and Eve, the first human pair, with a form like God, and a character of love identical to God's own heart of love for “God is love.” 1 John 4:8.

“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Genesis 2:23. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:24, 25. Thus, God created the marriage institution which is a union between a man and a woman.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:28. So, God commanded Adam and Eve to have children and to rule over the animals on the earth.

Now God says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also

loved the [Christian] church, and gave himself [died] for it; That he might sanctify [make it holy] and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word [of God, the Bible].” Ephesians 5:25, 26.

“That he [Christ] might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:27.

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord [Jesus Christ] the church: For we are members of his [Christ’s] body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Ephesians 5:28-30.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Ephesians 5:31, 32. And “let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Ephesians 5:33.

So, then the love of a husband for his wife is symbolic of the love of Christ for His church. Now thus “saith the LORD [Christ to His church]...I am married unto you.” Jeremiah 3:14. We can see then that the entire book, Song of Solomon, is symbolic of the marriage and mutual love between Christ and His church.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Courtship is desirable.
- Know that marriage is desirable and approved of God.
- Wives love your husband, and husbands love your wife.

- Keep love alive in your marriage under all circumstances of life.
- It is ideal that family and friends should approve of and support your marriage.
- God commands that sexual intimacy should only occur between a husband and wife.
- Love God because He created you and because His love is as strong as death.
- Love God supremely above your love for anyone else.
- Be willing to die rather than violate your love for God.
- Be happy in God's love and rejoice that His love for you is so great.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

# *Isaiah: Approx. 745 B.C. – Eden Restored*

**I**SAIAH IS THE TWENTY-THIRD book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Yesha'yahu* meaning “Yahweh saves.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Hesaias*, “Isaiah.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Isaiah is the author of the book of Isaiah. The book was written during Isaiah’s prophetic ministry which lasted from approximately 745 B.C. to about 685 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Isaiah covers the period from 745 B.C. to the future time when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, and the entire earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden.

The book of Isaiah is like a miniature Bible in that it has 66 chapters just as the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible has

66 books. It can be logically divided into two sections. The first section consists of Chapters 1 to 39 just like the Old Testament has 39 books. The second section consists of Chapters 40 to 66 (27 chapters) just like the New Testament has 27 books.

The first section of Isaiah mostly deals with the problems facing the kingdom of Judah, foremost of which is the problem of sin, and the succession of crises that arose from the then historical situation. There are also occasional glimpses of the future.

The second section of Isaiah turns to the future, glorious destiny that awaits Israel, the coming of the Messiah (Christ) and the establishment of His eternal kingdom on earth.

The book opens with the first section recording Isaiah's call by God to prophetic ministry and his early prophetic messages. Isaiah next turns to the circumstance in which Judah was in mortal danger from Syria. He predicts the impending Assyrian invasions and gives God's promise of the deliverance of Judah from both Syria and Assyria.

Isaiah then predicts God's deliverance of Judah from Babylon and from all the surrounding nations that had, at one time or another, oppressed Israel.

After this, Isaiah gives a graphic description of the future desolation of the earth when God would come in judgment against the nations. He also describes the future rejoicing of Israel at their deliverance and gives them a solemn warning to now turn to the Lord God and to trust in him. Isaiah then sets forth the folly of reliance on alliances with Egypt and Assyria in stark contrast to the blessedness of those who trust in God.

Isaiah next gives a graphic picture of the Messiah reigning in righteousness and His people dwelling in peace and security. After this, Isaiah gives details of the Assyrian king Sennacherib's invasions of Judah and God's miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army.

The first section of Isaiah closes with the sickness and recovery of king Hezekiah of Judah and the visit of envoys from Babylon.

In the second section of Isaiah, he opens with encouragement to Judah to look forward to deliverance from Babylonian captivity. They are to trust in God that deliverance will come from the Messiah (Christ) through God's servant Cyrus, the human agent whom God will use as His servant. Israel will then become God's servant to represent Him before the nations of the earth.

Isaiah then prophesies of the fall of Babylon and God challenges His people to learn the lesson of their Babylonian captivity. That is, lessons of loyalty to God, acceptance of their role as God's messenger to the nations, turning from earthly goals, and a wholehearted response to God's gracious invitation.

Then, Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah (Christ) will come as a suffering servant to redeem them from their sins and he outlines Israel's role in God's plan of evangelising the world. Therefore, God calls them to a revival of true religion. For this reformation will usher in Israel's glorious destiny when she arises and lets her light of God's ways of love shine forth to all peoples.

Next, Isaiah prophesies that when this evangelisation is completed, then will come the great day of God's vengeance on those who have rejected His gracious call of mercy. Isaiah makes a final appeal to his people, Israel, to wholeheartedly reform as the necessary preparation for the glorious events already foretold.

Lastly, Isaiah prophesies that the earth is restored, people are rewarded according to their deeds, and God's people worship Him in peace and righteousness forever.

## Themes

- People who have forsaken the worship of God, who made heaven and earth, and instead followed other so-called gods.
- People who practice the outward forms of the worship of God but have no real connection with, nor love of, God.

- Warnings from God to a nation that continuance in their evil ways would result in speedy destruction.
- People's refusal of God's mercy and protection.
- A remnant of humanity will be faithful to God and, therefore, will be saved by God to eternal life.
- Prophecies of the coming Messiah (Christ) as a suffering servant, whose message of salvation would go to the ends of the earth.
- The great mission of the church to be a light of love to the nations which will then come to her light to seek God.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God seated upon His throne.
- God calling upon humanity to repent and ever willing to forgive.
- God who will send judgments on those who persist in evil ways.
- God who promises restoration of the earth, and everlasting joy and peace for those who worship Him in truth and love.

## **Connections with The Rest of the Bible**

“She...brought forth her firstborn son: and...called his name JESUS.” Matthew 1:25. So, Christ, the promised Messiah, was born in human flesh just over 2,000 years ago in about 5 B.C.

Speaking of Israel, God says, “Him [Jesus Christ], being deliv-

ered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye [Israel] have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain [killed]: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death.” Acts 2:23, 24.

Now, Christ’s commission to His church is, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature [every person].” Mark 16:15.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Get to know God personally.
- Repent of your sins.
- Be a faithful representative of God to the world.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

# *Jeremiah: 627 B.C. – 31 A.D.*

**J**EREMIAH IS THE TWENTY-FOURTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Yirmeyah* which may mean “Yahweh is exalted” or “Yahweh casts.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Jeremias*, “Jeremiah.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Jeremiah is the author of at least most the book of Jeremiah, but the actual writing was done by his trusted secretary, Baruch, at Jeremiah’s dictation. The book implies that the final chapter was written by someone else, possibly Baruch. Jeremiah was written during Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry which lasted from 627 B.C. to approximately 576 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Jeremiah covers the period from 627 B.C. to 31 A.D. The book opens with Jeremiah’s call by God to his prophetic mission and God’s promises to Jeremiah of God’s protection. God then describes and denounces Judah’s sins and calls faithless

Israel to return to Him. God next prophesies that Judah will be invaded by a hostile nation and He describes their doom.

After this, God commands Jeremiah to go to the Temple and warn the people of the fate that awaited them unless they should repent. Jeremiah mourns about this, and he goes as commanded. God then pronounces a curse upon Judah because they have broken their covenant with God.

In reaction to Jeremiah's peaching, the men of Anathoth and Jeremiah's own relatives, plot to silence him by taking his life. God tells Jeremiah of the plot and Jeremiah appeals to God for justice. After this, there is a drought in Judah and God forbids Jeremiah to pray to Him for the good of the people.

Jeremiah laments his conflict with the people and God encourages him. God then commands Jeremiah not to marry, nor to mourn for the dead, nor attend festive assemblies. After this, God describes Judah's idolatry, promises to restore Judah from their captivity, and sends Jeremiah to call the people to faithful Sabbath observance.

About this time, Pashur, governor of the Temple, puts Jeremiah in the stocks. Jeremiah complains to God that he is in derision daily and everyone mocks him, and Jeremiah decides to resign from his commission from God. But God will not release Jeremiah from God's calling upon his life. So, Jeremiah curses the day he was born and laments the role God has given him. Nevertheless, Jeremiah shoulders the prophetic yoke once more.

King Zedekiah sends to Jeremiah to enquire of God and Jeremiah prophesies to the king of Judah's captivity to Babylon, the fate of Zedekiah himself, and the fate of other members of the royal house, namely, Shallum, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin.

God then prophesies that a righteous King will reign in Judah, denounces the false prophets, prophesies that Judah will be in exile for 70 years, and of His, God's, judgments upon all the nations. God next sends Jeremiah to the court of the Temple to announce the 70-year captivity of Judah, and the utter desolation

of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple.

In response, the priests and the prophets arrest Jeremiah and threaten to kill him, but Jeremiah is rescued by the princes of Judah. God then sends Jeremiah to warn the nations not to revolt against Babylon and to counsel king Zedekiah to do likewise and live.

Jeremiah is opposed by a group of false prophets and so Jeremiah prophesies that their leader, Hananiah, would die that year, and Hananiah does indeed die that same year. Jeremiah then writes to the exiles in Babylon that they should settle down there for a long captivity. The Jewish leaders in captivity in Babylon write back demanding that Jeremiah be imprisoned as a false prophet.

God then prophesies that He will deliver, restore, and reunite both Israel and Judah, and establish them in their homeland under a new covenant that God will make with both kingdoms. Next, God renews His promises of a glorious future for Israel with the elevation of Jerusalem to a place of honour among the nations, and the re-establishment of their kings and priests.

After this, Jeremiah prophesies of the fate of Judah and of king Zedekiah and denounces Judah's breach of faith in re-enslaving the people they had previously freed. Jeremiah then acts out a lesson to the people regarding the faithfulness of the Rechabites to their father's command not to drink wine.

Next, Jeremiah has his secretary, Baruch, write his messages from God on a scroll and read them in the Temple on a certain day of fasting in Israel. Word of this act comes to the princes, who ask for the scroll and they take it to king Jehoiakim, and the king burns the scroll in the fire. Therefore, God commissions Jeremiah to have the scroll rewritten, which Jeremiah does and Jeremiah adds more words.

Soon after this, king Nebuchadnezzar again invades Judah and lays siege to Jerusalem. But when Nebuchadnezzar hears that Pharaoh's army is come out of Egypt, he departs from Jerusalem.

Jeremiah then prophesies that Pharaoh's army could not help Judah, that the Egyptians would return to Egypt, and that the Babylonian army would return to invade Judah.

Jeremiah next leaves Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin and he is accused of defecting to the Babylonians and, therefore, imprisoned for many days. King Zedekiah then takes Jeremiah out from a dungeon, and he secretly asks Jeremiah what course he, the king, should take. Jeremiah advises Zedekiah to surrender to the Babylonians.

Zedekiah then commits Jeremiah to the court of the prison and commands that they give Jeremiah a daily piece of bread until all the bread in Jerusalem is finished. However, the princes demand that Zedekiah put Jeremiah to death. So, Jeremiah is put into an empty cistern and he sinks into the soft mud on the floor of the cistern.

Jeremiah's life is spared when an Ethiopian eunuch, Ebed-melech, gains permission from king Zedekiah to draw Jeremiah out of the cistern. Jeremiah is next placed in the court of the prison. Zedekiah then comes and secretly enquires of Jeremiah, and Jeremiah again advises the king to submit to the Babylonians.

Zedekiah asks Jeremiah not to reveal Jeremiah's advice to the king, Zedekiah, and Zedekiah leaves Jeremiah in the court of the prison. Jeremiah remains there in prison until Jerusalem falls captive to the Babylonians.

King Zedekiah and his entourage flee from Jerusalem, but the Babylonians pursue and overtake them. They are taken to king Nebuchadnezzar in Riblah, and Nebuchadnezzar passes sentence on them. Nebuchadnezzar then kills the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, as well as the nobles of Judah, blinds Zedekiah in both eyes, binds him, and takes him captive to Babylon.

After this, the Babylonians release Jeremiah from prison and Nebuchadnezzar permits Jeremiah to choose whether to go to Babylon or to remain in Judah. God then pronounces a blessing on Ebed-melech.

Jeremiah next attaches himself to Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had made the governor of Judah. Gedaliah is assassinated, and the people in fear of the Babylonians flee to Egypt taking Jeremiah with them.

In Egypt, Jeremiah continues his efforts to turn the people away from idolatry and back to God, but without success. Then Jeremiah prophesies that God will punish the people who had fled to Egypt and only a small remnant of them would return to Judah in the future. After this, Jeremiah prophesies that God will bless Baruch.

Jeremiah then prophesies of the destruction of Egypt, the Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Kedar, the kingdoms of Hazor, Elam, and Babylon. Of the latter nation, Babylon, God says that they will fall and Israel will be delivered and restored to their homeland. At that future time, Babylon's punishment from God will be according to their crimes, and God will then call the Jews to flee Babylon to escape Babylon's doom.

God next contrasts Himself with idols and calls Israel His battle axe and weapons of war to break the nations in pieces and to destroy kingdoms. God then describes the fall and utter desolation of Babylon.

The book ends with a historical summary of the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, the city's destruction, and the exile of the people of Israel to Babylon. Lastly, is the account of the king of Babylon releasing king Jehoiachin from prison and exalting him to royal privilege for the rest of his life.

## Themes

- Unbelief and idolatry and God's call to genuine worship of God.
- Human beings are naturally incapable of doing good.

- Promises of a glorious future for those who are true to God.
- A righteous Branch (Christ) of the line of king David of Israel would be humanity's King.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God calls people to their prophetic ministry.
- God calls people to repent and so avoid His judgments.
- God alone can change human hearts from evil to holiness.
- God who punishes the wicked for their sins.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Israel "said [Israel covenanted], All that the LORD [God] hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exodus 24:7. But "they continued not in [broke] my covenant...saith the Lord [God]." Hebrews 8:9.

Thus, "if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he [God] saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Hebrews 8:7, 8), in that, "I [God] will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Hebrews 8:10.

This second, new covenant, is actually the everlasting covenant which promised, "I [God] will put enmity" (Genesis 3:15) in human hearts for sin and Satan, and this new covenant has now been confirmed (ratified) by the death of Christ almost 2,000 years ago.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Obey God's call on your life with firmness of purpose, diligence, and joy.
- Do God's will at all times without questioning and without leaning to your own understanding and your preconceived notions.
- Understand that without God's help you can do no good.
- Partake of new covenant promises by submission to God's will, repentance, and faith in Christ as the Deliverer from sin.
- Believe in the glorious future God has in store for the faithful.
- Learn not to be sinful and idolatrous as Israel and Judah were.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

# *Lamentations: Approx. 586 B.C.*

**L**AMENTATIONS IS THE TWENTY-FIFTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Ekah* meaning “How!” The Jews also knew the book as *Qinoth*, “Lamentations.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Threnoi*, “Lamentations.”

### **Authorship**

Both Jews and Christians from ancient times have believed that the prophet Jeremiah is the author of the book of Lamentations. The book was written in the final days of the kingdom of Judah, and after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B.C., but before the end of Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry in approximately 576 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Lamentations are the lamentations of the prophet

Jeremiah for the city of Jerusalem. It opens with the desolation of Jerusalem, the wail of the city over her own condition, and the confession and prayer of the city.

Next, is a description of the judgments of God which brought war, siege, and destruction to the city, that is, upon wicked Jerusalem. Jeremiah then describes the captivity of the people and the distress it brought.

Jeremiah then writes of his despair at the afflictions of the people and he turns to his faith and hope in God. After this, is a further description of God's judgments, followed by a prayer recognising God's mercies and asking God to punish the enemies of God's people.

Jeremiah then writes of the appalling calamities that have come upon the people, contrasting it with the former glory of Israel. He next writes of the sins of prophets and priests and the downfall of the kingdom of Judah, and prophecies of God's judgment on the nation of Edom.

After this, Jeremiah prays to God regarding the pitiful plight of the Jews after the fall of Jerusalem. He acknowledges the people's sins and the resulting judgments of God. Jeremiah then prays that God will not forsake His people, but instead turn them to God and restore them to His favour despite God's anger because of their sins.

## Themes

- The miserable state of a city because of her sins.
- A city's complaint of grief at God's judgments.
- Confession that God's judgments are righteous.
- Prayer for deliverance from enemies and God's vengeance on the enemies.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who cannot endure the wickedness of humanity forever without punishing them for their sins.
- God who is merciful and compassionate to sinful humanity, always faithful to His everlasting covenant.
- God who desires humanity to humble themselves and repent.
- God whose ears are always open to humanity's prayers.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, "For this city [Jerusalem] hath been to me [God] as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face, because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Jeremiah 32:31, 32.

"And they have turned unto me [God] the back, and not the face: though I [God] taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened [listened] to receive instruction. But they set their abominations in the house [Temple], which is called by my name, to defile it." Jeremiah 33:34.

"And they built the high places of Baal [a so-called god], which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire [to murder them] unto Molech [a so-called god]; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause

Judah to sin.” Jeremiah 32:35.

“Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils [to demons], and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.” Psalm 106:37, 38.

“Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath [anger] of the LORD [God] kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance [the people of Israel].” Psalm 106:39, 40. For “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9.

So then, “I [God] will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed [people] of Ephraim [the kingdom of Israel]. Therefore pray not thou [Jeremiah] for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I [God] will not hear thee.” Jeremiah 7:15, 16.

“For thus saith the LORD [God], That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I [God] will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place [to Israel].” Jeremiah 9:10.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD [God], thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I [God] will hearken [listen] unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13.

“And I [God] will be found of you, saith the LORD [God]: and I will turn away [end] your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither [where] I have driven you, saith the LORD [God]; and I will bring you again into the place [Israel] whence [from which] I caused you to be carried away captive.” Jeremiah 29:14.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Repent of your sins without delay in order to prevent you becoming fixed in the ways of evil.
- No matter what your circumstances in life, worship God and praise Him for His mercies toward you.
- Humble yourself and pray to God who always hears such prayers.
- Always walk in the ways of righteousness and God will grant you eternal life with Him.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

# Ezekiel: 592 B.C. – Eden Restored

**E**ZEKIEL IS THE TWENTY-SIXTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Yechezq'el* meaning “God will strengthen.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Iezekiel*, “Ezekiel.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Ezekiel is the author of the book of Ezekiel. The book was written during Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry which lasted from 592 B.C. to about 570 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Ezekiel covers the period from 592 B.C. to the future time when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, and the entire earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden.

The book opens with Ezekiel’s call by God to his prophetic office while receiving a vision, which is supernatural mental im-

agery from God. At the time, Ezekiel is among the Jewish captives in Babylon in 592 B.C. This vision occurs on what might have been Ezekiel's thirtieth birthday, in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin of Judah's captivity in Babylon.

Ezekiel sees a vision of God's throne and God calls Ezekiel to be His spokesman to the Jewish people. Ezekiel hesitates to give God's message to the people for seven days until God rebukes him. God also says that Ezekiel, as God's spokesman, is a watchman to the Jews, and God makes Ezekiel dumb, only giving him the ability to speak when bearing God's messages to the people.

God then calls Ezekiel to act out portrayals of the siege of Jerusalem, the resulting scarcity of food, God's judgments on the Jews, the destruction of their high places for idol worship, and the desolation of the land of Judah under the Babylonian conquest. Nevertheless, God says a remnant of the Jews will escape His judgments.

God then takes Ezekiel in vision to the Temple in Jerusalem and shows Ezekiel the abominations of idol worship practiced there. God also shows Ezekiel in vision the men (angels) sent by God to execute punishment on the city of Jerusalem and the glory of God leaving the Temple. Next, God shows Ezekiel the wicked leaders of the Jews and denounces them.

After this, God tells Ezekiel to act out portrayals of the attempted escape of king Zedekiah of Judah, his capture by the Babylonians, and the terrors of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. God then gives Ezekiel discourses on the false prophets and prophetesses, the idolatrous elders in Israel, and various parables (short stories with a moral lesson) and acted out portrayals.

Next, God gives Ezekiel a narrative describing Israel's rebellions, various portrayals of threatening judgments, and a catalogue of Jerusalem's sins and their resultant doom. God then gives him a parable of the history of Israel's apostasy, a vision, and predicts the death of Ezekiel's wife who dies as God has prophesied.

After this, God gives Ezekiel prophecies against Israel's sur-

rounding neighbours, namely, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, and the Philistines, as well as prophecies against Egypt. God then repeats Ezekiel's call to his prophetic office by God Himself.

The news then comes to Ezekiel of the fall of Jerusalem and God looses Ezekiel's tongue so that he is no longer dumb. God next prophesies against the rulers and leaders of Israel, speaking of them as shepherds who neglect to care for the sheep, and promises to provide the Jews with a true Shepherd (Christ).

Next, God gives a prophesy against Edom, and foretells that desolated Israel will be rebuilt. God then prophesies that He will give the Jews a new heart to obey God and, so, there will be a spiritual revival that will be the basis of the new kingdom of Israel.

After this, God gives Ezekiel a vision of dry bones which come to life again with holy, spiritual life after Ezekiel prophesies to them. God then prophesies that the revived Jews consisting of the two kingdoms of Judah and Joseph (Israel) will be reunited under the house of king David. Next, God prophesies against Gog and Magog and declares that all the enemies of the Jews will be destroyed.

God then gives Ezekiel a vision of a glorious, rebuilt Temple, of the priestly service to be restarted, and the glory of God which will return to the Temple. The vision also foretells that the land of Israel will be reapportioned and of "the prince" (Ezekiel 44:3) who will come and go among them.

In the vision that God gives Ezekiel, there flows from the Temple in Jerusalem a healing stream that becomes a large river which flows into the sea. Also, in the vision, the borders of Israel are described and the land is divided among the tribes of Israel.

The book closes with the vision describing the size of Jerusalem, its gates, and foretelling that Jerusalem will be renamed "The Lord is there." Ezekiel 48:35.

## **Themes**

- Rebellion against God.
- A withdrawal of God's presence from His people.
- Conquest of God's people by their enemies because of the people's wicked ways.
- A spiritual revival of God's people.
- The destruction of the enemies of God's people.
- A return of God's presence among His people.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God sees the wickedness of people.
- God calls individuals to their prophetic ministry.
- God gives visions, speaks in parables, and in acted out portrayals.
- God brings about spiritual revival.
- God punishes evil.
- God is not with the wicked but with the godly.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

The kingdom of Judah was invaded by the Babylonians a number of times. The first invasion was in 605 B.C., when "Jehoiakim...re-

belled against him [against king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon].” 2 Kings 24:1.

In another invasion in 598 B.C., “at that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.” 2 Kings 24:10. When the siege ended, Ezekiel and king Jehoiachin along with others were taken captive to Babylon.

Finally, in 588 B.C., “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem.” 2 Kings 25:1. “The city was broken up” (2 Kings 25:4) in 586 B.C. and destroyed by the Babylonians.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Be obedient to God’s calling on your life.
- Do not follow a multitude of people to do evil.
- Be obedient to God’s messages to humanity as given in the Bible.
- Do not sin like those whom God punished for their evil ways.
- Anticipate with joy the glorious future God promises the godly as recorded in the Bible.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

# *Daniel: 605 B.C. – Christ’s Second Coming*

**D**ANIEL IS THE TWENTY-SEVENTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Daniye’l* meaning “God is my Judge.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title, *Daniel*.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Daniel is the author of the book of Daniel. The book was written during Daniel’s prophetic ministry which lasted from approximately 605 B.C. to about 534 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Daniel covers the period from 605 B.C. to the time when Jesus Christ comes to the earth a second time. Daniel has two parts; the first part is historical (Chapters 1 to 6) except for Chapter 2 which is also prophetic. The second part (Chapters 7 to 12) is prophetic.

The book opens with the invasion of the kingdom of Judah in 605 B.C. by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. At this time Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, are taken captive to Babylon.

There in Babylon the four Hebrew (Jewish) boys are placed under a three-year training program. Daniel and his friends seek and gain permission not to eat the king's diet but to eat only things grown, that is, a plant-based diet, and to drink only water. After ten days, they look better and plumper than those who ate the king's food.

At the end of the three years Daniel and his three friends, on examination, by the king are found to be ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers of Babylon. Therefore, the four Hebrew boys enter the royal service.

In the second year of the training of the Hebrew boys, king Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and none of his wise men could tell the king the dream and its interpretation. However, God reveals this secret to Daniel and, so, the king promotes Daniel and his three friends.

Next, the book records an image of gold which king Nebuchadnezzar made and the king commands everyone to worship the image. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, do not worship the image and, therefore, the king throws them into a burning fiery furnace. But God delivers them from the flames and they are not hurt by the fire.

After this, God causes king Nebuchadnezzar to lose his reason for seven years because of his pride. At the end of this period, the king regains his senses and, humbled, he extolls and praises the God of heaven and earth, the true God.

Next in the book is the feast held by Belshazzar king of Babylon, when they drink wine from the vessels of the Jewish Temple and praise their so-called gods. Then a hand from God writes on the wall. Daniel interprets the writing and tells the king that his kingdom has come to an end. That night Darius the Mede

conquers Babylon, and Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, is killed.

The book of Daniel then records a plot by the presidents and princes of Babylon who cause king Darius to sign a decree that, for 30 days, no one should pray to anyone except the king. Daniel, as is his custom, prays to God and, so, he is thrown into a lions' den. God delivers Daniel and then the men that plotted against Daniel, along with their families, are thrown into the lions' den and are killed by the lions.

The book then records a dream and vision which God gives to Daniel about four beasts and a little horn. Daniel then sees in a vision one like the Son of man (Christ) come to the Ancient of days in the presence of tens of thousands. The judgment is set and the Son of man (Christ) receives an everlasting dominion and kingdom. An angel then interprets the vision to Daniel.

Next, is a vision in which Daniel sees of a ram, an he goat, and a little horn, and is told that the vision is for 2,300 days. An angel named Gabriel begins to interpret this vision to Daniel who faints before Gabriel is finished with the interpretation and Daniel is sick for certain number of days.

After this, Daniel understands by the books that God had told Jeremiah that Jerusalem would be desolate for 70 years. He prays for Israel's restoration to their homeland and the angel, Gabriel comes to Daniel again. Gabriel completes giving the interpretation of the 2,300-day vision to Daniel.

The book next records Daniel's fast in the third year of king Cyrus of Persia. Daniel then has a vision in which a certain man speaks of future events that will occur on earth up to the time when God's people are delivered by God from a time of trouble. Daniel is then told to seal the book that he has written until the time of the end.

In the next vision that Daniel receives, Daniel hears a prophecy concerning the end of these wonders which he does not understand. Daniel then asks the certain man in the vision about the end of these things. The man gives him further prophecies and

makes a promise to Daniel. The promise was that, though Daniel would rest in the grave, at the end of the days of the world he, Daniel, would receive his reward from God.

## **Themes**

- God's original diet for humanity is the best diet for optimum health.
- Visions, dreams, and prophecies, from God.
- The prophetic history of the earth from the time of the Babylonian kingdom up to the time that God sets up His everlasting kingdom on earth.
- Satan's attempts to do away with both the worship of God on earth, as well as God's faithful people.
- The victory of the saints, who are God's faithful people, over their enemies and Satan.
- The disciplining of God and the resultant conversion of people to God.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God sets up and puts down nations.
- God gives visions and dreams and makes known their interpretation.
- God orchestrates both the deliverance of those faithful to Him from their enemies, and the exaltation of God's people.

- God sends holy angels from heaven to earth on God's mission to humanity.
- God reveals the future to those whom God chooses.
- God's wisdom, power, and supreme authority, revealed.

## **Interpretation of Daniel Chapter 2**

In the dream which God gives to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the king sees an image made of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. In the interpretation of the dream which God reveals to Daniel, the image's head of gold represents the Babylon Empire which would last from 612 B.C. to 539 B.C.

The image's breast and arms of silver represent the Media-Persia Empire which would conquer the Babylonian Empire, and which would last from 539 B.C. to 331 B.C. The image's belly and thighs of brass represent the Greek Empire which would conquer the Media-Persian Empire and which would last from 331 B.C. to 168 B.C.

The image's legs of iron represent the Roman Empire which would conquer the Greek Empire and which would last from 168 B.C. to 476 A.D. The feet which are part of iron and part of clay is symbolic of the nations of Europe which would arise from the breakup of the Roman Empire.

In the king's dream, a stone is cut out without hands and it strikes the image on the feet and breaks it to pieces. Then the gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay are carried away by the wind and the stone becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth.

The interpretation of this dream is that in the days of the nations of Europe, these nations will be destroyed by God who will then set up His everlasting kingdom on earth.

## Interpretation of Daniel Chapter 7

In Daniel's first vision there are four beasts—(1) a lion with eagle's wings, (2) a bear which raised itself up on one side and with three ribs in its mouth, (3) a leopard with four wings, (4) a dreadful and terrible beast with great iron teeth and ten horns—and a little horn. Each beast represented a kingdom.

The lion represented the Babylonian Empire, the bear symbolised the Media-Persian Empire, and the leopard the Greek Empire. The dreadful and terrible beast with its ten horns represented the Roman Empire which was broken up into the nations of Europe.

The little horn symbolised the Roman Empire in the latter of its two phases. The first phase was pagan Rome and the latter phase was papal Rome, which is the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, the little horn is identified as the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church), for the following nine reasons:

1. *Prophecy*: The little horn “came up among them [among the ten horns]” Daniel 7:8. *Fact*: The location of the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) is Rome, Italy, in Europe.
2. *Prophecy*: “In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things [blasphemies].” Daniel 7:8. *Fact*: The papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) has one man as its head, the Pope, who speaks for it.
3. *Prophecy*: The “little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots.” Daniel 7:8. *Fact*: The power of three Arian kingdoms (which held the false belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was created by God), namely, the kingdoms of the Vandals, the Heruli, and the Ostrogoths, was broken to make way for the rise of the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) in 538 A.D.

4. *Prophecy*: “He shall be diverse [different] from the first [ten horns].” Daniel 7:24. *Fact*: The nations of Europe were political, secular powers ruled by kings, but the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) was a religious power ruled by the Pope.
5. *Prophecy*: “The same [little] horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.” Daniel 7:21. *Fact*: It is a well-known fact of history, to which the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) admits, that the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) persecuted Christians and killed from 50 million to 100 million Christians.
6. *Prophecy*: The little horn “came up among them [among the ten horns]” Daniel 7:8. *Fact*: The papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) is an actual continuation of the pagan Roman Empire. For the capital of the Roman Empire, Rome, became the capital of the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) and the office of Pontifex Maximus, the chief high priest of the ancient Roman religion, was continued in that of the Pope, the head of the Roman Catholic Church.
7. *Prophecy*: “The saints...shall be given into his [the little horn’s] hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Daniel 7:25.

*Prophetic Time Calculation*: A time = 1 prophetic year, times = 2 prophetic years, and the dividing of time =  $\frac{1}{2}$  prophetic year. The total years then 1 year + 2 years +  $\frac{1}{2}$  year =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  prophetic years which is 42 prophetic months. Based on the 30-day month of the Jewish calendar, 42 months = 42 prophetic months x 30 days/month = 1,260 prophetic days. According to the day-for-a-year principle given in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 in the Bible, 1,260

prophetic days = 1,260 literal years.

*Fact:* The rule of the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) began in 538 A.D. when the last three opposing Arian kingdoms were uprooted, and its rule continued until 1,260 years later in 1798 A.D. Its political power came to an end in 1798 A.D. when the French Napoleon's general, Berthier, took the Pope captive. The period from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D. is 1,260 years during which the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) had power over the saints. This 1,260 literal years is an exact fulfilment of the 1,260-day prophecy of Daniel 7:25.

8. *Prophecy:* "He [the little horn] shall speak great things [blasphemies] against the most High [God]." Daniel 7:25.

*Bible Truths:* "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" Luke 5:21. It is blasphemy then against God to claim to forgive sins. "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." John 10:33.

*Fact:* According to the papacy's (the Roman Catholic Church's) own literature—

"The [Roman Catholic] Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power [*supposedly*] given to him by Christ."—Excerpt from Joseph Deharbe, S.J., *A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion* (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924, page 279). The current Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church states the same thing this way, "It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest's sacramental absolution [the formal forgiveness of sin *supposedly* imparted by a priest] God grants the

penitent 'pardon and peace.' "

"We [the Popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty."—Excerpt from Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, "The Reunion of Christendom [Latin: *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae*]" dated June 20, 1894, translated in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger, 1903, page 304).

Thus, the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) blasphemes God by claiming to forgive sins and by claiming that the Pope is God.

9. *Prophecy*: "And he shall...think to change times and [God's] laws." Daniel 7:25.

*Fact*: Note the following section from a Roman Catholic Catechism: "Question: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."—Excerpt from Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism* [FRS No. 7.], (3rd American ed., rev.: New York, Edward Dunigan & Bro., 1876, page 174).

God's "ten commandments" (Exodus 34:28) are given in Exodus 20:1-17 in the Bible, but in Roman Catholic Church's Catechisms, the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) has:

- A. Blasphemously omitted the second commandment

which states that we should not worship images.

B. In earlier versions of the Catechism, shortened the fourth commandment (which the Roman Catholic Church erroneously calls the third commandment) from 94 words to 8 words to make it to authorise the keeping of the first day of the week holy instead of keeping the seventh-day holy as God intended. Here the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) is saying that they have “changed” (so they think) the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of the week, and that virtually all Christian churches have accepted the new (false) holy day. Thus, they have *thought* to change times established by God.

The current version of the Catechism (accessed December 17, 2022) which can be read at the Vatican’s website says the same thing as follows:

(i) Part 3, Section 2, Chapter 1, Article 3 of the Catechism quotes *ONLY a portion* of the fourth commandment as given in the Bible in Exodus 20:8-11 which states that the Sabbath is the seventh day.

(ii) Part 3, Section 2, Chapter 1, Article 3, Subsection II, Paragraph 2175 of the Catechism *blasphemously* states that the Sabbath is no longer to be observed because Sunday, which the Roman Catholic Church *erroneously* calls the Lord Day’s, has replaced the seventh-day Sabbath.

(iii) Part 3, Section 2, Chapter 1, Article 3, In Brief, Paragraphs 2190 and 2191 of the Catechism *blasphemously* states that the Sabbath is no longer to be observed because Sunday, which the Roman Catholic Church *erroneously* calls the Lord Day’s, has replaced the seventh-day Sabbath.

(iv) Part 3, Section 2, Chapter 1 of the Catechism under the heading *The Third Commandment: Remember to Keep Holy the Lord's Day* and Question No. 452 asks "For what reason has the Sabbath been changed to Sunday for Christians?" The *blasphemous* answer given in the Catechism is "The reason is because Sunday is the day of the Resurrection of Christ." Thus the Roman Catholic Church *blasphemously* states that the Sabbath has been changed from the seventh day to Sunday which they call "the first day of the week."

C. *Blasphemously* divided the tenth commandment into two commandments to make up the number to ten because they have *erroneously omitted* the second commandment.

Thus, the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) has *thought* to change "the ten commandments" (Exodus 34:28), "God's law" (Nehemiah 10:29), which God gave humanity in Exodus 20:1-17 in the Bible. You can check this yourself by comparing the Bible with any of the papacy's (the Roman Catholic Church's) Catechisms (often available online).

The above nine points then regarding the little horn fit only one power—the papacy, that is, the Roman Catholic Church.

## **Interpretation of Daniel Chapter 9**

In Daniel's second vision, he is told that "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. In Chapter 3 of this book that you are reading, it was explained that this period of 2,300 prophetic days was 2,300 literal years according to the day-for-a-year principle of Numbers

14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6.

The angel to whom God said, “Gabriel, make this man [Daniel] to understand the vision” (Daniel 8:16) begins to give Daniel the interpretation of the vision. However, as Daniel says, “I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.” Daniel 8:27.

After some time, the angel, Gabriel, comes back to Daniel and says to him, “O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding...therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.” Daniel 9:22, 23. Gabriel here refers to the vision which he had started to interpret to Daniel, but could not finish because Daniel had fainted.

Gabriel takes up the interpretation of the vision again by saying, “Seventy weeks are determined upon [cut off for] thy people [the Jews] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” Daniel 9:24. So, Gabriel starts with the 70-week prophecy which begins at the same time as the 2,300-day prophecy.

Gabriel divides the 70 weeks of the prophecy into 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week, where  $7 \text{ weeks} + 62 \text{ weeks} + 1 \text{ week} = 70 \text{ weeks}$ . Now, the 70 prophetic weeks are  $70 \text{ weeks} \times 7 \text{ days per week} = 490 \text{ prophetic days}$  or 490 literal years. The interpretation of the prophecy is as follows. The first subdivision of 7 prophetic weeks, which is  $7 \text{ weeks} \times 7 \text{ days per week} = 49 \text{ prophetic years}$  or 49 literal years, starts in 457 B.C. and ends in 408 B.C. This was the period of the rebuilding of Jewish society according to God’s divine order under Ezra and Nehemiah “even in troublous times.” Daniel 9:25.

The second subdivision of 62 prophetic weeks, which is  $62 \text{ weeks} \times 7 \text{ days per week} = 434 \text{ prophetic years}$  or 434 literal years, starts in 408 B.C. and ends in 27 A.D. Note that since there is no

year zero in the A.D. dating system, the period of 434 years from 408 B.C. can be calculated as 408 years to 1 B.C., which ends the day before 1 A.D. begins. Since  $434 \text{ years} - 408 \text{ years} = 26 \text{ years}$ , therefore,  $26 \text{ years} + 1 \text{ A.D.} = 27 \text{ A.D.}$  At that time, 27 A.D., “God anointed Jesus [Christ] of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] and with power” (Acts 10:38) at the beginning of Christ’s public ministry.

Thus, “from the going forth of the commandment [the decree] to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [Jesus Christ] shall be seven weeks, and threescore [sixty] and two weeks.” Daniel 9:25. That is, there shall be  $7 \text{ weeks} + 62 \text{ weeks} = 69$  prophetic weeks  $\times 7 \text{ days per week} = 483$  prophetic days, which is 483 literal years. So, from 457 B.C., the start of the 70-week prophecy, to 27 A.D., when Jesus Christ was anointed, is 483 literal years.

The 70-week prophecy ends with the final subdivision of 1 week, the 70th week, which is 7 prophetic days or 7 literal years. This 70th week is when “he [the Messiah, Jesus Christ] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” Daniel 9:27. “And after threescore [sixty] and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself...and in the midst of the [70th] week [that is, after  $3\frac{1}{2}$  prophetic days =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  literal years] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation [offering] to cease.” Daniel 9:26, 27. This was fulfilled when  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years after His anointing in 27 A.D., Christ was murdered in 31 A.D.

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [the 70th week].” Daniel 9:27. At the end of the 70th week,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years after Christ’s death in 31 A.D., Christ’s disciple, Stephen, was stoned to death in 34 A.D. by the Jews and he became the first Christian martyr. “Therefore they [the Christians, the followers of Jesus Christ,] that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word [of God].” Acts 8:4. That is, in 34 A.D., as Christ said, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [the Jews], and given to a nation [the Christian Church] bringing forth the fruits

thereof.” Matthew 21:43. So, the work of preaching the gospel was taken from the Jewish nation and given to the Christian church.

As was said before, both the 2,300-day prophecy and the 70-week prophecy start at the same time in 457 B.C. The 70-week prophecy which is 490 prophetic days = 490 literal years ended in 34 A.D. as shown above. Thus, the first 490 literal years of the 2,300 literal years ended in 34 A.D. Now, 2,300 literal years – 490 literal years = 1,810 literal years remaining to the end of the 2,300-day prophecy. Therefore, 34 A.D. + 1,810 literal years = 1844 A.D. We see then that 2,300 literal years from 457 B.C. ends in the year 1844 A.D. which is the time of the start of Investigative Judgment in heaven when the heavenly sanctuary began to be cleansed.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“And I [John] stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw [in a vision] a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” Revelation 13:1.

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon [Satan] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Revelation 13:2.

The book of Revelation, in making reference to a leopard, a bear, and a lion, is making an allusion to the symbolism of the book of Daniel. Of the beasts seen by Daniel in vision, the first was like a lion, the second like a bear, and the third like a leopard. The beast John saw in a vision thus had physical characteristics drawn from all three beasts in the book of Daniel.

The symbolism then is that, in the depiction of Revelation, the power represented by the beast from the sea possessed characteristics that were prominent in the empires of Babylon, Media-Per-

sia, and Greece. This beast from the sea symbolises the papacy, that is, the Roman Catholic Church.

According to God, Satan, the dragon, gave the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) its power, seat, and authority. For the Pope is “that man of sin...the son of perdition [of eternal ruin]; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing [showing] himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.

Thus, the Pope is “antichrist” (1 John 2:18), the representative of Satan. For the Roman Catholic Church’s teachings are “cunningly devised fables” (2 Peter 1:16), a mammoth system of deception consisting of truth mixed with error. Now, just as there have been many Popes there have been “many antichrists.” 1 John 2:18.

And God says, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law [the ten commandments], and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10. The papacy, that is, the Roman Catholic Church, by *falsely* substituting Sunday for the seventh-day Sabbath (from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) *knowingly* teaches people to break God’s Sabbath commandment and is, therefore, guilty of breaking the whole law.

In fact, a careful and prayerful study of the Bible will reveal that anyone who follows the errors of the Roman Catholic Church to the end of their life, is sure to lose their soul by receiving eternal death (annihilation) from God instead of receiving eternal life.

In light of this, you may be asking, Does God have a church on earth? Yes, He does. The book of Revelation identifies God’s true church, and we will look at this issue when we discuss the book of Revelation.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will,

believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Ensure that you eat according God's original diet for humanity, not only for optimal health, but also because your diet affects your ability to perceive spiritual things.
- Worship God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who is the *only* true God.
- Cling to God, even in the midst of persecution for your Christian faith.
- Believe and praise God for His promise of ultimate victory over your enemies, including Satan.
- Avoid the necessity for God to discipline you by obeying all God's moral instructions given in the Bible, for even with the best intentions we often sin. Learn the lessons God desires to teach you the first time and endeavour not to repeat a particular sin.
- Learn to perceive the hand of God in the rise and fall of the nations on earth.
- "Be not forgetful to entertain [be hospitable to] strangers: for thereby some have entertained [have been a host to holy] angels unawares." Hebrews 13:2.
- Study the Bible prayerfully and carefully so that you may perceive what the future holds for humanity and, hence, be prepared for what is to come as God intended that you should be.
- Acknowledge God's wisdom, power, and supreme authority.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

# *Hosea: Approx. 755 B.C. – Approx. 725 B.C.*

**H**OSEA IS THE TWENTY-EIGHTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Hoshea* meaning “Yahweh saves.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Osee*, “Hosea”.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Hosea is the author of the book of Hosea. The book was perhaps written during Hosea’s prophetic ministry which lasted from approximately 753 B.C. to about 729 B.C., but written no later than 723 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Hosea covers the period from approximately 753 B.C. to about 729 B.C. Hosea begins by stating that he carried out his prophetic ministry during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, who were kings of Judah and during the reign of

Jeroboam (Jeroboam II) the son of Joash, king of Israel.

God commands Hosea to go and take a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms, because Israel had committed great whoredom. So, Hosea marries a woman named Gomer who bears three children, a son and two daughters. At the birth of each child, God gives Hosea prophetic messages.

God's three prophetic messages are, (1) I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of king Jehu and bring an end to the kingdom of Israel, (2) I will no more have mercy on Israel, and (3) you are not my people and I will not be your God.

God then promises to gather together Judah and Israel and accept them in the future. God next compares Israel to the unfaithfulness of Gomer to Hosea. After this, God speaks about Hosea's love for Gomer and God's love for Israel. Hosea then goes and buys Gomer back from slavery and God prophesies that, likewise, Israel will return to God.

God next describes the wickedness of the people of Israel, and of their priests and leaders, warning them of coming judgment. After this, God invites Israel to return to him. Next, God shows their willful breaking of His covenant with Israel, the wickedness of their royal house, and Israel's refusal to return to God.

After this, God prophesies of Israel's captivity to Assyria because of their sinfulness and idolatry. God then reproves Israel and prophesies of the devastation of their place for idol worship and the destruction of their kingdom.

Next, God speaks of His mercy and love towards Israel. God then reproves Israel and Judah, calling them to repentance. After this, God contrasts Israel's ingratitude and wickedness with the godly experience of their forefather, Jacob, and declares that their sins have provoked Him, God, to anger.

God then prophesies of His judgment upon Israel, entreating Israel to return to Him, and promising them mercy and His blessing if they turn away from idolatry.

## **Themes**

- The love of God for erring humanity.
- Adultery and whoredom.
- Unfaithfulness to God, idolatry, and wickedness.
- Prophecies.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who has love and mercy for the unfaithful and tenderly entreats them to return to Him.
- God who is provoked to anger by the sins of humanity.
- God who will cast away the nation that persists in wickedness.
- God who is willing to forgive sins.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Hosea was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah in that Hosea's prophetic ministry started in about 755 B.C., approximately 10 years earlier than that of Isaiah, and overlapped Isaiah's ministry by about 20 years.

Hosea's ministry started during the reign in Israel of Jeroboam II, the biblical "Jeroboam the son of Joash" (2 Kings 14:23) during the approximate period 793 B.C. to 753 B.C.

"And he [Jeroboam II] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD [God]: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the

son of Nebat [Jeroboam I], who made Israel to sin.” 2 Kings 14:24. “And...he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel.” 2 Kings 14:28. “And Jeroboam [II] slept with his fathers [Jeroboam II died]...and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.” 2 Kings 14:29.

“Zachariah the son of Jeroboam [II, did] reign over Israel in Samaria six months [approximately 753 B.C. to 752 B.C.]. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD [God]...and Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him...and slew [killed] him, and reigned in his stead.” 2 Kings 15:8-10.

“Shallum the son of Jabesh...reigned a full month in Samaria [752 B.C.]. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and...slew [killed] him, and reigned in his stead.” 2 Kings 15:13, 14. “Menahem the son of Gadi...reigned ten years in Samaria [752 B.C. to 742 B.C.]” 2 Kings 15:17. “And Menahem slept with his fathers [Menahem died]; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.” 2 Kings 15:22.

“Pekahiah the son of Menahem...reigned two years [742 B.C. to 740 B.C.]...But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him...killed him, and reigned in his room [in his place].” 2 Kings 15:23-25. “Pekah the son of Remaliah...reigned twenty years” (2 Kings 15:27), actually from 740 B.C. to 732 B.C. for he seemed to have either claimed the throne or was a rival king over the preceding 12 years, 752 B.C. to 740 B.C.

“And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah...and slew [killed] him, and reigned in his stead.” 2 Kings 15:30. “Hoshea the son of Elah...reign[ed] in Samaria over Israel nine years [732 B.C. to 722 B.C.]” 2 Kings 17:1. “In the ninth year of Hoshea [722 B.C.] the king of Assyria took [conquered] Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.” 2 Kings 17:6.

So, Hosea’s ministry ended about 725 B.C., approximately 3 years before Israel was taken captive by Assyria.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not commit adultery and whoredom.
- Do not provoke God to anger with your sins.
- Love God who loves you and is willing to forgive your sins.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

# *Joel: Approx. 620 B.C. – Eden Restored*

**J**OEL IS THE TWENTY-NINTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Yo'el* meaning “Yahweh is God.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Joel*, “Joel.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Joel is the author of the book of Joel. The book was perhaps written about 620 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Joel covers the period from approximately 620 B.C. to the future time when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, and the entire earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden.

Joel begins with a vivid description of the countryside of Judah which is stripped of all greenery by a severe plague of locusts.

He calls upon the elders to see that no such plague had ever been since the time of their fathers, and they are to tell it to the three succeeding generations. Nothing remains for the offerings of God's Temple as crop after crop has been ruined.

In view of this crisis, Joel calls for a period of fasting and summons the people of the land to the Temple for a solemn assembly. He then describes the effect of the plague on man and beast. Accompanying the plague of locusts is a severe drought. The drought is so great that the nation faces extinction which Joel describes as the coming day of the Lord.

The land is as if it had been swept by fire and the locusts are compared to a well-disciplined army. Joel then asks who can abide the day of the Lord God. Next, he calls the people to wholehearted repentance and to pray to God.

If they do so, God promises to remove the plague of locusts and to send the usual early and latter rain. God also promises that, as a result, they will have wheat, wine, and oil, sufficient to supply the needs of all. Furthermore, God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon the hearts of the people.

God then declares that there will be extraordinary signs in the sun and moon before the great and terrible day of the Lord God comes. Also, God promises that all those who call upon the name of the Lord will be delivered. Moreover, God promises to restore Judah and Jerusalem from their captivity.

God next declares that He will gather all the other nations which have been His people's oppressors to the vicinity of Jerusalem and execute judgment upon them. God promises to annihilate Judah's enemies and that never again will the nations oppress Judah.

Lastly, the book of Joel ends with God's promises of a bright future. For in the future, God declares that the land of Judah will stand forth in perpetual fertility and beauty. Also, God declares of Judah that, from generation to generation, God will dwell in the midst of His people.

## Themes

- National disaster caused by God's actions in the natural world.
- A call to repentance and to prayer to God.
- A coming day of the Lord God bringing national ruin.
- The coming great and terrible day of the Lord God at the end of the world.
- The land to be restored to productivity under God's favour.
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on God's people.
- The annihilation of the enemies of God's people.
- The future glory of God's people who are established in their own land under God's favour.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God brings judgments upon nations for their sins.
- God calls nations to repentance and to prayer.
- God brings national ruin for a nation's sins.
- God can restore a land from natural disasters to productivity.
- God's favour in His outpouring of the Holy Spirit on people.

- God will annihilate the enemies of His people.
- God will give future glory to His people.
- God dwelling in the midst of His people.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Joel was a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah. Now in 31 A.D., after Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, it happened that on the day of Pentecost, “they [the disciples of Christ] were all filled with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit], and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4.

Thus, Peter, a disciple of Christ, said, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my [Holy] Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” Acts 2:16, 17.

“And on my servants and on my handmaidens [on my female servants] I will pour out in those days of my [Holy] Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” Acts 2:18. This prophecy of the prophet Joel, as it was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., will again be fulfilled in the last days just before Jesus Christ comes to the earth a second time.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days [of persecution of the saints by the Roman Catholic Church]” (Matthew 24:29), “lo, there was a great earthquake” (Revelation 6:12) and then “shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” Matthew 24:29.

Of these three signs of Christ’s second coming, the first sign

was an earthquake on November 1, 1755 in Lisbon in Europe. It was one of the most terrible earthquakes ever recorded. The second sign occurred over New England in America and parts of Canada on the “Dark Day” of May 19, 1780. The third and final sign occurred in the great meteor shower of November 13, 1833 which was seen all over North America.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30. “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27. This is the future great and terrible day of the Lord God which was prophesied by the prophet Joel.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Repent of your sins and pray to God.
- “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” Jude 1:21. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit and, hence, be saved to eternal life.



## CHAPTER THIRTY

# *Amos: Approx. 767 B.C. – Eden Restored*

**A**MOS IS THE THIRTIETH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Amos* meaning “Burden Bearer.” The English title Amos comes from the Hebrew Bible.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Amos is the author of the book of Amos. The book was perhaps written during his prophetic ministry which lasted from approximately 767 B.C. to 753 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Amos covers the period from approximately 767 B.C. to the future time when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, and the entire earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden.

Amos begins his book by describing himself as a herdsman from Tekoa which was in the kingdom of Judah. He writes what God

has showed him concerning the kingdom of Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam (Jeroboam II) the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Amos then lists the crimes of Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel, and pronounces God's judgments upon them. Next, Amos declares the certainty of his prophetic messages and that Israel's punishment is inescapable because they have not repented of their sins. He then calls upon Israel to seek God in sincerity.

Amos next describes the wailing of the people of Israel at the fate of their nation. He then pronounces woe to those that are at ease in Israel and that put far away the day of doom.

Amos then records visions from God of grasshoppers, fire, and a plumbline, all symbolising God's judgments upon Israel. After this, Amaziah, the priest of Bethel in Israel, complains about Amos to king Jeroboam (II). Amos responds by saying that he was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, and God took him from following the flock and sent him to prophesy to the people of Israel.

Next, Amos records a vision from God of summer fruit, a famine for the words of God, and punishment of sinners, all symbolising God's judgments upon Israel.

God then promises to restore Israel and build it as in the days of old. At that time, God promises that He will cause Israel to return from their captivity to live peacefully in their homeland forever.

## Themes

- A call to prophetic ministry.
- Rebuke for evildoing.
- A call to sincere repentance.

- Judgments of God upon a nation for their sins.
- Visions from God.
- God's people to be established in their own land under God's favour.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God calls people to their prophetic ministry.
- God gives visions.
- God rebukes evildoing.
- God calls people to repent of their sins.
- God who will bring judgments upon nations for their sins.
- God will give future glory to His people.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

The prophetic ministry of Amos ended about 753 B.C., two years after the start of Hosea's ministry in approximately 755 B.C. and eight years before the start of Isaiah's ministry in about 745 B.C.

Now God had said to Israel, "Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD [God] did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." Deuteronomy 7:6, 7.

"But because the LORD [God] loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers [the godly

men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], hath the LORD [God] brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen [slaves], from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Deuteronomy 7:8.

"Behold, I [Moses] have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it." Deuteronomy 4:5.

"Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Deuteronomy 4:6.

"For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh [near] unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I [Moses] set before you this day?" Deuteronomy 4:7, 8. Thus, Israel, then a united kingdom, was called to be a godly example to the world.

After the united kingdom was divided into two kingdoms, God said to the northern kingdom of Israel, "He [God] hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8.

But "I [God] know Ephraim [a designation for the northern kingdom of Israel], and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled. They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD [God]." Hosea 5:3, 4. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17.

So, God said, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities [wickedness] have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:1, 2.

“How shall I pardon thee for this?” Jeremiah 5:7. “Shall I not visit [punish them] for these things? saith the LORD [God]: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” Jeremiah 5:9.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Obey God’s call on your life with joy and fixedness of purpose.
- Do not be deaf to God’s rebuke of your sins.
- Repent of your sins.
- Always be in agreement with God and His will.
- As your first priority, be a seeker of God and His righteousness.
- Always be prepared and ready to meet God whether you die before Christ returns to the earth or you live to see His return.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

# *Obadiah: Approx. 586 B.C.*

**O**BADIAH IS THE THIRTY-FIRST book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *‘Obadyah* meaning “servant of Yahweh.” The English title comes from the Hebrew Bible.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Obadiah is the author of the book of Obadiah. It was written no earlier than 586 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book opens with a summons from God for the non-Jewish nations to attack the nation of Edom because of her pride. God then declares that Edom is to be plundered and her people slaughtered.

God describes Edom’s crime as violence against their brother Jacob, that is, against the southern kingdom of Judah whose forefather was Jacob. For Edom was a participant when a foreign nation took the inhabitants of Judah captive. In that day, Edom rejoiced over the fall of the people of Judah to their enemies, they

plundered Judah, killed some who escaped from Judah, and took some of the escaping people captive.

God then declares that the day of the Lord is near upon all the non-Jewish nations. At that time, the nations shall be punished by God for what they have done and they shall be as though they had never existed. But upon Judah shall be deliverance and holiness, Judah shall possess all the possessions of the other nations, and the kingdom shall then be God's own kingdom.

## **Themes**

- Punishment from God for the sins of pride and violence.
- The deliverance of God's people from their enemies.
- The establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God the judge of all nations.
- God who delivers His people from their enemies.
- God who makes people holy.
- God who will set up his kingdom on earth.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

The prophet Obadiah was a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These four prophets ministered to the people of Judah, who were taken captive by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

The united kingdom of Israel along with Edom were nations

who were descendants of twin brothers, Jacob and Esau, the sons of Isaac. Israel was of the line of Jacob while Edom was of the line of Esau.

There was a time when, “Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he [Esau] swore unto him [Jacob]: and he [Esau] sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils [lentil stew]; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.” Genesis 25:33, 34.

At a subsequent time, “Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison [game], and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou [Esau] camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.” Genesis 27:33.

“And when Esau heard the words of his father [Isaac], he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother [Jacob] came with subtilty [subtlety], and hath taken away thy blessing.” Genesis 27:34, 35.

“And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father [Isaac] blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay [kill] my brother Jacob.” Genesis 27:41.

Esau’s hatred for Jacob was manifested through subsequent centuries as a bitter hatred between their descendants, namely, the nations of Israel and Edom. So, when God freed Israel from slavery in Egypt and Israel was on their way to the promised land of Canaan, “Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore [therefore] Israel turned away from him.” Numbers 20:21.

The animosity was apparent in the wars between Edom and the united kingdom of Israel during the reigns of kings Saul and David, and Edom was an adversary to king Solomon.

“So Saul took the kingdom [became king] over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side... [even] against Edom...and whithersoever [wherever] he turned himself, he vexed [dis-

comfited] them.” 1 Samuel 14:47. “And David...put garrisons in Edom...and all they of Edom became David’s servants.” 2 Samuel 8:13, 14. “And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king’s seed [descendants] in Edom.” 1 Kings 11:14.

After the kingdom of Israel was divided, there were wars between Edom and the southern kingdom of Judah, during the reign of kings Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Amaziah, and Ahaz, as follows:

In the days of king Jehoshaphat, “when they [Judah] began to sing and to praise, the LORD [God] set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir [Edom], which were come against Judah; and they were smitten [defeated].” 2 Chronicles 20:22. “In his [king Jehoram’s] days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king.” 2 Chronicles 21:8.

“He [king Amaziah] slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took [the city of] Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.” 2 Kings 14:7. “At that [later] time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. For again the Edomites had come and smitten [stricken] Judah, and carried away captives.” 2 Chronicles 28:16, 17.

And it came to pass that in 586 B.C., the city of Jerusalem, the last stronghold of the kingdom of Judah, fell to the Babylonians. Most of the people were taken captive to Babylon. There in captivity, the Jews prayed, “Remember, O LORD [God], the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem [the day when Jerusalem was taken captive]; who said, Rase [demolish] it, rase [demolish] it, even to the foundation thereof.” Psalm 137:7.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to

make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Avoid the sin of pride. Humble yourself in the sight of God.
- Do not be violent and, therefore, sin.
- Do not hate others. Love your fellow human being as you love yourself.
- Do not rejoice at the calamities of others.
- Be assured and rejoice at God's providential care over His people.
- Do not seek revenge against your persecutors for God will surely punish them for their sins.
- Be spiritually ready for the time when God's kingdom reigns on earth.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

# *Jonah: Approx. 790 B.C.*

**J**ONAH IS THE THIRTY-SECOND book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Yonah* meaning “dove.” The English title comes to us from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Jonas*, “Jonah”.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Jonah is the author of the book of Jonah. It was written no earlier than about 790 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book opens with Jonah being commanded by God to go to the city of Nineveh and announce their doom because of their wickedness. In response, Jonah decides to flee to Tarshish from the presence of God. So, he boards a ship at Joppa whose destination is Tarshish.

A great storm comes upon the ship at sea and the sailors are afraid, so they cry unto their so-called gods. But Jonah is fast asleep in the ship. The sailors wake Jonah up and tell him to call

upon his god. They then cast lots to see who on the ship has caused this trouble to come upon them and the lot falls upon Jonah.

The sailors then question Jonah, and Jonah tells them that he is a Hebrew (Jew), that his God made the sea and the dry land, and that he has fled from God. The sailors then ask Jonah what they should do to him so that the sea would become calm. Jonah tells them to cast him into the sea.

Nevertheless, the sailors row hard to bring the ship to land and they fail. Therefore, the sailors pray to God asking God not to charge them with Jonah's innocent blood. They then cast Jonah into the sea and the sea becomes calm. In fear, the sailors offer a sacrifice to God and make vows to God.

God prepares a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah is in the fish's belly three days and three nights. While in the fish's belly, Jonah prays a prayer of repentance to God and God causes the fish to vomit out Jonah on dry land. God then commands Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh and preach to its people. This time Jonah obeys God and he goes to Nineveh.

Jonah preaches to the people of Nineveh of the city's doom and the people believe God. So, the Ninevites repent and, therefore, God does not bring His judgments upon the Ninevites as He had intended.

However, Jonah is displeased and very angry. He prays to God saying that because he knew God would turn away from His judgments if the Ninevites repented he, Jonah, had fled to Tarshish. Jonah then asks God to take his life for it is better for him to die. God then asks Jonah if it is well for him to be angry and Jonah goes out of the city, makes himself a shelter, and waits to see what will happen to Nineveh.

God then causes a plant come up to shelter Jonah for which Jonah is exceedingly glad. The next morning, God prepares a worm and it damages the plant so that the plant withers. Therefore, when the sun rises and it beats upon Jonah's head, he faints.

Jonah again wishes to die and God asks Jonah if he does well to be angry about the plant. Jonah says to God that he does well to be angry. Then God says to Jonah that Jonah has pity on the plant and should not He, God, spare Nineveh, a great city of more than 120,000 people that do not have discernment concerning good and evil and which has much cattle?

## **Themes**

- A reluctant and disobedient prophet.
- The conversion of unbelievers to God.
- Miracles of God.
- The repentance of a nation.
- A prophet's displeasure and anger at God's mercy.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who is willing to save non-Israelites (non-Jews).
- God who is merciful to unbelievers.
- God who is merciful to a reluctant and disobedient prophet.
- God who gives sinners opportunities to repent.
- God who turns away His punishment from those who repent.
- God who deals patiently with people.
- God who does miracles.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

The prophet Jonah's ministry was in about 790 B.C., 45 years before the start of the prophet Isaiah's ministry. At least one of his prophecies was fulfilled. For "he [Jeroboam II] restored the coast [boundary] of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake [spoke] by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher [in Israel]." 2 Kings 14:25.

When God called Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh, Jonah's mind was, "Whither [where] shall I go from thy [God's Holy] spirit? or whither [where] shall I flee from thy [God's] presence?" Psalm 139:7. But God says, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I [God] shall not see him? saith the LORD [God]. Do not I [God] fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD [God]." Jeremiah 23:24.

As a result of Jonah's attempt to flee from God, "Jonas [Jonah] was three days and three nights in the whale's belly." Matthew 12:40. Now when God calls us to ministry, "if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation [a stewardship] of the gospel [God's plan of saving humanity from eternal death (annihilation by God )] is committed unto me." 1 Corinthians 9:17.

For God says, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Jeremiah 18:7, 8.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11. "Of a truth...God is no respecter of persons [does not indulge in favouritism]." Acts 10:34. "God...[has] to the

Gentiles [non-Jews] granted repentance unto [eternal] life.” Acts 11:18.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not be reluctant or disobedient to do God’s will.
- Believe in God’s miraculous power.
- Do not be displeased or angry at God’s mercy towards others.
- Believe that it is possible for an entire nation to repent.
- Know that God is willing to save every human being.
- Do not delay to repent of your sins.
- Know that God deals patiently with every human being.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

# Micah: Approx. 739 B.C. – Eden Restored

**M**ICAH IS THE THIRTY-THIRD book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Mikayehu* meaning “Who is like Yahweh?” The English title comes from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Micha*, “Micah”.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Micah is the author of the book of Micah. The book was perhaps written during his prophetic ministry which lasted from approximately 739 B.C. to 700 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Micah covers the period from approximately 739 B.C. to the future time when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, and the entire earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden.

Micah opens his book by stating that God spoke to him regard-

ing Samaria and Jerusalem during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel and Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah.) Micah then states that God will punish both Samaria and Jerusalem for their idolatry.

Next, he says the people are characterised by their evil plans and devices, covetousness, and violence. Therefore, God says He will devise evil against the wicked which they shall not be able to escape.

But God would gather all the remnant of the people who had not gone the way of evil and they would become a great multitude. In the future, this multitude would follow God, their King, who would lead them.

Micah then states that the leaders and princes were, figuratively, eating the flesh of the people and skinning them alive. Moreover, there were false prophets, dishonest judges, and mercenary priests. Therefore, God will destroy Zion (Jerusalem) and the mountain of the house (the Temple).

Next, Micah says that, in the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house will be established and be exalted, people shall flow into it, and many nations shall come to it. The nations shall learn war no more and none shall make them afraid for they will walk in the name of the Lord their God.

God will then reign over His people in mount Zion forever and the original dominion over the earth will come back to God and His people. That is, though many nations will gather against them, God will give His people victory over all their enemies.

Micah then states that he that is to be ruler in Israel and whose going forth has been from everlasting will be born in Bethlehem Ephratah. Then the remnant of God's people will be in the midst of many people as the dew and as showers that give life to the grass.

After this, Micah states that God's people will be victorious over their adversaries. For God will cut off His people's horses,

chariots, strongholds, witchcrafts, and idols, and God Himself will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the other nations.

Next, Micah says that God has a controversy with His people because of their ingratitude to Him. Micah then asks the people if God will be pleased with their offerings, even of the sacrifice of their firstborn, for their sin. Micah answers his own question by saying that God had showed them what is good and what God requires—to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.

God next condemns the people for their dishonesty, violence, deceit, and pronounces judgment upon them for these sins. Micah laments at the wickedness of the people and vows to look to God and wait for God's salvation for God will hear him, Micah. After this, Micah says that God will give him victory over his enemies and the land shall be desolate because of the evil deeds of the people that dwell in it.

Micah then asks God to prosper His people as in the days of old. In response, God promises to show His people marvellous things according to the days of their coming out of Egypt. The nations shall see it and be confounded at the might of God's people and be afraid of God.

Lastly, Micah praises God for pardoning sins, for not retaining His anger forever, and for delighting in mercy. Micah then says that God will have compassion on His people, God will subdue their wickedness, and cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Moreover, God will perform His promises which He had made to Jacob and Abraham, the forefathers of His people from the days of old.

## Themes

- The wickedness of leaders, prophets, judges, priests, and common people.

- God's remnant people who obey God's law of love.
- Judgment for sins.
- The coming of God's everlasting kingdom and the peace that it brings.
- The coming birth of a Ruler in Israel.
- The conversion of many people to God.
- The victory of God's people over their enemies.
- Praise to God.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who has a remnant people on earth who have not turned to evil.
- God who will bring in His everlasting kingdom on earth.
- God who will bring about the conversion of many people to Himself.
- God who gives His people victory over their enemies.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Micah was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah and Hosea in that his prophetic ministry (739 B.C. to 700 B.C.) overlapped those of Isaiah (745 B.C. to 685 B.C.) and of Hosea (753 B.C. to 729 B.C.).

In the course of time it happened that "Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the

house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused [future] wife, being great with child [being pregnant].” Luke 2:4, 5.

“And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son.” Luke 2:6, 7. So, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. And there came a time when “he [Christ] said unto them [His disciples], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature [every person].” Mark 16:15. So, Christ’s disciples are to be evangelists, that is, “labourers together with God [for the conversion of the world to God].” 1 Corinthians 3:9.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do “not follow a multitude to do evil.” Exodus 23:2.
- Be part of God’s remnant people, who alone will be saved by God to eternal life.
- Do not sit idly by and wait for God to convert the world to Himself. Instead, “do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of [entirely accomplish] thy [God-given] ministry.” 2 Timothy 4:5.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

# *Nahum: Approx. 640 B.C.*

**N**AHUM IS THE THIRTY-FOURTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Nachum* meaning “comforted.” The English title comes from Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Nahum*.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Nahum is the author of the book of Nahum. It was written no earlier than 663 B.C. and probably no later than 627 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book opens by saying that it is a prophecy concerning the city of Nineveh, according to the vision which God gave to Nahum, the Elkoshite. Nahum states that God will take vengeance upon his adversaries, and He, God, reserves His anger for His enemies. He next says that although God is slow to anger, He will not acquit the wicked. Nahum then describes God’s power to punish the wicked.

After this, Nahum says that God will make an utter end of

Nineveh such that they will never rise again. For God will break Nineveh's yoke from off Judah and restore peace to Judah. Next, Nahum describes the siege and capture of Nineveh and the plundering of the city. Nahum then says that God is against Nineveh for her whoredoms, crimes, and witchcrafts and, therefore, Nineveh will be destroyed.

For God says Nineveh is no better than the city of No in Egypt and, like No, Nineveh shall be captured and destroyed. All of Nineveh's strongholds shall be taken, the leaders killed and the people scattered. God says there is no healing of the Ninevites' spiritual bruise and their spiritual wound is grievous. All that hear the report shall rejoice for Nineveh's wickedness had come upon many nations.

## **Themes**

- The coming destruction of a wicked city.
- The breaking of the yoke of a wicked nation from off God's people.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who is slow to anger but will not acquit the wicked.
- God who will bring a complete end to wicked cities and nations.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

About 790 B.C., Jonah preached to Nineveh. And "the king of Nineveh...caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh...saying...let them turn every one from his evil way, and

from...violence.” Jonah 3:6-8. “And God saw...that they turned from their evil way; and God...[destroyed them] not.” Jonah 3:10. Thus, God spared Nineveh in the time of Jonah because they repented of their sins. However, within about 150 years after Jonah, Nineveh became so wicked that God said that He would destroy the city.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Turn from your evil ways so that you are not annihilated by God.
- Maintain a state of unwavering repentance and faith in God.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

# *Habakkuk: Approx. 630 B.C.*

**H**ABAKKUK IS THE THIRTY-FIFTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Chabaqquq* probably meaning “one who embraces.” The English title comes from the Jerome’s Latin Vulgate which has the title *Habacuc*, “Habakkuk.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Habakkuk is the author of the book of Habakkuk. It was probably written no later than 630 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book opens with Habakkuk saying that his book is the burden (prophecy from God) that he saw. Habakkuk cries out to God and asks God how long will God permit the apostasy (unfaithfulness to God) and the crime of Judah to go unchecked and unpunished.

God answers Habakkuk’s plaintive plea by assuring him that He will raise up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) who will come with

violence and invade Judah. By this means, God says, He will punish Judah for their sins. In response, Habakkuk affirms God as his Holy One and declares, “We shall not die“. He then asks God how can God, who is just, permit the wicked to devour the man who is more righteous than he. Habakkuk then says that he will watch to see what God will answer.

God answers Habakkuk saying to Habakkuk that he is to write the vision from God about Judah because it will surely come. Then God says to Habakkuk that he who is lifted up in pride is not upright, but the just shall live by faith. Next, God describes at length the sins of Babylon, and says let all the earth keep silence before God.

In response, Habakkuk prays to God expressing his awe at the coming divine anger, and makes a plea to God that God, in His anger, would remember mercy. God then gives Habakkuk a vision of His glory and power, showing God at work for the salvation of His faithful ones and for the overthrow of their enemies.

At this prospect, Habakkuk rejoices in the God of his salvation, and affirms his faith in the ultimate success of God’s divine plan of salvation. Habakkuk then dedicates his prayer as a psalm (sacred song) to the chief singer on his stringed instruments.

## Themes

- A conversation between God and one of His faithful people.
- A prophecy from God.
- A vision from God.
- Prayer.
- Steadfast faith in God.

- Judgments from God because of sins.
- Rejoicing in God.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God hears the cry of the heart of every human being who calls upon Him in sincerity.
- God answers those who are perplexed by the wickedness of those who profess to worship God.
- God will use sinners to punish other sinners, but none will escape His judgments if they do not repent.
- God is aware of the sins of every human being.
- God can give visions to any person.
- God gives prophecies of the future.
- God calls every upon human being to be humble and to have faith in Him.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?” Job 11:7-10.

“For he [God] knoweth vain men [vain human beings]: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it? For vain man [vain

human beings] would be wise, though man [human beings] be born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:11, 12) so that "ye [human beings] know nothing at all." John 11:49. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33.

"Great is our Lord [God], and of great power: his understanding is infinite." Psalm 147:5. "The LORD [God] is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Psalm 145:17. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the...righteous shall be delivered [from eternal death (annihilation).]" Proverbs 11:21. "He [God] will make an utter [complete] end [of sin]: affliction [sin] shall not rise up the second time [in the universe]." Nahum 1:9.

"Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5. Therefore, humble yourself and say of yourself wholeheartedly, "LORD [God], my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." Psalm 131:1. "Neither be ye of doubtful mind." Luke 12:29. "Have faith in God." Mark 11:22.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD [God]: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be [white] as wool." Isaiah 1:18. "Blessed are they that mourn [about their own sin and the sins of the world]: for they shall be comforted [by God with eternal life]." Matthew 5:4.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Humble yourself in the sight of God.
- Have reverence for God.

- Have faith in God.
- Cry out to God from a sincere heart and He will answer you, not necessarily by visions and dreams or audibly, but often by directing you to the word of God, the Bible.
- Do not demand that God answer you in the way that you think He should. Instead, learn from the record in the Bible wherein God has already answered, in principle, any questions you may have.
- Rejoice in the God of your salvation who will save you if you repent of your sins and have faith in God.
- Know that God is exceedingly wiser than you could ever be.
- Trust God's heart for He is righteous, a God of love, who is working to punish all the wicked, to deliver His people from their enemies, and to eliminate sin in the universe.
- Accept God's will in all things and cooperate with God in the work that He is doing in your life and in the life of others to save all humanity from eternal death (annihilation by God).



## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

# Zephaniah: Approx. 630 B.C. – Eden Restored

**Z**EPHANIAH IS THE THIRTY-SIXTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Sephanyah* probably meaning “Yahweh has hidden” or “Yahweh has treasured.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Sophonias*, “Zephaniah.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Zephaniah is the author of the book of Zephaniah. It was probably written no later than 630 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book covers the period from approximately 630 B.C. to the future time when the entire earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden. Zephaniah, a descendant of king Hezekiah of Judah, prophesied during the reign of king Josiah of Judah, whose reign started from 640 B.C. and ended in 609 B.C.

Zephaniah states that God will utterly destroy all things from off the land, both man and beast. God will put to death those in Judah and Jerusalem who worship idols, and punish those filled with violence and deceit. Moreover, God will punish those who say in their heart that the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.

Zephaniah then says that the great day of the Lord God is near and hastening greatly. He summons all the meek of the earth to repent and seek righteousness, seek meekness, so that they may be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.

Next, Zephaniah pronounces God's judgments upon the surrounding nations of the Philistines, Moab, Ethiopia, and Assyria. For, these nations in their pride, have magnified themselves against God's people. Zephaniah then pronounces a woe upon the princes, judges, prophets, and priests, for not obeying God's voice nor receiving God's correction.

Next, God asks His people to wait upon Him until He pours out His indignation upon these nations. Then God says He will give the people a pure language that they may all call upon God and serve God with one consent. Next, God says that the remnant of Israel will not do wickedness nor speak lies.

God then asks His people to sing, be glad and rejoice, because God has cast out their enemy and they shall not see evil anymore. In that day, God will save His people and God will rejoice over them with joy and with singing.

God then says that He will make a name for His people and make them a praise among all people of the earth when He ends their captivity.

## Themes

- God's judgments upon the wicked.
- A call to repentance.

- God's work in creating a godly remnant of His people.
- Singing and rejoicing by God over His people.
- God's people will have a name and will be a praise in all the earth.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who reveals His coming judgments upon the wicked.
- God calls people to repentance.
- God whose grace (His unmerited favour) works a transformation in people from sinfulness to holiness.
- God rejoices over the godly with joy and with singing.
- God who is able to cause His people to have a name and be a praise in all the earth.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Zephaniah was probably a contemporary of the prophet Habakkuk. Now God says, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. Thus, God revealed the future to His prophet Zephaniah.

God says to Judah, "Your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD [God], and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me [God], and have not kept my law [of love]." Jeremiah 16:11.

"And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto [obey] me [God]: Therefore will I [God] cast you

out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew [show] you favour.” Jeremiah 16:12, 13.

And God said of the surrounding nations, “With your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.” Ezekiel 35:13.

“Behold, the day of the LORD [God] cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.” Isaiah 13:9. “And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.” Isaiah 13:11.

“God...now commandeth all men every where to repent.” Acts 17:30. “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground [your land that has not been ploughed and thus prepared for the sowing of seeds]: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” Hosea 10:12. For “as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace [God’s unmerited favour] reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 5:21.

“Wait on the LORD [God]: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD [God].” Psalm 27:14. “Wait on the LORD [God], and he shall save thee [from eternal death (annihilation)].” Proverbs 20:22. Say to God wholeheartedly, “Unto thee, O my [moral] strength, will I sing: for God is my defence [against my enemies], and the God of my mercy.” Psalm 59:17.

Say to God with a sincere heart, “Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give [moral] strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.” 1 Chronicles 29:12, 13.

For God says, “My son [and daughter], if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins [my heart] shall

rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.” Proverbs 23:15, 16.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Repent of your sins and seek God and His righteousness.
- Do not receive God’s grace whereby you are transformed from sinfulness to holiness in vain.
- Be godly and God will exalt you to be with Him in heaven forever.
- Sing and rejoice at God’s deliverance from your enemies.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

# *Haggai: 520 B.C. – Eden Restored*

**H**AGGAI IS THE THIRTY-SEVENTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Chaggai* meaning “festal” or “festive.” The English title “Haggai” comes from the Hebrew Bible.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Haggai is the author of the book of Haggai. It was written no earlier than 520 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Haggai covers the period 520 B.C. to the future time when the earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden. It consists of Haggai’s four messages from God to the Jews, who had returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem and its surrounding cities, over the 3½ months from about August 29, 520 B.C. to December 18, 520 B.C.

In his first message, Haggai states that God reproves the Jews for attending to the building of their own houses while the Lord's house, the Temple of God, lay in ruins. God says that because of their neglect there has been a drought upon the land. In response, their leader, Zerubbabel, and Joshua the high priest, along with the people obey God and Haggai, the prophet, and they begin to build the house (the Temple) of the Lord God.

In Haggai's second message some three weeks later, God then says to the people through Haggai, "I am with you." In his third message, about four weeks later, God speaks to those who had seen the Temple in its first glory, and who now feel that this new Temple is as nothing in comparison to the first Temple.

God urges all the people to be strong and work, for I, God, am with you. In addition, God says that the Desire of All Nations (Christ) shall come and fill this house (Temple) with glory, and the glory of this latter house (Temple) shall be greater than the former.

In Haggai's fourth message some nine weeks later, God recounts the Jews' past disobedience to Him. God also says that as of this day that the foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid, I, God, will bless you.

On the same day, God speaks to Zerubbabel through Haggai saying that I will overthrow the thrones of the other nations. Also, in that day I, God, will make you, Zerubbabel, a signet (a ring with a seal, that is, an object of great importance, authority, and value) for I, God, have chosen thee Zerubbabel.

## Themes

- Neglect to work in God's cause on earth.
- A curse from God for not taking up the work of God on earth.
- A call from God to work in His cause on earth.

- A prompt and eager response of obedience to God's call to work in His cause.
- Active cooperation among people in the work of God.
- The assurance of God's blessing for those who faithfully work in His cause.
- A promise from God that Christ, The Desire of All Nations, would come to the Temple of God and, thus, fill it with glory.
- Encouragement from God strengthening the hands of those working in His cause on earth.
- A promise from God to the individual that their faithful service for God will be richly rewarded with eternal life from God.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God calls all humanity to work in His cause on earth.
- God is pleased with and blesses those who faithfully work in His cause on earth.
- God curses those who profess to be His people and yet neglect to do service for God.
- God encourages and strengthens the hands of those working in His cause on earth.
- God repeats His promise that Christ, the Deliverer from sin, would come to the earth.
- God promises that those who do faithful service for God

will be rewarded with eternal life from Him.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

After the Media-Persians had conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., the Jews in Babylon were allowed to return their homeland by Cyrus king of Persia in 536 B.C.

“The whole congregation together [of Jews that returned from exile] was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore [sixty], beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.” Ezra 2:64, 65. This was a total of approximately 50,000 Jews who returned.

Shortly afterwards, “the builders [of the Jews] laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD [God].” Ezra 3:10. However, “the people of the land weakened the hands of the people [Jews] of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” Ezra 4:4, 5.

Work on the Temple gradually slowed down until it virtually ceased mainly due to the continued opposition and hindrance of the Samaritans. The enemies of the Jews finally secured a royal decree to stop the work at Jerusalem on the Temple. Thus, the discouraged returning exiles turned to working their own plots of land and to building houses for themselves.

“Then [God raised up] the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, [who] prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel...and Jeshua [Joshua]...and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.” Ezra 5:1, 2.

“And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it [in 515 B.C.], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” Ezra 6:14.

In the course of time it happened that “the child [that was born]...was called JESUS...and...they brought him to Jerusalem [to the Temple], to present him to the Lord [God].” Luke 2:21, 22. Thus, as promised, Jesus Christ came to His Temple in 5 B.C.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Obey God’s call to work for Him with promptness and eagerness.
- Give faithful service to God and you will receive eternal life.
- Cooperate with others working in the cause of God on earth.
- Do not be discouraged by opposition to your service for God.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

# *Zechariah: 520 B.C. – Eden Restored*

**Z**ECHARIAH IS THE THIRTY-EIGHTH book of the Bible. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Zekaryah* meaning “Yahweh remembers” or “Yahweh has remembered.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Zacharias*, “Zechariah”.

### **Authorship**

The prophet Zechariah is the author of the book of Zechariah. The book was perhaps written during his prophetic ministry which lasted from approximately 520 B.C. to about 518 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Zechariah covers the period from about 520 B.C. to the future time when the earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden. It consists of Zechariah’s messages from God to the Jews who had returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem

and the surrounding cities, given over a period of two years from about October, 520 B.C. to November, 518 B.C.

God appeals to the people through Zechariah to turn to God and says that God will then turn to them. Next, Zechariah describes eight visions from God.

In the first vision, Zechariah sees a man seated on a red horse in a grove of myrtle trees and other horses behind the man. God is asked, "How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem?" God answers that He is jealous of Jerusalem and Zion (the Jewish people) and very displeased with the other nations. But now God is returned to Jerusalem with mercies and my house (Temple), God says, will be rebuilt in the city.

In the second vision, Zechariah sees four horns symbolising the nations that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. He also sees four carpenters which God says He will use to cast out the horns (powers) of the Gentiles (non-Jewish nations).

In the third vision, Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line who sets out to measure Jerusalem. God then says that the city, Jerusalem, is to be inhabited again and God will protect it from all enemies. And God will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem and many nations shall be joined to the Lord God in that day.

In the fourth vision, Zechariah sees Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord God in filthy garments. Satan accuses Joshua before God and God rebukes Satan. God then promises Joshua a change of raiment (clothing) if Joshua will walk in God's ways of love. God next says that His servant, the Branch (Christ), will come and the Jews will dwell in peace.

In the fifth vision, Zechariah sees a golden candlestick with a bowl and seven lamps on it and two olive trees providing oil for the lamps. God says to Zerubbabel that whatever is accomplished is not by might, nor by power, but by God's Holy Spirit and that Zerubbabel's hands will finish the Temple. Also, God says, Zerubbabel's time is a day of small things but God who is all-knowing and present everywhere will be with him.

In the sixth vision, Zechariah sees a flying roll or curse that goes forth over the face of the whole earth to put to death all those who do evil. In the seventh vision, Zechariah sees a container of the capacity of an ephah with a cover of lead and a woman inside. Zechariah is told that this represents wickedness which is symbolically carried to the land of Shinar (Babylon).

In the eighth vision, Zechariah sees four chariots pulled by four kinds of horses which go forth from standing before the Lord God of all the earth to walk to and fro through the earth.

After this, God instructs Zechariah to make silver and gold crowns for Joshua, the high priest, and to proclaim to Joshua the coming of the Branch (Christ) who will be a royal priest. Also, people that are far off will come and build in the Temple of the Lord God if the Jews diligently obey God.

God then tells Zechariah to denounce certain hypocritical religious practices of the Jews. He is to declare that what God desires of them is justice and mercy of every man to his brother. And for the lack of these things, God had scattered His people among the nations.

But God says that He is jealous for Zion (the Jewish people) and is returned to Zion. Therefore, God commands the people to speak truth to their fellow human being, execute the judgment of truth and peace, not to think evil against others in their hearts, nor swear falsely, for these things God hates. Then, God says, many people shall go speedily to pray to God and to seek God.

Zechariah then gives a burden (prophecy) from God saying that the neighbouring nations will be destroyed. The Jews are to rejoice for their King (Christ) cometh, as One who is lowly and having salvation. This King (Christ) will speak peace to the non-Jewish nations and His dominion will be even to the ends of the earth.

According to the prophecy, the Jews are to ask God for rain and God will give them showers of rain, and the Jews shall be as though God had not cast them off. God then gives a solemn warning to

the false shepherds, the evil leaders of the Jews, for not leading the people in God's ways of love.

Lastly, Zechariah gives a burden (prophecy) from God saying that all the people of the earth shall come against the Jews, but God will defend them and destroy all these nations. God will then pour His Holy Spirit upon the Jews and purify them from sin, idols, and false shepherds.

According to the prophecy, there is One (Christ) who was wounded in the house of his friends. God's Shepherd (Christ) is struck and the sheep (the people) are scattered. Two-thirds of all the people in the land are cut off and they die, and God brings one-third through the fire, refining them so that they say that the Lord is my God.

In this prophecy, God then goes forth to fight against nations that attack Jerusalem. After this, God descends upon the Mount of Olives to the east of Jerusalem, and the mountain splits apart making a very great valley. In that day, living waters go out from Jerusalem and God is King over all the earth which then has one Lord. Jerusalem will then be safely inhabited.

God will then send a plague among the people that fought against Jerusalem and these people will fight against each other. Then everyone remaining of all the nations that came against Jerusalem will go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, from year to year. For God will send a plague upon all the families of the earth which come not up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts. Thus, in that day there shall be no more Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.

## Themes

- A call for repentance.
- Judgments from God on people and nations for their sins.

- Protection from God against one's enemies.
- Satan accusing God's people before God.
- Visions and prophecies from God.
- Hypocrisy in the worship of God.
- Forgiveness and cleansing from sins by God.
- Encouragement from God in God's work on earth.
- A coming King (Christ) to the earth.
- The conversion of unbelievers to God.
- False shepherds (leaders) who lead people away from God.
- The destruction of the enemies of God's people.
- The work of the Holy Spirit.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God rebukes Satan for his accusations against God's people.
- God who gives visions.
- God who gives prophecies of the future.
- God who converts unbelievers to Himself.
- God who destroys the enemies of His people.
- God who is aware of the sins of all humanity.
- God who forgives people and cleanses them from their

sins.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Zechariah was a contemporary of the prophet Haggai. The book of Zechariah makes reference to the first, second, and third coming of Christ to the earth.

Christ first came to the earth in 5 B.C. when He was born as a baby boy named “Jesus.” Matthew 1:21. After a public ministry for three and a half years, “they crucified him” (Matthew 27:35) in 31 A.D. Crucifixion was a most cruel way to die for Christ’s hands and feet were nailed to a t-shaped wooden structure known as a cross.

“Him [Jesus Christ] God raised up [from the dead] the third day [after His death].” Acts 10:40. “He [Christ] shewed himself alive after his passion [His suffering and death] by many infallible proofs, being seen of them [His disciples] forty days.” Acts 1:3. “And... [it happened that] while they [His disciples] beheld, he [Christ] was taken up [into heaven].” Acts 1:9.

The second coming of Christ will occur “when he [Christ] shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26) to take the saints to heaven. At that time all the wicked among humanity die and “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan... [shall be symbolically] bound [on earth]...a thousand years” (Revelation 20:2) without any human being alive on earth.

At Christ’s third coming “when the thousand years are expired” (Revelation 20:7), “the holy city, new Jerusalem...[comes] down from God out of heaven.” Revelation 21:2. “And...Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations [of the wicked who were resurrected by God]...to gather them together to battle” (Revelation 20:7, 8) against God and the holy city.

So, Satan and all the wicked “went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed [surrounded] the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.” Revelation 20:9. “And I saw the dead [among humanity], small and great, stand before God...the dead were judged...according to their works.” Revelation 20:12. For Satan and his evil angels, “God...[had already] reserved unto judgment.” 2 Peter 2:4.

“And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them [Satan, his evil angels, and all the wicked people].” Revelation 20:9. God then creates “a new heaven and a new earth.” Revelation 21:1. “And...behold, the tabernacle [dwelling place] of God is with men [with the righteous among humanity], and...God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Revelation 21:3.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Know that you cannot accomplish anything in the work of God without the Holy Spirit working in your life.
- Know that God is willing to forgive you of your sins and to cleanse you from them.
- If you are faithful to God, He will rebuke Satan on your behalf.
- Do not be hypocritical in your worship of God.
- Be godly and your example will convert unbelievers to God.



## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

# *Malachi: Approx. 425 B.C. – Eden Restored*

**M**ALACHI IS THE THIRTY-NINTH book of the Bible and the last book of the Old Testament. The title of the book in the Hebrew Bible is *Mal'aki* meaning “my messenger.” The English title comes from the Septuagint which has the title *Malachias*, “Malachi.”

### **Authorship**

The prophet Malachi is the author of the book of Malachi. It was probably written no earlier than 425 B.C.

### **Summary**

The book of Malachi covers the period from about 425 B.C. to the future time when the earth is restored to the beauty of the garden of Eden. It consists of Malachi’s burden (prophecy) from God given in a series of eight dialogues between God and the people of Israel, followed by a message from God.

In the first dialogue, God proclaims His love for Israel, but the people ask God for evidence that God loves them. In the second dialogue, God observes that Israel owed Him the honour due a father from a son, and charges Israel's priests with despising God. In response, the priests ask God for evidence that they have despised God.

In the third dialogue, God answers the priests' question by describing their many failures. God states that the priests have offered polluted bread upon His altar, and the priests ask God for evidence that they have polluted God's worship. God replies that the evidence is in the blemished sacrifices that they offer to God.

Moreover, God says that the Jews have failed to have a pure worship of God as a godly example to the other nations. In fact, God says, the priests were weary of worshipping God, and God asks them if He should accept this at their hand.

In the fourth dialogue, God reviews His covenant with Israel, and charges the priests with causing many people to stumble at God's law of love. And God says that this is the reason why He has caused Israel to appear contemptible in the sight of the other nations and why He, God, refuses to accept their offerings. In response, the people ask God, Why? God replies that the people deal treacherously with the wife of their youth by divorcing their wives, a thing which God hates.

In the fifth dialogue, God states that Israel have wearied Him with their words, and the people ask God wherein have they wearied Him. God replies by pointing out that the Israel says that evil people are good and that God takes delight in such people. God then announces the coming of the Messenger of the Covenant (Christ), and asks the people which of them can survive the day of His coming.

In the sixth dialogue, God charges Israel with not keeping His covenant with them, and invites the people to return to Him and He will return to them. In response, the people ask God wherein shall they return to God.

In the seventh dialogue, God answers Israel's question by pointing out that Israel has robbed Him of tithes and offerings. The people then ask God for evidence that they have robbed Him. God replies that Israel is cursed because they have robbed Him, but if they return their tithes to Him, He, God, will bless them.

In the eighth dialogue, God declares that their Israel's words have been of stubbornness against Him, and the people ask God for evidence of this. God replies that Israel has said that it is vain to serve God, and that they have asked God what profit is there in that they have humbled themselves before God. The people then declare that the proud, the wicked, and those that tempt God are blessed by God.

God then declares that a book of remembrance is written before Him for those who have reverence for God, and who talk to one another about God, and who think about God. Such people, God says, are His jewels whom He will save to eternal life when the day comes. At that day, God says, all the proud and the wicked shall be burnt up, leaving neither root nor branch. But those people that have reverence for God will be blessed and will walk upon the ashes of the wicked.

Next, God warns the people to remember the law of Moses which God had given to him. God then declares that, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord God, He will send Elijah the prophet. Lastly, God states that Elijah will turn the hearts of the parents and the children to each other in love in order to prevent God from striking the earth with a curse.

## Themes

- People who are weary of worshipping God.
- Stubbornness and denial in the face of God's rebukes.
- Disobedience to God.

- Forgetfulness of God.
- The failure of a nation to fulfil their divine purpose.
- Worship that is unacceptable to God.
- Contempt and hypocrisy towards God.
- Self-justification in an evil course.
- Mercenary attitude towards the worship of God.
- A call to repentance.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who deals patiently with sinners.
- God who is offended by hypocrisy and contempt towards Him.
- God who is willing to forgive sinners.
- God who will send Christ, His Messenger, to a sinful world.
- God who will save those who have reverence for Him and love Him.
- God who will refine and purify people from their sins.
- God who will annihilate the wicked.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD [God] hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and

they have rebelled against me.” Isaiah 1:2. “Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble [burden] unto me [God]; I [God] am weary to bear them.” Isaiah 1:14.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD [God], and he [God] will have mercy upon him; and...he [God] will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:7.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not be stubborn nor be in denial when God rebukes you.
- Have no unacceptable worship nor be weary of worshipping God.
- Have no hypocrisy, contempt, or self-justification in an evil course towards God.
- Have no mercenary attitude or forgetfulness towards God.
- Do not be disobedient to God and so fail to fulfil your divine purpose.



## CHAPTER FORTY

# Matthew: Approx. 5 B.C.–Christ's Second Coming

**M**ATTHEW IS THE FORTIETH book of the Bible, the first book of the New Testament, and the first of four books known as The Gospels. The title of the book in Greek is *Euangelion kata Matthaion* meaning “The Gospel According to Matthew.” The English title comes from the Greek title.

### **Authorship**

Matthew, who was chosen by Jesus Christ as His disciple, and whom Christ called an apostle, is the author of the book of Matthew. It was written no later than 70 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Matthew opens with a genealogy of Jesus Christ, stating that Jesus was the son of David and the son of Abraham. Matthew then says that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a young woman named Mary who was a virgin. Jesus was Mary’s

son, her firstborn, and a Mary married a man named Joseph.

Wise men from the east, who are guided by a star, come to Jerusalem to worship Jesus as King of the Jews. Herod the king ascertains where and when Jesus was born and professes a desire to worship Jesus. The wise men find Jesus in Bethlehem and they worship Him and give gifts. God warns the wise men not to return to Herod and they return to their homeland by another route.

God warns Joseph to flee to Egypt because king Herod will seek to kill the child, Jesus, and Joseph does so. When the wise men do not return to Herod, he kills all the children in Bethlehem from two years old and under. When Herod is dead, God tells Joseph to return to Israel and the family settles in the city of Nazareth.

After this, John the Baptist preaches in the wilderness of Judaea a message of repentance. Many people, including Pharisees and Sadducees, are baptized by John confessing their sins. John baptizes Jesus, and the Father and the Holy Spirit manifest themselves at Jesus' baptism.

The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness where Jesus does not eat for forty days and forty nights. Satan comes to Jesus with three temptations and Jesus does not yield to any of them. When Jesus hears that John the Baptist is cast into prison he departs and dwells in Capernaum. There Jesus calls two fishermen, the brothers Simon Peter and Andrew, to follow Him and they immediately follow Jesus.

Jesus then goes about Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel, and healing diseases among the people. His fame spreads throughout Syria and multitudes of people from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea, and beyond Jordan follow Him.

Jesus goes up a mountain and sits down with His disciples and teaches the multitude. The people are astonished at the authority with which Jesus teaches and great multitudes follow Him. Jesus then heals a leper, a centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law, calms a storm at sea, heals two men who are demon-possessed,

and a paralysed man. He calls Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him and Matthew immediately rises up and follows Jesus.

Jesus has a meal with many publicans (tax collectors), sinners, and His disciples, and the Pharisees find fault with Jesus. On the way to a ruler's house to raise his dead daughter to life again, a woman touches the hem of Jesus' garment and is immediately healed. Jesus raises the ruler's daughter from the dead and Jesus' fame spreads.

After this, Jesus heals two blind men and a man who was dumb and goes about all the cities and villages teaching, preaching, and healing. Jesus then chooses twelve disciples, including Judas Iscariot who would betray Him, and sends them out to preach and to heal. Jesus Himself then goes to preach and teach in the cities.

John the Baptist sends and asks Jesus if He is the One who should come or should they look for another. Jesus sends a reply to John and Jesus speaks to the multitudes, calling John the Baptist a prophet. Jesus then speaks of His rejection by His generation and by some cities, and invites people to come to Him and find rest for their souls.

After this, Jesus has a conflict with the Pharisees who plot how they might destroy Jesus. The same day Jesus goes by the seaside and teaches great multitudes using parables (short stories with a moral instruction). Jesus then goes to Nazareth and teaches in their synagogue but the people reject Him.

Around this time, John the Baptist is executed by Herod. When Jesus hears of it, He departs by ship to a deserted place but the people come to Him there. Jesus heals the people and teaches them until evening when He performs a miracle feeding about 5,000 men, not counting the women and children who are present.

Later Jesus walks on water to go to His disciples whom He had earlier sent away by ship. After this, Jesus goes to the region of Tyre and Sidon and heals a Canaanite woman's daughter. Jesus then goes up a mountain near the Sea of Galilee and teaches

multitudes, and miraculously feeds 4,000 men, not counting the women and children who are present.

From this time, Jesus begins to tell His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and raised again from the dead on the third day after His death. Six days later, Jesus goes up a high mountain with His disciples Peter, James, and John, and is transfigured before them, in that, Jesus' face shines like the sun and his garments are as white as the light. And there Moses and Elijah appear talking with Jesus.

When they come down from the mountain, Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy and, at Capernaum, He obtains money to pay tribute by a miracle which He performs. Jesus then departs from Galilee and goes to the region of Judaea beyond the Jordan River. Great multitudes follow Him and he heals them. After this, Jesus sets out on His way to Jerusalem and at Jericho He heals two blind men.

When Jesus and His disciples come to the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, Jesus sends two of His disciples with instructions and they return with an ass (donkey) and set Jesus upon it. So, Jesus rides into Jerusalem accompanied by a great multitude shouting praises, and He cleanses the Temple of those that sold and bought there and the moneychangers. Jesus then leaves Jerusalem and goes to Bethany to stay overnight.

In the morning on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus curses a fig tree which immediately withers. At the Temple, Jesus comes into conflict with the chief priest and elders of the people and He speaks to them in parables. At this the chief priests and Pharisees seek to seize Jesus but they fear the people's reaction. The Pharisees then take counsel how they might entangle Jesus in His talk. Thus, the Sadducees come to Jesus questioning Him and Jesus puts them to silence.

Jesus teaches the multitude and His disciples, and weeps over Jerusalem saying that their Temple is now left desolate. He leaves

the Temple and goes to the Mount of Olives. There Jesus privately tells His disciples that the Temple will be thrown down. When His disciples ask Jesus about this, He teaches them using parables.

The chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people consult how they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill Him. When Jesus is in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, a woman anoints His head with a very expensive, sweet-smelling ointment. His disciples are indignant at what they see as a waste, but Jesus praises the woman. Judas Iscariot then covenants with the chief priests to betray Jesus to them for 30 pieces of silver.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus celebrates the Passover with His disciples and, after they sing a hymn, they go out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus then prophesies that His disciples will desert Him and that Peter will deny Him three times before the cock crows. They then come to the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus prays three times to His Father for the spiritual cup of woe, if possible, to be taken away from Him, but nevertheless let His Father's will be done.

Judas comes with a multitude armed with swords and clubs from the chief priests and elders. And Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss, Jesus is arrested, and all His disciples desert Him. Jesus is taken to Caiaphas, who is the high priest, and the scribes and the elders were also present there, where they accuse Him of blasphemy and guilty of death. They abuse Jesus, and Peter denies Jesus three times before the cock crows for which deed Peter weeps bitterly. In the morning, the chief priests and elders consult to put Jesus to death and they lead Jesus away to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

When Judas sees that Jesus was condemned, He is sorry for this outcome and he returns the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying that I have sinned and Judas goes out and hangs himself. Pilate tries Jesus and, according to tradition, asks the people whom he should release, Jesus or a criminal named Barabbas. Pilate's wife sends him a message to him to have

nothing to do with that just man, Jesus, because of a dream she had.

The chief priests and elders persuade the people to ask Pilate to release Barabbas who was a notorious prisoner. Pilate washes his hands and says to people that he is innocent of the blood of this just person, Jesus. Pilate then releases Barabbas, has Jesus scourged (whipped), and delivers Jesus to be crucified. The soldiers mock Jesus, abuse and torture Him, and then lead Him away to be crucified. They then compel Simon of Cyrene to bear Jesus' cross and when they come to the place called Golgotha, they crucify Jesus in the middle of two thieves who were crucified with Him.

There is darkness over all the land from the sixth hour of the day (12:00 p.m.) until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), at which time Jesus dies on the cross. At Jesus' death, the veil of the Temple is torn in two from top to bottom, there is an earthquake and some graves open. And many of the saints of God themselves were to rise from the dead to life again after Jesus was resurrected (rose from the dead). At that time, the risen saints would appear to many people in Jerusalem.

When evening comes on the day that Jesus dies, Joseph of Arimathaea, obtains the body of Jesus from Pilate. They bury Jesus in a new tomb carved out of the rock, roll the stone to seal the door of the tomb, and leave. That day on which Jesus died was the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath. The next day, the seventh-day Sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees ask Pilate to secure Jesus' tomb until the third day after Jesus' death because Jesus had said that after three days He would rise from the dead.

This they say to Pilate is in order to prevent Jesus' disciples from stealing away Jesus' body and saying to the people that Jesus is risen. So, Pilate gives them a watch (guard) of soldiers and they seal the tomb and set a watch (guard) there.

As Sabbath ends and it begins to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and Mary come to see the tomb. There

is an earthquake for the angel of the Lord God descends from heaven, rolls back the stone of the tomb and sits upon it. The watch (guard) of soldiers keeping the tomb shake and become like dead men at the sight of the angel. The angel tells the women that Jesus is not here for He is risen and tells them to go quickly to Jesus' disciples and tell them that Jesus is risen from the dead, and that they are to go to Galilee to meet Jesus.

The women depart with fear and great joy to tell the news to the disciples and they meet Jesus on the way. Jesus tells the women to tell His disciples to go to Galilee to meet Him. Some of the watch (guard) of soldiers go into Jerusalem and tell the chief priests the news of Jesus' resurrection. The chief priests and the elders give much money to the soldiers and tell them to say that Jesus' disciples stole Jesus' body away while they slept. The soldiers take the money and do as they were taught.

The eleven disciples of Jesus go to Galilee, to a mountain which Jesus had previously told them about, and they see Jesus and worship Him, but some of the disciples doubt. Jesus then says that all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth. And Jesus commands His disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey all things that He, Jesus, had commanded them. Jesus then promises to be with His disciples always even unto the end of the world.

## **Themes**

- The birth, life, death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ fulfils Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.
- Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
- Unbelieving Jewish leaders and their murderous plots

leading to the murder of Jesus.

- Jesus' preaching and teaching, often by using parables.
- Miracles of healing, of casting out demons, of control of the forces of nature, of multiplying food, of raising the dead to life again.
- The love, longsuffering, humility, gentleness, wisdom of Jesus.
- The establishment of the Christian church.
- The call to be disciples of Christ, that is, the call to follow Him and to worship Him.
- The prayers of Jesus, Jesus' life of prayer, and a call for humanity to pray to God.
- The public ministry of Jesus to Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles).
- Division among the Jews as to whether Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah.
- A people led astray from God by their religious leaders.
- The commission to Jesus' disciples to make other disciples.
- Jesus came, not to abolish God's law of love, but to fulfil it.
- What sin is, how to live godly lives, and so enter God's kingdom.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who conceived Christ in the womb of a virgin through the Holy Spirit.
- God who directed the life of Jesus.
- God who manifested Himself on earth with regard to Jesus.
- God who answered the prayers of Jesus.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God chose Israel to give a godly example to the world so that the world might be saved from annihilation by God, but God says, “they profaned my holy name.” Ezekiel 36:20. They persecuted God’s prophets and so for about 400 years from about approximately 425 B.C. to 5 B.C., Israel had no living prophet. And when Jesus Christ came to the earth in 5 B.C., they rejected Him and murdered Him.

So, God says, “A man [Israel] that is an heretick [heretic (misbeliever)] after the first and second admonition [warning] reject.” Titus 3:10. For “it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you [Israel]: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we [Christ’s disciples] turn to the Gentiles [to the non-Jews].” Acts 13:46. So, in 34 A.D., after Christ’s death in 31 A.D., God rejected Israel as His “peculiar treasure” (Exodus 19:5) on earth.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to

make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and the Son of God.
- Study the book of Matthew and learn its lessons.
- Be like Jesus Christ in character and so be saved to eternal life.
- Join the true church of God as revealed by the Bible in the books of Daniel and Revelation. The true church is not the Roman Catholic Church; this true church will be identified in the chapter on Revelation in this book that you are reading.
- Believe God's miracles; note though that Satan deceives through certain miracles that he is able to do.
- Teach God's word in the way that God calls you to do it.
- Be faithful to God, and endure persecution as Jesus did.



## CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

# Mark: 27 A.D. – Christ’s Second Coming

**M**ARK IS THE FORTY-FIRST book of the Bible and the second of four books known as The Gospels. The title of the book in Greek is *Euangelion kata Markon* meaning “The Gospel According to Mark.” The English title comes from the Greek title.

### **Authorship**

John Mark, whom the apostle Peter called “my son” (1 Peter 5:13), is the author of the book of Mark. (An apostle is a person specially chosen by Christ for a specific Christian ministry.) The book was probably written between 55 A.D. to 70 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Mark opens with the declaration that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Mark then says that John the Baptist preaches the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and baptizes in the wilderness. Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee is baptized by John

the Baptist and God makes Himself manifest at Jesus' baptism.

The Holy Spirit then drives Jesus into the wilderness, where Jesus remains for forty days. There Satan tempts Jesus and afterwards angels come and minister to Jesus. And after John the Baptist is put in prison, Jesus comes to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. In Galilee, Jesus calls two fishermen, Simon and Andrew, his brother, to follow Him and they immediately they leave their father with the hired servants and follow Jesus.

Jesus and his disciples go to Capernaum and, on the Sabbath day, Jesus teaches in the synagogue. There is a man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue and Jesus casts out the demon, the people are amazed and Jesus' fame spreads throughout Galilee. On leaving the synagogue, Jesus enters the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John, and heals Simon's mother-in-law.

At sunset, the people bring all those who are diseased or possessed with devils and Jesus heals them and casts many demons out of people. After this, Jesus preaches in all the synagogues in Galilee and casts out demons and heals a leper. After some days, Jesus goes to Capernaum and heals a paralysed man.

Jesus calls Levi (Matthew), a tax collector, to follow Him and Levi immediately does so. Going by the seaside, a multitude of people follow Jesus and He teaches them. The disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees come to Jesus and question Him and He answers them with a parable. After this, there comes a Sabbath day when Jesus' disciples pluck ears of corn to eat, and the Pharisees criticise Jesus' disciples. Jesus answers them saying that He, Jesus, is Lord of the Sabbath.

Next, Jesus enters a synagogue on the Sabbath day and heals a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees then take counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy Jesus. After this, Jesus withdraws with His disciples to the sea and a great multitude from Galilee, Judaea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, beyond Jordan, Tyre and Sidon, follow Him when they hear what great things Jesus did. Jesus heals many of them and casts unclean spirits out of people.

Jesus then goes to a mountain and chooses twelve disciples, including Judas Iscariot who would betray Him. The scribes come from Jerusalem and say that Jesus has a devil and Jesus warns them of committing the sin that God cannot forgive. Jesus then teaches the multitude by the seaside using parables. When evening comes, Jesus goes in a ship with His disciples and a storm arises on the sea which Jesus calms.

When Jesus and His disciples reach the other side of the sea, in the region of the Gadarenes, they are met by a man with an unclean spirit and Jesus casts out the demon. Jesus returns by ship to the other side of the sea and a ruler asks Jesus to come and heal his daughter who is near death. On the way to the ruler's house, a woman touches Jesus' garment and is immediately healed of her sickness. When Jesus arrives at the ruler's house, the daughter is dead, and Jesus raises her from the dead to life again.

Jesus then goes to Nazareth and teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, but the people reject Him. After this, Jesus sends out the twelve disciples in pairs and they go preaching repentance, casting out devils, and healing the sick. King Herod hears of Jesus and believes that Jesus is John the Baptist, whom he had killed, and who is now risen from the dead.

The twelve apostles return and tell Jesus about all they had taught and done. Jesus then takes them apart privately to a deserted place to rest and the people follow them there. Jesus teaches the people and, when much of the day is past, Jesus miraculously feeds 5,000 men, not counting the women and children who are present, with five loaves and two fishes.

Jesus then sends His disciples away in a ship and He goes up a mountain to pray. When evening comes and the disciples are caught in a storm at sea, Jesus goes to them walking on water and calms the storm. When the ship comes to land at Gennesaret, the people of the whole region meet Him, and wherever Jesus and His disciples enter into villages or cities, the people bring the sick to Jesus to be healed and He heals them.

After this, the Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem find fault with Jesus' disciples. Jesus justifies His disciples and charges the Pharisees and scribes with rejecting the commandments of God that they might keep their own tradition. Jesus then goes into the region of Tyre and Sidon and casts out the evil spirit out of the daughter of a woman there. Next, Jesus goes to the Sea of Galilee in the region of Decapolis where He heals a man that was deaf and dumb.

After this, there comes a time when the multitude about Jesus is very great and they have nothing to eat. So, Jesus miraculously feeds 4,000 men, not counting the women and children who are present, with seven loaves and a few small fishes. Next, Jesus comes to Bethsaida where He heals a blind man. Jesus then goes into the towns of Caesarea Philippi and begins to teach His disciples that He must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and after three days rise from the dead to life again.

After six days, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain and He is transfigured before them, in that, His clothes shine exceedingly white. There Elijah and Moses appear talking with Jesus. When they come down from the mountain, there is a great multitude and a man with a son who has a dumb spirit and whom Jesus heals.

After this, Jesus goes into the region of Judaea, the people come to Him, and Jesus teaches them. Jesus begins to travel to Jerusalem and they come to Jericho where Jesus heals a blind man.

When they come near Jerusalem, at Bethany and Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sends two of His disciples with instructions. They go and return with a colt (young donkey) and set Jesus on it. Many people shouting praises go with Jesus to Jerusalem. Jesus goes to the Temple, looks around at all things, and at evening, goes to Bethany with His twelve disciples.

The next morning, on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus curses a fig tree, enters into the Temple and casts out them that

sold and bought and the moneychangers. The scribes and chief priests hear of it and they seek how to destroy Jesus. In the evening, Jesus goes out of Jerusalem. The next morning, on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples see the fig tree, which Jesus had cursed, dried up from its roots.

As Jesus is walking in the Temple in Jerusalem, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, question His authority and Jesus asks them a question in return which they do not answer honestly. Jesus then speaks a parable and they seek to seize Jesus but they do not because they fear the people.

They then send to Jesus certain Pharisees and Herodians to entangle Jesus in His words. Then some of the Sadducees come to Jesus questioning Him. After this, a scribe comes questioning Jesus, whom Jesus tells that he is not far from the kingdom of God. After that, no one dares ask Jesus any question. Jesus then sees a poor widow casting in her small amount of money into the treasury of the Temple and commends her for her giving.

As Jesus is leaving the Temple, one of His disciples speaks admiringly of the Temple and Jesus says that the Temple will be completely destroyed. After this, as Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives, his disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, ask Him privately when these things shall be and Jesus answers them with prophecies of the future.

Two days before the Feast of the Passover and of Unleavened Bread, the chief priests and scribes seek how they might arrest Jesus with cunning deceit. Next, Jesus is in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper and a woman breaks an alabaster box of very expensive, sweet-smelling ointment and pours it on Jesus' head. Some of His disciples are indignant at what they consider a waste but Jesus commends the woman.

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, goes to the chief priests and covenants with them to betray Jesus for money. On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the Passover lamb is killed, in the evening, Jesus has a meal with His disciples.

Jesus then tells them that one of them will betray Him, that this same night they will all desert Him, and that Peter will deny Him three times before the cock crows.

Jesus then goes to a place called the garden of Gethsemane and prays asking the Father, if possible, to take the spiritual cup of woe away from Him, but nevertheless let the Father's will be done. Judas, one of the twelve disciples, then comes to Jesus with a great multitude armed with swords and clubs from the chief priests, scribes, and the elders. Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss and they arrest Jesus. One of Jesus' disciples cuts off the ear of a servant of the high priest with a sword and all the disciples desert Jesus.

They lead Jesus away to the high priest with whom is assembled the chief priests, elders, and scribes, who all accuse Jesus of blasphemy and say that He is guilty of death. They abuse Jesus, and Peter denies Jesus three times before the cock crows for which deed Peter weeps. In the morning, the chief priests consult with the elders, scribes, and the whole council, and they bind Jesus and deliver Him to Pilate.

The multitude cry out that Pilate, as was the custom, release one prisoner to them. Pilate asks them if he should release Jesus, the King of the Jews. The chief priests persuade the people to ask that Barabbas, a notorious prisoner, be released to them and that Pilate should crucify Jesus. Pilate releases Barabbas, has Jesus scourged (whipped) and Pilate delivers Jesus to be crucified. The soldiers mock and torture Jesus and lead Him away to be crucified.

On the way they compel Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear Jesus' cross and they bring Jesus to Golgotha where they crucify Him in the middle of two thieves who are crucified with Him. There is darkness over the whole land from the sixth hour (12:00 p.m.) until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.) when Jesus dies on the cross. At that time, the veil in the Temple is torn in two from the top to the bottom.

It is the preparation day, the day before the seventh-day Sabbath, and in the evening, Joseph of Arimathaea asks Pilate for

Jesus' body and they bury Jesus in a tomb carved out of the rock, roll a stone to seal the door of the tomb, and leave.

When the Sabbath has ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, in the first day of the week at the rising of the sun, come to the tomb. They find the stone rolled away from the tomb and a young man there tells them Jesus is risen from the dead, that He is not here, and they are to tell His disciples and Peter that Jesus will meet them in Galilee. The women then flee in fear.

On the first day of the week, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and she goes and tells the disciples but they do not believe her. After this, Jesus appears to two of His disciples as they walk together, and the two go and tell the rest of the disciples but the disciples do not believe them either.

Jesus then appears to the eleven disciples and He rebukes them for their unbelief and hardness of heart in not believing those who had seen Him after He was risen from the dead. Also, Jesus commands the disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. After this, Jesus is received up into heaven and He now sits on the right hand of God. The disciples go preaching everywhere with Jesus working with them to confirm their words with accompanying signs.

## **Themes**

- The life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
- Unbelieving Jewish leaders and their murderous plots leading to the murder of Jesus.
- Preaching and teaching of Jesus, often by using parables.
- Miracles of healing, of casting out demons, of control of

the forces of nature, of multiplying food, of raising the dead to life again.

- The love, longsuffering, humility, gentleness, wisdom of Jesus.
- The call to be disciples of Christ, who follow Him and worship Him.
- The prayers of Jesus, Jesus' life of prayer, and a call to humanity to pray to God.
- The public ministry of Jesus to Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles).
- A people led astray from God by their religious leaders.
- The commission to Jesus' disciples to preach the gospel to all others.
- What sin is, how to live godly lives, and so enter God's kingdom.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who manifested Himself on earth with regard to Jesus.
- God who answered the prayers of Jesus.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we [Jesus' disciples] are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land

of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew [killed] and hanged on a tree.” Acts 10:38, 39.

“Him [Jesus Christ] God raised up the third day [after His death], and shewed [showed] him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us [Jesus’ disciples], who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [of the living] and dead.” Acts 10:40-42.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- Study the book of Mark and learn its lessons.
- Be like Jesus Christ in character and so be saved.
- Believe God’s miracles; note though that Satan deceives through certain miracles which he is able to do.
- Teach God’s word in the way that God calls you to do it.
- Be faithful to God, even at the cost of your life.



## CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

# Luke: 5 B.C. – Christ's Second Coming

**L**UKE IS THE FORTY-SECOND book of the Bible and the third of four books known as The Gospels. The title of the book in Greek is *Euangelion kata Loukan* meaning “The Gospel According to Luke.” The English title comes from the Greek title.

### **Authorship**

Luke, a physician, who knew many eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life and who was familiar with their writings, is the author of the book of Luke. It was probably written not later than 63 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Luke opens with a declaration of Luke’s sources of information about Jesus and the book is addressed to someone named Theophilus.

Luke then speaks of a certain old priest named Zacharias who along with his wife, Elisabeth, were blameless and also childless.

While Zacharias ministers in the Temple, the angel, Gabriel, appears to him and tells him that he and his wife will have a son who would make ready a people prepared for the Lord God.

Zacharias goes home and Elisabeth conceives, and in her sixth month of pregnancy, the angel, Gabriel, appears to virgin named Mary in a city named Nazareth. Gabriel tells Mary, who is betrothed to a man named Joseph, that she will conceive a son through the power of the Holy Spirit, that she was to name her son, Jesus, and that her cousin, Elisabeth, was pregnant.

Mary visits Elisabeth, stays with her three months, and then returns home. Elisabeth gives birth to a son and they name him, John. Caesar Augustus decrees that all the world should be taxed and so Joseph and Mary travel to a city named Bethlehem to be taxed. While in Bethlehem, Mary gives birth to a son.

Angels appear to shepherds watching their flocks by night and they tell the shepherds that in the city of David a Saviour is born, which is Christ the Lord. The shepherds go and they find Mary and Joseph and their baby son lying in a manger (feeding trough) and they return home praising God.

On the eighth day, Mary and Joseph circumcise their son and name him, Jesus. After this, they take Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the God. There at the Temple, a man named Simeon prophesies concerning Jesus and an old prophetess named, Anna, also prophesies regarding Jesus. The child, Jesus, grows and is filled with wisdom.

When Jesus is twelve years old, Mary and Joseph take Him with them to the Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. When Mary and Joseph leave to return home, Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem without their knowledge. After three days, Mary and Joseph find Jesus in Jerusalem and Jesus tells them that He must be about His Father's business. Jesus returns home with them and He grows up filled with wisdom and in favour with God and man.

John, the son of Zacharias, comes into the wilderness and the region about the Jordan River, preaching the baptism of repen-

tance for the forgiveness of sins. Multitudes come to John to be baptized. Herod, the ruler, being reproved by John for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils he had done, shut up John in prison.

But before John's imprisonment, Jesus is baptized by John and the Holy Spirit and God, the Father, manifest themselves at Jesus' baptism. Luke then gives the genealogy of Jesus, starting from Jesus Himself and going back to Adam.

The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness where Jesus is tempted of the devil forty days during which Jesus eats nothing. The devil makes three last temptations of Jesus, which Jesus resists successfully. Jesus then returns to Galilee where His fame spreads throughout all the region and He teaches in their synagogues.

After this, Jesus comes to Nazareth where He was raised from a child and He speaks in the synagogue. The people are angry at Jesus' words and they attempt to kill him by casting Him down from the top a hill, but Jesus escapes. Jesus then goes to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and teaches the people on the Sabbath days. He casts out a devil (demon) from a man in the synagogue and His fame spreads.

At Simon's house, Jesus heals Simon's wife's mother of a fever. Many sick people are brought to Jesus and He heals them, casting out devils out of many people. After this, at the lake of Gennesaret, Jesus performs a miracle in which so many fish are caught by some fishermen that two ships begin to sink. The fishermen, Simon Peter, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee, then leave all and follow Jesus.

After this, Jesus heals a leper and a paralysed man, calls Levi a publican (tax collector) to follow Him and Levi immediately leaves all and follows Jesus. Levi makes a great feast for Jesus attended by a great company of publicans, and the scribes and the Pharisees murmur against Jesus and His disciples. On a Sabbath day after this, while going through the corn fields, His disciples pluck ears

of corn and eat at which act the Pharisees complain.

On another Sabbath, Jesus heals a man in the synagogue with a withered hand and the scribes and the Pharisees commune with one another what they might do to Jesus. After this, Jesus goes up into a mountain and prays all night, and when it is day, Jesus chooses twelve of His disciples whom He calls apostles.

A great multitude of people from all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, come to hear Jesus and to be healed by Him. Jesus heals them all and teaches them many things and when He is finished, He enters into the city of Capernaum where He heals a centurion's servant. The next day, Jesus goes to the city of Nain with many of His disciples, where He raises a dead man to life again. The report of this spread throughout all Judaea and the surrounding region.

John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Jesus with the enquiry whether Jesus is the One who should come or should they look for another. Jesus sends them back to John with an answer and Jesus praises John. A Pharisee invites Jesus to a meal at his house and while Jesus is there a woman anoints His feet with ointment.

After this, Jesus goes throughout every city and village with the twelve disciples preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. On a certain day, Jesus enters a ship with His disciples and a storm arises at sea and Jesus calms the storm.

When they arrive at the region of the Gadarenes, they are met by a man possessed by many devils. Jesus casts the devils out of the man and permits the devils to go into a herd of swine, at which the herd runs down a steep place into the lake and are drowned. The people, in fear, ask Jesus to leave but when Jesus returns at a later time, the people gladly receive Him. Jesus heals a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years and raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead to life again.

Jesus then sends out the twelve disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick and they go. When the disciples return,

they tell Jesus of what they had done, and Jesus takes them into a deserted place belonging to a city called Bethsaida. The people follow Jesus and He teaches them, heals them, and miraculously feeds 5,000 men, besides women and children with five loaves and two fishes.

Eight days after this, Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray. As Jesus prays, His face changes and His clothes become white and glistening and Moses and Elijah appear and they talk with Jesus, and God speaks from heaven. The next day when they come down from the mountain, Jesus heals a demon-possessed child.

When the time comes that Jesus should be received up into heaven, He sets His face to go to Jerusalem. Jesus sends messengers before Him but the Samaritans do not receive Him. Jesus next sends out seventy of His disciples in pairs into every city and place where He would come, and the seventy return with joy.

After this, Jesus has a conflict with the scribes and the Pharisees who lay wait for Him, seeking to catch words out of His mouth that they might accuse Him. When an innumerable multitude of people are gathered, Jesus teaches them many things. As Jesus is teaching in a synagogue on a Sabbath day, He heals a woman who had been sick for eighteen years. Jesus then goes through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.

As Jesus goes to Jerusalem, He passes through Samaria and Galilee and in a certain village, He heals ten lepers. Near Jericho, Jesus heals a blind man who follows Jesus and all the people praise God. On His way through Jericho, Jesus commends rich Zacchaeus, the chief publican (tax collector), for His repentance and goes to be a guest at His house, at which all the people murmur.

Ascending up to Jerusalem, when He comes near to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sends two of His disciples before Him with instructions. They return with a colt (a young donkey) and they set Jesus on the colt. When Jesus comes near

to Jerusalem, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of His disciples begin to rejoice and to praise God.

Jesus then goes into the Temple in Jerusalem and casts out them that bought and sold there. Jesus teaches daily in the Temple and the scribes and the chief of the people seek to destroy Him, but could not find what they might do Him as all the people were very attentive to Jesus.

On one of these days that Jesus teaches the people in the Temple and preaches the gospel, the chief priests, scribes, and elders confront Him. Jesus speaks a parable against them, and they desire to seize Jesus but they fear the people. They then watch Jesus continually and send out spies who would pretend to be just men, that they might catch Jesus in His words and so, deliver Jesus to the power and authority of the governor.

After this, Jesus sees the rich men casting their gifts of money into the treasury and likewise a certain poor widow whom He commends for her small offering. In the daytime, Jesus teaches in the Temple and at night He leaves and stays in the Mount of Olives. In the morning, all the people come to Him to hear Him.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Passover, draws near and the chief priests and scribes seek how they might kill Jesus for they fear what would be the people's reaction to this action of theirs. Then Satan enters into Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, and he communes with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Jesus unto them. The chief priests and captains are glad and they agree to give money to Judas, who then seeks an opportunity to betray Jesus in the absence of the multitude.

On the day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed, Jesus sits down to a meal with the twelve apostles. He institutes the celebration of the Lord's supper, prophesies that one of them will betray Him and that Peter will deny Him three times before the cock crows.

Jesus then goes to the Mount of Olives with His disciples. There

Jesus prays asking the Father to remove the spiritual cup of woe from Him if He is willing, but nevertheless let the Father's will be done. An angel from heaven appears and strengthens Jesus, and Jesus continues praying and His sweat is as if it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Judas, one of the twelve disciples, comes with a multitude and betrays Jesus with a kiss. One of Jesus' disciples strikes the servant of the high priest with a sword and cuts off his right ear and Jesus heals the servant. They take Jesus to the high priest's house and Peter follows from afar. There at the house, Peter denies Jesus three times before the cock crows and, when He remembers Jesus' words, Peter goes out and weeps bitterly.

They abuse Jesus and as soon as it is daylight, the elders of the people and the chief priests and scribes come together and lead Jesus to their council. They put Jesus on trial and the whole multitude of them lead Jesus to Pilate, the governor, with an accusation against Jesus. Pilate tells the chief priests and the people that he finds no fault in Jesus, and he sends Jesus to Herod, who is in Jerusalem at the time.

Herod mocks and abuses Jesus and sends Him back to Pilate, who yields to the crowd's request that he release Barabbas, a notorious prisoner, and crucify Jesus. As they lead Jesus away, they compel Simon, a Cyrenian, to carry Jesus' cross. When they come to the place called Calvary, they crucify Jesus and two criminals, one criminal on Jesus' right hand and the other on His left.

While Jesus hangs on the cross, He is mocked by the people, the rulers, the soldiers, and one of the criminals who is crucified with Him. The other criminal repents and Jesus promises him that He will be with Him, Jesus, in paradise. About the sixth hour of the day (12:00 p.m.) darkness covers the land until the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.) when Jesus dies.

Joseph, one of the councillors, who is a good and just man, begs Pilate for the body of Jesus and he takes it down and lays the body in a new sepulchre (tomb). That day is the preparation day and the

seventh-day Sabbath draws near so they rest on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women come to the tomb and find the stone at the door of the tomb was rolled away, and the tomb is empty. Two men in shining garments appear and tell them that Jesus is not here, He is risen from the dead to life again. The women go and tell the eleven apostles and all the rest of the disciples that Jesus is risen, but they do not believe the women. Peter runs to the tomb and finds it empty and he wonders at what has happened.

Jesus then appears that same day to two of His disciples who were walking to a village called Emmaus near Jerusalem. The disciples, one of them whose name is Cleopas, do not recognise Jesus and they invite Jesus to spend the night with them as it is very late in the day. At the evening meal, they recognise Jesus and He vanishes out of their sight.

At the same hour, the two disciples rise up and return to Jerusalem and they tell the eleven apostles and others disciples what had happened. Jesus then appears to them all, eats in their presence, and opens their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. Jesus next leads the disciples out as far as Bethany and He is carried into heaven. The disciples return to Jerusalem with great joy.

## **Themes**

- The birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
- Joy of God and angels in heaven when one sinner repents.
- Precise, detailed, historical data concerning the life of Jesus.

- The genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam, the first human being whom God created.
- Unbelieving Jewish leaders and their murderous plots leading to the murder of Jesus.
- The preaching and teaching of Jesus, often by using parables.
- Miracles of healing, of casting out demons, of control of the forces of nature, of multiplying food, of raising the dead to life again.
- The love, longsuffering, humility, gentleness, wisdom of Jesus.
- The call to be disciples of Jesus Christ, following Him, and worshipping Him.
- Jesus' life of prayer, and a call humanity to pray to God.
- The public ministry of Jesus to Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles).
- The friendly, social nature of Jesus.
- Women as consecrated followers of God, and of Jesus, God's Son.
- A people led astray from God by their religious leaders.
- What sin is, how to live godly lives, and so enter God's kingdom.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who conceived Christ in the womb through the Holy Spirit.
- God who manifested Himself on earth with regard to Jesus.
- God who answered the prayers of Jesus.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Only one angel is identified by name in the Bible. That is, in the books of Daniel and Luke, the name of an angel, “Gabriel” (Daniel 8:16; Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26), appears.

“Caesar Augustus” (Luke 2:1), “a raiser of taxes” (Daniel 11:20), reigned from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D., and it was during his reign that Christ was born in approximately 5 B.C. Tiberius Caesar was adopted by Caesar Augustus in 4 A.D. and Tiberius began his reign as “co-princeps” with Augustus in 13 A.D. When Augustus died in 14 A.D., Tiberius succeeded him. So, counting from 13 A.D., “the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar” (Luke 3:1), was the year 27 A.D., the year when Jesus Christ was baptized being “anointed with the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] and with power.” Acts 10:38.

In the previous discussion on the book of Ezra (Chapter 15 of this book that you are reading), it was stated that the 70-week prophecy of Daniel Chapter 9 started in 457 B.C. Now “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem [in 457 B.C.] unto [Christ] the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore [sixty] and two weeks.” Daniel 9:25. That is, after (7 weeks + 62 weeks) = 69 weeks = (69 weeks x 7 days per week) = 483 prophetic days, which is 483 literal years according

to the day-for-a-year principle. The end of the 483 literal years points to the time which would come “to anoint [Christ] the most Holy.” Daniel 9:24. So, (457 B.C. + 483 years) = 27 A.D., since there is no year zero between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D.

“After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah [Christ] be cut off, but not for himself.” Daniel 9:26. This was a prophecy that Christ would die after the 483 years which ended in 27 A.D. “And he shall confirm the [everlasting] covenant with many for one week [the 70th week]: and in the midst of the [70th] week he shall cause the [earthly sanctuary’s] sacrifice and the oblation [offering] to cease.” Daniel 9:27. Now the middle of the 70th week is 3½ prophetic days or 3½ literal years from 27 A.D. Therefore, Christ died in (27 A.D. + 3½ years) = 31 A.D.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- Study the book of Luke and learn its lessons.
- Be like Jesus Christ in character and so be saved.
- Believe God’s miracles; note though that Satan deceives through certain miracles which he is able to do.



## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

# *John: Eternity Past—Christ's Second Coming*

**J**OHN IS THE FORTY-THIRD book of the Bible and the last of the four books known as The Gospels. The title of the book in Greek is *Euangelion kata Ioannem* meaning “The Gospel According to John.” The English title comes from the Greek title.

### **Authorship**

John, who was chosen by Jesus Christ as His disciple, and whom Christ called an apostle, is the author of the book of John. It was probably written about 96 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of John opens by setting forth Jesus as the Word of God in human flesh. John the Baptist bears witness that Jesus is He of whom, he, John the Baptist had spoken of to the people. The Jews send priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John the Baptist and he says to them that he is not the Christ (the Messiah).

The next day John the Baptist points out Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Son of God, and he does likewise on the following day. Then two of John the Baptist's disciples follow Jesus, one of them being Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Andrew finds his brother Simon and brings him to Jesus. The next day, Jesus invites Philip to follow Him and Philip invites Nathanael to come to Jesus.

The following day Jesus and His disciples attend a wedding in Cana where, when the wine runs out, Jesus performs the miracle of turning water into wine (pure, fresh grape juice). After this Jesus goes to Capernaum with His disciples, His mother and brothers. Jesus then goes up to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover and He drives out of the Temple all those who bought and sold there and the moneychangers.

A Pharisee named Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night and Jesus speaks to him about the kingdom of God. After this, Jesus and His disciples go into Judaea where His disciples baptized people and John the Baptist also baptized people in Aenon near Salim. When Jesus knew that the Pharisees heard that He baptized and made more disciples than John the Baptist, He left Judaea and went into Galilee.

On the way, Jesus passes through Samaria where, in the city called Sychar, He speaks to a woman at the well about living water and declares to her that He is the Messiah, the Christ. The woman goes into the city and calls the men to come to Jesus and they do so. As a result, the Samaritans believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah.

Two days later, Jesus goes into Galilee and in Cana He heals a nobleman's son. After this, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem where, on a Sabbath day, He heals a man who had been unable to walk for 38 years. Therefore, the Jews seek to kill Jesus because He had healed the man on a Sabbath day. Next, Jesus goes across the Sea of Galilee, a multitude of people follow Him, and Jesus miraculously feeds 5,000 men, besides women and children with five loaves of bread and two fishes.

When Jesus perceives that the people would take Him by force to make Him a king of the Jews, He goes into a mountain alone. When it is evening, His disciples get into a ship to go across the sea to Capernaum without Jesus. A storm arises on the sea and the disciples see Jesus walking on the water and coming near the ship and they are afraid. Jesus reassures them that it is He and they willingly take Jesus aboard the ship and, immediately, the ship is at its destination.

The next day, the people come to Capernaum by ships and Jesus teaches them in the synagogue. As a result of what Jesus says then, many of His disciples turn away from Him. After this, Jesus goes about Galilee but would not go about Judaea because the Jews there were seeking to kill Him. After Jesus' brothers had gone up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus secretly goes to the feast there.

In the middle of the feast, Jesus goes into the Temple and teaches openly, and many of the people believe in Him. The Pharisees and the chief priests send officers to arrest Jesus but the officers return without Jesus, saying that no man ever spoke like this man. Jesus then goes to the Mount of Olives and early in the morning He returns to the Temple, where He teaches the people.

The scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman caught in the act of adultery to Jesus, and accuse her before Him, testing Jesus so that they might have something of which to accuse Him. Jesus' response to them and what Jesus wrote on the ground cause them to be convicted by their own conscience and to leave Jesus alone with the woman. Jesus does not condemn the woman, but tells her to go and sin no more.

After this, Jesus teaches in the Temple and many people believe in Him, but others took up stones to stone Him. Jesus escapes from them and He leaves the Temple. Jesus then heals a man who was blind from birth. As a result, the man speaks favourably of Jesus and the Pharisees cast out the man from the membership of the synagogue. When Jesus hears of this, He goes and speaks to

the man who believes in Jesus and worships Him.

At Jerusalem in winter when it is the Feast of Dedication, Jesus teaches in the Temple and again the Jews take up stones to stone Him. Jesus escapes from them and He goes and stays in the place beyond the Jordan River where John the Baptist baptized at first.

News comes to Jesus that Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha, is sick. Jesus goes to Lazarus' tomb after Lazarus has died and raises Lazarus from the dead to life again. As a result, the chief priests and the Pharisees plot to kill Jesus. Six days before the Passover, Jesus goes to Bethany and Mary anoints Jesus' feet with a very expensive, sweet-smelling ointment.

The next day, many people meet Jesus on His way to Jerusalem with branches of palm trees and cry out loudly in blessing Jesus. When Jesus has found a young donkey, He sits on it and goes into Jerusalem with the people. This displeases the Pharisees. Next, before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus rises from supper with His disciples and washes their feet. Jesus then announces that one of them would betray Him. Satan then enters Judas Iscariot and Judas leaves Jesus and the rest of the disciples.

Jesus then tells Peter that He will deny Jesus three times before the cock crows, which Peter denies, and Jesus next teaches the disciples many things. After this, Jesus crosses the brook named Cedron with His disciples to where there is a garden. Judas comes with a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, and Peter draws a sword and cuts off the right ear of the high priest's servant named Malchus.

Then the band of men, the captains and officers, bind Jesus and lead Him away, first to Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest. After questioning Jesus, Annas sends Jesus bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. There Peter denies Jesus three times and immediately the cock crows. Next, they lead Jesus away to Pilate, the governor, with accusations against Jesus. There Jesus has two trials before Pilate who delivers Jesus to be crucified.

Jesus is crucified at a place called Golgotha along with two

others, one on His left and the other on His right. While on the cross, Jesus commits the care of His mother to His disciple, John. Jesus then dies and Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus beg Pilate for the body of Jesus. They place Jesus' body in a new sepulchre (tomb) and it was the preparation day.

On the first day of the week, when it is still dark, Mary Magdalene finds the stone at the door of the tomb taken away. She runs and tells Peter and another disciple and these disciples go to the tomb and find it empty. After the two disciples had left, two angels in white appear to Mary and then Jesus Himself appears to her. Mary goes and tells the disciples that she had seen Jesus.

The same day at evening, Jesus appears to the disciples but the disciple, Thomas, is not there. Thomas does not believe that they have seen Jesus until eight days later when Jesus again appears to the disciples with Thomas being present. After this, Jesus again shows Himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Jesus feeds them with fish and bread and commissions Peter to care for Jesus' other disciples.

The book of John ends by stating that many other things Jesus did which, if they were all written, the world could not hold all the books that should be written.

## Themes

- The life, death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, Son of the living God.
- Unbelieving Jewish leaders and their murderous plots leading to the murder of Jesus.
- The preaching and teaching of Jesus, often by using parables.
- Miracles of healing, of control of the forces of nature, of

multiplying food, of raising the dead to life again.

- The love, longsuffering, humility, gentleness, wisdom of Jesus.
- The call to be disciples of Christ, following Him, and worshipping Him.
- The public ministry of Jesus to Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles).
- Division among the Jews as to whether Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah.
- A people led astray from God by their religious leaders.
- What sin is, how to live godly lives, and so enter God's kingdom.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God, the Father, the One who sent Jesus into the world.
- The Holy Spirit as another Comforter for humanity like Jesus.
- God who manifested Himself on earth with regard to Jesus.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“What shall we [humanity] then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He [God] that spared not his own Son [Christ], but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:31, 32.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect [God's

chosen]? It is God that justifieth. For “by...[Christ] we have access by faith into this grace [this unmerited favour of God] wherein we stand, and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God [in hope of ourselves fully displaying God’s character of love].” Romans 5:2. “Who is he that condemneth [us for our sins]? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Romans 8:33, 34.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- Study the book of John and learn its lessons.
- Be like Jesus Christ in character and so be saved.
- Believe God’s miracles; note though that Satan deceives through certain miracles which he is able to do.
- Be faithful to God, and endure persecution as Jesus did.



## CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

# *Acts of the Apostles: 31 A.D. – Approx. 63 A.D.*

**A**CTS OF THE APOSTLES is the forty-fourth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Praxeis Apostolon* meaning “The Acts of the Apostles.” The English title comes from the Greek title.

### **Authorship**

Luke, a physician, who was a companion of the apostle Paul, one of the main characters in the book, is the author of the book, Acts of the Apostles. It was probably written not later than 63 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Acts of the Apostles covers the period 31 A.D. to approximately 63 A.D. It tells the story of how the Christian Church, founded by Jesus Christ Himself, which was few in number and regarded as an insignificant Jewish sect, became a worldwide religion.

The book is addressed to a man named Theophilus, the same person to whom Luke had addressed the book of Luke. As Luke states, Jesus showed Himself alive to the apostles, for 40 days after His resurrection, speaking to them of many things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Jesus commands the apostles not to leave Jerusalem until they are baptized by the Holy Spirit. After Jesus speaks these things, He is taken up into heaven. Two men appear to the apostles, and they declare to the apostles that, in the same manner as Jesus was taken into heaven, He will return to the earth.

The apostles return to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and the eleven apostles along with the women, as well as Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus are continually praying in one accord. The apostles cast lots regarding the names of two men to determine which one of the two men would take the place of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus and then hanged himself. God chooses Matthias as an apostle to take the place of Judas Iscariot.

When the day of Pentecost comes, the apostles are all filled with the Holy Spirit and they begin to speak in other languages known to the multitude of devout Jews from many parts of the world, who come together to hear the apostles speak. The apostle Peter preaches a sermon which brings conviction to the hearts of those present and that same day, 3,000 persons are baptized into the Christian church.

The members of the church hold all their possessions as common goods, and they sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to everyone in need, and God added to the church daily such as should be saved by God to eternal life.

Peter and John miraculously heal a lame man at the Temple and preach of Jesus Christ to the people. As a result, Peter and John are arrested by the priests, the captains of the Temple, and the Sadducees. Notwithstanding this, about 5,000 men who had heard Peter preach believe in Jesus. After threatening Peter and

John and commanding them not to preach about Jesus, the leaders of the Jews release Peter and John.

After this, two members of the church, Ananias and Sapphira, deceive the church into thinking they had sold all their possessions and given it to the church, when in fact they had withheld a portion. Both Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead by the Holy Spirit because of their deceit.

The apostles do many miracles and more and more people are added to the church. They are arrested by the leaders of the Jews but an angel sets them free and commands them to preach in the Temple and the apostles do so. Once again, the apostles are arrested by the leaders of the Jews and this time they are beaten and released. After this, daily in the Temple and in every house, the apostles do not cease to preach about Jesus.

A complaint about the necessary daily distribution of food arises within the church and, so, the church appoints seven men, including Stephen and Philip, to take charge of the distribution. Thus, the apostles are left free to give themselves to prayer and preaching.

Then certain men of the synagogue enter into a dispute with Stephen. These certain men bribe other men to make false accusations against Stephen and, on the basis of this falsehood they stone Stephen to death. A young man named Saul is present consenting to the death of Stephen and he goes and wreaks havoc on the Christian church, entering into every house and dragging men and women off to prison. Therefore, the Christian church is scattered and they go everywhere preaching the word of God.

Philip goes to Samaria and preaches Christ to them. When the apostles at Jerusalem hear that Samaria has received the word of God, they send Peter and John to them, who then pray for the Samaritans and the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit. The angel of the Lord sends Philip to the south where Philip preaches to an Ethiopian eunuch who believes in Jesus and is baptized.

Saul receives letters from the high priest to go to the synagogues

in Damascus and to bind the disciples of Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem. On the way to Damascus, Jesus appears to Saul, who is immediately converted to Christ. Saul then preaches in the synagogues of Damascus that Christ is the Son of God but the church is suspicious of his intent. The unbelieving Jews plot to kill Saul but he escapes.

Saul next goes to Jerusalem and he tries to connect with the church, but they do not believe that he is now a disciple of Christ until Barnabas speaks favourably of Saul. Saul then preaches Christ in Jerusalem and, when there is a plot among the unbelieving Jews to kill Saul, the church sends him away to Tarsus. Then the Christian churches have rest from persecution in all Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria, and its numbers are multiplied.

Peter goes to Lydda where he heals a paralysed man named Aeneas and, thus, causes all the people of Lydda and Saron to turn to Christ. After this, Peter is summoned to Joppa where he raises a disciple named Tabitha from the dead to life again. As a result, many people in Joppa believe in Jesus.

Peter is summoned to the house of a Roman centurion in Caesarea where Peter preaches to Cornelius and His family and friends. As a result, they all receive the Holy Spirit and are baptized. Peter then goes up to Jerusalem to inform the church of all that has happened. The church then accepts that God has granted repentance to eternal life to the Gentiles (non-Jews).

A Christian church is established in Antioch by those disciples who had been scattered everywhere at the persecution of Stephen. Barnabas fetches Saul from Tarsus and brings him to the church in Antioch where the disciples of Jesus are first called Christians. About this time, king Herod kills the apostle, James, the brother of the apostle, John, and He also puts Peter in prison. An angel sets Peter free from prison and Herod kills Peter's former prison guards. After this, God strikes Herod with a disease and so Herod dies.

The Holy Spirit instructs the church at Antioch to send away

Barnabas and Saul to do the work to which they are called. Saul and Barnabas then set off on their first missionary journey passing through Cyprus, Paphos, and Perga in Pamphylia, where a disciple named John, who accompanied them, departed to return to Jerusalem. Next Saul (Paul) and Barnabas go to Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and the surrounding regions.

In every place, they preach Jesus Christ and make converts to Christ. Often, because of persecution they are forced to flee from one place to the next. In fact, in a city of Lycaonia, Paul is stoned and dragged out of the city by those supposing he is dead, but Paul survives this assault. Paul and Barnabas then set out to return to the Christian church in Antioch, retracing their steps and strengthening the Christian churches they had raised up in many places and ordaining elders in every church.

Certain men from Judaea come to Antioch and teach the church that, unless they become circumcised, they cannot be saved to eternal life. Paul and Barnabas dispute with them and the matter is taken up by a council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem. It was decided by the council in Jerusalem that the Gentiles need not be circumcised in order to be saved to eternal life, but that they must abstain from certain pagan customs. The church in Jerusalem accordingly sends a delegation from their church, including, Silas, along with Paul (Saul) and Barnabas, with letters to the Gentile (non-Jewish) churches.

Paul then suggests to Barnabas that they leave the church in Antioch and visit the churches they had established to see how they were doing. Barnabas wishes to take John Mark with them but Paul does not agree because he had abandoned the missionary work before and returned to Jerusalem. Due to a sharp contention between Barnabas and Paul, Barnabas takes John Mark with him and sails for Cyprus, while Paul sets out with Silas on his second missionary journey.

Paul and Silas visit the churches until they come to Derbe and

Lystra and then the Holy Spirit forbids them to go to certain places they wished to visit. One night, Paul has a vision in which a man called upon Paul and Barnabas to come to Macedonia to help them. So, on Paul's second missionary journey they pass through the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, making converts to Christ in every place. On the journey to return to Antioch, Paul and Silas pass through Ephesus and Caesarea.

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul sets out on his third missionary journey passing through the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, and the city of Ephesus, strengthening the churches there. Paul then decides to retrace his steps and pass through Macedonia and Achaia on the way to Jerusalem with the intent to next visit Rome. On his way to Jerusalem, he stops at Miletus where he meets the elders of the church at Ephesus. Paul then comes to Tyre and Caesarea and goes on to Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem Paul is accused by the Jews of defiling the Temple and the people start to beat Paul but he is rescued by the Roman chief captain and His soldiers. The Jews plot to kill Paul by deceiving the chief captain who, when he becomes aware of it, sends Paul to Caesarea to Felix, the governor. Felix tries Paul and finds no fault in him but to please the Jews he leaves Paul in prison.

After two years, Festus replaces Felix as governor and he too tries Paul, who appeals to stand before Caesar. After some time, king Agrippa visits Caesarea and, at the request of Festus, he too tries Paul. Agrippa finds no fault with Paul, but because Paul had appealed to Caesar, Agrippa commands that Paul be sent to Rome. As a result, Paul is put on a ship bound for Italy and, due to bad weather on the journey, they are shipwrecked on an island called Melita. Everyone on board the ship escapes safely to land.

After three months on the island, Paul is put on another ship bound for Italy. When Paul arrives in Rome, he is allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier as his guard. In Rome, Paul preaches to the Jews and some believe in Jesus but some do not believe. For two whole years afterwards, Paul dwells in his own rented house

and preaches Christ to all those who come to him, with no one forbidding him to preach.

## Themes

- The gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Christ enabling people to speak languages previously unknown to them.
- The manifestation of the Holy Spirit to the Jews from all parts of the world.
- The empowering of the disciples with spiritual power by the Holy Spirit to convict hearts of their sins and convert them to Christ.
- The raising up of missionaries to preach the gospel to the world.
- The continuation of the ministry that Jesus Christ began.
- The organisation of the Christian church.
- The planting of Christian churches.
- Persecution even to death of those preaching Christ.
- The small Jewish church organised by Jesus Christ becoming largely a Gentile (non-Jewish) church.
- The spread of the Christian church from Jerusalem throughout the Roman Empire.
- Salvation is for all people.
- Gentiles not required to become Jews in order to be saved to eternal life.

- The rejection of the gospel of Christ by many Jews.
- The fulfilment of prophecies in the Scriptures.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- The Holy Spirit instructing the church and directing its activities.
- God who performs miracles.
- God who brings His purposes which He prophesied beforehand to fulfillment.
- God who builds His church in the way He sees fit.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

A short time before Paul's final visit to Jerusalem, "when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat [of Gallio]." Acts 18:12. According to historical records, Gallio's tenure as deputy of Achaia can be fairly accurately dated to be between 51 A.D. and 52 A.D. More specifically, the "Gallio Inscription" found in Delphi, Greece, dates to between April to July, A.D. 52 and from this inscription it can be deduced that Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia the previous year, in 51 A.D.

Now Paul states that "after three years [from my conversion to Christ] I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." Galatians 1:18. "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also." Galatians 2:1. So, adding these two periods together we get 3 years + 14 years = 17 years. That is, exactly 17 years after his conversion,

Paul stood before Gallio in Achaia in 51 A.D. Therefore, Paul was converted to Christ 17 years before 51 A.D. in 34 A.D. Paul's conversion occurred the year when Stephen was stoned which we now know to be 34 A.D.

This is a confirmation of what was said before, that the 70th prophetic week of Daniel Chapter 9 ended in 34 A.D. For this was the close of the prophetic period which the angel Gabriel spoke of: "Seventy weeks are determined upon [allotted to] thy people [the Jewish people] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins...to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy [who is Christ]." Daniel 9:24.

That is, in 34 A.D. the probation of the Jewish nation as God's chosen people closed and the gospel of Christ was taken by the Christian church to the Gentile (non-Jewish) world. And, before his death, Paul declared, "The gospel, which ye have heard...was preached to every creature [every person] which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Colossians 1:23.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Receive the Holy Spirit through "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) and go and do as the Spirit directs.
- Join the Christian church that is identified in the book of Revelation.
- Endure persecution for Christ even at the cost of your own life.



## CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

# Romans: Approx. 58 A.D.

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Romans is the forty-fifth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek in the earliest manuscripts is *Pros Rhomaiious* meaning “To the Romans.” Later manuscripts enlarged the title to “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans” and this is the title in some English Bible versions.

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans. It was probably written not later than 58 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Romans is actually a letter (epistle) written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church at the city of Rome in Italy. It was probably written from the city of Corinth in what is modern-day Greece during Paul’s brief stay there on his Third Missionary Journey.

The letter begins with greetings, and Paul then expresses his interest in the Christian believers in Rome and his earnest desire to visit them. Paul next puts forth the utter failure of the Gentiles (non-Jews) to attain to righteousness, thus proving that they are all guilty of sin before God. After this, Paul shows that the Jews, whom God had made custodians of the Scriptures, were equally guilty of sin before God.

Next, Paul begins to speak about “the law” (Romans 2:12) which is, broadly speaking, the first five books of the Bible that were written by Moses (the Pentateuch), also called “the law of Moses.” Joshua 8:31. Specifically though, “the law” (Romans 2:12) refers to “the ten commandments” (Exodus 34:28) which were spoken audibly by God to ancient Israel, and which were written by God Himself on “two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” Exodus 31:18.

The context of what Paul says will usually indicate which “law” (Romans 2:12) he is referring to, whether the Pentateuch or “the ten commandments.” Exodus 34:28. When there is ambiguity, we can understand Paul to be referring to both the Pentateuch and “the ten commandments.” Exodus 34:28. Why? Because the Pentateuch includes “the ten commandments” and it is largely an amplification by God of “the ten commandments” (Exodus 34:28) and how to keep it.

Now, in order to understand the New Testament, which includes the book of Romans, we must recognise that Paul, who is one of the writers of the New Testament, makes a clear distinction between “the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:20), also called “the works of the law” (Romans 9:32), and “righteousness by faith.” Galatians 5:5. Of note, and a most important point to grasp, is Paul’s shorthand way of making this distinction by contrasting “the law” (Romans 2:12) and “faith.” Romans 1:17.

So, Paul declares that people are “justified by faith” (Romans 3:28), where “justification” (Romans 4:25), also called “righteousness by faith” (Galatians 5:5), means that one is now in right

standing before God. They are not justified by “the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:20), Paul says. Paul then gives an example by describing how Abraham was “justified by faith.” Romans 3:28. In other words, righteousness was imputed (reckoned) to Abraham by God without “the works of the law” (Romans 9:32) because, in addition to Abraham’s repentance, he had faith in God’s promises.

What exactly is “the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:20), that is to say, what is “the works of the law” (Romans 9:32)? It is when an individual who is in their “natural” (1 Corinthians 2:14), “carnal” (Romans 7:14), worldly state, and who is therefore lacking the aid of the Holy Spirit, seeks to keep God’s law of love by doing what is good. Such an attempt at righteousness will always fail “because the carnal [worldly] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7.

For it is ONLY when “the love of God is shed abroad [poured] in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] which is given unto us” (Romans 5:5) that we can keep God’s law of love by doing “good works.” Matthew 5:16. Otherwise, all that we do are “dead works” (Hebrews 6:1) since it is tainted and polluted with sin. That is, no matter how good the intentions, and how hard we try to do good, all that we do in our carnal, worldly state, is sin, even if, to all outward appearances, it seems good.

Paul then makes the argument that sin entered the world through Adam and sin brought condemnation to all humanity because every human being has inherited Adam’s disposition to sin and, therefore, they too sin. However, Paul declares that righteousness is possible for every individual because of the obedience of one man, that is, because of Jesus Christ’s obedience to God’s law of love.

For, Jesus, in His life on earth, was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Hebrews 7:26. That is, the love that is poured in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is the same love that existed in the heart of Jesus Christ, who is humanity’s “faultless” (Jude 1:24) Representative in the sight of God.

After this, Paul develops the theme that sin does not have dominion over those who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and, are, therefore, under grace (God's unmerited favour). Paul then shows that every human being in their natural, carnal condition has an inner conflict between their intention to do right and their inability to do right. To such an individual it seems as if this a dilemma from which there is no escape, but Paul thanks God that through Jesus Christ there is, in fact, a way of escape.

Next, Paul explains the way in which the individual may overcome inward corruption and sin through Christ and, specifically, through the work of the Holy Spirit. He then addresses God's rejection of the nation of Israel as God's chosen people, and God's consequent calling of the Gentiles (non-Jews) to be His people.

Paul states that Israel's rejection was due to their insistence in pursuing the works of the law instead of seeking righteousness by faith. Next, Paul makes it clear that, though Israel as a nation has been rejected by God, individual Jews can be saved by God, if they meet God's requirements for receiving righteousness by faith from God.

After this, Paul calls upon every person to present themselves to God be transformed by God, to use the gifts they receive by the grace of God to minister to others, and to respond to any evil done to them with good deeds. In addition, Paul calls upon everyone to be subject to the governing powers as these powers have been ordained by God, to love others, and to be careful not to cause those weak in faith to stumble in their spiritual journey with God.

In conclusion, Paul repeats his intention to visit the Christian church at Rome and sends greetings to a number of people my name. He warns the church against being deceived by false teachers, conveys greetings from his fellow Christian workers, blesses the church at Rome, and lastly, expresses his praise of God.

## Themes

- The universal sinfulness of humanity and, hence, their falling short of God's glorious ideal of holiness for humanity.
- All humanity under the condemnation of God because of their sins.
- Only God can cause humanity to cease from sinning.
- The grace (unmerited favour) of God in providing a way by which sinners may not only be forgiven of their sins, but also attain to righteousness.
- No excuse for sin.
- The impossibility and helplessness of humanity to escape their sinfulness in their natural, depraved condition.
- The need for repentance.
- The contrast between the works of the law and righteousness by faith.
- Abraham as an example of a person who attained to righteousness by faith.
- Christian greetings to godly, fervent workers in the church.
- A description of false teachers.
- Love for others fulfills God's law of love.
- Missionary plans.
- Spiritual gifts from God enabling the individual recipient

to minister to others according to God's will.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- The work of the Holy Spirit in the transformation of humanity from sinfulness to holiness.
- The work of Christ in overcoming sin on behalf of humanity.
- God as the One who rejected the nation of Israel and instead called the Gentiles (non-Jews) to be His people.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one [among humanity].” Job 14:4. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23. “If thou, LORD [God], shouldest mark [take note of] iniquities [wickedness], O Lord [God], who [among humanity] shall stand [be acquitted in God's judgment of humanity]? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared [reverenced].” Psalm 130:3, 4.

“Thou, O Lord [God], art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” Psalm 86:15. “For the LORD [God] is our judge, the LORD [God] is our lawgiver, the LORD [God] is our king; he will save us [to eternal life].” Isaiah 33:22. “Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.” Psalm 47:6.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will,

believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Seek righteousness by faith by “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:21.
- Make no excuse for your sin.
- Beware of false teachers.
- Use your spiritual gifts to minister to others according to God’s will.
- Make missionary plans to spread the gospel of Christ to the world.
- Have true love for others and so fulfill God’s law of love.
- Obey the governing powers where their requirements do not conflict with God’s law of love.
- Do not cause those weak in faith in God to stumble in their spiritual journey with God.



## CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

# 1 Corinthians: Approx. 57 A.D.

**T**HE FIRST EPISTLE OF Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians is the forty-sixth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek in the earliest manuscripts is *Pros Korinthious A* meaning “To the Corinthians 1.” The title in the English Bible is “The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians. It was probably written not later than 57 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of 1 Corinthians is actually a letter (epistle) written by the Paul to the Christian church at the city of Corinth in ancient Greece. It was probably written from the city of Ephesus in what is modern-day Turkey during Paul’s three-year stay there on his

### Third Missionary Journey.

The book opens with greetings from Paul to the church at Corinth and a prayer of thanksgiving to God for their spiritual growth. Paul then rebukes the Corinthians because of the factions in the church, each of which supports a different spiritual leader. He, Paul, defends his own ministry and the gospel, and states that they should glory in none other but Christ. He declares that their strife over spiritual leaders is a sign of their immaturity and worldliness. Paul counsels them that the ministers of the gospel are but servants of God, in that, they are co-labourers with God, stewards of the mysteries of God, sufferers for Christ's sake, examples to the church, and administrators of church discipline.

Paul next rebukes them for not disciplining a church member who is guilty of incest. He also rebukes the litigations between church members in secular courts, stating that the church is fully qualified to administer justice among its members. Members of the church, Paul says, should submit to the church's judgments. Paul then counsels the church that, as members of Christ's body and temples of the Holy Spirit, they should abstain from all sexual immorality.

After this, Paul responds to one or more letters from the Corinthian believers which raise a number of questions. On the question of marriage, Paul counsels on the marital rights of both husband and wife in their sexual relationship, recommends an unmarried state under certain circumstances, and counsels that believing spouses should not leave an unbelieving marital partner. Paul states that one's acceptance of Christ does not change one's social status, and he gives advice to those betrothed to someone for future marriage.

On the question of food sacrificed to idols, Paul states the Christian principle of sacrificing certain rights and privileges in order not to cause the ignorant and weak in faith to stumble in their spiritual life. Next, Paul gives himself as an example of surrendering certain of his rights and as an apostle in order to win

people to Christ.

He then describes the experience of ancient Israel and their infidelity to God as a warning to the Corinthians. Paul also advises them that their sacred fellowship at the Lord's supper demands that they separate themselves from evil associations, and that whatever they eat, drink, or do, they should in all these things glorify God.

Paul next gives counsel that social customs are to be observed regarding matters of dress, rebukes them for their disorder at the Lord's supper, and advises them of the proper way to observe it.

After this, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the Source of a diversity of spiritual gifts, and that all gifts are important in the church, which is the body of Christ. He then says that love is the most important gift and describes what is true love. Paul next states that the gift of tongues, which is the ability to speak in known, foreign languages, is to be exercised decently and in order in the church. He makes the point that the gift of prophecy is the more important gift because it benefits the church by easy-to-be-understood instruction.

Paul then declares the certainty of the resurrection from the dead because Christ Himself was resurrected, the literal nature of resurrection, and the hope of resurrection of the righteous dead that is to be realised when Christ comes to the earth a second time.

He next takes up his plans for the future—the collection for the poor saints, his intention to visit Corinth again—and asks that the church accept Timothy, his fellow-worker, when he comes to them. Paul then informs them of the decision of Apollos to remain at Ephesus and not to visit the Corinthians at the present time. He closes his letter with inspiring and encouraging words, saying that he was refreshed by the coming of some of their church members to visit him, and sends greetings from the churches in the Roman province of Asia and himself.

## Themes

- Counsels and rebukes to a church from one chosen by God to be an apostle.
- Limited spiritual growth of Christian believers due to their immaturity and worldliness.
- Spiritual gifts and their proper exercise by Christian believers.
- Marriage and sexual morality.
- The resurrection of the dead.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who by His grace causes spiritual growth in individuals.
- God's wisdom exceeds human wisdom.
- God as judge of every person's doings in their life.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

“And Saul (Paul) was consenting unto his death” (Acts 8:1), the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. “As for Saul, he made havock [havoc] of the church, entering into every house, and haling [dragging off] men and women committed them to prison.” Acts 8:3.

“And Saul (Paul), yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord [Jesus Christ]” (Acts 9:1), “as

he...came near Damascus...suddenly there shined...a light from heaven: And he...heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Acts 9:3, 4. “And he said, Who art thou, Lord [God]?”

And the Lord [God] said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks [goads which prick your conscience]. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord [God], what wilt thou have me to do?” Acts 9:5, 6. So, Christ Himself stopped Paul in his tracks of persecution and Paul became a devoted disciple of Christ.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Ever seek to grow spiritually and avoid dividing the church.
- Ask God to help you to identify your spiritual gifts as a true Christian and use your gifts to win persons to Christ.
- Worship, exalt, and honour none other but the Godhead.
- Live according to the counsels and rebukes of God given through the apostle, Paul.



## CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

# 2 Corinthians: Approx. 57 A.D.

**T**HE SECOND EPISTLE OF Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians is the forty-seventh book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek in the earliest manuscripts is *Pros Korinthious B* meaning “To the Corinthians 2.” The title in the English Bible is “The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians. It was probably written not later than 57 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 2 Corinthians is actually a letter (epistle) written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church at the city of Corinth in ancient Greece. It was probably written from Macedonia in what is modern-day Greece during Paul’s stay there on his Third

### Missionary Journey.

The book opens with greetings from Paul to the church at Corinth, and a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the comfort God gives in the midst of tribulations. He then explains that he had changed his travel plans to visit them to avoid the need for him to take severe disciplinary action against them when he came to Corinth.

Next, Paul counsels the church to forgive the immoral offender whom they had disciplined for his sin, and to restore him to fellowship with the church. He then describes his anxiety at not finding Titus at the district of Troas and, hence, his journey to Macedonia where he meets Titus, who is returning from a visit to the Corinthians. Paul's anxiety is replaced by joy, at the good news which Titus brought about the spiritual state of the Corinthian church.

Paul then asks the Corinthians if he and his fellow apostles praise themselves, or need letters of recommendation to the Corinthians, or letters of recommendation from the Corinthians. Answering his own question, Paul states that he has no need of these things for the Corinthians themselves, as converts to Christ, were an all-sufficient proof of Paul being a genuine apostle of Christ.

Next, Paul describes the ten commandments written by God Himself on two tables of stone as "the ministration of [eternal] death" (2 Corinthians 3:7) which was "glorious." 2 Corinthians 3:7. This glory of God's law written on stone was symbolically displayed by the shining of Moses' face when Moses came from the presence of God.

For Moses had gone up Mount Sinai to meet God, who gave Moses the two tables of stone with God's law. And when Moses returned to the Israelites his face shone and the people were afraid of him. So, Moses placed a veil over his face until the glory (shining) faded.

Paul uses this incident to illustrate the failure of ancient Israel,

which had covenanted with God to obey God's glorious ten commandments, to actually live up to their commitment to God. So then, Israel came under the condemnation of God's law of love for their disobedience and was, therefore, destined for eternal death, even though the law itself was glorious.

Why did Israel fail? They failed because they sought to obey God's commandments without first being enabled to do so by the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Israel sought to be righteous by the works of the law. For they thought that by an outward observance of the Ceremonial Laws they could thereby be made righteous.

But when Christ came to the earth, He, by His death for the sins of the whole world, confirmed the everlasting covenant, which became known as the new covenant. Thus, Israel was now called upon by God to understand that the Ceremonial Laws which prophesied of Christ's future death were now to be done away with. That is, these Ceremonial Laws were types (symbols) pointing to Christ and, at the antitype (reality) of Christ's death, they were no longer meaningful nor needed.

Instead, Israel, as at the first when God gave them the ten commandments, were once again called by God to seek righteousness through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, God now called upon Israel to leave behind their old covenant with its corresponding works of the law and to embrace the new covenant, that is, to embrace the everlasting covenant.

This new covenant of righteous by faith, had a corresponding enabling power of the Holy Spirit to make a person obedient to God's ten commandments, which is God's law of love. This is what Paul called "the ministration of the [Holy] spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:8) which he says is more glorious.

Now, both repentance and faith are requirements to reach the two milestones of justification and sanctification which result in salvation, and both milestones to salvation are only reached by the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

Note that a person may or may not be aware that they are being taught by the Holy Spirit, nevertheless the Spirit's teaching may be effective in leading them choose to turn from all their evil ways.

And as soon as the individual chooses to submit to the will of God, the first work of the Holy Spirit is the gift of repentance, then the gift of faith in God's promises, followed by the pouring of the love of God into the individual's heart. Thus, the individual may receive the forgiveness of sins from God and be enabled to cease from sin. When this first work is complete in the individual, they are instantaneously justified, that is, they are then in right standing before God.

Having been justified, the individual is tested, in that, the divine nature, which the Spirit has imparted to the individual resulting in their justification, is now in constant conflict with the natural sinful nature with which the individual was born. The individual must then gain the victory over every temptation to sin if they are to be sanctified (made holy). Hence, the second and final work of the Holy Spirit after the submission of the person to God's will, is the gift of moral strength to the individual so that they are enabled to overcome every sin and be sanctified (made holy) by keeping God's law of love. Then it is that the individual is fit for heaven, made ready to live a holy and happy life forever with God.

Another key point to grasp is that, from the moment that Adam and Eve sinned, the Holy Spirit has been at work in the world to turn every human being from selfishness to a character of love identical to God's own character. That is, the Holy Spirit was at work before the time of Israel's portable sanctuary, during the time of Israel's portable sanctuary, and also during the time of Israel's Temple which replaced their portable sanctuary. However, from the time of Adam up to the death of Christ, the Spirit's work was not clearly understood by many people. The few people who understood His work included Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.

In view of the clearer light with respect to the gospel afforded

people by the life and death of Christ, Paul says, the minds of the Jews were blinded to the transition from the old types of the Ceremonial Laws to the antitype, Christ. Because, for the Jews, the glory of the laws which God gave to Moses and which Moses wrote, consisted of the “letter” (2 Corinthians 3:6) of the law and in the outward forms and ceremonies it prescribed. But Paul declares that “the letter killeth” (2 Corinthians 3:6) meaning that it leads to eternal death (annihilation). For only the ministration (work) of the Holy Spirit in causing a person to keep God’s law of love can lead to eternal life.

After this, Paul states that the preaching of Christ is the theme of his ministry and that of his fellow apostles. He then outlines the fact that trials abound in ministry, nevertheless the apostles are not discouraged by this because they keep their eyes on the reward of eternal life from God.

Furthermore, Paul says that God has given the apostles the ministry of reconciliation and, therefore, as ambassadors for Christ they preach, urging every individual to be reconciled to God. He then appeals to the Corinthians to separate themselves from evildoers and to live holy lives. Next, Paul declares that even in the midst of tribulation he is nevertheless exceedingly joyful when he thinks of the Corinthians.

Also, with the coming of Titus from the Corinthian church with the news of their earnest desire regarding him, their mourning, and their zeal in following his godly counsel, he, Paul, was comforted and rejoiced the more. For the Corinthians had repented on reading his previous letter which brought joy to Titus’ heart. So, Paul says that his boasting to Titus about them was found to be a truth.

Next, Paul states that the Macedonian churches, even in a great trial of affliction and their deep poverty, have been willing and very generous in giving, urging Paul to receive their gift for the poor in the churches in Jerusalem. So, he urges the Corinthians to follow the Macedonians’ example remembering the sacrifice

Christ made for humanity, in order that humanity may be saved from eternal death (annihilation).

Thus, Paul says that he has sent Titus and a fellow church member to the Corinthians to receive their gift for the Christians in Jerusalem. He urges them to complete their collection of the funds for their gift, and appeals to their generosity, outlining Christian principles in giving.

Paul then responds to the charges of those who have belittled him as an apostle by pointing out that his, Paul's, apostleship comes from God. And, Paul says, Corinth and the regions beyond them are within his appointed sphere of labour from God. He then points out that Christians should not praise themselves but seek to be approved by God.

Next, Paul warns the Corinthians against the subtlety of false apostles who like Satan pretend to be angels of light. Paul then makes several points. First, that he has not been dependent on the Corinthians church for his livelihood. Secondly, he describes his perils and sufferings in carrying out the ministry which God has assigned to him. Thirdly, he has received a number of visions and divine revelations, even being caught up to heaven by God.

Fourthly, Paul points out that he is humbled by God by a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7) which is a disability that God will not take away from him. Paul's last point is that neither himself, Titus, nor the fellow church member whom he had sent to them were enriched at the Corinthian's expense.

Paul then addresses the unrepentant persons in the Corinthian church. He says that when he comes to the church, he does not wish to find them in an undesirable spiritual condition and, hence, there be contentions and strife between himself and them. He declares that when he comes to them this third time, he would not spare to rebuke those who are unrepentant.

In light of this, Paul urges the Corinthians to examine themselves whether they are faithful Christians. Therefore, he says that he has written his letter to them to encourage them to be godly in

order to avoid his being harsh with them when he next comes to them.

After this, Paul encourages the Corinthians to be perfect and to greet each other in a godly manner. He then closes his letter with greetings from all the saints and pronounces a blessing upon the Corinthians.

## Themes

- The labours of a Christian leader for the church he had planted.
- Anxiety of a Christian leader over the spiritual condition of a church.
- The joy of a Christian leader at an encouraging report from a missionary to a church.
- A church's repentance at the counsels and rebukes of their spiritual leader.
- The need to win back to Christ immoral offenders who have been put out of church fellowship because of their sins.
- A generous gift given joyfully from one poor church to the poor of other churches.
- Principles of giving for Christians.
- Attempts of false apostles sent by Satan to separate a church from their spiritual leader.
- Visions, divine revelations, and sufferings for Christ in Christian ministry.

- The fruitfulness of a Christian's ministry as evidence of God's approval of their labours for Christ.
- Church members who are unrepentant despite of the counsels and rebukes of their spiritual leader.
- The types (symbols) of Christ done away with at the death of Christ, the antitype (reality).

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God as the Comforter of the individual enabling them to be a comfort to others who have troubles.
- God whose grace (His unmerited favour) is sufficient for salvation in that His moral strength is made effective in those distrustful of themselves.
- God who causes the true Christian to be triumphant in Christ because of their godly influence on people.
- God who commands Christians to separate themselves from evildoers and to live holy lives.
- God who loves a cheerful giver.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“For not the hearers of the law [the ten commandments which are amplified and applied in all the Scriptures] are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Romans 2:13.

“For when the Gentiles [non-Jews], which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew [show] the work of the

law written in their hearts [by the Holy Spirit], their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” Romans 2:14, 15.

That is, the Jews had the benefit of great light regarding the gospel in that God gave them the types (symbols) and afterwards gave them Christ, the antitype (reality). Therefore, the Jews were inexcusable in rejecting Christ and in not keeping God’s law of love. Further, there were people who had no knowledge of the gospel, who were able to keep God’s law through the work of the Holy Spirit. So then, no human being has any excuse for not keeping the law.

If you are among those individuals who have kept God’s law and have, therefore, become sinless (sanctified), God will take away the sinful nature that is in constant conflict with the divine nature, because you have succeeded in subduing this evil nature. This taking away occurs at the end of the Investigative Judgment when the destiny of all persons who have ever lived is decided, whether the person receives eternal life from God or eternal death (annihilation) from God.

That is, when the Investigative Judgment is complete, God writes “forgiven” beside the sins of the sanctified whose “names are in the book of life.” Philippians 4:3. Human probation then closes, and when Jesus returns to the earth a short time after, for all the righteous living, the clamour of the sinful nature is taken away by God leaving the person with only the divine nature. Then it will be that “the former [sins] shall not be remembered, nor come into [one’s] mind forever.” Isaiah 65:17.

Likewise, when Jesus Christ returns to the earth, at that time, the righteous dead are raised to life again with the clamour of the sinful nature taken away leaving them with only the divine nature. For these people too, the resurrected sinless, “the former [sins] shall not be remembered, nor come into [one’s] mind [forever].” Isaiah 65:17.

Now, there is “grace [blessing from God] that is to be brought

unto you [the sanctified] at the revelation [second coming] of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13. This grace (blessing from God) is the work of Christ “who shall change our vile [sin-polluted] body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Philippians 3:21.

So, then the person who has received eternal life from God is cleansed from all sin, both from a sinful nature and from a vile, sin-polluted body. Thus, the sanctified enter upon eternal life having only the divine nature and a glorious body like that of Christ.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Be an effective Christian leader by following Paul’s example.
- Be a cheerful giver.
- Ensure that you understand why the types (symbols) were done away with at the death of Christ, the antitype.
- Be careful to understand that there has ever been only one way of salvation, which is the gospel, since the time of Adam and Eve.
- Be sure not to be the companion of sinners but instead to live a holy life.
- Know God as your Comforter so that you may comfort others.

- Do not trust in yourself for your own salvation; trust in Christ.



## CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

# *Galatians: Approx. 58 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Galatians is the forty-eighth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Galatas* meaning “To the Galatians.” The title in the English Bible is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians. It was probably written not later than 58 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Galatians is actually a letter (epistle) written by the apostle Paul to the Christian churches in the region of Galatia in ancient Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written from the city of Corinth in what is modern-day Greece during Paul’s three-month stay there on his Third Missionary Journey.

The book opens with Paul introducing himself as someone who

was chosen to be an apostle by Jesus Christ Himself. Paul then sends his blessings to the Galatian Christians.

Next, Paul expresses amazement that the Galatians have so soon turned away from the grace of Christ which he, Paul, had preached to them, to another gospel. But, Paul declares, this other gospel is a perversion of the gospel of Christ. He then pronounces a curse on those who have preached another gospel to them. Paul then assures the Galatians that the gospel which he preached to them, he received it by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

After this, Paul informs them that, in the past, he was zealous for the Jews' religion and, therefore, he persecuted the Christian church and ravaged it. But when God called him to preach Christ among the non-Jews (Gentiles) he did not consult anyone. Neither did he go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before him, but he went into Arabia and then returned to Damascus.

Paul then says that after three years he went to Jerusalem to see the apostle Peter, where he also saw James, the brother of Jesus Christ. Afterwards, he says, he came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and when the churches of Judaea heard that their former persecutor now preached faith in Christ, these churches glorified God who was in him, Paul.

Next, Paul states that after another fourteen years he went up again to Jerusalem along with Barnabas and Titus, and communicated privately to the apostles the gospel which he had preached to the Gentiles. But neither was Titus compelled to be circumcised because of false brethren who had secretly come into the church intending to turn the church members away from their freedom in Christ, to bondage that is contrary to the truth of the gospel.

After this, Paul says that the apostles at Jerusalem approved of my gospel and decided that Barnabas and Paul would preach to the Gentiles, while they would preach to the Jews. Afterwards though, Paul says, I publicly rebuked Peter at Antioch when he refrained from eating with the Gentiles as was his custom, when

certain church member came from James. For the other Jews and Barnabas were carried away by this pretence.

Paul then states that no one can be justified (declared righteous by God) by “the works of the law” (Galatians 2:16), but only by faith in Jesus Christ. If you will recall what was said in previous chapters of this book, “the works of the law” (Galatians 2:16) is a person’s self-sufficient attempt to keep God’s law of love. That is, an attempt to keep God’s law without receiving the gifts of repentance, faith, and love from God through the Holy Spirit. The Jews had the erroneous belief that the observance of the outward forms and ceremonies prescribed in the five books written by Moses (the Pentateuch), which they referred to as “the law”, was the way to salvation by God.

Paul continues by saying, “For I through [keeping] the law [through keeping God’s law of love] am dead to the [works of the] law, that I might live unto [according to the approval of] God.” Galatians 2:19. What does Paul mean? He explains by saying, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” Galatians 2:20, 21.

In other words, Paul is saying that his own self-love which is self-idolatry was put to death by spiritual crucifixion just as Christ Himself was crucified. This death of self-idolatry is his own repentance which was effected by the Holy Spirit when he, Paul, turned away from his sins and submitted himself to God’s will. Having repented, Paul then received the gift of faith in Christ, the Son of God, from the Holy Spirit, which faith he willingly acknowledged and, hence, the Spirit poured the love of God in his, Paul’s, heart.

The gift of love which Paul received from the Holy Spirit is actually “the gift of [Christ’s] righteousness.” Romans 5:17. Therefore, Paul could say that he no longer lives, but Christ lives in

him through the Spirit's gift of Christ's righteousness. So then, the life Paul now lives in the flesh as a human being, he now lives by constantly exercising faith in Christ to give him moral strength through the Spirit in order to overcome sin. That is, Paul is constantly trusting in Christ to give him the victory in his fight against sin.

In this way, Paul says he does not frustrate the grace of God which is God's unmerited favour and which is intended to set people free from sin. So, Paul uses the word "law" in Galatians 2:19 to mean two different things. In other words, God's law of love which the Holy Spirit has enabled Paul to obey through the gift of love has turned Paul away from any attempt to keep God's law of love through "the works of the law." Galatians 2:16.

That is, Paul through the Spirit has been turned away from the "dead works" (Hebrews 6:1) produced by "the works of the law" (Galatians 2:16) to instead do the "good works" (Ephesians 2:10) produced by obedience to God's law of love. Paul own words may be amplified as follows: "For I through the [obedience to God's] law [of love] am dead to the [works of the] law, that I might live [a holy life] unto [in the sight of] God." Galatians 2:19.

Therefore, Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God" (Galatians 2:21) because it has worked effectively in me to make me holy, that is, to make me obedient to God's law of love. In light of this, Paul exclaims that "if righteousness come by the [works of the] law, then Christ is dead in vain." Galatians 2:21. For this would mean that "the gift of [Christ's] righteousness" (Romans 5:17), which is the righteousness of Christ's sinless life on earth, is not necessary to make an individual holy. In other words, if righteousness could come by a person's self-sufficient attempt to keep God's law of love, then the death of Christ for the sins of the whole world was unnecessary and in vain.

Paul then asks the Galatians if they are so foolish, when having begun their Christian life through the gift of faith received from the Holy Spirit, do they now seek to be made holy by the works

of the law, according to what was being taught by their new teachers. For Abraham had faith in God's promises and, therefore, God credited him with the forgiveness of his sins and the gift of righteousness, that is, the gift of love.

It is important to note here that, while both repentance and faith in God's promises are necessary for an individual's justification, oftentimes the Bible simply refers to faith as necessary for justification. This does not mean that repentance is unnecessary, but simply that faith is the crowning act which leads to justification. For if a person stops at repentance and does not go on to faith, they will fail to be justified. Why? Faith, a belief and trust in God's remedy for sin, means that you have accepted this remedy and, therefore, you have given God permission to work in you to make you holy. Otherwise, not believing in God's remedy for sin means that you are resisting God's will to make you holy, and God will not, by any means, force anyone to be holy.

Paul then declares that God had preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, that through Abraham all nations would be blessed because Christ would be born as a descendant of Abraham. Thus, Abraham believed the gospel and all who like Abraham also believe the gospel will be blessed as Abraham was with the gift of righteousness from God. Paul then reiterates that no one can be justified by the works of the law. Also, God's giving of "the ten commandments" (Exodus 34:28) as a codified form of God's law of love for the universe that was designed to meet humanity in their sinful condition, some 430 years after God preached the gospel to Abraham, could not make void God's promise to Abraham.

Why then was the law, the ten commandments, given? It was given as a schoolmaster (tutor) to point out the sins in a person's life, so that such a person might recognise their need for salvation from sin through the gospel of Christ. But when a person has been justified by faith, they are no longer under a schoolmaster for they have received Christ's righteousness through the Holy Spirit and, hence, they have put away their sins.

Paul then asks the Galatians how is it that they desire to once again be in bondage to sin just as when they followed the ways of the world. He then says that he is afraid he has bestowed his spiritual labour on them in vain. Paul then reminds them that they had received him as an angel of God, and even as Christ Himself. For, if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him. Paul next asks them if he has become their enemy because he tells them the truth. He then exclaims that he is in the labour of childbirth for them again until Christ is formed in them, and also he, Paul, desires to see them.

Next, Paul likens the desire of the Galatians to live by the works of the law to the story of Abraham's two sons. The son by a slave woman Paul likens to seeking salvation by the works of the law which is really bondage to sin. The son by a free woman Paul likens to the gospel of Christ which leads to freedom from sin. That is, if they become circumcised according to the law written by Moses thinking that this is a means of salvation, then Christ is of no profit to them.

After this, Paul states that the Galatians had begun their Christian life well and asks them who has hindered them from obeying the truth of the gospel. He then asks them that if he were preaching circumcision, why does he, Paul, suffer persecution? For then the offence caused by the preaching of the cross of Christ would have ceased. He then declares that he wishes that the new teachers who trouble the Galatians would be cut off from them.

Next, Paul explains that God's law of love expressed as the ten commandments and all that is contained in the five books written by Moses, is fulfilled in one thing—that you love your neighbour (God and your fellow human being) as yourself. He encourages the Galatians to live according to God's ways through the working of the Holy Spirit. In this way they would not display the dead works of the sinful nature, but would instead display good works as the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Next, Paul charges the Galatians to restore to faith in Christ any-

one who has been overcome by sin, with a spirit of meekness, and considering themselves in the event that they also be tempted to sin. Also, they are to bear each other's burdens and so fulfill God's law of love. Nevertheless, everyone is responsible for bearing their own burden. He cautions them not to be weary in well-doing for they that sow (act according) to the sinful nature will reap eternal death (annihilation), but they that sow (act) according to God's ways through the Holy Spirit will reap everlasting life.

Paul then mentions that he has written to them in large letters with his own hand, apparently due to his poor eyesight. He declares that the new teachers of the Galatians desire them to be circumcised only because they wished to escape persecution for preaching the cross of Christ. Also, these new teachers who are themselves circumcised, do not keep God's law of love. Paul declares that he himself glories in the cross of Christ, for the cross has made him dead to the world's influence on his thinking and conduct, and he is himself also dead to any desire for the world.

Paul next cautions the Galatians that the issue is not whether one becomes circumcised or not, but whether one is a new person because they have been transformed by the Holy Spirit. He then pronounces a blessing on those who live according to God's law of love. Next, Paul says that no one should trouble him anymore about the matter for he, Paul, bears in his body the marks (scars) received because of his preaching of Christ. He then ends his letter with the prayer that the grace of God (God's unmerited favour) will be upon the Galatians.

## Themes

- The conversion of a persecutor of the church to Christianity.
- The call by God to be an apostle who is taught the gospel by God Himself.

- False teachers who preach contrary to the gospel of Christ.
- The error of salvation by works and the truth of salvation by faith.
- A spiritual father's concern for his children who have been led into error.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God calls people to be Christians and appoints them their work for Christ.
- God has preached the gospel to humanity from the earliest of times.
- God gave to the world the ten commandments and the laws written by Moses.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

“The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore [why]? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone [Christ].” Romans 9:30-32.

“For I bear them record that they [Israel] have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end [goal] of the law for righteousness to

every one that believeth.” Romans 10:2-4.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Beware of the error of salvation by works.
- Do the work which God has appointed you as a Christian.
- Be a spiritual father or mother for those living in sin.
- Beware of those who teach a perverted gospel.
- Trust in God’s power to save you through your faith in Christ.



## CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

# *Ephesians: Approx. 63 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Ephesians is the forty-ninth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Ephesious* meaning “To the Ephesians.” The title in the English Bible is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians. It was probably written not later than 63 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Ephesians is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church in the city in of Ephesus in ancient Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written from Rome in Italy, during his first imprisonment there in the approximate period, 61 A.D. to 63 A.D.

Ephesians opens with Paul declaring that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Paul then sends greetings and he

praises God for His plan of salvation for humanity. Next, he states that humanity has been redeemed (bought back from Satan) and a provision made for the forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Christ. For God's purpose in the plan of salvation is to gather all things, both in heaven and in the earth, together in Christ.

Paul then states that, according to the God's will and for which God is to be praised, God has sealed the true believers in Christ with the Holy Spirit. That is, the true believers have received the Holy Spirit as a Mighty Helper in their efforts to overcome sin. After this, Paul prays that the church will receive wisdom and a knowledge of God according to the greatness of God's power in those who believe in Christ.

Next, Paul declares that the true Christian was, figuratively, dead in their sins because they lived according to Satan's ways, but now God has raised them to life with Christ. This God did, that in the ages to come He might demonstrate His kindness to humanity. For it is by God's grace alone (God's unmerited favour), and not by the works of the law, that people are saved from eternal death (annihilation). In so doing, God has united Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) as one body where the individuals are filled with (have received) the Holy Spirit.

Paul next declares that God has now revealed the mystery of the plan of salvation to the apostles and prophets and to him, Paul, whom God has made a minister of the gospel. He then prays that the church and all saints would come to comprehend the fullness of Christ's love.

He next prays that the church would be united through the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to each Christian, for the purpose of Christian ministry through which they come to the perfection of Christ's character of love. Thus, the Christian would not then be deceived by every kind of teachings from those who cunningly state falsehoods. Paul then encourages the church to put off the "old man" with its uncleanness and instead put on the "new man" with its true holiness. Thus, he implores the church to

put away lying, unrighteous anger, theft, bitterness, and all malice, and instead speak the truth, do honest work for a living, be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. In other words, they are to live according to Christ's ways of love and so avoid joining others in their sins.

Paul then states that wives are to submit themselves to, and respect their husbands, as they would Christ, and that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Children are to obey and honour their parents as they would Christ, and the fathers are not to provoke their children to anger but train their children according to the ways of Christ. Servants are to be obedient to their masters serving them with goodwill as they would serve Christ, and their masters are to treat their servants as Christ would.

Next, Paul cautions the church to put on the whole armour of God so that they may be able to withstand the wicked schemes of the devil, who is Satan, for their source of moral strength is Christ. The armour, Paul says, is made up of righteousness, the gospel, faith, the word of God, the Bible, and prayer.

Paul ends his letter by asking the church to pray that he will boldly preach the mystery of the gospel for which he is an ambassador in prison. He then states that Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister, whom he is sending to the church to comfort them, would inform them of Paul's affairs and how he, Paul, is doing. Lastly, Paul pronounces a blessing upon the church.

## Themes

- Praise to God.
- Prayer.
- Unity of all Christians through the Holy Spirit.

- Salvation of humanity through Christ.
- Spiritual encouragement to be holy by the founder of a church.
- How to stand against the wicked schemes of Satan.
- How to have holy relationships in society.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who does all things according to His own will.
- God's kindness toward humanity in providing salvation.
- God who blesses humanity with all spiritual blessings.
- God who unites all Christians through the Holy Spirit.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

The book of Ephesians often uses the phrase “in Christ.” For example, “For we are his [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10.

The words “in Christ” are a reference to the words of Christ when He was on earth: “I am the true vine...I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing [good].” John 15:1-5. This refers to the “give-and-take” relationship between the true Christian and Christ. For just as a branch is grafted into (is in) and receives nourishment from the parent stock of the vine, Christ *gives* His gift of love to those who have a living connection with Him, and the Christian is to open their

heart to *take* this gift.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Praise God for the gift of salvation.
- Ensure that you cause no division in the church.
- Follow God's counsel on how to resist Satan's wicked schemes.
- Follow God's counsel on how to have holy relationships.
- Pray for all the ministers (pastors) of the Christian church.



## CHAPTER FIFTY

# *Philippians: Approx. 63 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Philippians is the fiftieth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Philippesious* meaning “To the Philippians.” The title in the English Bible is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians. It was probably written not later than 63 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Philippians is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church in the city in of Philippi in ancient Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written from Rome in Italy, during his first impris-

onment there in the approximate period, 61 A.D. to 63 A.D.

The book opens with a greeting from Paul and Timothy, both servants of Jesus Christ, to the Philippian church. Paul then thanks God for these Philippian converts to Christ and prays that their love will abound more and more. He next declares that his imprisonment has led to the advancement of the gospel in all of Caesar's palace and in all other places. It has also resulted in increased sharing of the gospel by church members to unbelievers, and even to insincere preaching of Christ, for all of which he rejoices because Christ is preached.

Paul, therefore, states his confidence that these things, along with their prayer, and the gift of the Holy Spirit will result in his own salvation. He is determined to exalt Christ whether by his, Paul's, life or his own death. He encourages the Philippians to be steadfast in the gospel and to endure sufferings for Christ's sake.

Paul then appeals to the church to be of one accord, of one mind, and to be humble, giving them, as an example, the amazing humility of Christ who was equal with God and who yet He died on a cross. Thus, Paul says they are to cooperate with God in the working out of their own salvation and, so, be blameless children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, being spiritual lights in the world.

Next, Paul declares his plan to send Timothy to the Philippian church and his hope to be released soon from his imprisonment. He explains that Epaphroditus, his fellow Christian and companion in labour, and the Philippians' messenger to him, Paul, was sick but had recovered from his illness. So, Paul has sent Epaphroditus to the Philippians and instructs the church to receive him with gladness, and to hold him in high esteem because for the work of Christ he came near to death, not regarding his own life in order to minister to Paul.

After this, Paul encourages the church to rejoice in the Lord and to beware of evil workers, that is, beware of circumcised, false Jewish teachers. He states that the true circumcision is to worship

God according to the Holy Spirit and to rejoice in Christ Jesus. He gives himself as an example of one who, in the past, had placed his confidence in his own physical circumcision and who had in his zeal persecuted the Christian church.

But now, he, Paul, counts those things that were gain to him as loss for the sake of the knowledge of Christ and that he may win Christ's salvation. For he, Paul, desires to be found not to have his own righteousness by works of the law, but instead the righteousness which comes through his faith in Christ. Paul states that his only goal in life is to know Christ, to partake of his resurrection, and to press toward the prize of God's high calling for him to reach a Christlike character of love.

So, Paul encourages the Philippians to imitate him, Paul, and not those who are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God is their belly and who are earthly-minded. He urges them to have their conversation on heavenly things, looking forward to the coming of their Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who at His return to the earth will give them a glorious body just like Christ's own body.

Paul again appeals to the church to be steadfast in the Lord Jesus Christ and to be united. He encourages them to rejoice in the Lord, and to be free from anxiety but instead make their request to God in prayer, with thanksgiving. He also urges them to think only of the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, and that have virtue and praise.

Next, Paul rejoices and thanks the Philippians for their gift to him which he says is evidence of their care for him. Not that he, Paul, is in need, for he has learnt to be content in whatever state he is in. He commends the church for sharing in his affliction as no other church did and says that their gift delivered by Epaphroditus pleased God. Nevertheless, he is confident that God will supply all his needs. Paul closes the letter with greetings and his blessings.

## Themes

- Rejoicing in Christ despite affliction and adversity.
- Spiritual counsel that we should be Christlike.
- The progress of the gospel.
- The care of a church by the one who taught them the gospel.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God as the source of strength and who supplies all needs.
- Christ's humility and obedience to the Father even unto death.
- God who prepares us for salvation.
- God who gives the saints a glorious body at the first resurrection.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, "Now...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption [the incorruptibility of eternal life]. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [not all die eternally], but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [trumpet]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [who are alive] shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:50-52.

“For this corruptible must put on incorruption [the incorruptibility of eternal life], and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption [the incorruptibility of eternal life], and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, [eternal] Death (which is to be annihilated by God) is swallowed up in victory [is done away with for those made holy by God].” 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Rejoice in Christ always despite affliction and adversity.
- Seek to be Christlike in every way.
- Have a care for the one who taught you the gospel.
- Rely on God as your strength and as He who supplies all your needs.
- Believe in the resurrection from the dead to receive eternal life.
- Give of your money and wealth to support the cause of God in the world.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

# *Colossians: Approx. 62 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Colossians is the fifty-first book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Kolossaeis* meaning “To the Colossians.” The title in the English Bible is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians. It was probably written not later than 63 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Colossians is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church in the city of Colossae in ancient Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written from Rome in Italy during his first imprisonment there in the approximate period, 61 A.D. to 63 A.D.

Paul begins the book with a greeting to the saints and the faithful at the Colossian church. He thanks God for them, having heard

from their minister, Epaphras, of their faith in Christ and their love. Paul then prays for blessings upon the church.

Next, he tells them that Christ is the perfect representation of the invisible God, the Creator of all that exists outside of God, and who preexists all these things. He also states that Christ is the Head of the Christian church, and He has reconciled all things to Himself by His blood that was shed on the cross.

Paul then declares that he himself is a minister of the gospel which has been preached to every person under heaven. For God desired to make known the mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of your fully reflecting God's glorious character of love.

After this, Paul states his great anxiety concerning the church at Colossae and the church at Laodicea. He desires that they be knit together in love with a full understanding and acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. He warns them against being deceived by enticing words and instructs them that they should be steadfast in their faith in Christ, and live according to Christ's ways of love.

Next, Paul warns the Colossians Christians to beware of being deceived and spoiled by the tradition of human beings and the philosophy of the world. For the Colossians were once dead in their sins, but Christ has made them alive with Him, having forgiven them of all their sins. And by so doing, Christ has blotted out the handwritten Ceremonial Law given by God through Moses and has nailed them to His cross. Thus, Christ has openly triumphed over the principalities and powers of Satan.

Again, Paul warns them not to lose their heavenly reward by voluntarily worshipping angels instead of holding on steadfastly to Christ, the Head of the Christian church. Why, Paul asks, are they observing the obsolete Ceremonial Law according to the commandments and teachings of some people? For these things have an appearance of wisdom in self-made religion, humility, and extreme ill treatment of their own bodies, which are of no value in preventing their indulgence of their sinful nature.

Paul then urges them to seek those things which are above in heaven and to set their affections on the things above and not on the earth. He also urges them to put to death the evil lusts and deeds of their past and instead cultivate virtues, including love, and be ruled by peace, unity, and thankfulness. Moreover, he entreats them to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly so that they are able to instruct and warn each other, as well as sing praises to Christ.

Next, Paul asks them to obey what he commands regarding the godly relationships that should exist between husbands and wives, children and parents, masters and servants. He then entreats them to continue in prayer and thanksgiving and to pray for him and his fellow workers in the gospel that God would give them opportunities to speak of the mystery of Christ, for which he thing, Paul, has been imprisoned. Further, he urges them to be a godly example to unbelievers.

After this, Paul states that he is sending faithful, Christian brothers, Tychicus and Onesimus, to them to see how they are doing, to comfort their hearts, and to report on Paul's state of affairs. He then sends them greetings from some of his fellow workers with commendations of these workers. He asks the Colossians to greet the church at Laodicea and others, and requests that his letter to the Colossians be also read in Laodicea and that the Colossians read his letter to Laodicea. Lastly, Paul closes his letter by asking them to remember his imprisonment and wishes them God's blessings.

## Themes

- Christians with firm faith in Christ and abounding in love.
- Teachings about Christ and the gospel.
- Warnings against errors that lead away from Christ.

- Commands to put away sinful deeds and to instead be Christlike.
- Teachings about godly relationships in the family and in society.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- Christ equal to the other members of the Godhead.
- The preexistence of Christ before creation.
- The preeminence of Christ over all creation.
- Christ who did away with the Ceremonial Laws.
- Christ who in His death triumphed over Satan and his evil angels.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage [of the works of the law]...if ye be circumcised [as a means of salvation], Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the [works of the] law; ye are fallen from grace.” Galatians 5:1-4.

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing [regarding salvation], nor uncircumcision; but faith [received from Christ] which worketh [good deeds] by [the resulting] love [received from the Holy Spirit].” Galatians 5:5, 6.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Have firm faith in Christ and abound more and more in love.
- Beware of errors that lead away from Christ.
- Be godly in all your relationships in your family and in society.
- Know that Christ is equal to the other members of the Godhead.
- Know that Christ has done away with the Ceremonial Laws.
- Pray to God always and be thankful to Him.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

# 1 Thessalonians: Approx. 51 A.D.

**T**HE FIRST EPISTLE OF Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians is the fifty-second book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Thessalonikeis A* meaning “To the Thessalonians 1.” The title in the English Bible is “The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians. It was probably written about 51 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of 1 Thessalonians is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church in the city in of Thessalonica in what is modern-day Greece. It was probably written from Corinth also in modern-day Greece on his Second

### Missionary Journey.

The book opens with greetings from Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, and that they give thanks to God for the Thessalonians, always mentioning them in their prayers. Paul then commends the Thessalonians for their faith in Christ, loving Christian service, and cheerful, patience endurance sustained by their hope in Christ. For they became followers of Paul and his Christian fellow-workers with joy despite much affliction and have exerted an exemplary influence far and wide, having turned from idolatry to serve the true and living God.

Paul then reminds them that his preaching to them was not in vain even after Paul and his fellow Christian workers had been shamefully mistreated at the city of Philippi. For Paul, Silvanus (Silas), and Timothy, had preached the gospel to them boldly, without deceit, with sincerity, and without covetousness. Paul and the others had been humble, gentle, and affectionate among them, working night and day because they did not wish to become a financial burden to the Thessalonians. He also states how holy, blameless, and fatherly, the conduct of Paul and the others was among the Thessalonians.

Paul then refers to the teachableness of the Thessalonians in the midst of suffering persecution from their own countrymen. He next states that though Paul and the others had been forced to leave Thessalonica, the church there was in their hearts and they were greatly desirous of seeing them again. Paul himself had sought opportunity time and again to visit them but he was hindered by Satan. Nevertheless, the church was the hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing, of Paul and the others in the presence of Christ at his second coming to the earth.

Paul then says that when he and the others could no longer endure their separation from the Thessalonians, they sent Timothy to them. Timothy's mission was to establish and comfort them in their faith that they should not be shaken by their afflictions which they were to expect. For Paul says that he had fears that Satan, the

tempter, had successfully led them into sin so that the labour of Paul and the others was in vain.

But Timothy had returned from Thessalonica with a good report of the church's faith, love, fond remembrance of Paul and the others, and their great desire to see Paul and the others, who likewise wished to see the Thessalonians. Therefore, Paul and the others were comforted and joyful at Timothy's report, praying night and day that they might see the Thessalonians to be a help to them in perfecting their faith in Christ.

Next, Paul declares that it is God's will that they be sanctified, that is to say, made holy, so that they abstain from sexual immorality. Also, Paul says that he does not need to write to them about brotherly love for they are taught by God to love one another, as they now do. He urges them to seek to lead a quiet life, working with their own hands as he, Paul, had commanded them and to live honestly.

Paul then comforts them by saying that they need not sorrow over church members who have died, as others who have no hope do. For, if they believe that Jesus died and rose again from the dead to life, those who have died with faith in Christ, when Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout, they shall rise from the dead first. Then those Christians who are alive and remain shall be caught up with the risen, righteous dead in the clouds to meet Jesus in the air, and so they all will forever be with Christ in heaven.

After this, Paul states that the day when Jesus Christ will return to the earth will come unexpectedly as a thief in the night, and that the unbelievers in God will not escape sudden destruction from God. He then warns them that as children of the light they should not sleep as do others, but should be watchful and sober, having faith, love, and the hope of salvation. Therefore, he says the Thessalonians should comfort and build up each other as they are already doing.

Next, Paul instructs them to esteem those who are leaders in

the church highly in love, to warn the insubordinate, comfort the fainthearted, support the weak in faith, be patient, and to do good to all others. Also, they are to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks to God in all circumstances, to be attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading, and not turn away from prophecies from God. Lastly, Paul pronounces a blessing upon the Thessalonians, asks them to pray for him and the others, to greet each other fondly, and to read his letter to the whole church.

## **Themes**

- The mutual love and joy of those who have planted a church and the members of the church.
- The faith, love, and spiritual growth of believers in Christ.
- The holy, blameless, fatherly conduct of the church planters.
- Persecution of the church and their patient endurance.
- The exemplary influence of a church.
- The existence of Satan as the tempter and the one who hinders the work of the gospel.
- A missionary visit to a church and the resultant good report of the spiritual state of the church.
- The glorious return of Jesus Christ to take the righteous dead and the righteous living to heaven to be with Him forever.
- Spiritual instruction of the church in practical godliness.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who by His grace has changed unbelievers in Christ to believers.
- God whose desire is the sanctification, that is, the holiness, of the church.
- God who takes the righteous, both living and resurrected dead, to heaven forever.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner [custom] was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ [the Promised Messiah, the Deliverer from sin]. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas [Sylvanus]; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” Acts 17:1-4.

“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and

the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.” Acts 17:5-8.

“And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas [Sylvanus] by night unto Berea: who coming thither [there] went into the synagogue of the Jews.” Acts 17:9, 10.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Become a church planter who raises up believers in Christ.
- Be a holy example to the church and instruct them in godliness.
- Be aware that Satan will hinder you as a gospel worker.
- Encourage the church to be faithful in the face of persecution.
- Preach about Christ’s return to take all the righteous to heaven forever.
- Maintain spiritual contact with the church(es) you have planted.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

# 2 Thessalonians: Approx. 51 A.D.

**T**HE SECOND EPISTLE OF Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians is the fifty-third book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Thessalonikeis B* meaning “To the Thessalonians 2.” The title in the English Bible is “The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians. It was probably written about 51 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 2 Thessalonians is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to the Christian church in the city in of Thessalonica in what is modern-day Greece. It was probably written from Corinth also in modern-day Greece on his Second

### Missionary Journey.

The book opens with greetings from Paul, Sylvanus (Silas), and Timothy, to the Thessalonians. They thank God because the faith of the church grows exceedingly and their love abounds. Paul and his fellow Christian workers commend the Thessalonians for their cheerful, patient endurance, and faith in Christ, in the face of all their persecutions and tribulations.

Their courageous attitude to their troubles, Paul says, is plain evidence that God judges fairly and that God by His grace is making them worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffer. Moreover, it is only right for God to repay those who are afflicting the Thessalonian church with affliction on them. So, you Thessalonians, Paul says, who are now troubled, rest with us (Paul, Sylvanus [Silas], and Timothy). For when Jesus shall come from heaven with His mighty angels, he will take vengeance with flaming fire on those who do not know God and who obey not the gospel.

These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of Jesus, when He comes to be praised and honoured by His saints (those who are sanctified) and to be admired in that day, because you have believed our (me, Paul, and my fellow Christian workers') testimony about Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul and the others pray that the Thessalonians will be found worthy of God's calling on their lives through the grace of God.

Paul then says that he and the others are entreating the Thessalonians not to be shaken in their minds, nor be troubled, neither as if by the Holy Spirit, nor by a spoken word, nor by a letter seeming to come from us, that says that the day when Jesus returns to the earth has already come.

They are not to let anyone deceive them for the day of Jesus' return will not come before there is first a falling away from faith in Christ and "that man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) be revealed. This man of sin will oppose and exalt himself above all that pertains to God or that is true worship, sitting in the Temple of

God and declaring falsely that he is God. The Thessalonians are to remember that when Paul was with them, he had warned them of these things.

That is, Paul says, there is now a restraining power by God so that the man of sin will only be revealed in God's appointed time. For the "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thessalonians 2:7), that is to say, the mystery of wickedness, Satan himself, is already at work, and only God who now restrains Satan will continue to restrain him until Satan is taken away by God.

Before that time comes, "that Wicked" (2 Thessalonians 2:8), Satan's human agent, will be revealed who works signs and lying wonders through the power of Satan, deceiving those persons who are perishing in their sins because they did not receive from God a love of the truth so that they might be saved by God. This Wicked, the man of sin, Jesus will destroy when He comes to the earth again. This Wicked, the man of sin, is also, symbolically, Satan himself who, in accordance with Satan's greatest desire, will near the end of time come out of hiding and appear on earth working signs and lying wonders seeking to receive the worship of the whole earth. And God will cause those people who have not received a love of the truth from God, to receive instead a strong delusion from Satan, so that they believe Satan's lie and be condemned by God because of their pleasure in unrighteousness.

Paul then thanks God for the Thessalonians, who are beloved by Jesus, because God has chosen them to be saved by their being sanctified (made holy) by the Holy Spirit. He urges the church to be steadfast and hold securely to Paul's teachings, whether they were given by the spoken word or by Paul's letter. Next, Paul prays that God, who has loved all humanity and who has given to the human race, everlasting comfort and hope by His grace, will comfort the hearts of the Thessalonians and establish them in sound teachings and good deeds.

Paul also prays that the word of God will go out into the world unhindered for the praise and honour of God, and that Paul, his

fellow Christian workers and the church be delivered from evil people. I and my fellow workers, Paul says, have confidence in the Thessalonians that they now do and will continue to do what I, Paul, have commanded them. He also prays that God will lead them to love God and to patiently wait for Jesus' return.

Next, Paul commands them not to associate with any church member who is disorderly and who does not live according to Paul's godly teachings. That is, the Thessalonian church should imitate the exemplary conduct of Paul and his fellow workers when they were with the church. For Paul and the others did not eat anyone's food free of charge, but they worked night and day to support themselves, so as to be an example to the Thessalonians.

Paul then reminds the church that he had commanded them that anyone who would not work, neither should they eat. For Paul and the others had heard that some church members were disorderly, not working at all, and were busybodies. So, Paul commands and urges such persons to lead a godly, quiet life of useful labour and to eat food which they have bought themselves.

After this, Paul cautions the Thessalonians against becoming weary of doing good. Also, Paul declares that if anyone in the church does not obey what Paul says in this letter to the church, the church should take note and not keep company with them. Nevertheless, do not regard such persons as enemies but warn them as one's own Christian brother. Lastly, Paul prays that God will give them peace at all times and be with them and he pronounces a blessing upon the church.

## Themes

- A church's cheerful, patient endurance of persecutions.
- Words of hope and comfort to a church from their church planter.

- The coming falling away from faith in Christ and the man of sin to be revealed.
- Satan who is working through his human agents.
- The destruction of that Wicked, who is the man of sin, and all the unrighteous by God.
- The salvation of the righteous by God.
- A church planter's prayers for the church.
- Warning to the church not to be deceived by false teachings.
- Warning to the church concerning members of the church who are disorderly, idle, and busybodies, and instruction to the church on how to treat such persons.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who takes vengeance on those who persecute the church.
- God who will reveal the man of sin and Satan's wickedness at God's appointed time.
- God who leads people to love God and to patiently wait for the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.
- God who saves the righteous.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, "He [God] will swallow up death in victory [do away with

eternal death (annihilation) for those made holy by God]; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD [God] hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD [God]; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Isaiah 25:8, 9.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits [firstborn] of them that slept [died]. For since by man [by Adam] came [eternal] death [which is to be annihilated by God], by man [Jesus Christ] came also the resurrection of the dead [rising from the dead to life again]. For as in Adam all die [eternally], even so in Christ shall all be made alive [eternally]. But every man [every person] in his own order: Christ the firstfruits [firstborn]; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming [to the earth again].” 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

“Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his [Christ’s] feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.

“For he [the Father] hath put all things under his [Christ’s] feet. But when he [the Father] saith all things are put under him [Christ], it is manifest [evident] that he [the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Christ]. And when all things shall be subdued unto him [Christ], then shall the Son [Christ] also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him [Christ], that God [the Father] may be all in all.” 1 Corinthians 15:27, 28.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will,

believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Have cheerful, patient endurance in the face of persecutions.
- Receive joyfully God's words of hope and comfort to you from the Bible.
- Know that there has been a falling away from true faith in Christ and the man of sin, the Pope, who is head of the Roman Catholic Church, has already been revealed (refer to Chapter 27 of this book that you are now reading).
- Be aware that Satan works through his human agents.
- Take care that you are not among those whom God will destroy (annihilate), namely, that Wicked, who is the man of sin, and all the other unrighteous among humanity, Satan and his evil angels. But instead that you are found among the righteous who will be saved by God to eternal life.
- Pray for the spiritual wellbeing of the Christian church.
- Take care that you are not deceived by false teachings.
- Be a godly example to the church and to the world and do not keep company with anyone who is disorderly, idle, or a busybody, but instead seek to win them to Christ that they may receive eternal life from God.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

# *1 Timothy: Approx. 64 A.D.*

**T**HE FIRST EPISTLE OF Paul the Apostle to the Timothy is the fifty-fourth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Timotheon A* meaning “To Timothy 1.” The title in the English Bible is “The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. It was probably written about 64 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of 1 Timothy is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to Timothy, the young pastor of the Christian church in the city of Ephesus, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written during the interval between Paul’s first and second imprisonment in Rome, Italy, in approximately 64 A.D.

The book opens with greetings from Paul to Timothy whom Paul had asked to remain at the church in Ephesus as its pastor.

Paul then urges Timothy to command some members of the church that they teach no false doctrine, nor give attention to fables and endless genealogies.

Next, Paul declares that the purpose of God's law was to promote love out of a pure heart in people, a good conscience, and sincere faith in Christ. However, there were some in the church who were teaching the law without understanding its significance.

Paul then thanks God who had deemed Paul to be faithful to Him and had, therefore put Paul into Christian ministry despite the fact that Paul was formerly in violent opposition to the gospel. But God's grace was active in Paul's life and Christ's long-suffering towards Paul was meant to be a pattern to all who would believe in Christ in the future. Paul then commands Timothy that he should wage a good warfare against Satan regarding his faith in Christ, for some have made a spiritual shipwreck of their faith.

After this, Paul declares that the church should pray for all humanity, that God desires to save everyone, and that Christ is the only Mediator between God and the human race. Paul then states that God has appointed him as an apostle of Christ to the non-Jewish nations, and he describes how women should conduct themselves in public worship in the church.

Next, Paul describes the character, habits, the godly rule over one's family, the necessary Christian experience, and good reputation, which are the qualifications for becoming a bishop. Similar qualifications he says are required of deacons. He then says that he is writing to Timothy so that Timothy would know how to conduct himself in the church. Paul then refers to the mystery of godliness wherein God came to the earth in human flesh.

After this, Paul prophesies of a future turning away from the gospel as a result of satanic teachings. He then describes how Timothy can be a good minister of Christ, and that Timothy should teach these things, with Timothy himself being a godly example to the church. Paul also urges Timothy to give attention to reading the Scriptures, to encouraging the church, to teaching,

and to Timothy's own spiritual gift from God. Timothy, Paul says, should meditate on these things, fully consecrate himself to God, and be watchful over his own conduct, all this so that he can exert a godly influence in the church.

Next, Paul advises Timothy how he should treat young and old members of the church, widows, church elders, and his duty to be impartial and careful in the appointment of elders. He then gives Timothy advice relating to Timothy's health.

After this, Paul describes the duties of servants to their masters, commands Timothy to separate himself from teachers of false doctrines, and states the blessings of contentment. He then describes the spiritual peril of desiring riches, Timothy's duty to avoid covetousness, to seek godliness, and to fight the good fight of faith in Christ against Satan's schemes to turn people away from God.

Paul next commands Timothy to keep himself pure until the return of Christ to the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Timothy, Paul says, is to warn the rich against pride and trust in uncertain riches, and urge the wealthy to be rich in good works and to be willing to share their wealth, thereby taking hold of eternal life. Paul closes his letter by urging Timothy to guard his faith in Christ, avoid vain talk and the conflicting theories of false science, and he wishes that God's grace will be with Timothy.

## Themes

- An experienced, godly Christian leader's advice and guidance of a young pastor.
- Teachers of false doctrine in a church.
- The necessity of pastors maintaining strong faith in Christ and fully consecrating themselves to God.

- Qualifications for leadership positions in a church.
- How pastors should conduct themselves in a church so as to have a godly influence.
- How women should conduct themselves in the church.
- How a pastor should treat various groups of members in the church.
- The ungodly desire for riches and the blessings of contentment.
- Warnings to, and spiritual encouragement of, the rich in the church.
- The necessity of a pastor to avoid useless talk among church members.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who gave his law of love for the uplifting of humanity through God's ways of love.
- God who is long-suffering and forgiving of sins.
- God who appoints persons as His ministers in Christian ministry.
- God who desires to save the entire human race from eternal death (annihilation).
- God who is King of kings and Lord of lords.
- God who bestows spiritual gifts upon His people.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says that every person should be able say of themselves in truth, “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God [which is the Bible]: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:17. “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” 2 Corinthians 4:2.

And God’s command is, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace [be a blessing] unto the hearers.” Ephesians 4:29.

Also, God’s desire for us who listen to teachers of the word of God, the Bible, is “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine [teaching], by the sleight [trickery] of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body [which is the church] fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying [building up] of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:14-16.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Become an experienced Christian and, therefore, able to

give advice and guidance to new converts to the Christian faith.

- Ensure that you are not a teacher of false doctrine.
- Have strong faith in Christ, fully consecrating yourself to God.
- Know for yourself what qualifies someone to be in a leadership position in the Christian church.
- Know for yourself how you should conduct yourself in a church so as to have a godly influence.
- Know how women should conduct themselves in the church.
- Know how to treat various groups of members in the church.
- Do not have an ungodly desire for riches, but instead be content with what God has given to you.
- Warn and give spiritual encouragement to the rich in the church.
- Avoid useless talk among church members and wherever else you may encounter it.
- Understand God's purpose in giving His law of love.
- Ensure that you carry out your God-given Christian ministry.
- Thank God for His long-suffering and forgiveness toward you.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

# 2 Timothy: Approx. 66 A.D.

**T**HE SECOND EPISTLE OF Paul the Apostle to the Timothy is the fifty-fifth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Timotheon B* meaning “To Timothy 2.” The title in the English Bible is “The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. It was probably written about 66 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 2 Timothy is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to Timothy, the young pastor of the Christian church in the city of Ephesus, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written during his second imprisonment in Rome, Italy, in approximately 66 A.D.

The book opens with greetings to Timothy and Paul mentions

his prayers for Timothy, his great desire to see Timothy, his recollection of Timothy's tears, and his joy because of Timothy's faith in Christ. He then urges Timothy to use his spiritual gift from God to the full and not to be ashamed of the gospel, for by it, God has saved the righteous according to God's purpose and grace.

Paul then states that God has appointed him to be a preacher, apostle, and teacher, to the non-Jewish nations and because of this he, Paul, has suffered many things. Nevertheless, Paul says, I trust in God and remain committed to Him. He then urges Timothy to hold securely to the gospel which Paul had taught him and informs Timothy that all of Paul's fellow workers in the Roman province of Asia (modern-day Turkey) had turned away from Him. The only exception being Onesiphorus, who found where Paul was imprisoned and often brought Paul relief from Paul's prison conditions.

Next, Paul urges Timothy to teach the gospel to faithful men who themselves are also able to teach the gospel to others. Timothy, Paul says, should endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ and not entangle himself in worldly affairs. As a spiritual athlete who contends for victory over sin, Timothy is to strive according to God's law of love. And as a spiritual farmer, Timothy must first himself display the good fruits of Christian love.

Paul then urges Timothy to keep in mind the resurrection of Christ, the preaching of which has led to Paul's imprisonment. But, Paul says, if we suffer for Christ, we shall reign with Christ forever. Further, Timothy is to command the church members not have strife over useless debates, but to diligently study the word of God such that God may approve of them. Also, they are to give no attention to those who falsely say the resurrection of the dead has already occurred thereby overthrowing the faith of some in the church.

In addition, Paul says, Christians are to separate themselves from evil, seek to become holy vessels fit for God's use in Christian ministry, flee youthful lusts, live righteously, and avoid foolish

questions and the resulting strife. Timothy, he says, as a servant of God is to gently, and patiently teach those who indulge in disputes, with the hope that they will repent of their sins, thus, recovering themselves from the snare of Satan.

Paul then describes the evil character traits of those who have not been converted to Christ but who have a counterfeit form of godliness, and commands Timothy to turn away from such people. For this sort of people prey upon silly women whom they lead astray through various lusts, and are ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of God's truth. Such people, in fact, resist the truth, having corrupt minds, and are rejected by God as Christians.

Next, Paul reminds Timothy of his, Paul's, teachings, conduct, purpose, faith in Christ, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, and afflictions. He declares that the godly will surely be persecuted, and evil people and those who seduce others into sin will become more and more evil and deceitful.

But Timothy, Paul says, is to continue living according to the gospel he has learned from a child for this will lead to Timothy's salvation. For all the Scriptures (the Bible) were inspired by God and are profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and the instruction of humanity in righteousness, fully equipping the godly person for good works.

Paul then commands Timothy to be ready at all times to preach the gospel and to rebuke, reprove, and encourage his hearers with all long-suffering. For there will come a time when people will not relish correct doctrinal teaching of the word of God, but will seek for teachers who will cater to their lusts. Nevertheless, Timothy is to be watchful for temptations to sin, endure afflictions, and work as an evangelist.

After this, Paul declares that he is prepared for his own death which is near for he, Paul, has fought a good fight against sin, and has not given up his faith in Christ. Therefore, God has prepared for Paul a crown of righteousness to give to Paul on

God's judgment day, and not only to Paul, but also to all the people who love the fact that Christ will return to the earth.

Paul then asks Timothy to come and see him soon for Demas has deserted Paul, having loved this present evil world, other fellow workers have departed to other places, and only Luke is with him, Paul. He asks Timothy to bring with him Paul's cloak, books, and scrolls. He next warns Timothy about Alexander who has done much evil to Paul and informs Timothy that when he, Paul, first stood to defend himself at his recent trial, no one stood with him, but all forsook him. Notwithstanding this, God was with him, Paul says, and strengthened him to preach the gospel to the unbelievers in God and so, he, Paul, was delivered from Satan's malice.

He then expresses confidence that God will deliver him from every evil work and preserve him for God's heavenly kingdom. Paul closes his letter by sending greetings from his fellow workers to Timothy, informs Timothy of the circumstances of some of these workers, asks Timothy to make every effort to come to him before winter, and pronounces blessings upon Timothy.

## Themes

- The parting words of a faithful Christian leader who knows that he is about to suffer a martyr's death.
- Godly advice and guidance from an experienced, godly Christian leader to a young pastor.
- The loneliness of an imprisoned Christian leader.
- Mutual affection and love of godly Christian leaders.
- The continual persecution of a Christian leader.
- The imprisonment, torture, and trial, of a Christian leader.

- A Christian leader's life experience, godly conduct, and ministry.
- The confidence and trust of a Christian leader in God in the face of their own death.
- The evil character traits of those who have not been converted to Christ.
- The importance of preaching the gospel at all times for the salvation of the hearers.
- The coming of a time when people will turn away from correct doctrinal teaching of the Scriptures and seek teachers who cater to their lusts.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who saves the righteous through the gospel.
- God who approves of Bible study which results in the correct interpretation of the Bible.
- God who appoints persons as Christian preachers and teachers, and as apostles.
- God who gave the Scriptures, the Bible, to humanity for teaching, correction, reproof, and instruction in righteousness.
- God who does not accept as Christians those who resist God's truth and who have corrupt minds.
- God who stands with His people when they are persecuted.

- God who rewards those who suffer for Christ with the joy of reigning with Christ forever.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Here is some of the apostle Paul's own testimony of his Christian life experience. Paul wrote, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes [whippings] above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes [blows] save [minus] one. Thrice [Three times] was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice [three times] I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep [waters]." 2 Corinthians 11:23.

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen [the unbelievers in God], in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren [counterfeit Christians]; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings [sleeplessness] often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without [are external], that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the [Christian] churches." 2 Corinthians 11:26-28.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Study the Bible and gain a correct interpretation of it so that God approves of you.
- Know that God is with all who are persecuted for their faith in Christ.

- Know that God rewards all those who suffer for Christ with eternal life.
- Know that all who are godly will surely suffer persecution.
- Maintain your trust in God and your commitment to Him even in the face of persecution and death.
- Preach the gospel to faithful people who can teach others also.
- Separate yourself from all evil.
- Have affection and love for godly Christian leaders.
- Never turn away from correct doctrinal teaching from the Bible and thus seek teachers who will cater to your lusts.
- Reject as Christians those who resist the truth and who have corrupt minds.
- Accept the advice and guidance of experienced, godly Christians.
- As far as possible, give care and relief to persecuted Christians.
- Know that the entire Bible is inspired by God and is given to teach, correct, and reprove people thereby fully equipping them for good works.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

# *Titus: Approx. 65 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Titus is the fifty-sixth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Titon* meaning “To Titus.” The title in the English Bible is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Titus.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Titus. It was probably written about 65 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Titus is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to Timothy, the pastor of the Christian churches on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. It was probably written between Paul’s first and second imprisonment in Rome in approximately 65 A.D.

The book opens with a greeting from Paul to Titus, and Paul says of himself that he, Paul, acknowledges God’s truth, hoping

to receive eternal life which God that cannot lie had promised before the world began. Paul then says that he had left Titus in Crete for the purpose of setting things in order in the churches and to appoint elders in every city in Crete.

Next, Paul describes the qualifications for being appointed as a bishop in the Christian church. He then declares that in the churches in Crete there are many insubordinate and mischievous talkers and deceivers, especially among the Jews, who were all circumcised. These Jews, Paul says, are to be silenced because they teach falsehoods, thereby corrupting whole households, and all for monetary gain.

In fact, Paul says, one of the Cretans own prophets describes the Cretans as liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. And since this characterisation is true of the Cretans, Titus is to rebuke them firmly. By so doing, the Cretan church members may come to have a correct faith in Christ, and not believe Jewish fables and human commandments which turn people away from God's truth. For the false teachers in the church profess to know God, but by their conduct they reject God, being detestable and disobedient to God, and are therefore rejected by God as true Christians.

Paul then urges Titus to teach correct Scriptural doctrines so that the aged men and women, as well as the young men and women in the church may turn from their evil ways and instead be godly in their conduct. Titus himself, Paul says, is to be a godly example in all things. Also, Titus is to encourage servants to obey their masters and please them well, and not in any way being insubordinate or disrespectful to their masters. Neither should servants steal from their masters but instead be trustworthy so that their conduct in every way makes the gospel of Christ attractive.

After this, Paul declares that God's grace (God's unmerited favour) which leads to our salvation has been poured out on the entire human race. This grace teaches us to put away ungodliness and worldly lusts and instead live soberly, godly, and righteously,

in the world. For we are to look forward to the blessed hope of Christ's return to the earth, the God and Saviour who sacrificed Himself for the human race. This sacrifice Christ made in order to have a people who are cleansed from their sins and who are zealous to do good works. These things, Paul says, Titus is to teach, encourage, and rebuke the church about with all authority, and let no one despise him because of it.

Next, Paul urges Titus to teach the churches to keep in mind how they should live in a godly manner and not according to their former sins. Paul then clarifies that our good works are not what causes us to be justified (to be declared righteous by God), rather it is God's grace that justifies us. (In fact, it is God's gift of repentance and faith in Christ to a person that causes them to be justified, which then leads to their receiving the gift of love from God, thereby empowering them to do good works. In other words, good works are the *evidence* that we have been justified and not the *means* to our justification.)

Paul then commands Titus to affirm these truths continually in the churches, so that the church members learn to always do good works. Also, Titus is to avoid foolish questions, debates about genealogies, contentions, and controversies over God's law, for these things are useless and unprofitable. Those in the churches who are divisive, if they do not reform after Titus has rebuked them twice, he is to reject as true Christians. Paul closes his letter by asking Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, for Paul intends to spend the winter there, he sends greetings from his fellow workers, and sends his own blessings.

## Themes

- A pastor with responsibility for appointing church leaders and reforming a number of churches.
- Church members who practice known, habitual sins.

- An experienced, godly church leader's counsel to a pastor.
- Teachers of false doctrine who are deceivers of the members in a church.
- The call for church members to always do good works.
- The qualifications to become a bishop in the Christian church.
- Servants are to behave in a godly manner toward their masters.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God whose grace is able to save to eternal life.
- God who cannot lie.
- God who does not count the ungodly as true Christians.
- God who requires godliness on the part of professed Christians.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God says, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds [of sin]; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in [the] knowledge [of God] after the image [according to the character of perfect love] of him [Christ] that created him [that created the new man]." Colossians 3:9, 10. "He that saith, I know him [God], and keepeth not his [God's] commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Be a godly example thus helping to bring about any necessary church reform.
- Do not practice known, habitual sins such as lying.
- Be an experienced, godly Christian who can counsel others.
- Beware of teachers of false doctrine and deceivers in the church.
- Ensure that you always do good works.
- Do not receive God's grace in vain by being ungodly.
- Know that God does not count the ungodly as Christians.
- Do not behave in an ungodly manner towards those who rule over you.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

# Philemon: *Approx. 62 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to Philemon is the fifty-seventh book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Philemona* meaning “To Philemon.” The title in the English Bible is “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Philemon.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Philemon. It was probably written about 62 A.D.

### **Summary**

The book of Philemon is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul to Philemon, a Christian who was probably a member of the Christian church in the city of Colossae in ancient Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey. It was probably written during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome in approximately 62 A.D.

The book opens with greetings from Paul and Timothy to Phile-

mon. Paul then expresses his approval and praise of Philemon's love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints. He next states that for love's sake, he, Paul, beseeches Philemon for Onesimus, who has been converted to Christ through Paul's ministry, and whom Paul regards as his son.

Onesimus, Paul says, had been unprofitable to Philemon in the past, but he is now profitable to both Paul and Philemon. Paul then states that he has sent Onesimus again to Philemon and he, Paul, asks Philemon to receive Onesimus kindly, as Onesimus has a place in Paul's affections. Paul notes that he would have kept Onesimus with him to minister to him, Paul, in his imprisonment but he, Paul, would not do so without Philemon's consent.

For, Paul says, Onesimus had departed from Philemon for a time that Philemon should now receive Onesimus forever, not as a servant, but as a beloved Christian brother, just as Paul regards Onesimus in this way. Paul asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul himself, and if Onesimus has wronged him and owes him anything, to charge it to him, Paul. For I will repay it, Paul says, although you, Philemon, owe your conversion to Christ and your resultant hope of eternal life to me, Paul.

Next, Paul asks Philemon to give him joy in the Lord Jesus by Philemon's reception of Onesimus. Paul says he writes to Philemon because he has confidence that Philemon will grant Paul's request and do even more than Paul is asking. Prepare me a place to stay, Paul asks Philemon, for I trust that through your prayers I will soon be released from prison and come to you. Paul closes his letter by asking Philemon to greet fellow Christian workers on Paul's behalf and he, Paul, blesses Philemon.

## Themes

- Christian respect, love, and tact.
- A Christian leader's converts to Christ.

- A runaway servant.
- The duty of obedience of servants to masters.
- The duty of Christian masters to treat their servants as beloved, fellow Christians.
- The duty of the wronged to forgive the sins of those who have sinned against them.
- The generous, loving act of a Christian to take upon himself the debt of a fellow Christian.
- Christian hospitality.
- The love of Christians for all others.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who gives grace and peace to humanity.
- God who causes Christians to have joy in each other.
- God who causes Christians to love all others.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God had rejected king Saul of Israel from being king because of Saul's disobedience to God and had chosen David to become the new king in due time. Now Saul had a son named Jonathan "and it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was [closely] knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul... Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and

gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle [belt].” 1 Samuel 18:1-4.

Now Jonathan informed David of his father Saul’s intent to kill David. “And...David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they [David and Jonathan] kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded [with David weeping the most].

And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed [descendants] and thy seed [descendants] for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.” 1 Samuel 20:41, 42.

Such was the love between Jonathan, an heir to the throne of Israel, and David who would be crowned king instead of him. Here is an example of the love that God can put in human hearts. “For all the law [God’s law of love] is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Galatians 5:14.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Have Christian respect, love, and tact, in all circumstances.
- Make converts to Christ through your God-given Christian ministry.
- Forgive the sins of those who have sinned against you.
- As a Christian, be generous and loving, and help fellow Christians who are in need financially.
- Practice Christian hospitality.

- Have love for all others and encourage others to do likewise.
- Be obedient and serve wholeheartedly those who have rule over you, as long as this does not conflict with God's law of love.
- Do not steal.
- Rule over those in your charge with love.
- Do not receive God's grace (God's unmerited favour in blessing humanity) in vain so that you are not saved to eternal life by God.
- Do not run away from your duties and responsibilities.
- Be a blessing to the world in your daily life.
- Pray for the Christian church and for the world, that God would overrule Satan, and that God's will prevails in all circumstances.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

# *Hebrews: Approx. 63 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Hebrews is the fifty-eighth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Pros Hebraious* meaning “To the Hebrews.” The title in many English Bibles is “The Epistle to the Hebrews.”

### **Authorship**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews. It was probably written about 63 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Hebrews is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle Paul apparently to Jewish Christians. It was probably written in approximately 63 A.D. during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome.

The book opens by Paul stating that, in the past, God had spoken to the ancestors of the Jews by the prophets, but now God speaks to them through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is equal with

God. Furthermore, Christ is better than the angels because they are commanded by God to worship Him. In addition, Jesus, who is righteous, has a throne that will last forever, and the angels are called by God to minister to humanity, the heirs of salvation.

Paul then warns against neglecting so great salvation which Christ preached, and which those that heard Christ also preached. Next, Paul declares that God has put all things in subjection under the feet of Christ, who as a human being God made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. So that, Christ, by His death, might destroy the devil (Satan) and deliver humanity, from a lifetime of bondage to Satan because of the fear of death.

After this, Paul says that Christ is superior to Moses, for Moses was faithful as a servant of God, but Christ was faithful as God Himself. Paul then warns the Jews against having unbelief like ancient Israel. That is, if the Jews hear God's voice today, they are not to harden their hearts. For one generation in ancient Israel always erred in their hearts, and therefore, God swore in His anger that that generation in ancient Israel with whom God was grieved for 40 years would not enter into literal rest in the Promised Land, Canaan.

Next, Paul says we should fear, if by any means, we should fail to enter into the spiritual rest which God has promised humanity. For though the gospel was preached to ancient Israel, it did not profit them. And God rested the seventh day from all His works as a symbol of spiritual rest but ancient Israel did not obtain spiritual rest because of their unbelief.

So, hundreds of years later, God spoke to ancient Israel, this time through king David. And God said that if today they heard God's voice, they were not to harden their hearts, for the nation of Israel had not obtained spiritual rest. Thus, there remains to be obtained a spiritual rest for Israel. Therefore, the Jews are to labour, to enter into God's spiritual rest and not be unbelieving.

Paul then declares that the word of God is living and powerful

and able to reveal the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no human mind is concealed from God to whom all humanity has to give an account of their lives. Therefore, Paul says, hold securely to your faith in Christ, who Himself was tempted in all points just like humanity is, yet He, Christ, never sinned. Humanity then is to come boldly to Christ's throne of grace to obtain mercy and receive grace to help in their struggle with sin.

After this, Paul says that Christ has been appointed High Priest by God. He rebukes the Jews for being slow to understand, for instead of being teachers of these things, they are in need of spiritual milk like babies as they are unskillful in the word of God. The solid food of the word of God, Paul says, is for those who from experience can discern the difference between good and evil.

Paul then says that the Jews are to become holy. For, if after being sanctified (made holy by God), the Jews again turn to evil ways, it will be impossible for them to repent and, hence, God will reject them. But, Paul says, he does not believe this will happen to them, for God has accepted the Jewish Christians' labour of love in ministering to the saints (to the justified) and, so, they themselves and the saints will inherit God's promises. They need not doubt this because God, by both His unchangeable counsel and by an oath, has confirmed His promises.

Next, Paul states that the Levitical priesthood of Aaron and his successors was changed, in that, Christ who was born out of the tribe of Judah is a priest by God's oath. Why? Because, although the Ceremonial Law preached the gospel of Christ, faith in whom alone could save them, the Jews put their hope of salvation in the Ceremonial Law itself. But Christ, as a sinless priest who lives forever, is a better hope, since Christ has secured salvation for all humanity by His death, which none of the previous priests as mortal, sinful men could do. Therefore, the Jews are come to Christ, who through His intercession (His prayers) to God on their behalf, is able to save them from eternal death (annihilation).

The sum of all this, Paul says, is that Christ is our High Priest

ministering in the heavenly sanctuary of which the earthly sanctuary was only a copy. And Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant which was established on the better promises of Christ. For the Jews had failed to keep the first covenant in which they had promised God they would obey Him, thus, the need for the second covenant, which is called the new covenant, to replace the first covenant.

Paul then says that the first covenant had daily and yearly services associated with an earthly sanctuary, which were a symbol (type) of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. For Christ ministers not by the blood of goats and calves, but by the better sacrifices of His own blood which was shed for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life to those who meet God's requirements. Furthermore, Christ need not offer Himself often as the high priests on earth offered blood every year in the earthly sanctuary, but Christ has died once for the sins of the world. And for those who await Him, Christ will appear the second time for their salvation.

Next, Paul urges the Jews to draw near to God with a true heart, to hold securely their faith in Christ without wavering, and to stir up each other to love and to do good works. He then warns the Jewish Christians against deliberate sin and reminds them of their former afflictions and the plundering of their goods, which they had endured, knowing that in heaven they have better possessions. He entreats them to have patience and to persevere in their faith and not to draw away from God to their own loss of eternal life.

Paul then mentions those who, in the past, were noteworthy examples of faith in Christ, namely, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and his parents, Joshua and Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and many others, Paul says.

After this, Paul encourages the Jews to set aside all sin and to run the Christian race with patience, keeping their eyes on Christ and

his victory over sin. They are not to rebel against the disciplining of God, for God only disciplines those He loves. Also, they are to seek to live in peace with all others, seek holiness, and beware of any bitterness springing up in their hearts to pollute them with sin. Neither are they to be like Esau who sold the blessings of God for a meal. Paul then contrasts Mount Sinai with Mount Zion (the heavenly Jerusalem), and warns them of the danger of refusing God's entreaties.

Next, Paul commands them to continue in love, not to dishonour their marriage vows, nor be covetous, but pay attention to the godly who rule over them. Neither are they to be led about by various false teachings, nor pin their hopes of salvation on the earthly Jerusalem, but instead they are to seek the heavenly Jerusalem which is to come down to the earth from heaven. Therefore, the Jews are to praise God and give thanks to Him, and please God by not forgetting to do good and to share what they have with others.

Paul closes his letter by asking the Jews to pray for him, he blesses them, informs them that Timothy has been released from his imprisonment, promises to visit them shortly, and sends his own greetings as well as greetings from the Christians in Italy.

## Themes

- The old and new covenants.
- The earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries.
- The earthly and the heavenly priesthods.
- The earthly and the heavenly ministrations on behalf of sinners.
- Warnings of dangers to avoid and duties in the Christian walk.

- Salvation through Christ and not through the Ceremonial Law.
- Persons who in the past were noteworthy for their faith in Christ.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- Christ equal with God.
- Christ better than the angels and Moses.
- Christ who lived a sinless life on earth.
- Christ who by His death sealed the coming death of Satan.
- Christ who delivered humanity from the fear of death.
- God who gives spiritual rest.
- Christ who intercedes for humanity as High Priest in heaven.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God said to Moses, “According to all that I [God] shew [show] thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it [the earthly sanctuary].” Exodus 25:9. “Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD [God] commanded him, so did he. And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared [raised] up.” Exodus 40:16, 17. “And he reared [raised] up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished

the work [for the earthly sanctuary].” Exodus 40:33.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Do not neglect the salvation which God has provided.
- When tempted to sin, pray expecting help from God and put forth your best effort not to sin.
- Graduate from the spiritual milk of the Bible to its solid food.
- Do not draw back from God and so lose eternal life.
- Know that God accepts your labour of love in Christian ministry.
- Understand the difference between the old and new covenants.
- Understand both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries.
- Understand both the earthly and the heavenly priest-hoods.
- Understand both the earthly and the heavenly ministry on behalf of sinners.
- Avoid the dangers and do the duties pointed out in the book of Hebrews.
- Know that salvation is from Christ and not from the Ceremonial Law.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

# *James: Approx. 46 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF JAMES is the fifty-ninth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Iakobou Epistole* meaning “Epistle of James.” The title in English Bibles is “The Epistle of James.”

### **Authorship**

James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, is believed to be the author of the book, The Epistle of James. It was probably written about 46 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of James is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, apparently to Jewish Christians scattered throughout the world.

The book opens with James sending a greeting to the twelve tribes of Israel dispersed throughout the world. The Jews are encouraged to have joy and patience when tempted to sin, to ask God for wisdom with unwavering faith, and to rejoice in God’s

dealings with them whether they are rich or poor. For those who overcome temptations to sin will receive a crown of eternal life from God. They are to know that God does not tempt anyone but that the inborn sinful nature entices every human being to sin. Therefore, do not err, James says.

James then states that every good and perfect gift comes from God who causes the person to be spiritually born again. Therefore, put away all wickedness and meekly receive God's implanted word which is able to save the person from eternal death (annihilation). For only those who hear and are doers of God's words, judging themselves by God's perfect law of freedom from bondage to sin and Satan, shall be blessed by God. Also, says James, the religion of those who are careless in speech deceives them and their religion is to no purpose, that is, it cannot lead to eternal life. Pure religion in God's sight is to care for the unfortunate, and to keep oneself unstained by the sins of the world.

Next, James declares that as Christians they should not show favouritism in how they treat people. For God's royal law requires that they love others just as they love ourselves. Therefore, James says, speak and act accordingly, knowing that you shall be judged by this law of freedom. He then states that faith in Christ that does not result in the doing of good works is dead, in that, it cannot save them from eternal death (annihilation). Why? Because repentance accompanied by faith in Christ, leads to the person receiving the gift of love in their heart through the Holy Spirit. Only then can the person do good works, otherwise the good deeds of a person arise from sinful "thoughts and intents [purposes] of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12) and are, therefore, counted as sin by God.

James then says let not many of you seek to be teachers, for in many ways we human beings err. And teachers who err shall receive the greater condemnation from God, for they ought to be godly examples. But they that do not sin in their speech are able to keep their whole body in subjection to their godly minds. For the tongue is naturally evil-speaking and is controlled by Satan.

That is, out of the same mouth comes blessings and cursing, which ought not to be so.

Those who are wise and have a knowledge of God should demonstrate this by their holy conversation, deeds, and meekness. For those with bitter envying and strife in their hearts have a wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and satanic. But the wisdom from God is pure, peaceable, gentle, easily entreated, full of mercy, good deeds, without favouritism, and without hypocrisy.

James then says the strife and contention among them arise out of their own lusts. They are not prospered by God because they do not pray to God. And when they do pray, they ask God wrongly for things to satisfy their lusts and, hence, they receive nothing from God. For whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

Next, James urges them to submit to God and resist the devil, to draw near to God and not be doubleminded, which is to be divided between the call of earthly pleasures and the call of unswerving loyalty to God. Also, they are not to speak evil of one another. Further, those who say they will go to a city to stay there, buying and selling to gain wealth, should consider that their life is like a vapour that appears and soon vanishes. Instead, they should say that, if God permits, they will live and do this or that thing. For their rejoicing and boasting in anticipation of future gain is evil and, those who know the right thing to do but do not do it, sin.

After this, James says that the rich men should weep and howl because of the miseries that will come upon them. For God has heard the cry of the labourers who have reaped their fields and whose wages they have withheld by fraud. Further, these rich men have lived in pleasure, lewdness, extravagant luxury, and have condemned and killed the righteous, who offer no resistance to their mistreatment.

James then urges them that as God patiently waits for the spiritual harvest of the earth, they should patiently wait for the soon coming return of Christ to the earth. Also, they are not murmur

and complain against each other, but follow the example of the prophets and Job who suffered affliction patiently, for God is compassionate and merciful. Neither are they to swear an oath but rather simply say, Yes or No, in every circumstance.

James urges them to pray for the afflicted and the sick, to confess their sins against each other to the ones they have wronged, and to pray for each other, so that their own sin-sickness may be healed by God. For the effective, fervent prayer of the righteous has power with God just as the prophet Elijah's prayers did. Lastly, James closes his letter by saying that, if any of them turn away from the truth and one of them turns the sinner back to God, he or she has saved the sinner from eternal death (annihilation) and caused a multitude of sins to be blotted out by God in the coming judgment of the world.

## Themes

- Joy and patience necessary in the Christian walk with God.
- Encouragement to overcome temptations to sin.
- God's royal law of freedom.
- Christians to have love for one another.
- Faith always accompanied by good works.
- The tongue that is controlled by Satan.
- Wisdom from God as against the wisdom of the world.
- Worldly lusts, strife, envy, contention.
- Ungodly plans and boastings regarding future gain.
- The rich who defraud their labourers and kill the right-

eous.

- Prayer.
- The doubleminded and doubtful.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who is compassionate and merciful.
- God who gives perfect and good gifts to humanity.
- God who shows no favouritism towards persons.
- God who does not tempt anyone and who cannot be tempted.
- God who gives wisdom.
- God who does not hear sinful prayers.
- God who hears the cry of the those who are mistreated.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

James wrote, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” James 2:14. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” James 2:24. And the apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28. Paul also wrote, “And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” Galatians 3:12. Again, Paul says, “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Romans

7:6.

Thus, in comparing the writings of Paul with the writings of James some people see a contradiction and conflict in their teachings. But is this so? Well, here are two instances where Paul agrees with James: Jesus Christ is He “who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity [wickedness], and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:14. “(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Romans 2:13. So, how do we reconcile all these statements and others in the Bible?

The answer is quite simple and clear if we have a correct understanding of the relationship between faith, the law, and good works. First of all, “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20), that is to say, the law tells us what is sin in God’s sight. Now the aim of God’s plan of salvation is do away with the sin in every human heart. That is, God will save to eternal life only those people of whom God can say in truth, “Ye [are they] that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law [God’s law of love].” Isaiah 51:7.

For God’s aim in the plan of salvation is that every human being is “be conformed to the image [character of love] of his Son [Christ].” Romans 8:29. So, what is Christ’s character like? God wrote of Christ who said, “Then said I [Christ], Lo, I [Christ] come [to the earth]: in the volume of the book [in the Scriptures, the Bible,] it is written of me [Christ], I [Christ] delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [God’s law of love] is within my heart.” Psalm 40:7, 8.

The question then is, How does God put His law in human hearts? The answer is that when any person has “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21), they are justified by God, that is, declared righteous by God. How can this be seeing every human being is naturally a sinner? Well, we are justified by God, because God immediately upon their meeting these two conditions, forgives us our past sins and “the

love of God is shed abroad [supernaturally poured] in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] which is given unto us.” Romans 5:5. This gift of love is “the gift of righteousness” (Romans 5:17) from God that enables the us to stop sinning.

We see then that faith in Christ is one of the two requirements to receive the gift of righteousness from God in our heart. And this gift enables us to stop sinning, which is to say, to do only good works. So, if righteousness, that is to say, if love is in our heart, what then does this have to do with having God’s law in our heart just like Christ? Well, God says, “All thy [God’s] commandments are righteousness.” Psalm 119:172. Thus, So, righteousness, which is love in our heart, means that we have God’s commandments in our heart.

Now God refers to “the ten commandments” (Exodus 34:28) as “I [God]...give thee [Moses] tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I [God] have written.” Exodus 24:12. Thus, having God’s commandments in our heart means that we have God’s law in our heart. In other words, with the ten commandments, known as the Decalogue or Moral Law, in our hearts we are justified, declared righteous by God.

But Paul wrote, “now we are delivered from the law” (Romans 7:6), What does this mean? The meaning is that we are delivered from “the works of the law” (Romans 9:32), which is to say, delivered from “the deeds of the law.” Romans 3:28. In other words, we are delivered from our own attempts to cleanse ourselves from sin. For God says, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” Job 14:4. Thus, God is saying that it is impossible for any human being to cleanse themselves from their own sins. We see then that there is no contradiction or conflict regarding these teachings in the Bible, or with respect to any of the many teachings of the Bible.

One further point to note in our discussion is that, when we are justified, we do not instantaneously become sinless, which is God’s requirement for anyone to receive eternal life from God.

Instead, we now have two natures in constant conflict with each other—the natural sinful nature and “the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), which we received from God when the Holy Spirit poured God’s love into our heart.

And so, we immediately on our justification, enter into the School of Christ where we are to learn to overcome all temptations to sin. That is, we are to become like Jesus Christ who “was in all points tempted like as we [human beings] are, yet [He, Christ, was] without sin.” Hebrews 4:15. When this lifelong process of testing is completed and we gain the victory over every sin, we are “sanctified” (Acts 20:32) and, hence, we will receive eternal life from God.

Now having considered these things we can have a good understanding of what God means when He says, “For by grace [God’s unmerited favour] are ye saved through faith [in Christ]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his [God’s] workmanship, created in [a spiritual connection with] Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-10.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Have joy and patience in your Christian walk with God.
- Labour in God’s moral strength to overcome temptations to sin.
- Understand God’s royal law of freedom from sin and Satan.
- Have love for your fellow human beings.

- Understand that your faith in Christ must always be accompanied by good works.
- Pray and put forth earnest effort so that your tongue that is not controlled by Satan.
- Ensure that you receive wisdom from God and not the wisdom of the world.
- War prayerfully and earnestly against the worldly lusts, strife, envy, and contention, of your sinful nature.
- Make no ungodly plans and boastings regarding future gain.
- Be not like those who defraud their labourers and kill the righteous.
- Pray to God with a sincere heart and your prayers will become fervent and effective so that you have power with God.
- Do not doubt God's God compassion and mercy.
- Do not be doubleminded.
- Believe in and anticipate the blessings of receiving God's perfect and good gifts to humanity, especially, as Christians who are those prepared by God to benefit spiritually.
- Show no favouritism towards persons. Treat the rich and the poor alike.
- Understand that your temptations to sins come from your natural sinful nature and from the world, as well as Satan and his evil angels, for God tempts no one.
- Know that God does not hear sinful prayers and study the

Bible to know what makes our prayers sinful.

- Make sure that you have a correct understanding of the relationship between faith, the law, and good works.



## CHAPTER SIXTY

# 1 Peter: Approx. 65 A.D.

**T**HE FIRST EPISTLE OF Peter is the sixtieth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Petrou A* meaning “of Peter 1.” The title in English Bibles is “The First Epistle of Peter.”

### **Authorship**

Peter, a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ chose as an apostle, is the author of the book, The First Epistle of Peter. It was probably written, possibly by dictation to his secretary, Silvanus (Silas), about 65 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 1 Peter is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the Peter to Jewish and Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians scattered throughout the Asia Minor, in what is modern-day Turkey.

The book opens with Peter sending them greetings and praising God for the heavenly inheritance of the righteous, who because of their faith in Christ, are kept from sin by the power of God. Therefore, Peter says, they rejoice greatly even though, for a little

while, they are distressed by numerous temptations to sin. For God is testing their faith, that it may be found to be more precious than gold which is tested and refined by fire.

And, Peter says, though they have not seen Christ, they love Him and believe in Him, rejoicing with inexpressible, glorious joy, receiving the goal of their faith which is their salvation. Of this salvation, the prophets prophesied, enquired, and searched diligently concerning the future sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow. For it was revealed to the prophets that they were ministering to future Christians and all these things the angels desire to look into.

Therefore, Peter says, they are to be sober, hope for God's grace to come upon them, be obedient to God, and be holy as God is holy. For they have been redeemed by God from sin and Satan by Christ's precious blood. Also, seeing that they have purified their hearts in obedience to the truth by sincere love for their fellow Christians, they are to continue in love, being born again by the incorruptible word of God that endures forever.

Next, Peter says they are to put away all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, evil speaking, and as newborn babies eagerly desire the milk of God's word that they may grow spiritually. For they have been chosen by God as living stones to build up God's spiritual house, with Christ as the Chief Cornerstone who has been rejected by, and is a stumbling block to, unbelievers. Also, God has chosen them as a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people, to proclaim God's praise. And as strangers and pilgrims on earth, they are to abstain from worldly lusts which war against their souls.

Peter then says that they are to submit themselves to every human institution such as kings and governors for Christ's sake, that by their exemplary conduct they may silence the ignorant and hostile. Further, servants are to submit to their masters, whether good or bad, for it is praiseworthy if they suffer wrongfully for their faith in God. For Jesus Christ suffered for humanity, leaving an

example for all humanity to follow, in that, Christ never sinned nor was He deceitful. And Christ, when He was abused and slandered, did not respond in like manner but committed Himself to God, bearing our sins on the cross so that humanity's sin-sickness is healed by his wounds.

After this, Peter commands wives to submit to their husbands with meekness and calmness, seeking to win any who are unbelievers in God to Christ by their holy conversation. Likewise, husbands are to honour their wives, and all the Christians should be united, compassionate, loving, tenderhearted, and courteous. They are not to repay evil with evil nor abuse with abuse, but instead bless others so that God may bless them.

Further, Peter says, happy are they if they suffer evil for righteousness' sake. And they should be always ready to give a faithful testimony of God's goodness with meekness, reverence, and a good conscience to those who ask them about their Christian hope. For Jesus Christ suffered once for sins that He might turn humanity to God, and He has gone to heaven and is sitting on God's right hand with angels, authorities, and powers, all subject to Him.

Next, Peter says since Christ has suffered for humanity, they are to be of the same mind as Christ, so that for the rest of their lives they turn away from worldly lusts to do God's will. For in their past lives the Christians had lived as the unbelievers in God, and these same unbelievers now think it strange that the Christians have been transformed in character, and so they speak evil of Christians. But, Peter says, the end of the world is near, therefore be sober, prayerful, have fervent love among yourselves, be hospitable, speak in accordance with God's words, that God may be glorified and praised.

Peter then says they are not to think it strange that great trials have come upon them but rejoice as partakers of Christ's sufferings, knowing that when Christ returns to the earth, they will be glad with exceeding joy. But none of them should suffer as a

murderer, thief, evildoer, or busybody in other people's affairs. And, if any of them suffer as a Christian, they should not be ashamed, but commit themselves to God as a faithful Creator by their holy conduct.

After this, Peter encourages the elders, as leaders among the Christians, to preach God's word to the flock of God, that is, to God's people, willingly, not for dishonest gain but with eagerness, not lording it over God's church but as godly examples to the church. If they do so, when Christ, the Chief Shepherd appears they will receive an everlasting crown of glory from God. Peter then encourages both young and old among the Christians to humble themselves before God that God may exalt them in due time, and to cast all their cares upon God for God cares for them.

Next, Peter warns them to be sober, and vigilant, because their adversary Satan is like a roaring lion, going about seeking to devour all. Therefore, they are to resist Satan with faith in Christ, knowing that all Christians in the world suffer the same afflictions from Satan. But God, who is gracious, will, after they have suffered a while, perfect their love, establish them, morally strengthen them, and settle their faith in Christ. Peter then praises God, acknowledges his secretary, Sylvanus (Silas), as a faithful Christian, and sends greetings from the church at Babylon (Rome) and from Mark, Peter's spiritual son in the Christian faith. Lastly, Peter closes his letter with a blessing upon the Christians.

## Themes

- Suffering because of one's faith in Christ.
- A Christian leader's counsel to persecuted Christians.
- Trials that test the faith of Christians.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who by His power keeps Christians from sinning.
- God who tests the faith of Christians in order to strengthen their character.
- Christ who suffered for the sins of humanity.
- God who cares for all humanity.
- God who exalts those who humble themselves before Him.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

God says, “There was a man...whose name was Job.” Job 1:1. “And the LORD [God] said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth [reverences] God, and escheweth [shuns] evil? Then Satan...said, Doth Job fear God for nought [nothing]? Hast not thou [God] made an hedge about him [Job], and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance [possessions] is increased in the land. But put forth thine [God’s] hand now, and touch all that he [Job] hath, and he [Job] will curse thee to thy face.” Job 1:8-11.

“And the LORD [God] said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.” Job 1:12. As a result, Satan causes the death of Job’s 10 children, the loss of all his goods, and the loss of almost all his servants in one day. But “in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Job 1:22. After this, “Satan...said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will

he give for his life.” Job 2:4. “And the LORD [God] said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So...Satan...smote [afflicted] Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown [to his head].” Job 2:6, 7. “In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” Job 2:10. Thus, Satan’s unsleeping malice toward humanity can only be restrained by God.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- When suffering, wrongfully or not, remain faithful to God.
- Trust in God and cast all your cares upon Him.
- Thank God that He morally strengthens you to endure trials.



## CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

# *2 Peter: Approx. 66 A.D.*

**T**HE SECOND EPISTLE OF Peter is the sixty-first book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Petrou B* meaning “of Peter 2.” The title in English Bibles is “The Second Epistle of Peter.”

### **Authorship**

Peter, a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ chose as an apostle, is the author of the book, The Second Epistle of Peter. It was probably written about 66 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 2 Peter is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the Peter to Christians everywhere and was probably written from the city of Rome in Italy shortly before Peter’s death.

The book opens with a greeting to true Christians. Peter then says that God has given His divine power to true Christians (not to those who are Christians in name only) and God has called the true Christian to glory and virtue. And this divine power, in

accordance with God's exceeding great and precious promises, has made the true Christian a partaker of the divine nature, so that they have escaped the corruption that is in the world because of lust.

Peter then describes a spiritual ladder with eight rungs that the Christian who has genuine faith in Christ must climb, namely, the rungs of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love (charity). And the mature Christian, having acquired these character traits, will be fruitful in making disciples of Christ, will never fall away from God, and will, in the end, be welcomed in God's everlasting kingdom.

Next, Peter says that while he is alive he wishes to remind the Christians of God's truth for the present time. For, Peter states, Jesus Christ has revealed to me that I must shortly die. Therefore, Peter says he will ensure that, after his death, Christians may always have a reminder of present truth. For we, the apostles of Christ, Peter says, have not followed cunningly devised fables, but some of us were eyewitnesses, through a vision from God, of the power and majesty of the future second coming of Christ to the earth. Moreover, Peter says, we are sure that the prophecies of the past have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and that these prophecies give spiritual light in the darkness of the world. Further, these prophecies were given through the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

After this, Peter says to the Christians, just as there were false prophets before, there will be false teachers among you who will secretly teach spiritually ruinous things, even denying Jesus Christ, thereby bringing upon themselves swift destruction from God. And many shall follow their destructive ways and cause evil to be spoken of God's truth. For these false teachers through their covetousness and deceitful words shall exploit you, Peter says, whose annihilation by God will not be delayed.

For God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them out of heaven awaiting God's Judgment Day. Neither did God spare

the old world which God destroyed by a flood, but saved only eight persons, including Noah. Nor did God spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but brought them to ashes, saving only righteous Lot. Thus, God knows how to deliver the godly from temptations and to reserve the wicked for punishment on His coming Judgment Day.

Next, Peter says that the false teachers are lascivious (sensual), despise authorities, presumptuous, self-willed, and are not afraid to speak irreverently of God and the holy angels. Whereas the holy angels, who are greater in power, do not bring reviling accusations against them to God. But these false teachers, like brute beasts, speak evil of things they do not understand and shall, therefore, be annihilated by God. For they take pleasure in lewd deeds in broad daylight and are spots and blemishes on the Christian church, in that, they are adulterous and cannot stop sinning.

The false teachers, Peter says, entice unstable persons by their covetous practices and like Balaam they love the wages of unrighteousness. They are wells without water and clouds driven by a storm, for whom God has reserved the blackest darkness. And with great pompous words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the lower nature of human beings and through much wantonness, those who had indeed escaped from them who live in error. And while they promise freedom to those enticed, they themselves are slaves to Satan because of their sensual vice.

Therefore, Peter says to the Christians, if having escaped the pollutions of the world through a knowledge of Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome by these sinful pollutions, their end is worse than their beginning. For it would have been better if they had not known righteousness than having known it, to turn away from it.

Peter then says that this second letter is to remind Christians of the words of the holy prophets and the apostles. For there will be mockers of Jesus Christ's promised return to the earth in the end

time of earth as we now know it, saying that nothing has changed on earth since its creation. And they are willingly ignorant of the fact that the world was destroyed by a global flood and that the present heavens and earth are reserved by God for the fire of God's Judgment Day which will destroy the ungodly.

Do not be ignorant, Peter says, that to God a thousand years is as if it was a day and that God will fulfil His promise. And God is long-suffering, not willing to annihilate any human being but desires that all should repent. For God's Judgment Day will come unexpectedly and seeing that all these things on earth shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought they to be in holy conversation and godliness? Nevertheless, we look for new heavens and a new earth where righteousness reigns. Ensure then, Peter says, that you are found in peace by God on God's Judgment Day and without spot, being blameless.

So, Peter says, God's longsuffering is for their salvation just as our beloved apostle Paul has written in all his letters, in which there are some things that are hard to understand. These letters of Paul the unlearned and unstable twist, just as they do the others Scriptures unto their own destruction (annihilation) by God. Therefore, beware and avoid being led away from God by the error of the wicked. But instead grow in Christian maturity by God's grace, for to God be glory both now and forever.

## Themes

- Guidance from a Christian leader who is soon to die.
- How Christians escape the corruption in the world.
- False teachers in the Christian church.
- God's Judgment Day certain to come.
- Mockers and unbelievers in God's coming Judgment Day.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who gives the gift of His divine power to the true Christian.
- God who gave a vision of Christ's return to the earth.
- God who will destroy false teachers in the church.
- God whose long-suffering delays His Judgment Day.
- God whose past judgments are a warning to the world.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Just as Peter warned the church against false teachers, the apostle Paul warned the Galatian churches against the same thing. Paul wrote, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed [cursed]. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed [cursed]." Galatians 1:6-9.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Acquire the eight character traits in Peter's spiritual ladder.

- Beware of false teachers in the Christian church.
- Do not be led away from God by lusts of the lower nature and wantonness.
- Do not mock nor have unbelief regarding God's Judgment Day.
- Be godly and ensure your speech is holy.
- Pray and seek to understand *all* of the apostle Paul's writings.



## CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

# 1 John: Approx. 93 A.D.

**T**HE FIRST EPISTLE OF John is the sixty-second book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Ioannou A* meaning “of John 1.” The title in English Bibles is “The First Epistle of John.”

### **Authorship**

John, a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ chose as an apostle, is the author of the book, The First Epistle of John. It was probably written about 93 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 1 John is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle John in his old age to Christians everywhere, and there is no clear evidence of the location from which it was written.

The book opens with John saying that Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, was made clearly apparent to the ears, eyes, and hands of His disciples. Therefore, John says he is writing to the Christians to promote the fellowship of the Christians with John and his fellow disciples, with the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, and that the

Christians might have fullness of joy. John then declares that God is light (truth) and we can have fellowship with God if we walk in the light, that is to say, if we live according to God's truth.

Furthermore, John says, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. For Christ is humanity's Advocate with the Father, in that, He is the merciful Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, we are to live our lives in accordance with God's truth just as Christ did. That is, if we obey God's new commandment of love, which is really an old commandment that God spoke from the beginning, we will not hate our fellow human being.

Next, John says he is writing to little children and fathers because they have overcome, Satan, the wicked one. He then cautions the Christians not to love the world, for such love is not from the Father. Also, John says, it is the last days of the world, and as they have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists in the world. These antichrists have left the Christian church and are liars because they deny that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, the promised Deliverer from sin, and also deny the Father.

John then encourages the Christians to abide in the God's truth knowing that God has promised them eternal life. Moreover, John is writing these things to them concerning those who try to lead the Christians away from God. The Christians, John says, should know that the divine, spiritual anointing which they have received teaches them all the truth from God, and they have no need for anyone to teach them. Therefore, they are to abide in God's truth and, hence, be confident that when Christ returns to the earth, they shall not be ashamed in His presence. Also, knowing that Christ is righteous, they should know that everyone who does righteousness has been spiritually born again through Christ.

After this, John declares that the love which God has bestowed on the Christian, elevates the Christian to the status of children of God in God's sight. And everyone who hopes to be thus elevated

by God, purifies themselves from sin just as Christ is pure. For whoever abides in a spiritual connection with Christ, does not sin. Therefore, they should not allow themselves to be deceived by anyone, for those who commit sin and do not love their fellow human being, are of the devil. That is, God's message from the beginning is that we should love one another and not be like Cain, who was of the devil. For Cain killed his brother because Cain's own deeds were evil, and his brother's deeds were righteous.

John then says that, if the world hates you, know that you have passed from eternal death (annihilation) to eternal life because you love your fellow human being. And the love of God for humanity is evidenced by the fact that Christ laid down His life for humanity, and therefore, persons should lay down their lives for the salvation of their fellow human beings.

That is, the Christians are to demonstrate love by their sacrificial deeds and not only by their words. Thus, the Christian can have the assurance of their salvation from God, and that God will answer their prayers because they do what is pleasing in God's sight. And believing in Christ, loving one another as God has commanded, ensures that the Christian has a spiritual connection with Christ.

Next, John warns the Christians not to believe what every person says, but instead to put them to the test since there are many false prophets in the world who deny that Christ came into the world in human flesh. For the false prophets belong to the world which listens to them, but the Christians are of God and those who know God listen to the Christians. This is the difference between having the spirit of truth and having the spirit of error.

That is, John says, love is of God, for God is love. This love in the Christian's heart causes them to testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. And perfect love in human hearts casts out all fear. For the Christian is able to love God because God first loved them and gave them the gift of love in their heart. And those who love Jesus Christ and believe that

He is the Messiah, also love the Father who sent Him to the earth. Such persons demonstrate their love for God by keeping God's commandments.

John then says that whosoever is spiritually born again by God has overcome the sins of the world by their faith in Christ. And there are divine witnesses in heaven and on earth who testify of the truth regarding Christ. Those who believe God's testimony are witnesses to the truth, and those who do not believe make God out to be a liar. For God's testimony is that God has given eternal life to the Christian through Christ, God's Son.

Next, John says that Christians can have confidence that, if they ask God anything according to God's will, God will grant them their request. And if anyone sees their fellow human being sin a sin that does not lead to eternal death (annihilation), they can ask God to grant them eternal life and God will do so. But they should not pray for those who sin a sin that leads to eternal death (annihilation). (Note that we can only know if a person has sinned a sin leading to eternal death if God reveals it to us.)

Lastly, John closes his letter by saying that those who have been spiritually born again by God do not sin, and Satan, the wicked one, cannot cause them to sin. For the whole world is wicked in God's sight, but Christians know that Christ who came to the earth has caused them to have a spiritual connection with Him. Christ is the true God who gives eternal life, therefore, do not worship idols.

## Themes

- The love of God.
- The evidence of God's love in human hearts.
- Sin is of the Devil, that is, of Satan.

- Antichrists and false prophets.
- Fellowship with God and a spiritual connection with Christ causes the individual not to sin.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God whose character defines what is love.
- Christ who came to the earth in human flesh.
- Christ who is the merciful Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.
- Christ who is humanity's Advocate with God.
- God who commands us to love one another.
- God who answers prayers.
- God who gives eternal life through Christ.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

In the Bible, God describes the love in God's own heart as follows: "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity [love] envieth not; charity [love] vaunteth not [does not boast] itself, is not puffed up [in pride], doth not behave itself unseemly [dishonourably], seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil [does not keep an inventory of evil]; rejoiceth not in iniquity [in wickedness], but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity [love] never faileth [never perishes]." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Get to know and understand the love of God for yourself through spending quality time in prayer to God, Bible study, sharing the gospel with others, and trusting in God.
- Examine yourself for the evidence of God's love in your heart.
- Know that sin is of the Devil, that is, of Satan.
- Beware of antichrists and false prophets.
- Enter into fellowship with God and have a spiritual connection with Christ so that you do not sin.
- Know and understand that it is God's character which defines what is love.
- Believe that Christ came to the earth in human flesh.
- Believe that Christ is the merciful Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.
- Believe that Christ is humanity's Advocate with God.
- Obey God's command to love one another.
- Know for yourself that God answers prayers.
- Believe that God gives eternal life through Christ.



## CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

# 2 John: Approx. 94 A.D.

**T**HE SECOND EPISTLE OF John is the sixty-third book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Ioannou B* meaning “of John 2.” The title in English Bibles is “The Second Epistle of John.”

### **Authorship**

John, a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ chose as an apostle, is the author of the book, The Second Epistle of John. It was probably written about 94 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 2 John is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle John in his old age to a Christian woman and her children, and there is no clear evidence of the location from which it was written.

The book opens with John greeting the Christian woman as one whom God has chosen to receive eternal life, and so also her children. John says he loves them because they live in accordance

with God's truth, and that they are also loved by those who know God's truth. John then urges the woman to continue to obey God's commandment that we should love one another.

Next, John says that there are many deceivers and antichrists in the world who do not acknowledge that Christ came to the earth in human flesh. We should beware then, John says, that we do not lose things which we have worked for spiritually in cooperation with God, but that we receive the full reward of eternal life. For those who sin, do not live according to the teachings concerning Christ and do not have a spiritual connection with God. But those who live according to these teachings have a spiritual connection with both the Father and the Son, Christ.

John then warns the Christian woman that she should not receive the false teachers into her house, neither give them any encouragement, for those who do so, are partakers of their evil deeds. John then says that he has many things to write to her, but he doesn't want to use paper and ink. Instead, John hopes to visit her and to speak to her face-to-face that both himself and she might have fullness of joy. John closes his letter by sending greetings from the children of her sister in the Christian faith, who has been chosen by God to receive eternal life.

## Themes

- Christian love between a leader of the church and one of its members.
- A faithful, exemplary, Christian household.
- Deceivers and antichrists who go around spreading their false teachings.
- The need to have no friendship nor association with false teachers.

## God as Revealed in the Book

- God who has given His truth to humanity.
- God who has a spiritual connection with those who live in accordance with His truth.
- God who rewards those who live in accordance with His truth with eternal life.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Just as the apostle John warned against false teachers, so did the apostle Peter. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [secretly] shall bring in damnable heresies [errors that lead to eternal death (annihilation)], even denying the Lord [Jesus Christ] that bought them [back from sin and Satan], and bring upon themselves swift destruction [from God].” 2 Peter 2:1.

“And many shall follow their pernicious [their spiritually ruinous] ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words [with fabricated lies] make merchandise of you [engage in the selling (betrayal) of the souls of their victims to Satan]: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not [shall not be delayed].” 2 Peter 2:2, 3.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Have Christian love between yourself and the leaders of the Christian church.
- Ensure that you have a faithful, exemplary, Christian household.
- Beware that you are not corrupted by deceivers and antichrists who go around spreading their false teachings.
- Have no friendship or association with false teachers, except that which is necessary in your seeking to win them from Satan to Christ.
- Know that God has given His truth to humanity through nature, His providence, the impressions of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, and through the Bible, which is the word of God.
- Live in accordance with God's truth so that you may have a spiritual connection with God, for this is essential if you are to receive the reward of eternal life from God.



## CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

# 3 John: Approx. 94 A.D.

**T**HE THIRD EPISTLE OF John is the sixty-fourth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Ioannou G* meaning “of John 3.” The title in English Bibles is “The Third Epistle of John.”

### **Authorship**

John, a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ chose as an apostle, is the author of the book, The Third Epistle of John. It was probably written about 94 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of 3 John is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the apostle John in his old age to a Christian man, and there is no clear evidence of the location from which it was written.

The book opens with a greeting from John to a man named Gaius whom John loves because Gaius lives in accordance with God’s truth. John then wishes Gaius prosperity and good health. John says he rejoiced greatly when other church members came

to John and told him of Gaius' exemplary Christian life.

John then expresses approval of Gaius' hospitality to the church members and to strangers, who, in turn, have testified to the church of Gaius' love toward them. For, John says, if Gaius helps these on their journeys in a godly manner he does well. These people, John says, went out into the world for Christ's sake, not taking any financial support from the unbelievers to whom they preached the gospel. Therefore, the church should hospitably receive such persons in order that, John, and themselves might be their fellow Christian workers.

Next, John says, he wrote to the church but Diotrophes who loves to hold the highest position in the church did not recognise nor accept John's authority in the church. Therefore, John says, if I come to visit the church, I will remember his deeds wherein he speaks unjustifiably against us with malicious words. And, not content with this only, he does not hospitably receive the traveling evangelists of the church, forbids those who would do so, and even expels those who do so from church membership.

John then urges Gaius not to follow Diotrophes' evil example, but instead to follow that which is good. For those who do good belong to God, but those that do evil do not know God. John then points to Demetrius, of whom everyone reports good things, especially saying that his life is in accordance with God's truth. And, in addition, John and his fellow Christian workers, also recommend Demetrius as a good Christian, and Gaius knows, John says, that John and his fellow workers are speaking the truth.

John closes his letter by saying that he has many things to write to Gaius, but he will not now write them with paper and ink. For John hopes to see Gaius shortly and speak to him face-to-face. John then blesses Gaius, sends greetings from their mutual friends, and asks Gaius to greet the Christian friends in the church by name.

## **Themes**

- The love between a leader of the Christian church and one of its members.
- The good report of the godly life of some church members.
- The hospitality of church members.
- The abuse of authority and evil deeds of a church leader.
- Godly, travelling evangelists of the Christian church.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God whose truth is a guide for Christian living.
- God who requires Christians to be hospitable.
- God who condemns the abuse of authority and evil deeds.
- God who sends out evangelists into the world.

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

God's requirement of leaders in the Christian church is as follows: "Feed the flock of God [the church members] which is among you [with good spiritual food from the word of God, the Bible], taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre [not for dishonest gain], but of a ready mind [with eagerness]; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples [godly examples] to the flock [to the church]. And when the chief Shepherd [Jesus Christ] shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of

glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Peter 5:2-4.

## **Spiritual Applications**

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Let there be true Christian love between yourself and leaders in the church.
- Be among those Christians of whom there is a good report of your godly life.
- Know that God requires Christians to be hospitable.
- Show hospitality to others as a Christian, especially to church members.
- Know that God condemns all abuse of authority and evil deeds.
- Do not abuse your authority and do evil deeds as a church leader, and if you are not a church leader, do not follow the evil example of any such church leader.
- Be a godly, travelling evangelist in the Christian church if God calls you to fill this role in the church.
- Let God’s truth be your guide in Christian living.



## CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

# *Jude: Approx. 77 A.D.*

**T**HE EPISTLE OF JUDE is the sixty-fifth book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Ioudas* meaning “of Jude.” The title in English Bibles is “The Epistle of Jude.”

### **Authorship**

Jude, a half-brother of Jesus Christ, is the author of the book, The Epistle of Jude. It was probably written about 77 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Jude is actually a letter (epistle) that was written by the Jude to Christians everywhere, and there is no clear evidence of the location from which it was written.

The book opens with Jude describing himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James (the author of The Epistle of James in the Bible) and Jude sends greetings to true Christians everywhere. Jude says that he was about to write to the Christians about the salvation they have in common with him, however, he found that there was an urgent need to instead write encouraging

them to strive against errors by cleaving to the original Christian faith that was delivered once and for all time to the saints (the justified) by Christ Himself.

For certain ungodly men have crept into the Christian church without the church members being aware of it. These men, whom God in old times had already condemned, have frustrated the grace of God by their evil inclination to lewdness, and have denied Jesus Christ.

Remember, Jude says, that God who delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, afterwards destroyed those who had no trust in God. Likewise, the angels who left their God-appointed post in heaven, God has reserved, symbolically, in chains and spiritual darkness, until God's Judgment Day. Similarly, God has made Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them which practised fornication (sexual intimacy between people not married to each other) and homosexual acts, an example of God's vengeance by pouring eternal fire upon them, that is, fire that burned them to ashes just like hellfire will.

Likewise, these men who pose as those having prophetic dreams from God, live in accordance with their sinful nature, reject authority, and speak evil of the holy angels. Yet Michael the Archangel, who is Christ Himself, when striving with the Devil, that is, with Satan, about raising the dead body of Moses to life again, dared not make a charge of wrongdoing against Satan, but said to Satan, The Lord (God) rebuke you.

But, Jude says, he wishes misery upon these men who corrupt themselves. For they have followed the wicked way of Cain, have greedily abandoned themselves to Balaam's error of seeking profit for himself for opposing God's will, and perished like Korah in their rebellion against God. They are like hidden reefs in the sea in your godly feasts, selfishly caring for their own interests at the expense of the interests of others without any reverence for God.

These wicked men are like clouds that bring no rain, trees whose fruit withers and which have been plucked up by the roots,

untamed waves of the sea exhibiting their own shame, wandering stars, for whom God has reserved darkness forever. Further, Enoch also, of the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied that Christ is coming with ten thousand saints (holy angels), to execute judgment upon all the ungodly. For these wicked men are grumblers and complainers against God, living according to their lusts, speaking disrespectful words, and flattering people to gain an advantage over them.

Remember, Jude says, the words of the apostles of Christ, who told you that there would be scornful persons in the last days of earth's history who live according to their ungodly lusts. These persons who cause divisions in the church, lack moral restraint and have not received the Holy Spirit. But you, Jude says to the true Christians, build up yourselves in your most holy faith in Christ, praying according to the Holy Spirit's leading, keep the love of God in your hearts, expecting Jesus Christ's mercy in giving you eternal life.

And have compassion for some persons, making a difference between them and the wicked men in the church. Others save from eternal death (annihilation) with a reverence for God, pulling those in sin out of the fire, and hating even their clothing symbolically stained by their rotting flesh. Jude then closes his letter, saying to the true Christians, that to God who is able to keep them from falling into sin, and to present them faultless with exceeding joy before His glorious presence, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, both now and forever.

## Themes

- A godly leader in the Christian church giving guidance to church members.
- Wicked men in the church leading church members into sin.

- God's condemnation and judgment of the wicked men in the church.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who brought judgments in the past upon the wicked.
- God who has reserved the wicked for His coming Judgment Day.
- Christ and His interaction with Satan.
- Christ who is returning to the earth with ten thousand saints (holy angels).

## **Connections with the Rest of the Bible**

Jude wrote, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh [and doing homosexual acts], are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire [from God]." Jude 1:7. Does this mean that the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah is still burning today and will burn for eternity?

Well, Peter wrote concerning the same event, "And [God] turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample [example] unto those that after [afterward] should live ungodly." 2 Peter 2:6. So, No, the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah are not burning today. The fire went out after they were completely burnt to ashes. This is an example of how the Bible is its own interpreter.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Live in accordance with the guidance from godly leaders in the Christian church.
- Beware of wicked men in the church who lead people into sin.
- Know that God condemns wicked people in the church.
- Know about God's judgments in the past upon the wicked.
- Know that God will punish the wicked on His Judgment Day.
- Beware of accusing others just as Christ did not accuse Satan.
- Know that Christ is returning to the earth with many holy angels.



## CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

# Revelation: Approx. 95 A.D. – Eternity Future

**T**HE REVELATION OF JESUS Christ is the sixty-sixth and last book of the Bible. The title of the book in Greek is *Apokalupsis Ioannou* meaning “Apocalypse of John.” The title in English Bibles is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

### **Authorship**

John, a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ chose as an apostle, is the author of the book, The Revelation of Jesus Christ. It was probably written about 95 A.D.

### **Summary and Analysis**

The book of Revelation was written by the apostle John in his old age to Christians everywhere while he was imprisoned on the small island called Patmos located in the Aegean Sea off the western coast of modern-day Turkey.

The book opens with the statement that the Revelation of Jesus

Christ concerns things that must shortly come to pass, and Christ has sent His angel to give this revelation to the apostle, John, in symbolic language. John, in turn, writes down what he heard and saw in a series of visions, where a vision is supernatural mental imagery from God. There is a blessing from God, John says, for all those who read or hear the words of the prophecies of Revelation and keep them.

Next, John sends greetings from himself and from Jesus Christ to the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia which is modern-day Turkey. After this, John says that while he was imprisoned on the island called Patmos for preaching the word of God and for giving his testimony regarding Jesus Christ, he had a vision in which he saw Christ in His glorified form in heaven. And, in the vision, Christ instructs John to write the messages that He, Christ, gives to John, to the seven churches.

Now the key to understanding the book of Revelation is given in Chapter 1 verse 19: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Revelation 1:19. That is, Revelation concerns things that have already happened in the past, things in the present, and things to come in the future.

## **The Seven Churches**

**VISION:** The first message which Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Ephesus. Jesus commends Ephesus for not tolerating false apostles and for their Christian labours to win persons to Christ, but rebukes them for having lost their first love.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Ephesus also, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the Christian church over the period 31 A.D. to 100 A.D. And the year 31 A.D. was the time when the resurrected Jesus Christ, that is to say, Jesus who was raised from the dead to life again, ascended to heaven.

**VISION:** The second message which Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Smyrna. Jesus commends Smyrna for being spiritually rich, although there are among them those who follow Satan's wicked ways. Jesus also encourages Smyrna not to fear persecution or even death because of their Christian faith because a crown of eternal life awaits them.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Smyrna, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the Christian church over the period 100 A.D. to 323 A.D. Specifically, Christ prophesies of the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian over the 10-year period 303 A.D. to 313 A.D.

**VISION:** The third message which Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Pergamos. Jesus rebukes Pergamos because they are defiled with false teachers, sexual immorality, idolatry, and also the righteous among them are being put to death because of their Christian faith. Thus, Jesus urges the church at Pergamos to repent.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Pergamos, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the Christian church over the period 323 A.D. to 538 A.D. when many in the church compromised their faith in Christ and accepted pagan (unchristian) beliefs. This was the time when persecution of the Christian church ceased and Christianity was elevated to the position of being the state religion of the Roman Empire. Thus, there was a uniting of church and state.

**VISION:** The fourth message that Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Thyatira. Jesus commends some in Thyatira for their love, Christian service and faith, patience, their labours to win persons to Christ, and encourages them to be steadfast in their faith in Christ. Jesus also rebukes Thyatira for being defiled with false teachers, sexual immorality, and idolatry.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Thyatira, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the church over the period 538 A.D. to 1517 A.D. Now the year 538 A.D. marked the

beginning of what is known as the papacy, that is, the Roman Catholic Church, which at that time began to have supremacy over all the Christian churches. The Roman Catholic Church is a gigantic system of false religion which is Satan's masterpiece of deception. For anyone who believes and follows the Roman Catholic Church's false teachings is guaranteed to lose eternal life and, instead, receive eternal death (annihilation) from God. As was said before in Chapter 27 on Daniel in this book that you are now reading, it is a well-known fact of history, to which the papacy (Roman Catholic Church) admits, that the papacy (Roman Catholic Church) persecuted Christians and killed from 50 million to 100 million Christians.

Also, the year 1517 A.D. marks the year that a man named Martin Luther, on October 31, 1517 A.D., nailed a document to the door of a Roman Catholic Church with his 95 theses against the Roman Catholic Church's error of selling what were called indulgences. For according to the Roman Catholic Church's false teaching, by paying money to the Roman Catholic Church, one could guarantee one's acceptance by God into heaven and eternal life from God. Martin Luther's document spread near and far and led to the start of what is called the Protestant Reformation. That is, God raised up reformers who attempted, at the cost of their own lives by the murderous deeds of the Roman Catholic Church, to reform the Roman Catholic Church.

This attempted reform of the church proved unsuccessful and, so, many people left the Roman Catholic Church and formed what is known as Protestant churches. Examples of these Protestant churches are the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, and the Presbyterian Church.

**VISION:** The fifth message that Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Sardis. Jesus rebukes some in Sardis for being spiritually dead and urges them to repent, and commends others in Sardis for being spiritually pure, promising them that they will be with Him, Jesus, in heaven forever.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Sardis, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the church over the period 1517 A.D. to 1798 A.D.

It is important to note that all throughout the reign of the Roman Catholic Church from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D., God's faithful remnant, "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), maintained, despite the Roman Catholic Church's persecution, "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints [(who are the sanctified) by Christ Himself]." Jude 1:3. The year 1798 A.D. marks the time when the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's general Berthier took the Pope captive and the Pope afterwards died in captivity. Thus 1798 A.D. marked the end of the reign of the Roman Catholic Church over all Christian churches, that is to say, over Christendom, and over all nations.

**VISION:** The sixth message that Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Philadelphia. Jesus commends Philadelphia for having some moral strength, for living in accordance with the word of God, and for not denying His, Christ's name. Jesus also says that He has set before them an open door of opportunity to preach the gospel which no one can shut, and that He, Jesus, will make those who live according to Satan's wicked ways to come and worship at the church members' feet, and to know that He, Jesus, has loved the church of Philadelphia.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Philadelphia, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the church over the period 1798 A.D. to 1844 A.D.

During this period, the years 1798 A.D. to 1844 A.D., many Bible Societies were formed which printed and distributed Bibles all over the world. Also, from about the 1830s A.D., God raised up people all across the world who were studying the prophecies of the book of Daniel in the Bible and who all came to the same conclusion that Christ would return to earth by the year 1843 A.D. or 1844 A.D. This was a great religious awakening that resulted in thousands of believers in this Bible interpretation

taken from among unbelievers and from among the Protestant churches. In the United States of America, a prominent preacher of Christ's Second Advent (Christ's Second Coming), was a man named William Miller, and his followers came to be known as the Millerites.

William Miller, along with other Advent preachers, interpreted the Bible's prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel Chapter 8 verse 14 to mean that Christ would come to the earth on October 22, 1844 to judge the earth by cleansing the earth with fire. That is, at that time, Christ would destroy all the wicked who were living at that time, and take to heaven all the righteous living at that time along with the righteous who were resurrected (who were brought back to life from the dead by God). The Advent believers were, however, disappointed because Christ did not come on October 22, 1844 and this event was known as "The Great Disappointment." As a result, many of the Advent believers, who were now being mocked by the world, gave up their faith in Christ's Second Advent.

However, a few of the Advent believers prayed and studied the Bible earnestly to find where they had made an error in their interpretation of the Bible. Thus, they found that the date October 22, 1844 A.D. was correct, but they were mistaken as to the event that was to take place on that day. The actual event that occurred on that day was the movement of Christ from the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin the work of the Investigative Judgment before Christ's coming to the earth the second time. The Investigative Judgment looks at the records in heaven of all human beings who have ever lived. It ends with the close of human probation of all people living on earth at that time. That is, it ends when every person living on earth at that time has made their ultimate decision for or against Christ. Thus, God would no longer offer the people living on earth at that time, any more time to repent since they would never again change their decision.

**VISION:** The seventh message that Jesus Christ gives to John is to the church of Laodicea. Jesus rebukes Laodicea for being lukewarm in their Christian faith, for being satisfied with material wealth in place of God's grace, and for not knowing that they were spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Jesus urges them to obtain spiritual riches from Him, Christ, and to repent because Jesus' rebukes are only given in His love for them.

**INTERPRETATION:** This literal message to Laodicea, symbolically, represents the spiritual condition of the church over the period starting in the year 1844 A.D. up to the coming of Christ to the earth the second time.

So then, the seven churches represent the spiritual condition of the Christian church in the face of opposition by Satan, from the church's founding by Christ Himself until Christ's second coming to the earth.

## **The Seven Seals**

**VISION:** After this, John has a vision of the throne of God in heaven where he sees some intelligent beings surrounding the throne of God, worshipping and praising God. And in the right hand of the Father sitting on the throne is a scroll kept closed with seven wax seals. John weeps because there is no one in heaven nor on earth able to open the scroll. John is then told not to weep by one of the intelligent beings called an elder, for there is One who is able to open the scroll. John next sees a Lamb which is as if it had been killed, representing Christ, take the scroll out of the hand of the Father. When Christ does this, the intelligent beings surrounding the throne of God worship God and praise Him.

Christ, the Lamb, then opens the first seal on the scroll and John then sees a man with a weapon, specifically, a bow, riding a white horse and going forth conquering and to conquer.

**INTERPRETATION:** This symbolically represents the word of

God during the period 31 A.D. to 100 A.D., going forth into the world and conquering unbelief in God by winning persons to Christ through a pure Christian faith.

VISION: Christ then opens the second seal and John sees a man with a great sword seated on a red horse, who has power to take peace from the earth, in that, people should kill one another.

INTERPRETATION: This symbolically represents Christians during the period 100 A.D. to 323 A.D. being persecuted and killed by pagan Rome for refusing to worship the Roman emperor.

VISION: Christ then opens the third seal and John sees a man seated on a black horse with a pair of balances in his hand weighing out a measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny, and not destroying the oil and the wine.

INTERPRETATION: This symbolically represents the scarcity of the uncorrupted word of God during the period 323 A.D. to 538 A.D.

VISION: Christ then opens the fourth seal and John sees Death riding a pale horse and followed by Hell, and with power over one quarter of the earth to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

INTERPRETATION: This symbolically represents the period 538 A.D. to 1517 A.D. when some 50 million to 100 million Christians were killed by the Roman Catholic Church for refusing to follow the Roman Catholic church's erroneous teachings regarding the Bible, or for simply owning a Bible, for reading the Bible, or for teaching Bible truth.

VISION: Christ then opens the fifth seal and John sees under the altar, the souls of the people, who were killed for clinging to the pure word of God and for teaching it, crying out to God to avenge their murder by the Roman Catholic Church on those living on the earth. These souls are given white robes by God and God tells them that they should rest a little while until it is fulfilled that their fellow Christians should be killed as these souls had been killed.

INTERPRETATION: This represents symbolically the period

1517 A.D. to 1755 A.D. during the time of the Protestant Reformation, which was raised up by God, and when the persecutions of the Roman Catholic Church continued so that many Christians were killed for refusing to follow the Roman Catholic Church's erroneous teachings regarding the Bible, or for simply owning a Bible, for reading the Bible, or for teaching Bible truth. The events of the fifth seal end in 1755 A.D. because persecution gradually came to an end from about that time.

(Note that there are NOT literal souls under an altar in heaven, for God speaks of "the sleep of death" [Psalm 13:3], thereby, indicating that death is a sleep until one is awakened by either the first or the second resurrection. After the second resurrection, the wicked will be annihilated and cease to exist, for God says, "they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD [God] of hosts." Jeremiah 51:57.).

**VISION:** Christ then opens the sixth seal and John sees a great earthquake, the sun becomes black, the moon becomes as blood, and the stars of heaven fall to the earth. Next, John sees the sky rolled back as a scroll when it is rolled together and every mountain and island is moved out of their places. Then the kings of the earth, the great men, rich men, chief captains, mighty men, every slave, and every free man, hide themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. These people ask the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him who sits on the throne of God and from the fury of the Lamb (Christ), for the great day of His anger is here and who shall be able to stand before God?

**INTERPRETATION:** This represents symbolically the period 1755 A.D. to the second coming of Christ to the earth.

The events of the sixth seal mark the time of three signs that point to Christ's soon return to the earth. The first sign was an earthquake on November 1, 1755 in Lisbon, a city in Portugal in Europe. The second sign which occurred over New England in America and parts of Canada was the "Dark Day" of May 19,

1780 when the sun was darkened and the moon that night was like blood. The third and final sign occurred in the great meteor shower of November 13, 1833 which was seen all over North America.

VISION: After this, (under the same sixth seal) John sees four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth. Another angel ascends from the east having the seal of God, who says to the four angels to whom it is given to hurt the earth and the sea, that they should not hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees until we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.

INTERPRETATION: This is symbolic of God holding back the winds of strife on earth until the all righteous among humanity are settled in their minds into the truths of the word of God, and are, thereby, fitted up for heaven.

John then hears that 12,000 people from each of 12 tribes of Israel are sealed. This number is  $12,000 \times 12 = 144,000$ , but this is not to say that only 144,000 righteous people from among humanity will go to heaven. For after this, John sees a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, tribes, and peoples, standing before the throne of God and before Christ, the Lamb, in heaven. These people are clothed in white robes, they have branches of palm trees in their hands, and they sing praises to the Father who sits on the throne and to Christ, the Lamb. And all the angels and the other intelligent beings about the throne worship God.

(Note that the number 144,000 has both a literal and a symbolic meaning which we will see later in the book of Revelation). This vision of the 144,000 and the great multitude is God's answer to the question, Who shall be able to stand before Christ when He returns to the earth? It is the unrepentant, wicked people who run away and call for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from Christ as he comes a second time to the earth.

VISION: Christ then opens the seventh seal on the scroll and John sees that there is silence in heaven for about half an hour.

**INTERPRETATION:** This half an hour is prophetic time, and according to the day-for-a-year principle it is 7½ literal days. This period of time, 7½ days, represents the time between the first resurrection (when all the righteous dead who have been resurrected, together with all the righteous living, are caught up by God to meet Christ in the air at His return to the earth) and the subsequent arrival of all these saints (the sanctified) in heaven. Of course, God could have taken them instantaneously to heaven, but God has good reason to delay their arrival in heaven by 7½ literal days as we will see later in the book of Revelation.

So then, the seven seals represent the progress of the spreading on earth of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ to the whole world, in the face of Satan's attempts to destroy and to abolish the Christian church, which was founded by Christ Himself.

## **The Seven Trumpets**

**VISION:** John then sees seven angels standing before God who is seated on His throne, and they are given seven trumpets, one trumpet to each of the seven angels. (Note that trumpets in Bible often means the giving of an alarm concerning war that is about to occur).

**INTERPRETATION:** Here the trumpets are symbolic of God's actions as the answer to the prayers of the saints (the sanctified) of all ages.

**VISION:** Another angel, that is, Christ appearing in the form of an angel, comes and stands at the Altar of Incense before the throne, having a golden censer in His hand. Christ is given much incense to offer to God with the prayers of the saints, and the smoke of the incense along with prayers of the saints (the sanctified) ascend to God out of Christ's hand. The angel, Christ, then fills the censer with fire and casts it to the earth and

there are voices, thundering, lightnings, and an earthquake. The seven angels with their seven trumpets then prepare to blow their trumpets.

The first angel blows his trumpet and John sees hail and fire mingled with blood cast upon the earth and one-third of the trees are burnt up and all the green grass is burnt.

INTERPRETATION: This is symbolic of the period 31 A.D. to 100 A.D. during which, from the time of the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, in 34 A.D., and the subsequent persecution of the Christian church by the Jews, Christ's disciples, "they...were scattered abroad [and] went every where preaching the word [the gospel]." Acts 8:4. Here God turns Satan's evil persecution to good in spreading the gospel throughout the world.

Also, during this period 31 A.D. to 100 A.D., there was war between the Jews and the Romans which ended in the complete destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the death of at least a million Jews. Here God takes vengeance on the Jews, the enemies of Christ who crucified Christ, and who persecuted and killed many Christians.

VISION: The second angel blows his trumpet and John sees a great mountain burning with fire cast into the sea and the third part of the sea becomes blood, the third of the living creatures in the sea die, and the third part of ships are destroyed.

INTERPRETATION: This is symbolic of the period 100 A.D. to 538 A.D. when there were a number of attacks on the pagan Roman Empire from barbarian tribes.

Now the pagan Roman Empire had split into two parts in 395 A.D., namely, the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire). Subsequent to this, the barbarian tribes attacked the Western Roman Empire. These attacking tribes were the Visigoths under their leader Alaric I who looted and plundered Rome itself in 410 A.D., the Huns under their king, Attila, in 451 A.D., the Vandals under their leader, Genseric, in 455 A.D., and the Heruli under their king, Odoacer, in 476 A.D.

Together they brought an end to the pagan Western Roman Empire through their attacks in 476 A.D. And so, with the end of the Western Roman Empire the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) was still left standing.

Of note too during this period, 100 A.D. to 538 A.D., is the victory of Clovis, king of the Franks, over the Visigoths in 508 A.D. and his conversion to the doctrines of the church in Rome. Subsequently, three barbarian tribes, specifically, the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and the Heruli, were virtually exterminated by the church in Rome, resulting in the setting up of a new entity, the papacy, that is, in the setting up of the Roman Catholic Church in 538 A.D. This resulted in the permanent overthrow of paganism in the Western Europe. Here we see that though God overthrew one evil—the pagan Western Roman Empire—which persecuted and killed many Christians, another evil—the Roman Catholic Church—rose up to take its place. Does this mean that God was defeated in His purposes? Absolutely not!

For the apostle, John, was the last of Christ's apostles to die and he died in 100 A.D., by which time the writings of the 27 books of the New Testament of the Bible by Christ's true apostles were complete. The original manuscripts, known as *autographs*, of these 27 books of the New Testament of the Bible were written by the apostles in Koine (Common) Greek. These Greek Scriptures are collectively known by the Latin title, the Textus Receptus (the Received Text) and, in fact, this is the TRUE Textus Receptus (New Testament) received as *autographs* of the apostles. For some people use the term Textus Receptus to refer *Greek manuscripts which date no earlier than the 1500s A.D.* But as was said before the TRUE Textus Receptus (New Testament) consists of the Greek Scriptures which came directly from the apostles' hands.

Prior to Christ's birth on earth as a baby boy named Jesus, the 39 books of the Old Testament of the Bible were already written in the Hebrew language with a tiny portion in the Aramaic language. Hence, this was the only portion of the Holy Scriptures that

was available when Christ was alive on earth. This Hebrew Old Testament is commonly referred to today as the *Masoretic Text*. So then, the WHOLE BIBLE consists of 39 books (Old Testament, that is, the Masoretic Text in Hebrew) + 27 books (New Testament, that is, the TRUE Textus Receptus in Greek) = 66 books in total.

Now, as God would have it, in the second century A.D., the TRUE Textus Receptus (New Testament), either in its original language, Koine Greek, or by its translation into other languages, was the Bible of the Syrian Christian church and the Christian church in many European countries. Thus, God worked to have His word distributed throughout the world.

So, the seven trumpets as answers to the prayers of the saints (the sanctified) of all ages, do not only represent God's judgments by means of which God takes vengeance on His enemies, who are therefore the enemies of God's people. But the seven trumpets also represent the spread of the gospel through the TRUE Textus Receptus (New Testament) to the world. One noteworthy group of Christians was the Waldensian Church, formed about 120 A.D., which church passed on the teachings of the TRUE Textus Receptus (New Testament) received from the apostles of Christ, from father to son for over 1,400 years and spread it throughout all Europe.

**VISION:** The third angel blows his trumpet and John sees a great star named Wormwood, burning as a lamp, fall from heaven upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. The third part of the waters become wormwood and many people died from the waters which were made bitter.

**INTERPRETATION:** This is symbolic of the period 538 A.D. to 1160 A.D. when the spiritual darkness caused by the papacy, that is, by the Roman Catholic Church's withholding of the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Testament]) from the world, was very great. This resulted in the spiritual death of many people who believed the papacy's (Roman Catholic Church's) false teachings.

Also, during this period of the third trumpet, 538 A.D. to 1160 A.D., we have the rise of the religion of Islam in 622 A.D. which swept through Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain, within a few years. The Moslems taught from a false Bible (the Quran), they had a false prophet (Mohammed), and a false Sabbath (Friday), and this too led to the spiritual death of many people.

These hordes of Muslims made a constant attack on the papacy, the Roman Catholic Church, and kept the papacy busy with trying to contain and push back the spread of Islam during this period. So much so that the papacy in 1096 A. D. began military campaigns, which were religious wars known as the Crusades, to recover the Holy Land of Palestine from Islamic rule. As God would have it, this to some extent restrained the Roman Catholic Church's attempts to exterminate by violence and murder those true Christians who held to the pure teachings of the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Testament]).

VISION: The fourth angel blows his trumpet and John sees the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, darkened so that a third part of the day and a third part of the night had no light. And an angel flying in the midst of heaven cries with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth! Why? Because of the three angels (the fifth, sixth, and the seventh angels) which are yet to blow their trumpets.

INTERPRETATION: This is symbolic of the period 1160 A.D. to July 27, 1299 A.D. during which one noteworthy individual, Peter Waldo (Born 1140 A.D., Died 1205 A.D.) of Lyons, France, a wealthy merchant, who began about 1160 A.D. to preach the genuine teachings of the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Testament]).

This man, Peter Waldo, devoted himself to the translation and distribution of the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Tes-

tament]) into the everyday language of the people. Thus, he gave help to “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38) which was made up of true Christians, that is, those Christians who rejected the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

This circulation of the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Testament]) among ordinary Christians resulted in an increase in their missionary spirit. Thus, Peter Waldo can be acknowledged as contributing to the increase in numbers and influence of “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38) scattered throughout the world. Symbolically then, Peter Waldo struck a blow against the Roman Catholic Church, darkening its false lights—the Pope (sun), the College of Cardinals (moon), as well as the Monastic Orders and Mendicant Orders (stars). For the Monastic Orders of the Roman Catholic Church counterfeited the life of Christ, and its Mendicant Orders counterfeited the ministry of poverty and preaching of the true Christian Church.

**VISION:** The fifth angel blows his trumpet and John sees a star falls from heaven to the earth, to whom is given the key to the bottomless pit which he opens. Smoke arose out of the bottomless pit and out of it came locusts upon the earth. These locusts were given power like scorpions and commanded not to hurt any grass, green thing, or tree, but only those people without the seal of God in their foreheads. And it was given to the locusts to torment those without God’s seal for five months. In those days, people shall desire to die and death shall flee from them.

The locusts were like horses prepared for battle which had the faces of human beings and a crown like gold upon their heads. Their hair was long like the hair of women and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. They had iron breastplates, and the sound of the locusts’ wings were like the sound of many chariots and horses running to battle. Also, they had stings in their tails like scorpions with power to hurt people for five months. Their king is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is Abaddon in the

Hebrew language and Apollyon in the Greek language. One woe (the fifth trumpet) is past and two more woes (the sixth and the seventh trumpets) come afterwards.

**INTERPRETATION:** The fifth trumpet with its prophecy of five months of torment represents five prophetic months, which is 5 months x 30 days per month = 150 prophetic days = 150 literal years. (Note that a month in the Bible has 30 days.) Now on July 27, 1299, the Ottoman Turks, so-called because of their leader, Othman, who for the first time united all the Moslems under one monarchy, made his first assault on the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire). On that day, July 27, 1299, the Ottoman Turks entered Nicomedia in the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire), and this was the starting point of the fifth trumpet.

The Ottoman Turks did not cease their attacks on the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) until exactly 150 years later on July 27, 1449. This is the end date of the fifth trumpet. On that day, the Christian emperor of Eastern Rome, Constantine XIII, voluntarily acknowledged that his sovereignty was over, in that, he no longer ruled by his own authority, but only ruled by the consent of the Ottoman Turks. Thus, the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) was now under Muslim control after 150 years of war. So, the fifth trumpet covers the 150-year period July 27, 1299 to July 27, 1449.

What was God's purpose in all of this? Well, the Dark Ages had started in 476 A.D., and it was brought about by the many false doctrines taught by the church in Rome, contrary to the pure teachings of the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Testament]). And, except among the Waldenses, the word of God, the Bible, had for many centuries been locked up in ancient languages known only to the learned. However, as God would have it, under the fifth trumpet, John Wycliffe in England (Born approx. 1330 A.D., Died 1384 A.D.), translated the Bible into the English language.

Thus, Wycliffe, known as “the morning star [of the Reformation]” (Revelation 2:28), made the Bible available in English to the common people, and so brought the light of God’s truth to dispel the spiritual darkness of the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. This was the beginning of the end of the Dark Ages which had started in 476 A.D., and which God purposed to bring to an end. (For up till this time, God had given Satan enough time to be condemned by the revelation of Satan’s true character of evil both to humanity and to the onlooking universe. Yet there remained much more to be revealed of Satan’s true character and his real object in rebelling against God.)

So, as of July 27, 1449, the woe of the fifth trumpet was past and there were two more woes (the sixth and the seventh trumpets) to come.

**VISION:** The sixth angel blows his trumpet and John hears a voice from the golden altar before God which tells the sixth angel to loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. The four angels are loosed and they prepare for an hour, a day, a month, and a year to kill the third part of men. And the army of horsemen were two hundred thousand, thousand, (200 million) in number. Those that sat on the horses had breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone, and the horses’ heads were like the head of lions, out of the mouths of which came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three things issuing out of the horses’ mouths was the third part of men killed.

The horses’ power was in their mouth and in their tails which were like serpents. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, nor idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood. Neither did they repent of their murders, sorceries, fornication, nor thefts.

**INTERPRETATION:** Now the sixth trumpet’s hour, day, month, and a year represent prophetic time. For in the Bible, a month has 30 days and a year, therefore, has 12 months x 30 days per

month = 360 days. So then, the sixth trumpet's prophetic time can be calculated as 1 hour + 1 day + 30 days + 360 days = 1 hour + 391 days of prophetic time = 1 hour of prophetic time + 391 literal years. Using the year-for-a-day principle, and since there are 24 hours in a day, one prophetic hour =  $1/24$  of a prophetic day =  $1/24$  of a literal year =  $1/24 \times 360$  literal days = 15 literal days. As was said before, the fifth trumpet ended on July 27, 1449, and if we add to this date the 391 literal years and 15 literal days of the sixth trumpet, we find the sixth trumpet ends on August 11, 1840.

What was God's purpose in all of this? Well, four years after the beginning of the sixth trumpet on July 27, 1449, Constantinople, the Christian capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the year 1453 A.D. As a result, many Christians fled to Western Rome with thousands of manuscripts of the TRUE Textus Receptus (the New Testament of the Bible) in the Greek language, and these manuscripts were secured by the centres of learning in Europe. This led to a revival of the knowledge of the Greek language in the former Western Roman Empire and effectively ended the Dark Ages (476 A.D. to 1453 A.D.) which had been brought about by the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

By 1516 A.D., Desiderius Erasmus (Born approx. 1469 A.D., Died 1536 A.D.) of the Netherlands had printed the TRUE Textus Receptus (New Testament of the Bible) in the original Greek language. And between the period 1522 A.D. to 1534 A.D., two noteworthy TRUE Textus Receptus Bible translations were done, specifically, Martin Luther's Bible in the German language and William Tyndale's Bible in English. After this, came the King James Bible in English in 1611 A.D. which is still in use today in the twenty-first century after more than 400 years.

Further, on August 11, 1840, at the end of the period of the sixth trumpet, the Ottoman Turks, threatened by an invasion from Egypt which they were not able to repel militarily, surrendered their independence to the great Christian powers of Europe. Thus

was the power of the Ottoman Empire broken.

So then, the seven trumpets represent God's answer to the prayers of the saints (the sanctified) of all ages by shaping the political movements on earth to protect God's people and God's word, the WHOLE BIBLE (consisting of the Masoretic Text [Old Testament] and the TRUE Textus Receptus [New Testament]) from Satan's unsleeping malice and murderous fury.

## **The Advent Movement**

VISION: Next, John sees in vision another mighty angel come down from heaven, who had in his hand a little book that was open. The angel set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, and cries out with a loud voice, after which seven thunders utter their voices. John is about to write what the seven thunders said, but is told not to write it. The angel then swears by Him that lives forever that there shall be time no longer, but in the days when the seventh angel shall begin to blow His trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished.

The voice which John had heard from heaven tells John to take the little book out of the hand of the angel. John goes to the angel and the angel says to John that he should take the book and eat it and it will make John's belly bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in John's mouth. So, John takes the book and eats it, and it was sweet as honey in his mouth, and bitter in his belly. And the angel says to John that he must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues.

INTERPRETATION: The mighty angel that comes down from heaven is, symbolically, Christ Himself. The little book open in Christ's hand is that part of the book of the Daniel in the Bible, which relates to the last days of earth as we now know it, of which Daniel was told, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Daniel 12:9. If you will recall

from Chapter 27 of this book that you are now reading which covered the book of Daniel in the Bible, that the 2,300-years prophecy ended in the year 1798 A.D.

Subsequent to 1798 A.D., starting about the 1830s A.D., God raised up people all across the world who were studying the prophecies of the book of Daniel and who all came to the same conclusion that Christ would return to earth by the year 1843 A.D. or 1844 A.D. This was a great religious awakening that resulted in thousands of believers in this Bible interpretation from among unbelievers and from among the Protestant churches. Thus, the 1830s mark the start of “the time of the end” (Daniel 12:9) when the book of Daniel was to be unsealed and knowledge of its prophecies increased. So then, the “the time of the end” (Daniel 12:9) begins in the 1830s during the period of the sixth trumpet which ran from July 27, 1449 to August 11, 1840. And “the time of the end” (Daniel 12:9) will not be finished until the day of Christ’s second coming to the earth.

As was said earlier in this chapter on the book of Revelation, the Advent believers interpreted Daniel’s 2,300-years prophecy to mean that Christ would return to the earth on October 22, 1844. Thus, the book of Daniel was as sweet as honey in the mouth because they joyfully looked forward to Christ’s return to the earth on that day. But Christ did not return at the expected time and, hence, the book of Daniel made their belly bitter, for the Advent believers were bitterly disappointed when Christ did not come on that day, October 22, 1844. Notwithstanding this, Christ commanded them to continue to preach the Bible’s messages to the whole world.

So, all in all, the Advent Movement starts at the beginning of “the time of the end” (Daniel 12:9) in the 1830s and goes up until the time when Christ comes to the earth the second time.

## **The French Revolution**

VISION: Next, the angel (Christ) in vision gives John a measuring rod to measure the Temple of God, the altar, and the worshippers within it. But John is not to measure the court outside the Temple for it is given to the non-Jewish nations who shall trample the holy city under foot for 42 months. Christ then says that He will give power to His two witnesses and they shall prophesy for 1,260 days in sackcloth. These two witnesses stand before the God of the earth and if anyone hurts them, fire comes out of their mouths to devour their enemies. These two witnesses have power to shut heaven that it does not rain, to turn waters to blood, and to strike the earth with plagues.

When the two witnesses shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them and kill them. Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where the Lord Jesus was crucified. For three and a half days, the people of the world shall not allow their dead bodies to be put in graves. And the people shall rejoice over them, making merry, and sending gifts to one another.

After three and a half days, the Spirit of life from God entered into their dead bodies and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw it. And the two witnesses hear a voice from heaven calling them to come up there, and they ascend to heaven in a cloud in the sight of their enemies. And the same hour there was a great earthquake and the tenth part of the city fell, seven thousand men were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe (the sixth trumpet) is past and the third woe (the seventh trumpet) comes quickly.

INTERPRETATION: Again, what does all this mean? The answer is that the periods of 42 months and 1,260 days are the same

and refer to the period of papal supremacy, that is, the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church over the 1,260-year period 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D. The two witnesses are symbolic of the Scriptures, namely, the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. The 1,260 days in which they prophesied in sackcloth refer to the time when the Roman Catholic Church caused the Bible to be in obscurity, when those who dared to preach the Bible's sacred truths were tortured, martyred, or compelled to flee to the mountains and caves of the earth. Nevertheless, God's loyal servants who loved God's words declared God's truths during this whole 1,260-year period of 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D.

The fire out of their mouths which destroy their enemies represents the warnings that God gives to humanity against changing in any way that which God has revealed or commanded. As the period when the two witnesses (the Old Testament and the New Testament) prophesied in sackcloth drew to a close in 1798 A.D., war was made upon them by the power symbolized by the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, namely, Satan. According to the prophecy, in the country where this power, satanic in origin and character, should silence the two witnesses (the Old Testament and the New Testament), there would be manifested the atheism of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and the licentiousness of Sodom. This prophecy was fulfilled in the history of the country, France, in Europe.

In 1789 A.D., the French Revolution began in which there was displayed the most bitter hatred against our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in the person of His disciples that were martyred. Thus, there was a period starting on November 26, 1793, during which religion and the Bible was banned by the decree of France's National Assembly. This decree was overturned on June 17, 1797, a period of a few days beyond the three and a half years after the decree was passed, just as was prophesied. That is, the decree was overturned on June 17, 1797 BEFORE three years and seven months had passed, effectively then, AFTER three years

and six months. So, June 17, 1797 symbolised the time when the two witnesses (the Old Testament and the New Testament) stood on their feet and great fear fell upon those who saw it.

The great earthquake symbolises the turmoil and upheaval that characterised France up to the year 1798 A.D. which was the end of the 1,260 years of papal (the Roman Catholic Church's) supremacy. Such were the scenes of bloodshed and horror in France during that time that those who escaped these atrocities gave glory to God, not willingly, but because God had proven to them that those who make war upon heaven make graves for themselves.

And since the time that France made war upon God's Bible, the Bible has been honoured as never before on earth, symbolised by the two witnesses (the Old Testament and the New Testament) ascending to heaven. For by the year 1804 A.D., the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed, followed by numerous similar organisations throughout the world. Today, in the twenty-first century, the whole Bible or parts of it has been translated into thousands of languages. This then brings us to the close of the second woe which is the sixth trumpet on August 11, 1840. The third woe (the seventh trumpet) is to come quickly.

Thus, the French Revolution which began in 1789 A.D. and continued up to 1798 A.D. falls entirely under the sixth trumpet which ran from July 27, 1449 to August 11, 1840.

## **The Seventh Trumpet**

VISION: The seventh angel blows his trumpet and John hears great voices in heaven declaring that the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and His Christ, and that Christ shall reign forever. Then the 24 elders, who sat before God, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, giving God thanks because God has taken to Him his great power and reigned. And

the elders also say that the nations were angry, God's anger has come, as well the time to judge the dead, the time to give reward to God's servants, the prophets, and to the saints (the sanctified), and to destroy them that destroy the earth. John then sees that the Temple of God in heaven was opened, and John sees the Ark of the Testament in the Temple, and there is lightning, voices, thunder, an earthquake, and great hail.

**INTERPRETATION:** Here the seventh trumpet is symbolic of the period from August 11, 1840 to the time when Christ returns to the earth. For when Christ returns, all earthly kingdoms will be done away with and Christ will be King over all the earth. And starting in the year 1848 in Europe, the nations were indeed angry, in that, there were a number of revolutions, that is, uprisings, of the people. Also as was said before, the Investigative Judgment began on October 22, 1844. It was the start of, first God's judgment of the righteous dead, followed by God's judgment of the righteous who are living on earth at that time.

At the end of the Investigative Judgment, Christ will return to the earth with His reward for the prophets and all the saints, which is to say, Christ's reward for all those who had been sanctified. At that same time, God's fierce anger will come upon the wicked who are then living on earth, such that God will put to death all these people who have corrupted the earth. John seeing the Temple of God opened and the Ark of the Testament there is symbolic of Christ ending His ministry in the Holy Place of the sanctuary in heaven on October 22, 1844, and Christ moving to the Most Holy Place, where the Ark of the Testament is located, to begin the Investigative Judgment on that day, October 22, 1844.

Note that the seventh trumpet in John's vision is NOT "the last trump [trumpet]" (1 Corinthians 15:52) when the first resurrection occurs and all the righteous, both living and resurrected dead, are taken to heaven with Christ. For the seventh trumpet began to sound on August 11, 1840 and the last trumpet of God is yet future. No one knows "neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of

man [Christ] cometh [to the earth a second time]" (Matthew 25:13) as the last trumpet sounds.

## **A Survey of History**

VISION: John then sees a great wonder in heaven, namely, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. The woman is pregnant and being in labour she cries with pain. John then sees another wonder in heaven, this time a great red dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. The dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven casting them down to the earth, and the dragon stood before the woman ready to devour her child as soon as it was born. The woman gave birth to a male child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and the child was caught up to God's throne in heaven. The woman then fled into the wilderness to a place prepared by God, that she should be fed there 1,260 days.

Next, John sees war in heaven between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels. The dragon, who is that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, and who deceives the whole world, did not prevail over Michael and, hence, the dragon and his angels were cast out of heaven to the earth. And there was a loud voice heard in heaven declaring that salvation, strength, the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ had come, for the accuser of the brethren both day and night was cast down. The voice then says that the saints (the sanctified) overcame the dragon by their testimony and by not loving their lives so much that they refused to die for their faith in Christ. Therefore, rejoice you that dwell in heaven and woe to the inhabitants of the earth for the Devil has come down to the earth in great anger because he knows that he only has a short time to live.

The dragon, when he saw that he was cast down to the earth,

persecuted the woman who had given birth to the male child. And the woman was given the two wings of a great eagle so that she flew into the wilderness away from the serpent where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. And the serpent cast a flood of waters out of his mouth to carry away the woman, but the earth helped the woman by opening her mouth and swallowing up the flood of waters. And the dragon was very angry with the woman and started to make war against the remnant of her descendants who keep God's commandments and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**INTERPRETATION:** The symbolism here is that the woman represents the true church, made up of repentant Adam and Eve and all the saints (the sanctified) up to the time of the Christian Church which was established by Christ Himself. She is clothed with the sun representing the light and glory of the gospel, and the moon under her feet represents the types and shadows of the Ceremonial Law which God gave to Israel by the hand of Moses, and which pointed forward to the coming of Christ to the earth. The woman's crown of twelve stars represents the twelve apostles who were chosen by Christ Himself. Thus, the sum of all this is that the woman represents the true church in which is displayed the purity of Christ's righteousness.

The dragon in heaven is Satan whose deceit caused a third of the angels to be cast out of heaven with him. And the male child of the woman is Christ, whom the dragon, Satan, sought to kill as soon as He was born, but Christ ascended to God's throne in heaven. The woman, that is, the true church made up of the saints (the sanctified), fled into the mountains and caves of Europe for 1,260 years—from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D.—when the faith of the visible Christian church, the Roman Catholic Church, was corrupted.

The war in heaven was between Christ and His angels and Satan and his angels, and it was a war which Satan did not win and, hence, Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven. It is Satan

who accuses the saints (the sanctified) before God both day and night. The voice in heaven anticipates salvation for the saints (the sanctified) through the moral strength given as a gift from God, and the coming kingdom of God and the power of Christ, which was made certain by Christ's victory over Satan by Christ dying on the cross.

The vision that John saw then looks at the working of Satan from the time of Christ to Christ's return to the earth, during which time Christ's faithful disciples, the saints, overcome Satan's persecution through the grace of God and through being willing to die for their faith in Christ. Heaven is called to rejoice because Satan and his evil angels are no longer there in heaven, but woe unto the people on earth for Satan's great anger increases as his time to live grows shorter and shorter.

Satan persecutes the true church, and God causes this church to flee into remote places from Satan's persecution for 1,260 years which is a time (1 year), and times (2 years), and half a time ( $\frac{1}{2}$  year), that is, a total of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  prophetic years or 1,260 literal years from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D. Near the end of this period of 1,260 years, many Christians of the true church flee to the New World where a new nation, the United States of America, arises. Thus, this sparsely populated nation of America, symbolised by the earth, opens her mouth to swallow up Satan's flood of persecution.

Many Christian denominations established themselves in America, but there is only one denomination in America which God recognises as the "remnant" (Revelation 12:17) of God's true church. This Remnant Church is characterised by the keeping of God's commandments and they have "the testimony of Jesus Christ" Revelation 12:17. What does this mean? As was said before, the Advent believers suffered a great disappointment on October 22, 1844 when Christ did not return to the earth as they expected. Out of this group of believers there came a small group who prayed and studied the Bible and they discovered that the Investigative Judgment began on October 22, 1844 in the Most

Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

This group of Advent believers also discovered that the only item of furniture in the Most Holy Place is the Ark of the Testament containing the two tables of stone on which God wrote “the ten commandments.” Exodus 34:28. Thus, their attention was drawn to these commandments and they realised that they were not keeping the fourth commandment which specifies that the weekly seventh-day Sabbath is to be kept holy. Hence, they resolved to keep the seventh-day Sabbath as specified in the Bible.

Further, in December of 1844, a young woman among them named Ellen G. Harmon (later Ellen G. White after marriage) of about 18 years of age had a vision from God, in which God encouraged the small group of Advent believers in their Christian faith. This was the first of over 2,000 visions from God that Ellen G. White would have over a span of 70 years. As a result of God’s guidance through Ellen G. White’s visions and dreams, and through prayerful Bible study, this group of Advent believers formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the year 1863.

This church, which today in the twenty-first century is to be found in over 215 countries of the world, is characterised by keeping all Ten Commandments, including the seventh-day Sabbath, and has the approximately 100,000 pages of the writings of Ellen G. White which it refers to as “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17. For Ellen G. White’s writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Remnant Church of Revelation 12:17. How can we know this to be true? Well, the rest of the book of Revelation in the Bible confirms this.

This is not to say though, that the visible Remnant Church, that is, the visible Seventh-day Adventist Church is perfect, for it is made up of many sinners and many saints (the sanctified). In other words, God’s invisible Remnant Church, His invisible True Church, is made up of all the saints (the sanctified) on

earth—those in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well as those in the other Christian denominations, the saints (the sanctified) to be found in other religions, and even the saints (the sanctified) among the non-religious—all these saints (the sanctified) who are scattered across the world.

## **The Mark of the Beast**

VISION: John then says that as he stands upon the sand of the sea, he sees a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. The beast was like a leopard, a bear, and a lion, and the dragon gave power to the beast, gave the beast his seat, and his great authority. One of the beast's heads was wounded to death, the deadly wound was healed, and all the world admired the beast, and they worshipped the dragon who gave power to the beast, and worshipped the beast. The beast was given a mouth speaking blasphemies and power to continue for 42 months (1,260 days).

The beast blasphemed God and it was given him to make war with the saints (the sanctified) and to overcome them, as well as power over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. And all those on earth, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb who was killed from the foundation of the world, shall worship the beast. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity, and he that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints.

John then sees another beast coming up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb and which spoke as a dragon. This second beast exercises all the power of the first beast and causes all the people on earth to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. The second beast does great wonders so that he

causes fire to come down from heaven to the earth in the sight of all the people on earth. And this second beast deceives the people on earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the first beast, saying that the people should make an image to the first beast which was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

Also, the second beast had power to give life to the image of the first beast such that the image of the beast should speak, and cause that all those people who would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And the second beast caused all people to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead, and that no one could buy or sell unless they had the mark, or the name of the first beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom, let those with understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.

**INTERPRETATION:** The symbolism here is that the first beast is papal Rome (Roman Catholic Church), and the dragon, Satan, has given this church power, a throne, and great authority. The wounding to death of one of the beast's heads represents French general Berthier taking the Pope captive in 1798 A.D. and the subsequent death of the Pope in exile, which brought an end to the civil and religious power of the papacy (Roman Catholic Church). But God's prophecy says that this deadly wound to the Roman Catholic Church would be healed, and all the world would admire this church, and worship Satan who gave power to the Roman Catholic Church, and worship this church.

It is important here to understand the workings of Satan, who ever seeks to prevent the entire human race from becoming sanctified by God, so that he can ensure their annihilation by God for their sins. Satan, from the time of Adam and Eve, has sought to wipe out (exterminate) from the face of the earth all those people who are seeking God in order to become sanctified by God. Satan does not spend his energies on those people who never seek God because he is already sure of their annihilation by God, but those

people who turn to God are the special objects of Satan's hatred and wicked schemes.

In the early history of the Christian church, which replaced the nation of Israel as God's visible church on earth, Satan sought to kill all the followers of Christ by working through pagan Rome to persecute and kill Christ's disciples. This tactic of Satan failed because the more Christian martyrs there were, even greater were the number of additions of new converts to the Christian church. Realising this, Satan changed tactics. Satan's aim remained the same, but now Satan sought to replace the pure Christian faith of the early Christian church with a vast counterfeit religious system, the Roman Catholic Church, which is a monument to Satan's supreme evil and deceitfulness. So, instead of working directly against God through pagan Rome, Satan now worked behind the deceptive outward appearance of a professedly Christian organisation, the Roman Catholic Church.

And so, God prophesied that the papacy (Roman Catholic Church), would speak blasphemies and have power to continue 42 prophetic months (1,260 prophetic days) which is the literal 1,260-year period from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D. During this time, the Roman Catholic Church would make war against the saints (the sanctified), who are the true followers of Christ, and physically overcome them and would have power over all tribes, peoples of all languages, and nations. And God declares that all who worship according to the Roman Catholic Church's false teachings do not have their names written in heaven in the Lamb's (Christ's) book of eternal life.

For the unsuspecting world is unaware that by worshipping God according to the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, they are, in effect, worshipping Satan. That is, the true God, God's love, the gospel of Christ which is God's plan to save humanity from annihilation because of their sins, are all completely obscured by the Roman Catholic Church's system of faith and worship. In other words, you are guaranteed to end up in hellfire

to be burned to ashes by God, if you believe in and follow the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. And so, God says that he or she who has an ear, let him or her pay attention to what God says to them. Further, God assures the saints (the sanctified) that those who led them into captivity and killed them would themselves suffer the same fate. Notwithstanding this, the saints (the sanctified) would need to have patience to endure persecution and would also need to cling steadfastly to their faith in Christ.

The second beast symbolises the United States of America coming up out of the earth which represents a sparsely populated continent. Its two horns like a lamb represent religious liberty and civil liberty, both of which are guaranteed by America's Constitution, as well as the guarantee of the entire and perpetual separation of church and state. However, God prophesies that America would come to speak like a dragon, that is, become a persecuting power just like Satan by enacting (speaking) unjust and oppressive laws.

The prophecy also states that America will exercise all the power of the first beast, the Roman Catholic Church, as a power in which church and state are united. Further, America will cause all the people on earth to worship according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, whose deadly wound was healed. For God says, America will cause fire to come down from heaven on earth and by this and other miracles which they had power to do through the workings of Satan and in the sight of the Roman Catholic Church, deceive all the people on earth.

Thus, America will convince the people on earth to make an image (a replica) of the first beast, that is to say, a global system of faith and worship just like that of the Roman Catholic Church, the papacy. For the image of the beast is that form of apostate (unfaithful) Protestantism in America that will be developed when the Protestant churches in America shall seek the help of the civil power to enforce their false teachings and beliefs.

America, according to God's prophecy, will have power to leg-

islate and, thereby, bring into force the image of the first beast, which is the Roman Catholic Church, causing all those people who will not worship according to this Roman Catholic Church system to be killed. Moreover, America will cause that those people who do not have the mark of the first beast, the name of the first beast, or the number of the first beast, cannot buy nor sell, that is, they will cut off people who are such from all economic support. Those with wisdom, God says, will count the number of the first beast which is the number of a man, and that number is 666.

Now who is the man for whom we are to count the number of his name? Clearly, the man of whom God speaks is the Pope, the head of the Roman Catholic Church. What is his name? The official title of the Pope which is inscribed on the Pope's mitre is the Latin phrase VICARIUS FILII DEI meaning "Vicar of the Son of God," that is to say, the Pope is considered to be a substitute on earth for Christ, the Son of God. How can we count the number of this name? The answer is that each of the letters of His name have a numerical value according to the system of Roman numerals. Here is the total numerical value of the Pope's title, VICARIUS FILII DEI, which we can see is 666:

**Roman Numeral = Decimal Value**

**V** = 5

**I** = 1

**C** = 100

**A** = 0

**R** = 0

**I** = 1

**U** = **V** = 5

**S** = 0

**F** = 0

**I** = 1

**L** = 50

I = 1

I = 1

D = 500

E = 0

I = 1

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**Total = 666**

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## **God's Final Warning Messages to the World**

VISION: John then sees a Lamb standing on mount Sion (mount Zion) with 144,000 people who had their Father's name written in their foreheads. And John hears a voice from heaven like the voice of many waters and great thunder, and the sound of harpers playing on their harps. The 144,000 sang before God's throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders, a song which no one could learn but the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These 144,000 were not defiled by women for they were virgins and they follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They were redeemed from among humanity as first fruits offered to God and the Lamb, and in their mouths was no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

After this John sees another angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to all the inhabitants of the earth. The angel's message was that the people on earth should fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him who made heaven, the earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters. A second angel followed the first angel, saying that Babylon is fallen because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath (anger) of her fornication.

A third angel follows the second angel, saying that if anyone

worships the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, they shall drink of the wine of the wrath (anger) of God which is poured out without mixture in his cup of indignation. Such people will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And those who worship the beast and his image, and who receive the mark of his name, the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and they have no rest either day or night. Here is the patience of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

John then hears a voice from heaven, and the Holy Spirit saying that those who die in the Lord from that time forward are blessed, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. After this, John sees a white cloud with the Son of man sitting on it, having a golden crown on his head and a sickle in His hand. Another angel comes out of the Temple and with a loud voice and says to Him that is sitting on the cloud, that He should thrust in His sickle and reap, for the time to reap has come and the earth's harvest is ripe. And the Son of man sitting on the cloud thrusts in His sickle into the earth and the earth is reaped.

Another angel comes out of the Temple in heaven having a sharp sickle. And another angel, who has power over fire, comes out from the altar and speaks to the angel with the sharp sickle saying that the angel should thrust in his sharp sickle and gather the ripe clusters of the vine of the earth, for the earth's grapes are fully ripe. The angel thrusts in his sickle gathering the vine of the earth and casts it into the winepress of the anger of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city and blood came out of the winepress reaching up to the horses' bridles and filling a space of 1,600 furlongs.

**INTERPRETATION:** Now, if you will recall, the 144,000 was mentioned earlier in the book of Revelation. But who are they? There is a both a literal and a symbolic meaning to the 144,000. First of all, the 144,000 is symbolic of all the saints (the sanctified)

who are alive on earth when the probation of the human race closes before the end of the Investigative Judgment. At that time, the destiny of every human being who has ever lived has been decided by God, whether to receive eternal life from God or to be annihilated by God for sins of which they have not repented. The end of the Investigative Judgment marks the end of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as humanity's High Priest interceding with God for the forgiveness of the sins of the repentant.

A little while after the Investigative Judgment ends, Christ returns to the earth. So, the 144,000 is symbolic of those saints (the sanctified) who must live WITHOUT Christ as their Intercessor in heaven during the period BETWEEN the end of the Investigative Judgment and the time of Christ's return to the earth. Now, God had earlier given a prophecy of this span of time or "waiting" period in the book of Genesis in the Bible. For God shut Noah and his family in the Ark thus sealing the doom of the wicked outside the Ark. But it did not start to rain on the earth until seven days later, during which time the wicked did not know that their doom was sure. Likewise, the 144,000 will receive the symbolic seal of God at the end of the Investigative Judgment and the wicked who are alive on earth during the "waiting" period will not know that their doom is sure.

There is no other group of human beings like the 144,000 who have ever had such an experience of living without an Intercessor in heaven. That is why no one can learn the song of the 144,000 for it is the song of their unique experience. Secondly, the 144,000, I believe, is the literal number of people, chosen by God, to be leaders of the desperately needed revival and reformation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For the seventh church of the book of Revelation in the Bible, the Laodicean church in need of a spiritual revival, is actually symbolic of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The messages of the three angels, The Three Angels' Messages, are God's last warning messages to the world before Christ

returns. These messages are preached by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The First Angel's Message is the preaching of "the everlasting gospel" (Revelation 14:6) to every nation, kindred, language, and people on the earth. For every person on earth is to understand the unsurpassably great sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world, so that every human being might be saved from eternal death, which is to cease to exist. Accordingly, everyone on earth is called to reverence God and give God all the praise for His kindness to the human race.

In addition, the First Angel's Message states that the hour of God's judgment is come. Now, as was explained earlier in in this book that you are now reading in Chapter 27 on the book of Daniel, the interpretation of the 2,300-day prophecy was given. The 2,300 prophetic days, according to the day-for-a-year principle in the Bible, is actually 2,300 years. This period began in 457 B.C. and ended on October 22, 1844 A.D. At that time, Jesus Christ, as humanity's High Priest in heaven, ended His ministry in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary and then Jesus entered into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to begin what is known as the Investigative Judgment.

The purpose of the Investigative Judgment, as discussed above, is to have Jesus examine the life record in the books of heaven of every human being who has ever lived, starting with the dead and moving on to the living. Based on the books, Jesus decides if the individual's sins have all been pardoned by God and, hence, they are worthy to receive eternal life from God. Otherwise, the individual will receive eternal death from God. Shortly after the Investigative Judgment ends, Jesus Christ returns to the earth.

Furthermore, the First Angel's Message is a call to worship God as the Creator of heaven and earth. It also contains an almost word-for-word quote from the fourth of the Ten Commandments, which says that we are to remember to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy. So, the First Angel's Message is also God's call to the world to observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in accordance

with God's commandment.

The Second Angel's Message states that Babylon is fallen. Here Babylon is symbolic of the Roman Catholic Church as we will see later in the book of Revelation in the Bible. This Roman Catholic Church has fallen into sin and, hence, is doomed by God because they have caused the WHOLE WORLD, except for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to accept their false teachings, which teachings, symbolically, is the wine of the wrath (of the fury) learnt through her fornication (spiritual adultery) with Satan, which fury is directed against the saints (the sanctified).

The Third Angel's Message warns everyone on earth not to accept the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church which has established the first day of the week, Sunday, as a false Sabbath in place of the true seventh-day Sabbath. This false Sabbath, Sunday, the Roman Catholic Church claims as its "mark of authority" and hence God refers to it as "the mark of the beast." Revelation 16:2; Revelation 19:20. For you will recall that the Roman Catholic Church was the fourth beast of Daniel Chapter 7 (as was explained earlier in Chapter 27 on the book of Daniel of this book that you are now reading).

All those who receive the Mark of the Beast will be annihilated by God because they are effectively worshipping Satan instead of God. Note that the false Sunday Sabbath only becomes the Mark of the Beast AFTER Babylon, the Roman Catholic Church, has caused the WHOLE WORLD to accept Sunday. This has not yet happened, and so no one on earth has as yet received the Mark of the Beast.

Now we can understand why earlier, at the opening of the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for a prophetic half an hour, which is 7½ literal days. This period represents the time between the first resurrection which takes place when Christ returns to the earth, and the time when the saints actually arrive in heaven. Having spent 7½ days travelling from earth to heaven, every saint would thus have kept the seventh-day Sabbath holy while on their

journey to heaven.

Why is this necessary? The reason is that there are many saints (the sanctified) who had never kept the seventh-day Sabbath holy while they were alive on earth because they did not know of it, nor understood its importance. If they had known or understood, they would have kept the seventh-day Sabbath holy as God has commanded. Such persons will not lose heaven, for God has made a provision for them to keep the fourth of the Ten Commandments while in transit to heaven.

The Third Angel's Message also includes a message of righteousness by faith, as the saints (the sanctified) are those who, through the faith they receive from Jesus Christ, are ENABLED BY GOD to keep ALL the commandments of God. Also, the reaping of the earth by the Son of man, Christ, represents the first resurrection where all of God's saints (the sanctified) who have ever lived are taken to heaven. Similarly, the reaping of the earth by the angel with the sharp sickle represents the second resurrection when all the wicked who have ever lived are raised from the dead by God to receive their punishment for the sins of which they have never repented.

## **The Seven Last Plagues**

VISION: John then sees another sign in heaven, namely, seven angels having the seven last plagues full of the anger of God. Next, John sees a glass sea as if mingled with fire and, standing on this glass sea having the harps of God, those people who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. And they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

After that John sees that the Temple of the testimony in heaven was opened. Seven angels clothed in pure white linen and a golden girdle about their breasts come out of the Temple having seven

plagues. And one of the four living creatures gives to the seven angels, seven bowls full of the anger of God, who lives forever. And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power. No one was then able to enter into the Temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

John then heard a great voice out of the Temple telling the seven angels to go and pour out the bowls of the anger of God on the earth. The first angel poured out his bowl and there fell a foul and grievous sore upon the people who had received the Mark of the Beast and who worshipped the image of the beast. The second angel poured out his bowl upon the sea and it became as blood and every living thing in the sea died. The third angel poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters and they became blood. John heard the third angel praising God for His judgment upon the earth and another angel from the altar agreed with the third angel.

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun and power was given unto him to scorch the wicked with fire. And the wicked were scorched with a great heat and they blasphemed God and did not repent of their sins. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the seat of the beast and the beast's kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, blasphemed God, and did not repent of their sins. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and the water of the river was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

John then saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. These are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the whole world to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Jesus then says that He comes as unexpectedly as a thief and blessed are those people who watch and keep their garments so that they do not walk naked and others see their shame. And the dragon gathered the world to a place called Armageddon in the Hebrew language.

The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and a great voice came out of heaven saying, It is done. And there were voices, thunder, lightning, and a great earthquake such as had never been on the earth. And the great city was divided into three parts, the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered great Babylon to give to her the cup of the fierceness of His anger. And every island was moved out of its place and the mountains were not found. And great hail fell from heaven with every stone about a talent (58 to 80 pounds) in weight, and people blasphemed God because of the hail.

INTERPRETATION: Now, the Temple being filled with smoke prior to the seven plagues being poured out, and no person being able to enter until AFTER the seven plagues have been fulfilled, is symbolic of the close of human probation. This means that, at the close of human probation, there is no more intercession in heaven on the part of Christ our High Priest as the Investigative Judgment has ended and God's fierce anger is now to come upon the world.

Before the start of the plagues, the three unclean spirits like frogs represent the threefold union of (1) spiritualism (the deceitful works of Satan, either directly or through his human agents, that is to say, it is witchcraft), (2) apostate (unfaithful) Protestantism in America, and (3) the Roman Catholic Church, which were at work to kill all the saints (the sanctified). For spiritualism is Satan's deceptive workings through which he deceives people and leads them to venture onto his enchanted ground where they have no defence from God, so that Satan gains control of their minds and causes them to do whatever he wishes, even against their will. It is this threefold union which causes the wicked to gather themselves together against God's people to kill them all, and this final conflict on earth which is called the Battle of Armageddon which is ongoing throughout the outpouring of the plagues.

After human probation is closed, the restraining power of the

Holy Spirit is completely withdrawn from the earth. Then begins the outpouring of the seven last plagues in succession, one after the other. And under the sixth plague, there is a drying up of the Euphrates River which is symbolic of the point where ALL the wicked, those who were deceived by Satan, the Roman Catholic Church, and apostate (unfaithful) Protestantism in America, now realise that they have been deceived and, hence, have lost eternal life and they turn against the Roman Catholic Church with the same hatred that they are already directing against the saints (the sanctified) to kill all the saints. Therefore, the way for Christ to come with the Father and with the Holy Spirit to the earth, that is, symbolically, the way of the kings of the east is prepared.

Lastly, under the outpouring of the seventh plague, God brings an end to the Battle of Armageddon when God reveals Himself in favour of His people, the saints (the sanctified), on earth.

## **Babylon the Great Described**

VISION: John then says that one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls came and talked with him. The angel tells John that he will show John God's judgment on the great whore (prostitute) that sits upon many waters, and with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with whom the people on earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

The angel then carries John in the spirit into the wilderness where John sees a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy and having seven heads and ten horns. The woman is clothed with purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls, with a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Upon the woman's head is written the name, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. The woman was drunk with the blood of saints, and

the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and John is amazed with great astonishment.

The angel then asks John why he marvelled at the woman, and says that he will tell John the mystery of the woman, and the beast that carries her which has seven heads and ten horns. The angel then proceeds to tell John that the beast which John saw that was, and is not, shall ascend out of the bottomless pit to go to eternal ruin. And the people on earth whose names are not in the book of life shall marvel when they see the beast that was, is not, and yet is. Those people who are wise will know that the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. And there are seven kings—five have already fallen, one is now reigning, and the other is yet to come—who when he comes must reign a short time. And the beast that was, and is not, is the eighth king and is also of the seven kings and he goes to eternal ruin.

The ten horns are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast, and with one mind they give their power and strength to the beast. These ten kings and the beast make war with the Lamb (Christ) and the Lamb (Christ) overcomes them. For the Lamb (Christ) is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those people with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.

The angel also tells John that the waters that John saw where the whore (prostitute) sits are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which John saw upon the scarlet beast shall hate the whore (prostitute), and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God had put it into the hearts of the ten horns to fulfill God's will and to agree and give their kingdom to the beast until God's words shall be fulfilled. And the woman that John saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

**INTERPRETATION:** Now, the scarlet (red) beast with seven heads and ten horns is Satan who carries the woman wherever he chooses. The woman sitting on the scarlet beast is the Roman

Catholic Church which is rich and which is clothed with purple and scarlet, the chief colours of the robes of the Popes and cardinals of the church. As was said before, the Roman Catholic Church blasphemes God. This church also has corrupt teachings obtained through her spiritual adultery (fornication) with Satan. The Roman Catholic Church is called MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS (PROSTITUTES) AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. For the Protestant churches which accept her false Sunday Sabbath have thereby also committed spiritual adultery (fornication) as prostitutes with Satan. And it is the Roman Catholic Church which has killed 50 million to 100 million of the saints, who are martyrs for Jesus' sake.

The beast "that was, and is not, and yet is" (Revelation 17:8) represents the Roman Catholic Church (papacy). This was the church "that was" during its reign from 538 A.D. to 1798 A.D., "and is not" when the Pope died in exile after being taken captive by the French general Berthier in 1798 A.D., "and yet is," in that, the Roman Catholic Church (papacy) has today been restored, though it does not now wield the power that it once did. The seven heads of the beast are symbolic of the seven mountains, or seven hills, upon which the city of Rome is built, where Rome is the city from which the Roman Catholic Church takes its name.

There are seven kings, and the five which have fallen up to the year 1798 A.D. are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, pagan Rome, papal Rome (the Roman Catholic Church) in that order. The sixth king that now is, is "the king of the south" (Daniel 11:5) which is symbolic of all the anti-Bible religions and beliefs in the world today such as Islam, Hinduism, atheism, and secularism, along with the Roman Catholic Church which is the chief antichrist power. The seventh king that is not yet come, and that must reign a short time, is the threefold union of (1) spiritualism, (2) apostate (unfaithful) Protestantism in America, and (3) the Roman Catholic Church, that is to come.

Of this threefold union, Satan is the prime mover. So, ultimately,

the seventh king is the last days manifestation of the “king of the south” (Daniel 11:5) which is Satan. For Satan appears in different places all over the world, as he “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4. That is, Satan makes his appearance to the world claiming to be Christ, “even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. The seventh king, Satan, is overthrown by Christ, the “king of the north” (Daniel 11:6) “as the LORD [who] liveth, [and] which saveth [spiritual] Israel” (1 Samuel 14:39) when Christ comes to the earth a second time.

Now, the eighth king is also Satan, who at the end of the 1,000 years (the millennium) when Christ comes to the earth a third time with all the saints, leads all the wicked among humanity who have ever lived and who have then been resurrected by God, against Christ and all the saints. This eighth king, Satan, is of the seven kings that were before, in that, it is Satan who was the “evil spirit” (Judges 9:23) that was inspiring and leading all the previous six kings from among humanity. And this eighth king, Satan, goes to eternal ruin because, in the end, Satan, his evil angels, and all the wicked among humanity, are annihilated by God because they have not repented of their sins.

The ten horns which are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one (prophetic) hour, that is, 15 literal days, with the beast (the Roman Catholic Church) are the leaders among those, who earlier in the book of Revelation, were represented by the Euphrates River. These ten kings, with one mind, give their power and strength to the Roman Catholic Church, and they war against Christ, the Lamb, and God’s people on earth. But Christ, when He returns to the earth the second time, overcomes Satan, the Roman Catholic Church, the ten

kings, and all the rest of the wicked among humanity.

The waters where the whore (the Roman Catholic Church) sits are the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, of the Old World which is made up of the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. (In contrast, the New World is made up of the Americas, namely, North, Central, and South America.) The ten horns, that is, the ten kings shall rise up against the whore (the prostitute, the Roman Catholic Church) when they realise that they have been deceived by this church and that they have lost eternal life and this occurs under the sixth plague. And the woman sitting on the scarlet beast, that is, the Roman Catholic Church, is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

## **Babylon the Great Destroyed**

VISION: John then sees another angel come down from heaven having great power and he lightens the earth with his glory. The angel states with a strong voice that Babylon the great is fallen and has become the dwelling place of devils, of every foul spirit, and of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of the wrath (anger) of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich through her abundant delicacies. After this, John hears another voice from heaven calling people to come out of Babylon so that they do not partake of her sins nor receive her plagues. For her sins have reached up to heaven and God has remembered her wickedness.

The angel asks God to reward Babylon in double proportion according as she has glorified herself and lived luxuriously. Therefore, the angel says that her plagues shall come in one day with death, mourning, and famine, and she shall be completely burned with fire. For God who judges Babylon is strong. And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication with Babylon and

lived luxuriously with her shall mourn when they see her being burnt with fire. These kings say that in one hour Babylon's judgement has come upon her. The merchants of the earth shall also weep and mourn because no one buys their merchandise, which includes the souls of persons, anymore. And the angel says that that which Babylon lusted after are departed from Babylon and she shall find them no more.

The merchants of these things which were made rich by Babylon stand afar off for fear, weeping and wailing. For in one hour so great riches are come to nothing. And the angel calls for heaven, the holy apostles, and the prophets, to rejoice over Babylon's destruction for God has avenged them. And a mighty angel takes up a great millstone and casts it in to the sea and says that thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down. Then the voice of musicians, shall not be heard in Babylon anymore, neither craftsmen, nor the sound of a millstone. The light of a candle shall shine in her no more, the voice of the bridegroom and bride shall be heard in her no more. For her merchants were the great men of the earth and by her sorceries (witchcraft) were all nations deceived. And in Babylon was found the blood of prophets, of saints, and of all that were killed on earth.

After this, John heard a great voice of much people in heaven praising God. For true and righteous are God's judgments upon the great whore (prostitute), the Roman Catholic Church, which corrupted the earth with her fornication, and so God has avenged the blood of God's servants on her. Also, the twenty-four elders and four living creatures fall down and worship God who sits upon His throne. And a voice came out of the throne praising God, and John hears the voice of a great multitude like many waters and thunder praising God, for the all-powerful God reigns.

**INTERPRETATION:** This vision of the destruction of Babylon (Roman Catholic Church) is more or less literal and, therefore, has very little symbolic language. Except to say, that her plagues come in one prophetic day which is one literal year. Also, in

one prophetic hour so great riches are come to nothing which symbolises 15 literal days. The violence with which Babylon is thrown down represents the hatred with which those who, under the sixth plague, realise that they have been deceived by the Roman Catholic Church and, hence, have lost eternal life, destroy the Roman Catholic Church. Lastly, the great voice of much people in heaven praising God symbolises the voice of the saints (the sanctified) whom Christ takes to heaven with Him when He comes to the earth a second time.

## **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

**VISION:** The voices which John heard now call for gladness and rejoicing and to give honour to God for the marriage of the Lamb (Christ) has come and His wife has made herself ready. And to the Lamb's (Christ's) wife is granted by God that she should be clothed in fine linen that is clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And the angel tells John to write that those called to the marriage of the Lamb (Christ) are blessed by God, and that these are the true sayings of God. John then falls at the angel's feet to worship him and the angel tells John not to worship him. For the angel says that he himself is a fellow servant of God just like John and his brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, and John is to worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

**INTERPRETATION:** Here the wife of the Lamb, Christ, is the group of all the saints (the sanctified) who have ever lived. In addition, God explicitly teaches humanity not to worship angels. The Spirit of prophecy is one of the spiritual gifts given by God to the justified. In a special sense, though, the Spirit of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the Remnant Church, which is the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This church has the approximately 100,000 pages of the writings of Ellen G. White, all inspired

by the Holy Spirit, and which God refers to as “the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 19:10) and “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

## **The Second Coming of Christ to the Earth**

**VISION:** John then sees heaven opened and a white horse upon which sits Christ, who is called Faithful and True, and who righteously judges and makes war. Christ’s eyes are like a flame of fire and He has many crowns on His head, and a name written there that no one knows but Christ Himself. He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood and His name is called The Word of God. The armies in, heaven, sitting on white horses and clothed in fine linen that is white and clean, follow Christ. And out of Christ’s mouth there is a sharp sword that with it, Christ should strike the nations, and Christ shall rule them with a rod of iron. Also, Christ treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath (anger) of Almighty God and on His garment and on His thigh is written the name KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

**INTERPRETATION:** Here we have the time “when the Son of man [Christ] shall come in his glory [to the earth a second time], and all the holy angels with him.” Matthew 25:31. Christ treading the winepress in the fierceness of His anger refers to the fact that Christ will then “punish...the wicked for their iniquity [their wickedness].” Isaiah 13:11.

**VISION:** After this, John sees an angel standing in the sun who cries with a loud voice calling all the birds to come and gather themselves to the supper of the great God. The birds are to eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, of horses and their riders, of all people both free and slave, both small and great. John then sees the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Christ and His army. And the beast was taken along with the false prophet that worked miracles be-

fore the beast, and with which the false prophet deceived those who had received the Mark of the Beast and who worshipped the image of the beast.

These two were cast alive into a lake of fire and brimstone. And the rest of the people were killed with the sword of Christ who sat upon the horse, which sword came out of Christ's mouth, and the birds were filled with their flesh.

INTERPRETATION: "And the slain of the LORD [those killed by God] shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung [the excrement of animals] upon the ground." Jeremiah 25:33. Thus, here we see that ALL the wicked among humanity, including the Roman Catholic Church (the beast) and apostate (unfaithful) Protestantism in America, that is, the false prophet, who are living at the time of Christ's second coming to the earth are killed by God.

## **The Annihilation of All the Wicked**

VISION: John then sees an angel coming down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. The angel takes hold of the dragon, that old serpent, and the Devil (Satan), and binds him for 1,000 years (a millennium). And casts Satan into the bottomless pit, shutting him up, and setting a seal upon him, so that he should deceive the nations no more, until the end of the 1,000 years. At that time, Satan must be loosed for a short time.

After this, John sees thrones and the people sitting on them and God gives judgment into their hands. Thus, John sees the souls of them who were beheaded for their witnessing regarding Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands. These people lived and reigned with Christ for

1,000 years. This is the first resurrection and the rest of the dead did not live again until the 1,000 years were finished. Blessed and holy is the person who has a part in the first resurrection. On such people, the second death (annihilation by God) has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Christ for 1,000 years.

**INTERPRETATION:** Here Satan is bound by a chain of circumstances where all the wicked living on earth at the time of Christ's second coming have been killed by God, and all the righteous who have ever lived are alive in heaven. So, for 1,000 years Satan along with his evil angels are confined to the earth with no one else alive on earth for him to tempt or deceive.

**VISION:** And when the 1,000 years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And Satan shall go out to deceive all the wicked who have been raised from the dead by God in the second resurrection to life again, and this occurs at the end of the 1,000 years. So, Satan goes out to gather the nations of the wicked in the four corners of the earth, whom God refers to as Gog and Magog, and who are as numerous as the sand of the sea to battle. And the nations of the wicked along with Satan and his evil angels go up across the breadth of the earth and surround the camp of the saints (the sanctified) and of God, which is the beloved city. And fire comes down from God out of heaven and kills them all. And the Devil (Satan) that deceived the wicked among humanity was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night forever.

John then sees a great, white throne and God that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the sky fled away and no place was found for them. And John sees the wicked who were all once dead standing before God and God's books were opened, and another book, the book of eternal life, was opened. The dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and

death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged everyone according to their deeds. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whoever was not found written in God's book of eternal life was cast into the lake of fire to be burnt to ashes.

INTERPRETATION: This vision again is more or less literal. Except to say that Satan, the Roman Catholic Church (the beast), and apostate (unfaithful) Protestantism in America, that is, the false prophet, along with the rest of the wicked among humanity are all cast into a lake of fire because they had not repented of their sins. The fire burned, not literally forever, but until they all burn to ashes and then the fire goes out.

## **The New Heaven and the New Earth**

VISION (WITH INTERPRETATION IN BRACKETS): John then sees a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. After this, John sees the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for Christ, her husband. And a great voice out of heaven says that God's dwelling place is with humanity and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death, sorrow, crying, nor pain for these former things are passed away.

Then God who sits upon the throne tells John to write His words for they are true and faithful. God then says that He will freely give of the fountain of the water of eternal life to those who are (spiritually) thirsty. And he who overcomes (sin) will inherit all things and God will be their God and they shall be God's children. But the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whoremongers (prostitutes), sorcerers (those who practise witchcraft), idolaters, liars, shall have part of the lake which burns with fire and

brimstone (to be burnt to ashes), which is the second death.

And one of the seven angels with the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came and told John to come and the angel will show John the bride, the Lamb's (Christ's) wife. And the angel carried John away in the spirit to a great, high mountain and showed John the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. The city had the glory of God, a great high wall, and at the twelve gates twelve angels and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on the gates. There were three gates on each of the four sides to the east, north, south, and to the west. And the foundations of the city's wall had in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, who is Christ.

The length, breadth, and the height, of the city was twelve thousand furlongs. The angel measured the wall which was made of jasper to be 144 cubits (216 feet) high and the city was made of pure gold, like transparent glass. The foundations of the city were adorned with twelve precious stones, namely, jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and amethyst. Each gate was made of one pearl and the street of the city of pure gold, like transparent glass.

And John saw no Temple in the city for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Christ) are its Temple. The city had no need of the sun nor the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God gave it light, and the Lamb (Christ) is the city's light. The nations of those who are saved to eternal life by God shall walk in the light of the city and the saved kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into the city. The gates of the city shall not be shut all day for there is no night in the city. And the saved shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. Also, nothing that defiles, does abominable things, or makes a lie, shall enter into the city but those whose names are written in the Lamb's (Christ's) book of (eternal) life.

The angel then shows John a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, coming out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. On either side of the river is a trunk of the tree of life (which is united

at the top in one tree). This tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit every month and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, instead the throne of God of the Lamb (Christ) is there and God's servants, (the saved of the earth), shall serve God. These shall see God's face and God's name shall be in their foreheads. There shall be no more night, no need of a candle nor the light of the sun, for God gives His people light and God's people shall reign forever and ever.

The angel then tells John that God's sayings are faithful and true, and it is God who sent His angel to show John the things that must be done shortly. And Christ says that He is coming quickly to the earth again. Blessed are those people who keep the sayings of the prophecy of the book of Revelation. John then says that, having seen and heard these things, he once again fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed him these things. The angel again tells John not to worship him for he is a fellow servant (of God) just like John, John's brethren, the prophets, and them that keep the sayings of the book of Revelation. So, John, the angel says, is to worship God.

The angel then tells John not to seal up the sayings of the prophecy of the book of Revelation for the time is soon to come. Let the unjust and filthy, the angel says, remain unjust and filthy, and let the righteous and holy remain righteous and holy. And Christ says that He is coming quickly with His reward for every human being according to their deeds. I am, Christ says, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The angel then says blessed are those people who do God's commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city, (new Jerusalem). For outside the city are people whom God calls dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers (prostitutes), murderers, idolaters, and whosoever loves to tell lies.

Next, Christ says to John, I Jesus have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I, Christ, am the root and the

offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. The (Holy) Spirit and the bride of Christ say, Come, and let those who hear the Spirit say, Come. Let those people who are (spiritually) thirsty come and freely take of the water of life.

The angel then says that he testifies to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of the book (of Revelation), that if anyone adds anything to the book (of Revelation), God will add to them the plagues written in the book (of Revelation). And if anyone takes away anything from the book (of Revelation), God will take away their part out of the book of (eternal) life, and out of the holy city, (new Jerusalem), and from the things written in the book (of Revelation). Christ, who testifies of these things says, Surely, I come quickly. To this the John says, Amen, Even so, come Lord Jesus. John then pronounces a blessing upon every human being and ends by saying, Amen.

## Themes

- Visions from God given to a faithful Christian leader.
- An angel sent from God with a message to a faithful Christian leader.
- Letters from Christ to Christian churches.
- Prophecies of the history of the Christian church.
- Prophecies of God's answer to the prayers of the saints (the sanctified) of all ages.
- A survey of the history of the conflict between God and Satan.
- A prophecy of a death decree by Satan for those who do not worship him.

- God's last warning messages to the world.
- The prophecy of the seven last plagues on earth.
- Prophecy of a large, counterfeit Christian church and its destruction.
- Prophecy of the second coming of Christ to the earth.
- Prophecy of the 1,000 years (the millennium) during which Satan is alone with his evil angels on earth.
- The annihilation by God of all the wicked.
- The new heaven and the new earth where God dwells with the saved from among all humanity.

## **God as Revealed in the Book**

- God who will conquer Satan in his war to overthrow God.
- God who knows the future and has made successful plans to meet every emergency of the Christian church on earth.
- God who gives prophecies to prevent people from destroying themselves.
- God who gives visions of things to come on earth.
- Christ who will return to the earth as a victorious King.
- God who will annihilate all the wicked.
- God who moves His throne to the new earth and dwells with the saved from among all humanity.

## Connections with the Rest of the Bible

Here are descriptions of the state of the earth during the 1,000 years (the millennium). “Behold, the LORD [God] maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD [God] hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” Isaiah 24:1-5.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man [no person], and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD [God], and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD [God] said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end [of humanity for the saved from among all humanity are in heaven].” Jeremiah 4:23-27.

## Spiritual Applications

*Pray* to God sincerely and *ask* God to help you to do His will, believing that God *will* help you, and thus you *will* be enabled to make the spiritual applications noted below:

- Read, study, and live in accordance with God's will as revealed in the book of Revelation.
- Study the book of Daniel together with the book of Revelation, which is the complement of the Book of Daniel.
- Pray, read, study, and obey, the entire Bible so that you know the Scriptures well and cannot be deceived by any means.
- Preach the Three Angels' Messages of the book of Revelation which are God's last warning messages to the world.
- Teach the prophecies of the book of Revelation to all others.
- Take the necessary steps to be justified (declared righteous) by God and sanctified (made holy) by God as this is the **ONLY WAY** to be kept by the power of God from the errors of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Pray for yourself and others that you will be saved by God from the snares of Satan.
- Learn to pray and to fast so that you have victory over the indulgence of appetite, and so avoid receiving the Mark of the Beast when Satan brings a loss of all economic support and a death decree to bear upon you to cause you to worship Satan instead of God.

## *About Author*

Andrea P. Sutherland writes Christian nonfiction to cause everyone to desire everlasting life and to guide them on the path to becoming a victorious Christian. She loves God with her whole heart and she spends her time every day seeking to know God better. This is the all-consuming desire of her life. For more information about Andrea and her books, her other resources, and to contact her, visit her website at [onlyrepairer.com](http://onlyrepairer.com). Andrea lives in Jamaica.