

SEVEN YEAR WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Lessons 27-39

Third Quarter

II Kings 1 -- Ezra

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FOREWORD

WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

In THE RESTORER, Vol. 17, No. 9, "The Voice of Lincoln Bible Institute,"--now known as Lincoln Christian College--for January 31, 1961, is a pertinent question for us all. It is "Why Study the Old Testament?" Anyone dedicated to the movement to restore New Testament Christianity obviously acknowledges, by that very fact that the New Testament is the book for Christians. HOWEVER, DOES THAT MEAN THAT WE ARE TO TEAR OUT AND DISCARD THE FIRST THIRTY-NINE BOOKS of our Bible? THESE, TOO, ARE THE WORD OF GOD! It was of these books that Peter wrote when he stated: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," (II Peter 1:21). IF GOD SAW FIT TO GIVE THEM, HOW ARE WE TO CONTINUE TO IGNORE OR TO NEGLECT THEM, AS HAS SO OFTEN BEEN DONE?

The following excerpts from the aforementioned article show that the Old Testament should be studied because of:

1. Its Importance in the Life of Jesus. Many times our Lord quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures. 'These are they,' he said, 'that testify of me' (John 5:39). . . many of the events in the life of our Lord, as well as much of His teaching, would be little understood apart from a knowledge on our part of the Old Testament.

2. Its Antiquity and Its Language. Portions of the Old Testament are older than the dawn of Greek literature. It is about an ancient Oriental people who differed vastly from ourselves, not only in language but in culture, customs, environment, and historical setting. Its message is set forth in a language that is some three thousand year's before our time. . . More attention than that of a casual reading needs to be given to this Book.

3. Its Message for our Day. The Old Testament is ancient, but its message reaches down to our own generation and calls for translation into terms that modern man can comprehend. In an age that emphasizes the supreme value of wisdom there needs to be thundered forth anew the truth that one has not even begun the path to wisdom UNTIL HE HAS KNOWN THE FEAR OF GOD!

4. The Changing Emphasis of Present Day Old Testament Liberal Scholarship. A few years ago it was rather widely believed by liberal scholars of the Bible that the field of Old Testament study had been quite exhausted. Certain 'assured results' of high criticism were initialed Q. E. D., and he who dared to question was labeled a dogmatist or an obscurantism. . many new sources of information. . . many of the conclusions that were formerly hastily arrived at by the critics HAVE BEEN ABANDONED, and others have BEEN GREATLY MODIFIED, so that the net result has been a tendency towards a more conservative position on many issues. . . these conservative views, on the part of many liberals have been reached by the application of the critical method and not through dogmatism. . . they indicate that the conservative scholar was indeed correct in some of his views. .

5. The New Sources Available for Biblical Study. Extensive archaeological work of recent years at the ancient sites of Jericho, Nuzi, Ugarit, and Mari have provided sensational finds in the way of artifacts, literary works. . . a number of rare words of the Hebrew Bible, formerly obscure, have been made clear.

6. The Inspired Writers of the New Testament Had an Old Testament Background. It is true that the New Testament was written in Greek. However, its authors, for the most part, were Hebrews. . . native tongue was Aramaic, a language closely akin to the Hebrew of the Old Testament. And their thought patterns were conditioned by that fact.

If you are not privileged to study at Lincoln Christian College, or another Bible College like Lincoln, you may study this WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE, a twenty-eight quarter series on the WHOLE BIBLE from Genesis through Revelation.

You can, if you will, read the thirty-nine (39) books of the Old Testament of 929 chapters, and the twenty-seven (27) books of 260 chapters! Begin today to read the sixty-six (66) books of the Bible, 1189 chapters. In ONE YEAR you easily can read the Bible by reading three (3) chapters each day in the Old Testament, and one (1) chapter in the New Testament! "Search the scriptures" (John 5:39, King James Version)!

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 27
II Kings 1-2

Page 1
Memory Verses: Psalm 105:5

Memory Verse:

"Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgment of his mouth"
(Psalm 105:5).

Public Reading: II Kings 2:1-11.

TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA'S CALL

II Kings is a continuation of the story begun in I Kings, giving parallel accounts of the two kingdoms (Northern, 10 tribes; Southern or Judah, 2 tribes) on to the captivity. Israel fell in 721 B. C. to the Assyrians (II Kings 17:23). Judah was captured in four installments; Zedekiah was taken captive and the city burned in 586 B. C. (II Kings 25).

To God's prophet Elijah, came the task of rebuking sin and announcing God's judgment thereon. To Ahab and idolatrous Israel he foretold the drought of three and one-half years (I Kings 17:1; James 5:17, 18). He branded Ahab as the real troubler, as the cause of drought, of Israel (I Kings 18:17, 18). He slew three false prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:40; Deut. 18:20), and in Naboth's vineyard brought the tidings that Ahab's house would be cut off, Jezebel should be eaten by the dogs and that his royal blood should be licked up by the dogs (I Kings 21:19-24; 22:34-38). The man of God, then or now, has a terrifying responsibility in delivering God's message (II Timothy 3:16-4:8).

A woman once said to me: "I'd rather hear a pretty lie than the ugly truth any day." She amazed me. Do you not agree that it is better for a doctor to hurt you by cutting away a diseased part of your body than to have the whole body die? Such a moral cancer in the woman mentioned, and which she would not let Christ remove, explains why she forsook her husband and family. She is now living in adultery with another man.

Before his translation (his removal to heaven without dying), Elijah had one more judgment from God to deliver to idolatrous Ahaziah king of Israel (855-854 B. C.), who reigned two years and also as co-regent with his father Ahab, and wicked like him (I Kings 22:51).

I. Checking Up On An Evil King (I Kings 22:51-II Kings 1:1-18)

"Ahaziah the son of Ahab . . . did evil" (I Kings 22:51, 52): Ahab's son walked in the way of his evil father and mother. This is another illustration of: "Like father, like son." He disobeyed God and "served Baal, and worshipped him" (I Kings 22:53), as his father had done (I Kings 16:31).

"Then Moab rebelled against Israel . . ." (II Kings 1:1): Moab was subdued by David (II Samuel 8:2). It was allotted to Israel when the kingdom was divided. Tired of paying heavy tribute to Israel, Moab rebelled when Ahab died (II Kings 3:4, 5).

"Ahaziah fell down through a lattice . . ." (II Kings 1:2): The king fell through the grating in his upper room at Samaria. The grating was either a window furnished with a shutter of latticework, or a door of latticework in the upper room. Severely injured, he resorted to Baalzebub of Ekron to obtain an oracle concerning the result of his illness.

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"The Lord said to Elijah . . . Arise, go . . ." (II Kings 1:3): This was the last act of Elijah's ministry before his translation. It was a judgment of death on a king who worshipped dumb idols instead of the living God!

"God . . . Baalzebub . . ." (II Kings 1:3): Ahaziah forsook the God of Israel. He turned to Baalzebub, the god Ekron. Baal was viewed at Ekron as the producer of flies and hence able to control the pest. The Fly-God governed the coming and going of the flies; they felt the flies were "apparently endowed with prophetic power themselves." Hence, a special power of prophecy was attributed to this god. To inquire of such an idol whether he would recover from his fall, Ahaziah turned from Almighty God to an idol that has ears that hear not, eyes that see not!

"Thou . . . shalt surely die" (II Kings 1:4): God knows the future, and Elijah delivers the blunt truth to an idolatrous king. He would die!

"He was a hairy man . . ." (II Kings 1:8): Since the messengers quickly returned, Ahaziah said: "Why are ye now turned back?" (verse 51). They told him of Elijah's verdict to them (verses 6, 7), and giving a description of his dress, the king said: "It is Elijah the Tishbite." "Hairy" refers to Elijah's dress of sheepskin, goatskin, or camelhair.

"Thou man of God. . . Come down" (II Kings 1:9): The angry king knowing his father, Ahab had not been able to silence Elijah, thought he would do so. Therefore, he sent fifty soldiers to arrest him (verse 10). Twice Ahaziah attempted to capture Elijah, and in each case, the answer of God on behalf of his servant was a swift judgment of fire (verses 10b-12). To consult an idol was a breach of God's law (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7).

"The Lord said . . . Go down" (II Kings 1:15): Although 150 soldiers could not compel him to go before king Ahaziah, when God's angel spoke Elijah, without hesitation arises and with his own lips tells the king he shall die (verses 13-16). "So he died" (II Kings 1:17). Jehoram, his brother, reigned in his stead (II Kings 3:1).

The nation was degraded. However, TRUTH was kept alive, despite the apostasy, and God was still governing and moving carrying out His own purpose. God abides. Only this fact kept Elijah firm and steady in his service!

II. Elijah Is Caught Up to Heaven (II Kings 2:1-11)

"When the Lord would take up Elijah. . ." (II Kings 2:1): Ten years must have elapsed since Elijah had called Elisha to be his disciple, and his successor (I Kings 19:16-21). His work is drawing to a close. He wanted to be alone, but Elisha would not leave him.

"By a whirlwind . . ." : God would take up his servant to heaven in a tempestuous storm, which was frequently the herald of the divine self-revelation of God to man (see Job 38:1; 40:6; Ezek. 1:4; Zech. 9:14). For about twenty-five years, Elijah had preached against Baalism to drive it out of Israel. He had hard, rough, and disagreeable work to do. He thought he had failed. But God did not think he had failed, and "sent a deputation of Angelic chariots to bear him away in triumph to heaven."

"Elijah went . . . Gilgal . . . to Bethel" (II Kings 2:1, 2): This Gilgal was about four miles distant from Bethel and Shiloh. It was a school of the prophets, in the hills of Ephraim. He visited the school of the prophets at Bethel (verse 3), and Jericho (verses 4, 5). What sacred partings these were. Elisha and the young prophet-to-be knew God was going to take the fiery prophet from their midst. Would it MAKE A DIFFERENCE in our words and actions if we knew God would take us to heaven today? Or, if unrepentant, that we would go to hell?

"I will not leave thee . . ." (II Kings 2:6): Elisha loyally stood by Elijah until he was translated to heaven. Under the inward impulse of the Spirit of God, Elisha would be an eyewitness of Elijah's glorification that he might receive the spiritual inheritance of the first-born from his departing spiritual father.

"Let a double portion of thy spirit . . ." (II Kings 2:9): Crossing the Jordan by a miraculous smiting (verse 8), Elijah no longer seeks to hide from Elisha his translation. "Ask what I shall do for thee." Elisha requested

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the "double portion," of the first-born (Deut. 21:17). He desires to be anointed as the successor and heir of Elijah's office of prophet. It was promised on condition that Elisha see the prophet as he ascended into heaven (verses 9-10).

"Chariot of fire . . ." (II Kings 2:11): Elijah had been a prophet of fire on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:38), and to the soldiers of Ahaziah (II Kings 1:12, 14). Now he is borne to heaven in "a chariot of fire." This occurred east of the Jordan near where Moses was buried (Deut. 34:1). Moses and Elijah became heavenly pals. "They found their greatest joy in looking forward to the coming of their Greater Pal, with whom they made a brief earthly appearance" (Matthew 17:3).

III. Elisha Is Chosen to Succeed Elijah (II Kings 2:12-25)

"Elisha saw it . . . My father . . ." (II Kings 2:12): He met Elijah's condition (verse 10). God put his stamp of approval on Elisha. The sons of the prophets accented him (verse 15).

"And he took the mantle of Elijah . . ." (II Kings 2:14): He began to work miracles, as Elijah had done (verses 8, 14b). Two incidents of his ministry are recorded: one beneficent, the healing of the waters (verses 19-22); and the other punitive, the destruction of the infidel, idolatrous "little children" or young men who with contempt called Elisha "bald-head." They died (verses 23-25) for their irreverence to God's man and this method of divine revelation.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Ahaziah, Ahab's son, worship God (II Kings 1:2; I Kings 22:51-53)?
2. To what extent had Baal-worship revived (I Kings 22:53)?
3. How did Ahaziah fall through the lattice (II Kings 1:2)?
4. What is said of Moab at this time (II Kings 1:1; 3:4, 5)?
5. Who was Baal-zebub?
6. What message did ELIJAH send to Ahaziah (II Kings 1:3-6)?
7. When the messengers described the man and his message, what did Ahaziah say (II Kings 1:5-8)?
8. What happened to the first two companies of fifty men (II Kings 1:9-12)? The third fifty (verses 13-16)?
9. Did Ahaziah die as Elijah prophesied (II Kings 1:17)?
10. Who was Jehoram (II Kings 1:17; 3:1)?
11. Where was this Gilgal (II Kings 2:1, 2)?
12. How did they know what would be done (II Kings 2:3, 5)?
13. What is the meaning of "a double portion of thy spirit" (II Kings 2:9)?
14. On what condition did Elijah say the request would be granted (II Kings 2:10,11)? Did Elisha meet the condition (II Kings 2:12)?
15. Why the search by the fifty (II Kings 2:16-18), and what was proved by it?
16. What was wrong with the water supply at Jericho (II Kings 2:19)?
17. How did Elisha "heal" the waters, and are those waters good now (II Kings 2:20-22)?
18. What irreverence did the "little children" or "juvenile delinquents" of Bethel show toward God's man (II Kings 2:23)?
19. What is the meaning of "cursed them in the name of the Lord" (II Kings 2:24), and purpose of the death of these forty-two boys?
20. In which kingdom were Bethel and Jericho (II Kings 2:25)?

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Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 28

Page 1

II Kings 3-4

Memory Verses: II Kings 4:9

Memory Verse:

"And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually" (II Kings 4:9).

Public Reading: II Kings 4:8-17.

MINISTRY OF ELISHA

When a great man dies, we wonder who can take his place and if it can ever be filled. God always has his man ready; His cause goes marching on. When David fell, the nation naturally would ask, "And who can succeed him?" but Solomon's wisdom and glory outshone his father's as long as he served God faithfully. When a Moses fell, a Joshua arose. When Elijah ("Jehovah is God") was translated into the heavens in a chariot of fire and by a whirlwind. His mantle fell on Elisha ("God is Salvation"). A double portion of his spirit was visited on this junior who immediately in word and work proved a worthy successor (II Kings 2:1-14, 21).

Today we see Elisha rebuking and giving a revelation of victory to Jehoram and in a ministry of mercy as four miracles were performed.

I. Moab Rebels and is Defeated (II Kings 3:1-27)

1. General Character of Jehoram's reign (II Kings 3:1-3).

"Jehoram the son of Ahab. . ." (II Kings 3:1): Jehoram is the same as Joram, which mean "Let Jehovah be exalted." He was king of Israel, succeeding his childless brother Ahaziah. He was the tenth king on the separate throne of Israel, and reigned twelve years (854-843 B. C.)

"He wrought evil . . . but not like his father . . . mother" (II Kings 3:2): This is an old case of parental delinquents being worse than the juvenile delinquent. However, all three were delinquents!

2. Three kings march against Moab and enquire of the Lord (II Kings 3:4-19).

"Mesha king of Moab . . ." (II Kings 3:4): This king had paid tribute to Ahab. He now rebelled. The Moabite Stone, now in the Louvre Museum, tells the story of Mesha's rebellion. The stone of blue basalt, was found at Dibon in 1868, twenty miles east of the Dead Sea. It is four (4) feet high, two (2) feet wide, and fourteen (14) inches thick. "I, Mesha. . . warred against the king of Israel. . . drove him out. . . destroyed his (4) cities. . . devoted the spoil to Chemosh, and the women and girls to Ashtar."

"Jehoram. . . numbered Israel" (II Kings 3:6): He was getting ready to crush the Moabite rebellion. Jehoshaphat the king of Judah (verse 7) and the "king of Edom" (verse 9) joined him as allies. Jehoshaphat joined in the war because he wished to punish the Moabites for their invasion of Judah (II Chron. 20:1-34), although he was blamed by the prophets for his alliance with Ahab and Ahaziah (II Chron. 19:2 and 20:37).

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"The Lord hath called. . ." (II Kings 3:10): The Lord had not called the three kings together. Jehoram had called them together, and had decided to go "The way through the wilderness of Edom," the long southern route around the Dead Sea, and attack Moab at the most defenseless part of the king's domain. It is an old failing of man to make decisions that are bad, and then blame the Lord for the calamity that comes!

"Here is Elisha. . ." (II Kings 3:11): Directed there by the Spirit of God for this special purpose of distinguishing him in the eyes of Jehoram, and of pointing Jehoram to the Lord as the only true God. Elisha as Elijah's servant and pupil had "poured water on the hands of Elijah." He was recognized as a true prophet of God. He had a good reputation. The three kings came to him (verse 12). The allies were about to perish from lack of water (verse 9).

"Get thee to the prophets of thy father . . ." (II Kings 3:13): When men get into trouble, why don't they still trust in their false gods? Elisha taunts Jehoram with this harpoon of truth and declares "were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat. . . I would not look toward thee" (verse 14). What great power even one man wields when yielded to God!

"Bring me a minstrel . . ." (II Kings 3:16): The effect of soothing music is highly regarded in the East. Ancient prophets resorted to it before entering their work to prepare them by praise and prayer to receive a revelation from God (see Hebrews 1:1-3).

"Valley full of ditches . . ." (II Kings 3:16): Capable of holding water. From the eastern mountains of Edom a great fall of rain came and filled the ditches (verse 20).

"Water . . . red as blood" (II Kings 3:22): The reflection of the morning sun gave the water the appearance of blood. The Moabites thought the allies had fought among themselves (verse 23), and foolishly rushed to their death (verses 24-25).

"Eldest son . . . offered him" (II Kings 3:27): This was human sacrifice to appease the wrath of a dumb idol-Chemosh. This resulted in Israel's return to their own land.

II. Miracles of Mercy of Elisha (II Kings 4:1-44)

1. Elisha relieves a prophet's widow (II Kings 4:1-7).

"My husband is dead. . ." (II Kings 4:1): The prophets, priests and Levites were allowed to marry. Prophets then, like preachers now, had little or no earthly treasures. This prophet died and left his family poverty-stricken. A widow's plight, then or now, is not easy.

"Creditor. . . take sons": Falsely interpreting Ex. 21:7 and Lev. 25:39-41 the creditor demanded the widow's sons as bondmen. Elisha was touched by her plight. Like Jesus, Elisha went about "doing good" (Acts 10:38).

"What hast thou . . . a pot of oil" (II Kings 4:2): It was all she had. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." See John 11:39, 41; Matt. 14:17, 19.

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"Borrow the vessels . . ." (II Kings 3:3): The oil increased until every vessel was filled. HER FAITH LIMITED HER POSSESSIONS!

"Borrow not a few." So does our faithfulness as God's stewards (Mal. 3:8-10; II Cor. 9:6-8). God is anxious to fill us with every good thing (Phil. 4:19). Nevertheless, we must be "found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2). At Elisha's direction, she sold the oil, paid the debt, and lived "off the rest" (verses 4-7).

2. The kindness of a Shunammite rewarded (II Kings 4:8-17).

"A great woman . . ." (II Kings 4:8): Her home was at Shunem few miles north of Jezreel. Elisha often passed her wealthy home, and enjoyed its hospitality.

"Let us make a little chamber . . ." (II Kings 4:10): A small room in the porch or gateway which would afford Elisha a quiet, restful place to stay as he "passed by" (verse 9). Thank God for the many homes where a "Prophet's room" has given me a place for rest, meditation and study as I've traveled over America!

"Thou shalt embrace a son . . ." (II Kings 4:16): Desiring to how his appreciation of the kindness and love shown him, Elisha asked if there is some favor he can bestow upon her (verses 11-13). She and her husband are promised a son (verses 14-17) which comes to pass as God's man had promised (verses 17-18; Heb. 13:1-3; Gen. 18:12, 13; 21:2).

3. The child dies and is revived by Elisha (II Kings 4:18-37).

"My head . . ." (II Kings 4:19): Death comes to the wealthy and to the poor alike. The lad "sat on" his mother's "knees till noon, and then he died" (verse 20).

"I will not leave thee . . ." (II Kings 4:30): She felt that Elisha could raise her son from the dead. She believed that Gehazi could not raise him from the dead (verse 31). Her faith in the God of Elisha was justified, for the lad was raised from the dead and restored to his mother (verses 32-37). God's power raised the lad. Our hope is in the resurrected Son of God (John 11:21-27; Rev. 1:18).

4. Elisha makes uneatable food wholesome (II Kings 4:38-41).

"There is death in the pot . . ." (II Kings 4:40): The "pottage for the sons of the prophets" (verse 38) consisted of meat cut into small pieces mixed with rice, meal or other vegetables. The "wild gourds" (verse 39) were probably wild cucumbers. The extremely bitter taste alarmed the pupils of the prophets when they began to eat, and they cried: "There is death in the pot." Elisha had meal brought and "cast into the pot" and uneatable food was made wholesome.

5. Feeding 100 pupils with twenty barley loaves (II Kings 4:42-44).

"They shall eat . . . leave thereof" (II Kings 4:43): The food was blessed by the word of the Lord's prophet, and there was food enough, and to spare. Is this not a type of the miraculous feeding of the people by Christ (Matt. 14:16ff; 15:36, 37; John 6:11, 12). See Deut. 18:4, 5; Num. 18:13.

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QUESTIONS

1. Who followed Ahaziah as king over Israel and what was his attitude toward Jehovah (II Kings 3:1-3)?
2. What king rebelled against Jehoram of Israel, and why (II Kings 3:4)?
3. What three nations formed an alliance against Moab (II Kings 3:5-9)?
4. What was the line of their march, where were they, and what was their fear (II Kings 3:8-10)?
5. For the sake of which king did Elisha deliver his prophetic message (II Kings 3:14)?
6. What two things did Elisha promise, and what were they to do (II Kings 3:16-20)?
7. Why take the water for blood (II Kings 3:22-23,17)?
8. To whom did the king of Moab sacrifice his son (II Kings 3:27)?
9. What two incidents had brought sorrow to the prophet's widow (II Kings 4:1)?
10. What right had the creditor to do this (II Kings 4:1; Lev.25:39, 40)?
11. By what method did God relieve her distress (II Kings 4:1-7)? Who limited what the widow received (II Kings 4:3,6)? Am I "limiting" God, and in what ways (Psa.78:41; I John 5:2,3)?
12. Where was Shunem, and what is the meaning of "great woman" (II Kings 4:8)?
13. Why make such provision for Elisha, and how could the chamber be "on the wall" (II Kings 4:10)?
14. Do you think Christians today should be more hospitable (Rom. 12:13; I Pet. 4:9; Heb. 13:1-3)?
15. How did God reward her for this kindness to Elisha (II Kings 4:14-17; 8:1, 2)?
16. Of what disease did the child die, and who restored life to the lad (II Kings 4:19-37)?
17. What was pottage (II Kings 4:38), and why were the prophets reduced to such fare?
18. As they were eating, what did one cry out (II Kings 4:40), and was the poisoned pottage made palatable (II Kings 4:41)?
19. Why the barley bread and grain (Deut. 18:4, 5; Num. 18:13) and what miracle of our Lord did it form a type (Matt. 14:16ff; 15:36, 37; John. 6:11, 12)?
20. Do you think you can outgive God (Prov. 11:25, 26; 13:7; Lk. 6:38; Mal. 3:8-10; II Cor. 9:6-8)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 29
II Kings 5

Page 1
Memory Verses: II Kings 5:14

Memory Verse:

"Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."
(II Kings 5:14)

Public Reading: II Kings 5:1-9.

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN

Christian missions, of course, begin with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The missionary spirit is not altogether lacking in the Old Testament. In this chapter we read of a very zealous missionary who braved much in order to bring a heathen to trust in God. The name of this "little Maid" missionary is not recorded, but this girl's name is surely recorded in heaven. Her action is an inspiration to those living in difficult times or places. Today our lesson deals with:

I. A Great Man (II Kings 5:1a)

"Naaman, captain of the host . . . (II Kings 5:1a): Naaman means "Pleasantness." He was a great man, being commander of the armies of Ben-hadad II (Josephus, Ant. vii, 15, 5), king of Damascene Syria. He is described "a great man with his master, and honorable . . . a mighty man of valor."

Our Lord dealt with this story as an actual happening (Luke 4:27). God had blessed this man with victory. Like another soldier, Cornelius (Acts 10), God heard his prayers and blessed him greatly. He was living up to the best he knew of right. Note the four things said of him: (1) He was captain of the Syrian host, (2) He was a great man with his master, (3) He was honorable, and (4) He was a valiant and successful leader!

II. A Great Malady (II Kings 5:1b)

"But he was a leper" (II Kings 5:1b): Leprosy was, and is, a terrible affliction. Lepers in Israel were forced to "dwell alone" (Lev. 13:46; 14:1ff). In Syria, although Naaman was afflicted with leprosy he could hold a very high state office in the closest associations with his king. However, the slow deadly progress of the malady would eventually compel Naaman to resign his position. All Syrian remedies had been applied, without effect.

Leprosy is an infection produced by a microbe." Hansen discovered it in 1871. It is contagious, although not readily communicated by casual contact. It is estimated there are ten million lepers in the world today. Leprosy is a type of sin (Lev. 13:44-46; Rom. 6:12-14).

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III. A Great Message (II Kings 5:2-4)

"Captive . . . Israel. . . a little maid" (II Kings 5:2): Captured in one of the many raids made by the Syrians on the northern border of Israel, this "little maid" proved to be the greatest blessing Naaman had received thus far in his life. A look at I Samuel 30:1-8 will show how the hit-and-run raids took place.

"The prophet . . . he would recover" (II Kings 5:3): When every Syrian means had been exhausted, this slave-girl bore her witness to the power of her God and His prophet. She let her light shine (Matt. 5:16) for God in her day! Are we as eager to tell those about us who are dying with the leprosy of sin about the One who alone can cleanse them (I John 1:7, 9)? Her faithfulness was well known; her word was believed (verse 4).

IV. A Great Mistake (II Kings 5:6-12)

"Go . . . unto the king of Israel" (II Kings 5:5): As the prophet lived in the domain of the king of Israel, the Syrian king felt he was reaching the right man. Of course, Jehoram the king of Israel had no power to cure leprosy. Naaman took enormous gifts with him to reward the one who could heal him of his leprosy.

"Am I God . . .?" (II Kings 5:7): When Jehoram received the letter (verse 6) from the king of Syria he "rent his clothes and said, "Am I God. . .?" Or, "Am I omnipotent like God?" (See Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6). The words of the letter were not so insolent in their meaning as Jehoram supposed, but simply asked the king to help him to be cured, as Israel had a wonder-working prophet. The Syrian king imagined that the king of Israel could do what he liked with his prophets and their miraculous powers. There was no ground of suspicion as Jehoram imagined that "he seeketh a quarrel against me," or starting another war. Tradition says it was Naaman who drew "his bow at a venture" and gave Ahab his death wound (I Kings 22:34). If this is correct, Jehoram would have added reasons to fear Naaman and the king's letter. Jehoram would not think readily of Elisha whom he hated (II Kings 3:14).

"Elisha . . . let him come now to me" (II Kings 5:8): Elisha helped Jehoram out of a tight spot and bade the king send Naaman to him that "he might know that there is a prophet in Israel."

"Go . . . wash in Jordan" (II Kings 5:10): Naaman was too proud to enter the prophet's humble dwelling. He "stood at the door" (verse 3) and waited for the prophet to come out to him. Elisha remained indoors and sent out a messenger with the term of Naaman's cleansing. It was not lack of courtesy which kept Elisha from coming to meet Naaman, but that the Syrian might know that it was not Elisha, but solely the power of God working through him that wrought the cure.

"I thought . . ." (II Kings 5:11): The non-appearance of the prophet and the command to dip in the Jordan seven times was an insult to Naaman's pride. The Jordan!? Fancy a Syrian dipping himself in that "clay-colored" river, when he could bathe in the rivers of Damascus.

"Abana and Pharpar . . ." (II Kings 5:12): The Abana the present Barada, or the cold river; its source is in Anti-Lebanon Mts. and flows through the city of Damascus; thence after fifty miles it is lost in the marshy lake Bahret el-Kibliyeh. The Pharpar: the swift, is the present Awaj, a little south of Damascus. Its total length is forty miles. It empties into lake Heijany. The great man Naaman made a great mistake and goes "away in a rage."

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Many people object to Christian baptism (immersion) on the same basis. "I THINK sprinkling is as good as immersion!" There is just one thing wrong with this sort of thinking, or lack of thinking. It is contrary to the teaching of the word of God. Read Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Roman 6:3-11; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:14. Think twice before you turn away from the plan of God, sinner friend!

V. A Great Miracle (II Kings 5:13-19)

"Do some great thing . . ." (II Kings 5:13): Most folk are looking for something spectacular. Not many want the plain, simple way of obedience to God's command. The sensible servants' appeal to Naaman caused the soldier to obey God's prophet.

"He . . . dipped himself seven times" (II Kings 5:14): Had he dipped himself six times in the Jordan, Naaman would not have been cleansed of his leprosy. He obeyed God's man, Elisha. Therefore, must we obey Jesus Christ to be cleansed of our sins (Heb. 5:9; John 14:6). Saul of Tarsus is told to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). The blood which cleanses (I John 1:7) is applied when in loving obedience we are immersed in water. There is no other way (Gal. 3:27; John 14:6; Acts 2:38), although some publishing houses --to sell their literature to various denominations-- "leave out" the plain teaching of God's Word and by omission make other ways seem "right" (Matt. 28:18-20; Rev. 22:18, 19).

"I know . . ." (II Kings 5:15): God's way is now plain to Naaman. Elisha refuses his presents (verse 16). He would not let the Syrian think that God's healing was to be bought for money. Naaman then asked for "two mules' burden of earth" with which to erect an altar to God that he might testify to God for his people. He wanted forgiveness when going to the idol Rimmon (Vs 18). Elisha sent him away with his blessing (verse 19).

VI. A Great Misery (II Kings 5:20-27)

"But Gehazi . . ." (II Kings 5:20): Elisha's servant coveted for himself a portion of the presents of the Syrian which his master had refused. "So Gehazi followed after Naaman" (verse 21) and the grateful Naaman insisted that Gehazi take "two talents" of silver (verses 22, 23). Gehazi misrepresented Elisha; he lied; he brought the true religion of the living God into disrepute.

"The leprosy . . . of Naaman shall cleave unto thee" (II Kings 5:27): Gehazi lied to his master, who charged him with all that Gehazi had done (verses 24-26). The servant went out covered with leprosy as if with snow (Ex. 4:6; Num. 12:10). Naaman because of his faith in the living God was cleansed of leprosy; Gehazi for love of money dishonored God and Elisha and went out a leper from Elisha's presence. See I Tim. 6:10; Matt. 26:14-16.

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QUESTIONS

1. Did Christ deal with the story as an actual happening (Luke 4:27)?
2. Who was Naaman, and what does his name mean (II Kings 5:1)?
3. What four desirable things are stated of Naaman (II Kings 5:1)?
4. What one thing marred Naaman's glory (II Kings 5:1b)?
5. Who was God's faithful witness in Naaman's household (II Kings 5:2-4)?
6. Why did the letter from the king of Syria terrify the king of Israel (II Kings 5:5-7; Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6)?
7. Who was the man of God who assumed responsibility for Naaman's healing (II Kings 5:8, 9)?
8. What caused Naaman to turn away in a rage (II Kings 5:10-12)?
9. How many times was Naaman told to dip himself in the Jordan (II Kings 5:10)?
10. Who encouraged Naaman to do the prophet's simple bidding (II Kings 5:13)?
11. Do you think Naaman would have been cleansed of his leprosy if he had dipped himself ONLY SIX times in the Jordan?
12. What was the result when he literally obeyed God's prophet (II Kings 5:14)?
13. Did Naaman truly receive Jehovah as his God (II Kings 5:15-18)?
14. What were the sins of Gehazi (II Kings 5:22-25)?
15. How did God punish Gehazi (II Kings 5:27)?
16. Do you think the story of Naaman is placed in the Bible for its historical value alone (Roman. 15:16; I Cor. 10:11)?
17. Did Naaman offer to God (through Elisha) before he was healed or afterward (II Kings 5:15)? How does he represent the one who offers to God today (II Cor. 8:5)?
18. In the light of our study, what does Naaman's burial in the Jordan and resurrection from the Jordan represent to us in the gospel age (Romans 6:3-11)?
19. Did Naaman plan to testify to his own people (II Kings 5:17, 18)?
20. What part of this lesson has been to you most helpful?

YEAR 2 - LESSON 30 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 30
II Kings 6-8

Page 1
Memory Verses: II Kings 6:16

Memory Verse:

"And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them (II Kings 6:16).

Public Reading: II Kings 6:1-7.

FURTHER MINISTRY OF ELISHA

Elisha ("God is Salvation") is noted for his long public and private ministry. The events in chapters 6-9 are not chronologically arranged.

Elisha's Miracles

Beginning his career of service, Elisha carried Elijah's mantle (II Kings 2:12), being clothed as a private citizen. He healed a spring of water (II Kings 2:21). He relieved the distress of the prophet's widow (II Kings 4:1-7). He restored the son of the Shunemite woman (II Kings 4:8-37). He healed the poisonous pottage and fed 100 men (II Kings 4:38-44). He healed Naaman (II Kings 5:1-19) and dooms Gehazi with leprosy (II Kings 5: 20-27).

Seven Resurrections

Elisha's restoring the Shunamite's son (II Kings 4:8-37) is one of the Bible's seven recorded resurrections: Elijah: the Widow's son (I Kings 17). Elisha: the Shunamite's son (II Kings 4). Jesus: Jairus' daughter (Mark 5); widow's son at Nain (Lk. 7); Lazarus (John 11). Peter: Dorcas (Acts 9). Paul: Eutyclus (Acts 20).

These seven do not include the resurrection of Jesus Christ, first fruits or capstone of them all, for He was raised without human instrumentality; nor the strange incident of Elisha's bones (II Kings 13:21).

His public ministry was extended and influential: Cf. II Kings 3:4-27; 6:8-23; 6:24-7; 8:7-15; 9, 10; 13:14-19. He greatly influenced Israel and Judah; was feared and respected by the Syrians (II Kings 8:7-9).

Elisha began his ministry in the reign of Jehoram (II Kings 3:1, 11, probably about 850 B. C., continuing through the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz, dying in the reign of Joash (II Kings 13:14-20) about 800 B. C.

Elisha's Seminary Work

Samuel (I Sam. 19:20) had started a school of the prophets at Ramah. Elisha had such schools at Bethel, Jericho Gilgal, and other places (II Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38; 6:1). Beside these, he seems to have resided at Carmel, Dotham, and Samaria (II Kings 2:25; 4:10, 25; 6:13, 32. He appears to have been a sort of pastor-prophet-teacher-adviser to the king.

A farmer boy of Abel-meholah in the upper Jordan valley (I Kings 19:16, 19), he was trained under Elijah.

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Of the Northern Kingdom, Elisha was probably a contemporary of Joel of the Southern kingdom. He may have been the teacher of Jonah and Amos, for they were boys at the time.

I. Three More Miracles of Mercy (II Kings 6:1-8:6)

1. A prophet's axe recovered (II Kings 6:1-7).

"Sons of the prophets . . . dwell with thee" (II Kings 6:1): This means "Sit before thee." They were his pupils. He instructed them. The place of the common abode was too small for them. They needed larger quarters in which to live and study (verse 2). Elisha agreed with them (verse 3).

"They came to Jordan . . ." (II Kings 6:4): Enough timber was to be found along the banks for their new dormitory and class rooms.

"Axe . . . water. . . borrowed" (II Kings 6:5): Literally it was "begged." The prophet was unable to buy an axe, because of his poverty, so he had begged one. Hence, the loss was so painful to him. In his poverty, he could not replace it.

". . . the iron did swim" (II Kings 6:6): This was by a miraculous exertion of power which God granted Elisha. The term "density is used to denote the mass, or quantity of matter, per unit volume." This means that one cubic foot of water weighs 62.4 pounds; one cubic foot of iron weighs 462 pounds. Hence, the density of iron is 7.4 TIMES THAT OF AN EQUAL VOLUME OF WATER. So, the axe-head of the sorrowful young prophet was sure to sink. But God's power is not limited by the operation of natural laws. So, the "iron did swim" and the prophet "put out his hand, and took it" (verse 7).

2. Elisha captures the Syrian band (II Kings 6:8-23).

"Syria warred against Israel. . ." (II Kings 6:8): Elisha told the king of Israel, Jehoram, the secret places of the Syrian army (verses 9, 10), thus allowing Israel to escape.

"Fetch him. . . he is in Dothan" (II Kings 6:13): The king of Syria determined to capture Elisha. He then could no longer give information to Jehoram. Elisha was at Dothan, about eleven miles north of Samaria.

"Open his eyes. . . may see" (II Kings 6:17): The Syrian host came by night and surrounded Elisha's house. The servant, successor to the leprous Gehazi, was paralyzed with fear (verses 1-16). He did not know of God's power through Elisha. The prophet prayed that his servant might see the guard of angels that encompass and defend us (Psalm 34:7). The eye of Faith SEES THE REALITY of the Divine presence where the ordinary eye sees nothing but the enemy's force (Rom. 8:31).

"Smite. . . blindness" (II Kings 6:18). This was not a total blindness, but a mental blindness (See Gen. 19:11), so that they did not recognize Elisha to be the one whom they sought. The prophet led them to Jehoram, king of Israel, who at the prophet's instruction fed them and sent them away in peace (verses 20-23). The object of the miracle would have been lost if the Syrians had been slain. The intention was to show them that they had to do with a prophet of the true God, against whom no human power could be of any avail that they might learn to fear the almighty God. This treatment did stop the flying parties from invading Israel.

2. Samaria besieged and relief predicted (II Kings 6:24-7:2).

"Syria . . . Besieged Samaria" (II Kings 6:24): Ben-hadad thus fulfilled a prophecy made to Ahab (I Kings 20:42). We do not know the length of times between verses 23 and 24. This was not guerrilla warfare. It was a full-fledged war.

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"Great famine in Samaria" (II Kings 6:25): Enormous prices were paid for the worst sort of food as a common occurrence.

"Dove's dung . . ." This was not the manure of doves, but roasted chick peas. Literal dung has been eaten in times of terrible famine.

"We boiled my son . . ." (II Kings 6:29): See Lev. 26:27-29 and II Deut. 28:15, 53. Cannibalism has been practiced during many wars in many different places, including in the Philippine Islands during World War II, according to our missionaries who were interned there for nearly three years.

"The head of Elisha . . ." (II Kings 6:31): The idolatrous king like his father, Ahab, blames an innocent man for all his trouble. He had upon his body the hairy garment of penitence and mourning a sign of humiliation before God; his heart needed to be bent before God and His judgment!

"Son of a murderer . . . mine head?" (II Kings 6:32): Like father, like son. See I Kings 18:4; 21:10-16.

". . . Should I wait for the Lord any longer?" (II Kings 6:33): The king is in despair, but the very utterance of his feelings shows he still has a weak glimmer of hope in the Lord. The prophet strengthened him.

"Hear ye the word of the Lord. . ." (II Kings 7:1): In his mercy, God again would give deliverance to Israel. The famine would end, despite the infidelity of the chief captain of the king (verse 2) who would die for his unbelief (verse 20).

4. The prediction fulfilled (II Kings 7:3-20).

"Why sit here . . ." (II Kings 7:3): The four lepers asked a question that many of the Lord's people need today to ask and answer rightly. They dared to die, and found life (verses 5, 8).

"Hear . . . noise of a great host" (II Kings 7:6, 7): Panic swept the host of the Syrians who fled in haste leaving everything behind (Prov.28: 7).

"We do not well . . ." (II Kings 7:9): After satisfying their own number, the lepers knew they would be found and punished as traitors the next morning if they kept their secret. Are we Christians doing well to keep the Gospel to ourselves when the world is dying for the Bread of Life (John 6:48; Matt. 28:18-20)?

"The people spoiled the tents . . ." (II Kings 7:16): The lepers reported the news of the flight of the Syrians, the investigation proved it was not a ruse (verses 10-15) and the famine was over in Samaria according to the promise of God!

"The people trod upon him . . ." (II Kings 7:17, 20): The starving multitude streamed out of the city to plunder the camp of the Syrians, and trampled the unbelieving aide-de-camp to death. Elisha's prediction was fulfilled (II Kings 7:2).

5. Kindness is rewarded (II Kings 8:1-6).

"Restore all that was hers . . ." (II Kings 8:6): The Shunammite woman was advised by Elisha to leave Israel for the Philistine plain for seven years (verses 1, 2). At the end of that time she returned to her home and found that relatives possessed it, or that the king had confiscated it. Gehazi told the king of her good deeds to Elisha, and Jehoram restored her lands (verses 3-6). It pays to be kind!

II. The Prophet Anoints Hazael, and Its Effect (II Kings 8:7-15)

"Shall I recover of this disease?" (II Kings 8:8): God's Spirit caused Elisha to come to Damascus to carry out the commission which Elijah had received at Horeb with regard to Hazael (I Kings 19:15). Ben-hadad king

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of Syria was sick at the time, and when Elisha's arrival was announced to him, he sent Hazael to the man of God, to see if he would recover from his sickness? This shows the wide influence of Elisha, the man of God.

"The man of God wept" (II Kings 8:11): Elisha read the thoughts of Hazael, and gazed on him until Hazael was ashamed. Elisha wept. He knew the cruel future which awaited the children of Israel (verses 12, 13), and that Hazael would kill his king (verse 14, 15).

III. The Reign of Jehoram of Judah (II Kings 8:16-24; II Chron. 21:1-20)

IV. The Reign of Ahaziah of Judah (II Kings 8:25-29; II Chron. 22:1-6)

QUESTIONS

1. In II Kings 6-8 are we dealing with Israel or Judah?
2. Who was king over Israel (Compare II Kings 1:17 with 8:24)?
3. Can you give scriptural proof that a king by the same name was reigning over Judah (II Kings 8:16, 17, 28, 29; II Chron. 21:1-6)?
4. Which prophet was ministering in Israel (II Kings 6:1)?
5. Why was the place "too strait" (II Kings 6:1), what kind of dwelling, and why go to the Jordan (II Kings 6:2)?
6. Was the axe "borrowed" or "begged" (II Kings 6:4-7)? Will God supply our needs today (Phil. 4:19)?
7. Who told Elisha of Ben-hadad's secret plan (II Kings 6:8-12; Dan. 2:20-23, 26-28; Amos 3:7)?
8. How did God prove to Elisha's servant and to the Syrians, that He was able to deliver His faithful prophet (II Kings 6:13-23, 16; II Chron. 32:7-8; Prov. 55:18; Rom. 8:31)?
9. What awful distress was caused by the Syrian siege (II Kings 6:24-29)?
10. What innocent man did Jehoram hold to blame for his condition (II Kings 6:31)?
11. What was the real cause of this suffering (II Kings 6:33; Lev. 26:27-29; Deut. 28:15, 53)?
12. Who told Elisha that the famine would end the following day (II Kings 7:1), and was the prediction fulfilled (II Kings 7:1, 16)?
13. How did God punish the man who refused to believe His word (II Kings 7:1, 17-20)?
14. What two prophecies did Elisha make (II Kings 8:12, 13), and were they fulfilled (II Kings 10:32, 33; 13:3ff)?
15. Who co-reigned with Jehoram of Judah, and succeeded him (II Kings 8:16; II Chron. 21:5)?
16. Did the connection with the idolatrous house of Ahab probably encourage Jehoram in his wickedness (II Kings 8:16-19; II Chron. 21:6)?
17. After Jehoram's death through whom did Athaliah continue her wicked work (II Chron. 22:1-4)?
18. How did God prevent the royal seed of Judah from being exterminated (II Chron. 22:10, 12)?
19. How was Athaliah daughter of Omri (II Kings 8:26, 18)?
20. Can you name some characteristics of Elisha, and contrast him with Elijah?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 31
II Kings 9-10

Page 1
Memory Verses: Psalms 103:10

Memory Verse:

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10).

Public Reading: (II Kings 9:30-37).

REIGN OF JEHU

It is one thing to be sorry for one's self, but a totally different thing to be sorry for one's sins. Many are sorry for their sins, but only sorry that they have been CAUGHT in sin! Repentance means that one is so sorry for his sins that he stops sinning and starts serving God. The sinners who were caught in their sins in this lesson showed no spirit of repentance.

Jehu (the meaning is uncertain, perhaps it means "Jehovah is he") was the instrument of destruction of Jehovah to rid Israel of the house of Ahab and Baal worship. He became king of Israel and reigned twenty-eight years, 843-816 B. C.

I. Jehu Is Anointed and Commissioned by Elisha's Order (II Kings 9:1-13)

1. Jehu is anointed king (II Kings 9:1-10).

"Elisha . . . called one . . . of the prophets" (II Kings 9:1): Elisha the prophet knew that the hour had come for the final scourge of God to be prepared for impenitent Jehoram, king of Israel (854-843 B. C.) God had originally told Elijah at Mt. Horeb (I Kings 19:15-18) to anoint Jehu king of Israel. Now the time of judgment had come. The wages of sin were about to be paid (Rom. 6:23). A young prophet is commissioned by Elisha to do the anointing of Jehu at Ramoth-gilead.

"Jehu. . . oil. . . anointed" (II Kings 9:2, 3): The young prophet obeyed Elisha. Thus Elijah through his successor Elisha completes the three-fold commission God had given Elijah at Mt. Horeb. Oil was "poured on his (Jehu's) head" to show that he was thus anointed as God's chosen for a special task! Jehu is told that God has chosen him to wipe out the house of Ahab and destroy Baal worship (verses 4-10).

2. The army proclaims Jehu king (II Kings 9:11-13).

". . . Jehu is king" (II Kings 9:13): Popular with the army, when General Jehu told his companions of his anointing to be king over Israel, the soldiers spread garments "under him on the top of the stairs" and "blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king." Jehu stands for power, place, and pride. He was a fitting instrument for swift and relentless judgment. He was a furious driver, which was symbolic of his character. He halted at nothing; he swept like a whirlwind from point to point until the things he desired were accomplished.

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The unthinking world is ready to shout for and stand with such a king. The hiss of hatred is given for the true king of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, who stands for self-sacrifice, love and service (John 19:5, 6).

II. Jehu Slays Two Kings (II Kings 9:14-29)

"Jehoram had kept Ramoth-gilead. . ." (II Kings 9:14): Joram (Jehoram) was king of Israel. Ramoth-gilead was a strong city, east of Jordan in Gad. The king had been wounded in defending or in besieging the city. He had retired to Jezreel to recover. When he left, the young prophet sent by Elisha anointed Jehu to be king and carry out God's command (verse 15).

"Let none go forth. . . to tell it in Jezreel" (II Kings 9:15): King Jehoram would not be warned of his coming doom.

". . . like the driving of Jehu" (II Kings 9:20): The General or rather now King Jehu had a reputation as a furiously fast driver. He proceeded immediately to his bloody work. He was "intrepid, relentless, pitiless, thorough. It was rough and cruel work. Jehu was fitted for it. . . nothing else could have accomplished it." From the tower the watchman could see Jehu "driving furiously" toward Jezreel. So eager was Jehoram for news of what he thought was the supposed battle that when the messengers did not return, he and Ahaziah (king of Judah) drove out to meet Jehu.

"Peace. . . What peace. . .?" (II Kings 9:22): The wicked king knows his day of accounting has come. He turns to flee and Jehu shot him through the heart with an arrow (verses 23, 24).

"The blood of Naboth. . . ' (II Kings 9:25 ,26): God does not pay off every Saturday night, but He pays off (Gal. 6:7; Gal. 6:23). Jehoram's body was thrown in the vineyard of Naboth which had been stolen from that righteous man by the treachery and murder of Jezebel (Jehoram's mother) with the full consent of Ahab (Jehoram's father). Wicked sons of wicked parents shall be destroyed in all generations. The first phase of the ancient blitzkrieg was successful (I Kings 21:16-22).

"Ahaziah. . . died" (II Kings 9:24, 28; II Chron. 22:9): Ahaziah was king of Judah (II Kings 8:26). Jehoram was his uncle. His mother was the daughter of Jezebel. He was wicked. A bad alliance brought his death. Mortally wounded, he fled to Megiddo "and died there" (verse 27). He was buried "in his sepulchre with his father in the city of David" (verse 28).

III. Jezebel Is Slain (II Kings 9:30-37)

"Painted her face . . ." (II Kings 9:30): Literally, "her eyes." Archeologists of Harvard University found, in the ruins of Samaria, saucers and small stone boxes, no doubt similar to those in which Jezebel mixed her cosmetics. They had a number of small holes to contain the various colors, kohl for black, turquoise for green, ochre for red; and a central depression for mixing. They still had traces of red. This wicked, brazen, idolatrous woman painted her eyebrows and eyelids, attired her hair, and, "Cleopatra-like," prepared to "die a queen." Looking out a window she taunts Jehu (verses 30, 31), hoping to stall for time so her forces could be rallied.

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"Who is on my side? Who?" (II Kings 9:32): Two or three eunuchs looked out the window. "Throw her down," Jehu commanded (verse 33). They threw down this wicked woman under whose reign the blood of countless babies had been slaughtered to Baal. The blood spurted and stained the "wall, and on the horses: and he trod her under his feet." Jehu made sure she was dead by driving the chariot over Jezebel's body.

"If we wonder at God's use of an agent like Jehu, let us remember that Baalism was unspeakably vile. God sometimes uses men and nations who are far from what they ought to be to execute His judgments on the wicked." Let America take heed today!

"Found. . . skull. . . feet. . ." (II Kings 9:35): This was a horrible end, but a fitting one for a vicious, prophet-killing, sensual, God-defying woman. When we spurn God's way and God's people, we can expect a horrible end (Prov. 29:1, 2). "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). Jesus said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Yes unless we stay out of the fire, we shall perish! To defy the law of nature, or of the spirit is to insure death, physical and spiritual (Ezek. 33:11).

IV. Ahab's Seed Destroyed (II Kings 10:1-14)

"Seventy sons in Samaria. . . Take ye the heads" (II Kings 10:1, 6): There were sons and grandsons. All were beheaded. Sin's harvest is devastating (verses 10-11), reaching Ahab's descendants in Israel and Judah (verses 13, 14).

V. Baal Worshipers Are Exterminated (II Kings 10:15-28)

"House of Baal was full . ." (II Kings 10:21): Baalism was vile, cruel, and immoral. It required the sacrifice of the first-born child! These prophets of Baal as part of their official duty were murderers of little children. Jehu had the Baal prophets put on their vestments (verse 22) to make certain that they and "none of the servants of the Lord" (verse 23) were destroyed. All the prophets and priests of Baal were exterminated, and made "the house of Baal" a "draught house," or an "outhouse" as a mark of the greatest insult.

VI. The Rest of Jehu's Reign (II Kings 10:29-36)

"Jehu . . . departed not from the sins of Jeroboam" (II Kings 10:31): The reign of Jehu is marred by his refusal to put away the golden calf worship. His words to Rechab (verse 16) reveal a proud spirit. It is possible to be an instrument in the hand of God for judgment upon others, and never be in fellowship with God!

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QUESTIONS

1. Name the seven kings prominently mentioned in this lesson, and tell over which kingdom each one reigned?
2. Through what man had God prophesied judgment upon the house of Ahab (I Kings 19:13-17)?
3. Why did God pronounce such severe judgment upon Ahab (I Kings 16:30-33; 21:25, 26)?
4. Who caused Jehu to be anointed at Ramoth-gilead (II Kings 9:1-4)?
5. Did he plainly tell Jehu why he was being anointed king (II Kings 9:5-10), and why was the prophet called "this mad fellow" (II Kings 9:11)?
6. Why was Jehu acknowledged king so promptly (II Kings 9:11-13)?
7. Why was "let none escape and go forth out of the city"? (II Kings 9:15)?
8. How was the driving recognized (II Kings 9:20)?
9. How was Jehoram slain (II Kings 9:16-26), and where was his body cast?
10. What king of Judah was next smitten, where did he die, and where was he buried (II Kings 9:27-29; II Chron.22:9)?
11. Did Jezebel show any signs of humility or repentance before she died (II Kings 9:30-31)?
12. How did Jezebel die, and what happened to her body (II Kings 9:32-37; Psa.83:10)?
13. What future judgment upon bloodshed and idolatry is prefigured by this punishment of Jezebel (Revelation 17:5,6; 18:4-8)?
14. What bold challenge was presented to the son of Ahab (II Kings 10:1-3), and by what method were they destroyed (II Kings 10:4-11)?
15. How did the princes of Ahaziah suffer because of their connection with the house of Ahab (II Kings 10:13, 14; 8:16-18, 24, 26, 27; II Cor.6:17)?
16. Who was Jehonadab (II Kings 10:15; Jer. 35:1-9; I Chron. 2:55)?
17. By what subtle method did Jehu assemble the priests and prophets of Baal (II Kings 10:19-28)?
18. What is the meaning of "draught house" (II Kings 10:27)?
19. What were the sins of Jeroboam practiced by Jehu (II Kings 10:31; I Kings 12:26-33; 14:15, 16)?
20. Which of Jehu's sons reigned over Israel after his death (II Kings 10:35, 36)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 32

Page 1

II Kings 11-12

Memory Verse: II Kings 11:17

Memory Verse:

"And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people (II Kings 11:17).

Public Reading: II Kings 11:1-3, 13-16.

JOASH, ATHALIAH, AND JEHOIADA

Three outstanding characters appear in today's lesson: a king, a godless queen, and a priest. The king is Joash (II Kings 11:2; 12:1, 2) also known as Jehoash, meaning "Jehovah is strong" or "Jehovah hath bestowed." He was king of Judah (843-803 B. C.), reigning forty years having become king at age seven. He started out well; he ended his career the wrong way by listening to the advice of evil men (II Chron. 24:17-22).

The queen is Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (II Kings 8:26, 18), queen of Judah from 843-837 B. C., the only woman who ever sat on David's throne. She was married to Jehoram king of Judah, a marriage of political expediency; was mother of Judah's next king, Ahaziah. She was queen eight years, queen mother one year, besides ruling in her own right six years. Thus, she was in power fifteen years.

Jehoiada ("Jehovah knows") is called high priest (II Kings 12:10); married Jehoshabeath, daughter of Jehoram (II Chron. 22:11). A godly man; true to God all his life. He was the real power behind the throne of Joash.

I. Athaliah Massacres the Royal Seed (II Kings 11:1-3; II Chron. 22:10-12)

"Athaliah. . . destroyed all the seed royal" (II Kings 11:1): She was a true daughter of Jezebel. If anything, she was more callous than her mother. Jezebel did not murder her own grandchildren (as far as we know). When Jehu, God's instrument of destruction against Ahab's house, slew Ahaziah the son of Athaliah (II Kings 9:27) she was determined to slay all who by connection with the royal house might claim to be ruler over Judah (II Chron. 21:2-4; 22:1). She did this to havoc her family outlive the family of David, in self-defense against Jehu, and because of personal ambition to rule and to establish Baal worship in Judah as her mother Jezebel had done in Israel. This "wicked woman" (II Chron. 24:7) slew her own innocent grandchildren to secure the throne for herself. She kept the throne six years. She is the only heathen and woman who reigned on the throne of David before the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. She allowed the temple to decay; its services were suspended. Baal worship flourished as she swayed the scepter of her terrible power over the kingdom of Judah.

"But Jehosheba . . . daughter of king Joram" (II Kings 11:2): In this wholesale slaughter, Jehosheba saved Joash. The wife of the high priest Jehoiada (II Chron. 22:11), she was the daughter of king Joram and sister of Ahaziah. She was most likely not the daughter of Athaliah, but had been born to Joram by a wife of the second rank.

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"Joash . . . him" (II Kings 11:2: Thus Jehosheba, meaning "Jehovah her oath," was the aunt of Joash. She "stole him from among the king's sons which were slain and hid him in the chamber of the beds, a room where bedding was kept and which was not used as a dwelling-room in the East. At first this was the easiest place to conceal the child and his nurse.

"He . . . hid in the house of the Lord" (II Kings 11:3): This was an apartment in some part of the temple in which Jehoiada and his wife lived. How much romance lies behind the six years during which Jehosheba nursed and cared for the young life hidden in the Temple! Joash was the ONLY LIVING HEIR OF DAVID.

II. Joash Crowned, and Athaliah Slain (II Kings 11:4-16; II Chron. 23:1-15)

"The seventh year Jehoiada sent. . ." (II Kings 11:4): Jehoiada the priest took careful measures to insure the death of Athaliah and the crowning of Joash, now seven years of age. The captains (II Chron. 23:1-3) went about the land and summoned the Levites and heads of families in Israel to Jerusalem, probably under the pretext of a festal celebration. A covenant with the persons assembled was made to insure their assistance in the execution of his plan. He placed armed guards at various places inside the temple (verses 4-11) and around the palace to keep Athaliah out until Joash was crowned and anointed king.

"God save the king" (II Kings 11:12): When Joash, a son of the royal seed of David, was crowned king, it was a great moment for the people. They clapped their hands and shouted: "God save the king!" Jehoiada's counter-revolution against wicked Athaliah succeeded. Selfish ambition and all evil passions are at work, but over all these God presides and moves toward victory for His will!

"Athaliah heard . . . Treason" (II Kings 11:14): Hearing the shouting of the people, the murderous grandmother entered the temple and saw Joash standing by one of the Temple pillars and holding the Testimony, or Books of the Law. She knew Jehoiada had outwitted her. She shrieked: "Treason, Treason."

"Without the ranges . . . (II Kings 11:15): Or, fence. She was not to be killed in the sacred area of the temple. Once outside, she was smitten and died (verse 16).

III. The Temple Repaired (II Kings 11:17-12:16; II Chron. 23:16-24:1-14)

1. A covenant made, and Baal-worship destroyed (II Kings 11:17-21; II Chron. 23:16-24:1).

"Covenant between the Lord. . . king. . . people" (II Kings 11:17): This was a renewal of the national covenant of God with Israel (See Ex. 19:2-8; Deut. 4:1-9; 6:1-5; 27:9). The covenant between the King and the people was in consequence of this and by it the King bound himself to rule ACCORDING TO GOD'S LAW, while the people AGREED TO SUBMIT, to give the allegiance as the Lord's anointed.

"All the people . . . house of Baal. . . brake it down" (II Kings 11:18): The immediate consequence of the renewal of the covenant was the extermination of the worship of Baal and all that pertained to him. Such revivals were needed then. They are needed in this Gospel age also. "Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again!"

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"And he sat on the throne of the kings . . . Jehoash" (II Kings 11:19, 21): Or Joash, meaning "Jehovah has given." He was the eighth king of Judah.

2. The early part of the reign of Joash (II Kings 12:1-3; II Chron. 24:2, 3).

"Jehoash began to reign . . . forty years he reigned" (II Kings 12:1): Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign (II Kings 11:21). He "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (verse 2) as long as Jehoiada lived and "instructed him." The covenant between the people and the king was followed by the destruction of the temple of Baal, and the slaying of the priest of Baal" (II Kings 11:18). The worship places of Baal were made into public latrines, as in Samaria (II Kings 10:27), called "draught houses." All this was done at the direction of Jehoiada, the uncle by marriage of Joash, and high priest. However, worship on the high places was not entirely suppressed (see I Kings 15:14).

3. Joash repairs the temple (II Kings 12:4-16; II Chron. 24:4-16).

"Repair the breaches of the house . . ." (II Kings 12:5): Gaps, or leaks. Athaliah had allowed the temple to decay. Nothing had been done to repair it for many years. Imagine what condition any church building would be in if no repairs were made for twenty-five years. Young King Joash levied taxes of half a shekel, "as an offering to the Lord" (Ex. 30:13); the "money that every man is set at," the redemption-price of every one or any thing devoted to the Lord (Lev. 27:1-8), and free-will offerings paid yearly (II Chron. 24:5) were the means of raising the money to repair the temple. This was NOT SUCCESSFUL (verses 4-7).

"Chest . . . much money" (II Kings 12:9, 10): This is called the Chest of Joash. It was used to collect money, as the people came to worship, to repair the Temple. The "Joash Chest" idea is often used today to raise money for special projects. The people cheerfully gave the needed money for the Temple repairs. The work was finished under the direction of Jehoiada, and the king's scribe and the necessary workmen (verses 10-16; II Chron. 24:8-14). Today if we Christians bring our tithes and love offerings each first day of the week, the Lord's work will never suffer (Mal. 3:8-10; I Cor. 16:2; 9:7)! "Prove" God and see!

IV. The Temple Dismantled and Joash Slain (II Kings 12:17-21; II Chron. 24:23-27)

"Then Hazael fought. . ." (II Kings 12:17): Joash "did right in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 12:2) as long as Jehoiada lived. Then Joash apostatized, set up idols, and was ruined by the faithless, lying, flattering priests (II Chron. 24:4-7). When Zechariah the high priest, son of Jehoiada, rebuked Joash for his sin the king allowed him to be stoned (II Chron. 24:17-22).

"Jehoash. . . took the hallowed things" (II Kings 12:18): Joash had to dismantle the temple to pay tribute to the Syrian King. His servants "slew Joash in the house of Millo" (verses 19-21). "Amaziah his son reigned in his stead."

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QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the wicked queen in this lesson (II Kings 11:1)?
2. Who were her parents (II Kings 8:18, 26)?
3. Why did she destroy her own grandchildren (II Kings 11:1)?
4. Where was Joash hidden (II Kings 11:2, 3) and by whom (II Chron. 22:11)?
5. In which kingdom was Jehoiada the high priest (II Kings 11:4, 15)?
6. By what plan did Jehoiada make Joash king (II Kings 11:4-12)?
7. When the people shouted, "God save the king," who came to the people in the temple of the Lord (II Kings 11:12, 13), and what did she cry (verse 14)?
8. Where was she slain (II Kings 11:15, 16)?
9. What was done to the "house of Baal" (II Kings 11:18)?
10. How old was Joash when he began to reign (II Kings 11:21)? How could he reign so early (II Kgs 12:1, 2)?
11. What kind of breaches were to be repaired (II Kings 12:5)?
12. Why was not the work completed at first (II Kings 12:4-8; II Chron. 24:4, 5)?
13. What is the Joash Chest (II Kings 12:9-16; II Chron. 24:8-14), and did it work?
14. Do you think every need of the church would be met if each Christian followed God's way of supporting the church (Mal. 3:8-10; Matt. 23:23; II Cor. 9:6, 7; I Cor. 16:2)?
15. Why not reckon with the workmen (II Kings 12:15)?
16. Where was Gath (II Kings 12:17)?
17. Why did not Joash fight Hazael (II Kings 12:17-18; II Chron. 24:23, 24)?
18. What did Joash do to the temple to cause Hazael not to attack Jerusalem (II Kings 12:18)?
19. Who conspired to slay Joash (II Kings 12:19-21; II Chron. 24:25)?
20. What does the career of Joash illustrate (II Chron. 24:17-22; I Cor. 15:33; II Kings 12:2, 3)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

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Lesson 33

Page 1

II Kings 13-16

Memory Verse: James 1:15

Memory Verse:

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:15).

Public Reading: II Kings 13:14-21.

THE DEATH OF ELISHA TO THE DEATH OF AHAZ

The young may die; the old must die. "In Adam all die"; "in Christ shall ALL may be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). The hope of the Christian is in Jesus Christ (John 11:25 26; 14:19).

Elisha, for fifty years or more, had been a faithful servant of God, but we read (II Kings 13:20) "And Elisha died." From Elisha's death until the ten northern tribes went into captivity (721 B. C.) the nation seemed determined to forsake God. When God's grace is spurned, God has no course to follow but to let judgment and punishment come (James 1:15).

Ahaz the Apostate of Judah reigned from 741-726 B. C. (16 years) and was very wicked.

Elisha was a farmer boy of Abel-meholah, in the upper Jordan valley (I Kings 19:16, 18) and was trained by Elijah (II Kings 3:11). Elijah was like the tempest and earthquake; Elisha, like the still small voice; Elijah was flint-like; Elisha, gentle, gracious; Elijah, a man of the wilderness; Elisha, a man of the cities, a pastor to many people, a worker of miracles. On occasion Elisha was severe. Under Jehu he destroyed Baal worship in Israel; Elisha finished the great work of wiping out Baal worship which Elijah started.

In order that you may see the kingdoms clearly, I give the kingdom, king and date of each. You are referred to Jesse McKee Adam's Ancient Records and the Bible," page 372. His suggested dates are:

United Kingdom -- Saul, 1050-1010 B. C.; David, 1010-970 B. C.; Solomon 970-931 B. C.

The united kingdom lasted 120 years. After the death of Solomon the kingdom was divided: Ten tribes formed the Northern Kingdom, called "Israel"; Judah and Benjamin formed the Southern Kingdom, called "Judah." The Northern Kingdom lasted a little over 200 years, It was destroyed by Assyria in 721 B.C. Lasting a little over 300 years, the Southern Kingdom was destroyed by Babylon about 586 B. C.

The secession of the Ten Tribes "was of God" (I Kings 11:11, 31; 12:15) as a punishment for the apostasy of Solomon and a lesson to Judah.

Divided Kingdom

There are difficulties in the chronology of the period. They may be accounted for by "overlapping reigns," "co-regency," "intervals of anarchy," and "parts of years as a year." Hence, these dates are only approximate.

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19 Kings of Israel

Jereboam	-----	933-911
Nadab	-----	911-910
Baasha	-----	910-887
Elah	-----	887-886
Zimri	-----	886
Omri	-----	886-875
Ahab	-----	875-854
Joram	-----	854-843
Jehu	-----	843-816
Jehoahaz	-----	820-804
Joash	-----	806-790
Jeroboam II	-----	790-749
Zechariah	-----	748
Shallum	-----	748
Menahem	-----	748-738
Pekahiah	-----	738-736
Pekah	-----	748-730
Hoshea	-----	730-721

20 Kings of Judah

Rehoboam	-----	933-916
Abijah	-----	915-913
Asa	-----	912-872
Jehoshaphat	-----	974-850
Jehoram	-----	850-843
Ahaziah	-----	843
Athaliah	-----	843-837
Joash	-----	843-803
Amaziah	-----	803-775
Uzziah	-----	878-735
Jotham	-----	749-734
Ahaz	-----	741-726
Hezekiah	-----	926-697
Manasseh	-----	697-642
Amon	-----	641-640
Josiah	-----	639-608
Jehoahaz	-----	608
Jehoiakim	-----	608-597
Jehoiachin	-----	597
Zedekiah	-----	597-586

Kings of Israel

Jereboam	22 yrs Bad
Nadab	2 yrs Bad
Baasha	24 yrs Bad
Elah	2 yrs Bad
Zimri	7 days Bad
Omri	12 yrs Extra Bad
Ahab	22 yrs The Worst
Ahaziah	2 yrs Bad
Joram	12 yrs Bad mostly
Jehu	28 yrs Bad mostly
Jehoahaz	17 yrs Bad
Joash	16 yrs Bad
Jeroboam II	41 yrs Bad
Zechariah	6 mos Bad
Shallum	1 mo Bad
Menahem	10 yrs Bad
Pekahiah	2 yrs Bad
Pekah	20 yrs Bad
Hoshea	9 yrs Bad

Kings of Judah

Rehoboam	17 yrs Bad mostly
Abijah	3 yrs Bad mostly
Asa	41 yrs Good
Jehoshaphat	25 yrs Good
Jehoram	8 yrs Bad
Ahaziah	1 yr Bad
Athaliah	6 yrs Devilish
Joash	40 yrs Good mostly
Amaziah	29 yrs Good mostly
Jotham	16 yrs Good
Ahaz	16 yrs Wicked
Hezekiah	29 yrs The Best
Manasseh	55 yrs The Worst
Amon	2 yrs The Best
Josiah	31 yrs The Worst
Jehoahaz	3 mos Bad
Jehoiakim	11 yrs Wicked
Jehoiachin	3 mos Bad
Zedekiah	11 yrs Bad

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Some of the reigns were, in part, concurrent. All the kings of Israel served the Calf; the worst served Baal. Most of the kings of Judah served Idols; a few served Jehovah. Some bad kings were partly good; some good kings, partly bad.

I. The Death of Elisha (II Kings 13:1-25)

1. The reign of Jehoahaz (II Kings 13:1-9.)

"Jehoahaz besought the Lord. . ." (II Kings 13:4): King Jehoahaz did evil. God allowed Syria to oppress him severely (verses 1-3). Jehoahaz continued in the sin of Jeroboam (the worship of the golden calves), and the more he sinned, the more severe did the punishment become. When the punishment became unbearable, the king prayed to God. We learn that God is always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and that God does answer the cry of those in distress although God does not mistake distress for repentance. This king, like so many, was sorry he was caught in his sins!

"The Lord gave Israel a Savior . . ." (II Kings 13:5): The Savior was not an angel, but a "savior" in the form of the two successors of Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Jeroboam II, the former of whom wrested from the Syrians all the cities that had been conquered by them from his father (verse 25), while the latter restored the ancient boundaries of Israel (II Kings 14:25).

"They departed from the sins. ." (II Kings 13:6): Sin brought the nation to a new low (verse 7). Jehoahaz died (verses 8, 9).

2. The reign of Jehoash of Israel (II Kings 13:10-13).

"Jehoash . . . reign over Israel" (II Kings 13:10): Like his evil father, Jehoahaz, he "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (verse 71). He continued the calf worship. He reigned sixteen years.

3. Elisha's last prediction (II Kings 13:14-19).

"Elisha was fallen sick . . ." (II Kings 13:14): Jehoash (or Joash) king of Israel came to visit Elisha before the prophet died. The king wept as he bent over the sick man.

"Take bow and arrows . . . Shoot" (II Kings 13:15-17): The arrow which was shot eastward symbolized a victory over the Syrians, against which this act was a declaration of war. Jehoash should have smitten "five or six times" (verses 18, 19) for a complete victory over the Syrians. LACK OF FAITH kept Jehoash from smiting the ground repeatedly with the arrows! Lack of faith robs us, too, of victory which God wants to give us!

4. Death and burial of Elisha (II Kings 13:20, 21).

"Elisha died . . ." (II Kings 13:20): Elijah was translated, but Elisha did and was buried. his "bones" (verse 21) were the means used of God to raise a man from the dead, not to provide an argument in favor of sacred places, BUT to demonstrate the fact that Elisha lives. Elisha had been called to be a prophet in the reign of Ahab and did not die till that of Joash. Forty-one years elapsed between the year that Ahab died and the beginning of the reign of Joash, he must have held his prophetic office for at least fifty years. He was probably eighty years old when he died.

5. Elisha's prediction fulfilled (II Kings 13:22-25).

II. Decline and Decay: The Reigns of Amaziah and Jeroboam the Second (II Kings 14)

1. Amaziah reigns and avenges his father's death (II Kings 14:1-7; II Chron. 25:1-4).

"Amaziah . . . the children of the murderers he slew not" (II Kings 14:6): Amaziah who succeeded good king Joash of Judah began his reign well. He refrained from putting the sons of his father's murderers to death, an act of mercy in agreement with Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:8, 20. This marks the realization for a new attitude toward individual responsibility for sin (Jer. 31:29, 30).

2. Amaziah's foolish challenge to Jehoash (II Kings 14:8-16; II Chron. 25:17-24).

"Come . . . look one another in the face" (II Kings 14:8): Amaziah foolishly challenges Jehoahaz, king of Israel, to war. The fable of the king of Israel showed the folly of pride over-rating its strength. "Amaziah king of Judah" (verse 13) was taken prisoner by Jehoash king of Israel and kept as such until the death of Jehoash.

3. The death of Amaziah (II Kings 14:17-22; II Chron. 25:25-28).

"Amaziah . . . conspiracy against him" (II Kings 14:19): He departed from the Lord. He was slain at Lachish, and brought to Jerusalem in a chariot without pomp or ceremony.

4. The "bad" reign of Jeroboam II (II Kings 14:23-29; Not in Chronicles).

"Jeroboam . . . Samaria . . . reigned forty and one years" (II Kings 14:23): "Bad" is the term which best describes Jeroboam II. His reign was outwardly prosperous, but inwardly it was depraved. Idol worship decayed the morals of the people, too (verse 24).

"He restored . . . Hamath unto the sea of the plain" (II Kings 14:25): A man of war, Jeroboam brought about the restoration of some lost territory. Hamath or "Fortress" was capital of upper Syria in the Orontes valley. "The sea of the plain" is the plain to the south of the Dead Sea.

"Lord God . . . spake by . . . Jonah" (II Kings 14:25): This is Jonah the son of Amittai, of the tribe of Zebulun, of Gath-Hepher, to the north of Nazareth. He was sent "to Ninevah . . . cry against it" (Jonah 1:2). Jonah exercised a great ministry among his own people. "The Lord saw the affliction of Israel . . ." (II Kings 14:26): Jeroboam's victories were due to God's vision of the affliction of his people. The king's doom was not yet pronounced; he was the savior promised to Jehoahaz; he restored a measure of liberty to the nation (verses 27-29). His death occurred after forty-one years' reign, and in the twenty-seventh year of Uzziah (II Kings 15:8). Zachariah his son came to the throne in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah.

III. The Reign of Azariah in Judah, and a Revolutionary Period in Israel (II Kings 15:1-31; II Chron. 26:1-23)

1. Reign of Azariah, or Uzziah (II Kings 15:1-7). See Amos 1:lff.
2. The house of Jehu ends with the death of Zechariah (II Kings 15:8-12).
3. The reign of Shallum (II Kings 15:13-16).
4. The reign of Menahem (II Kings 15:17-22).
5. The reign of Pekahiah (II Kings 15:22-26).
6. The reign of Pekah (II Kings 15:27-31). See Hosea 1:lff.

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IV. The Reigns of Jotham and Ahaz Over Judah (II Kings 15:32-16:20)

1. Reign of Jotham (II Kings 15:32-38; II Chron. 27:1-9).
2. The extreme wickedness of Ahaz (II Kings 16:1-4; II Chron. 28:1-4).
3. His war with Rezin and Pekah (II Kings 16:5-9; II Chron. 28:5-15).
4. Ahaz adopts a heathen altar and makes changes about the temple (II Kings 16:10-20; II Chron. 28:22-27). See Micah 1:1ff. The nation and its kings lost the testimony of truth. The very name of God was being blasphemed among the heathen!

QUESTIONS

1. What caused Jehoahaz of Israel to pray to the Lord (II Kings 13)?
2. Can you name the last prediction made by Elisha to Jehoash (Joash) king of Israel (II Kings 13:14-19), and why did the king not smite the earth but thrive?
3. How old was Elisha when he died (II Kings 13:20), and what happened when a dead man touched his bones (verses 21)?
4. Was Elisha's prediction fulfilled (II Kings 13:22-25)?
5. What is your estimate of King Amaziah's character from II Kings 14:1-7), and why mention the sparing of the children?
6. After his victory over Edom, what foolish challenge did Amaziah king of Judah make to Jehoash king of Israel (II Kings 15:8-14; II Chron. 25:5-9)?
7. Why was God's anger kindled against Amaziah (II Chron. 25:15-17), and what was the result of the war with Israel (II Kings 14:11-14; II Chron. 25:17-25)?
8. After what act of Amaziah did the people slay him (II Chron. 25:27)?
9. Who succeeded Amaziah as king of Judah (II Kings 14:21) and by what name is he commonly known (II Chron. 26:1-4; II Kings 15:1-4)?
10. How long did God prosper Uzziah (II Chron. 26:5)? What of his glory and works (II Chron. 26:6-15)?
11. What sin did Uzziah commit (II Chron. 26:16), and what severe judgment fell upon him as a punishment (II Chron. 26:17-21; Ex. 30:7, 8)? Who are God's priests today (I Peter 2:9)?
12. Which of the prophets ministered during the reign of Uzziah (II Chron. 26:5; Is. 6:1; Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1)?
13. How long did Jeroboam II reign in Israel (II Kings 14:23), what lost territory did he restore (verse 25), and what prophet spoke during his reign (verse 25ff)?
14. With what king did the house of Jehu end (II Kings 15:8-12)?
15. What Assyrian king invaded Israel, and how was he turned back (II Kings 15:19-21; I Chron. 5:26)?
16. Can you show that the terrible sin of Zechariah (II Kings 15:8-12), Shallum (verses 13-16), Mannheim (verses 17-22), Pekahiah (verses 22-26), and Pekah (verses 27-31) was the most terrible period, in some respects, of all Israel's history?
17. What Assyrian came in the days of Pekah and carried into captivity some of Israel (II Kings 15:27-31)?
18. Who followed Uzziah on the throne in Judah (II Kings 15:32-38; II Chron. 26:23-27:9)?
19. What sin caused Ahaz to be called the Apostate (II Kings 16:10-20; II Chron. 28:22-27)? Can you name the prophet who spoke so bravely in his reign (Micah 1:1)?
20. Do you think the drunkenness, divorces and daring display of evil in America today is a good sign that God will continue to bless us (Prov. 14:34; Psalm 33:12)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 34
II Kings 17

Page 1
Memory Verse: II Kings 17:16, 17

Memory Verses:

"And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. "And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger" (II Kings 17:16, 17).

Public Reading: II Kings 17:7-18.

ISRAEL'S DOWNFALL AND CAPTIVITY

The Ten Northern Tribes (Israel) chose the way of death. God always warns His people that disobedience and the practice of evil must be punished. The prophets Amos and Hosea vigorously denounced the sins of the people. Hosea has been called "the prophet of Israel's decline and fall." (Hosea 10:7, 8, 14, 15; Isa. 28:1; Micah 1:5, 6).

Moses in his farewell address (Deut. 28:36, 37) warned the nation that idolatry would result in the downfall and captivity of the people!

The reign of Hoshea and the captivity of Israel is found in II Kings 17:1-41.

I. Duplicity: Hoshea Conspires Against Shalmaneser and Is Cast into Prison (II Kings 17:1-4)

"Hoshea . . . reign in Samaria . . . nine years" (II Kings 17:1): Hoshea is the same as Hosea. He was the last king of Israel the nineteenth. He conspired against and slew his predecessor, Pekah (II Kings 15:30) "in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah." Tiglath-pileser set up Hoshea as the nominal king of Samaria, but as his personal representative (B. C. about 733). He did not fully become established on the throne till after an interval of at least eight years, namely, in the "twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah." II Kings 15:29 informs us that Tiglath-pileser had carried the northern tribes Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher and Dan into captivity as well as the two and one-half tribes East of the Jordan (see Isaiah 9:1).

"He did . . . evil in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 17:2): He did not follow the calf worship of Jeroboam, son of Nebat. He permitted Hezekiah of Judah to send messengers to all the cities of Israel inviting the people to come to his great Passover (II Chron. 30:6-11). Although better than his predecessors, the judgment of destruction burst upon his sinful kingdom and his people, because he had not truly turned to God.

"Against him came Shalmaneser. . ." (II Kings 17:3): The stroke of divine judgment, long hanging over the guilty people, fell at last. Shalmaneser IV, king of Assyria (727-722 B. C.) "Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents," or paid him tribute as a vassal.

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"The king . . . found conspiracy in Hoshea" (II Kings 17:4): Hoshea king of Israel rebelled against Shalmaneser king of Assyria. He refused in his sixth year as king to pay tribute to Assyria. He sent messenger to "So, king of Egypt." This So was Shabako a classic historian, a famous Ethiopian who occupied the Egyptian throne fifty years. His appeal for Egyptian help caused Shalmaneser IV to besiege Samaria. When Samaria fell, king Hoshea was taken prisoner. He disappears from history. The prophets of this period were Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. Hosea had warned King Hoshea not to make an alliance with Egypt while pretending to serve Assyria. This duplicity, or double-dealing, of the court is shown in Hosea 7:11; 12:1.

II. Downfall: Samaria Taken and Israel Carried Away (II Kings 17:5, 6)

"Samaria . . . besieged it three years" (II Kings 17:5): Shalmaneser began the siege. He died about a month before the siege was completed. He was succeeded by Sargon II (722-705 B. C.) who completed the destruction of Samaria and Israel's captivity. The siege lasted so long because Samaria was built on a hill about 300 feet high. Its strategic value was the reason Omri purchased Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver (I Kings 16:24). It remained the capital of the ten tribes until the captivity came in 721 B. C.

"King of Assyria. . . carried Israel away" (II Kings 17:6): Sargon II did not follow Tiglath-pileser by any great slaughter of the Israelites, but some grievous suffering did come (see Hosea 13:16). The Assyrians often skinned their prisoners alive, cut off their hands, feet, noses, ears, put out their eyes, or pulled out their tongues. They made mounds of human skulls to inspire terror.

An archeological note on the captivity of Israel: "The king of Assyria besieged Samaria three years . . . and took it. . . and carried Israel away. . . and brought men from Babylon. . . and placed them in the cities of Samaria."

"Israel . . . placed them in . . . (II Kings 17:6b): This was enforced deportation.

An inscription of Sargon says: "In my first year I captured Samaria. I took captive 27,290 people. People of other lands, who never paid tribute, I settled in Samaria."

Assyrian policy was to deport conquered peoples to other lands, to destroy their sense of nationalism, and make them more easily subject.

"Sargon king of Assyria" (Isaiah 20:1) is the only known mention of Sargon's name in extant ancient literature. Critics claimed the Bible blundered here! But in 1842, Botta discovered the ruins of Sargon's palace, in Khorsabad on the north edge of Nineveh, with treasures and inscriptions showing him one of Assyria's greatest kings. Yet his name had disappeared from history, save from Isaiah's lone mention, until Botta's discovery.

III. Depravity: God's Reasons for Sending Israel into Captivity (II Kings 17:7-23)

"For . . . Israel had sinned against the Lord" (II Kings 17:7): Repeated warnings from the Lord, the prophets' calls to repent beginning with Shemaiah and ending with Hosea had fallen on deaf ears. Continued disobedience to God, conformity to the nations from which they had been separated, secret practice of **YEAR 2**

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abominations and eventually public idolatry--these things cause the captivity!

Israel's sins summarized:

1. The nation instead of purifying Canaan of the evil practices of its heathen inhabitants had fallen into these sins-both moral and religious (verses 7-12).

2. They sinned against the light, by turning willfully from the warning of the prophets (verses 13, 14).

3. In later years they added to their sins by introducing the occult vanities of Assyria, worshipping the stars of heaven, offering their sons to Moloch, and using superstitious enchantments (verses 15-17).

The relation between a people's worship and its morals is very close. The heathen cults were immoral; they debased the worshippers. Israel loved the darkness of immorality and spiritual depravity. The nation was irretrievably corrupt. What else could they expect but the withering wrath of God (verse 18)?

Israel had failed God (verses 19-23). Her tragic end is a standing proof that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Sin blight, damns, deadens, destroys (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:7, 8). Sin weakens the will and destroys all desire for righteousness. No man or nation has any hope who turns from God, or who debases his conception of God! America, wake UP! A reckoning day may be nearer than we think!

IV. Descendants: The New Inhabitants of the Land (II Kings 17:24-41)

"King . . . brought men from Babylon. . ." (II Kings 17:24): The Assyrian method of subjecting a nation was to deport the flower of the population (leaders, higher class of society, and leave the lower class who could be easily controlled) and repopulate the land with other conquered peoples. "Cuthah": Chaldee form of Cush, or Susiana, where the village of Tell-Ibrahim now marks the former site. "Ava": Or Ivah, identified with Tell Kafir 'Avah on the Orontes S. W. of Homs. "Hamath": In Syria. "Sepharvaim": Commonly identified with the city Sippar, the ruins of which are southwest of Bagdad, near the Euphrates. All these people were idol worshippers who were moved to Samaria.

"Lions . . . slew some" (II Kings 17:25): The depopulation of the country resulted in an increase of wild beasts. The scared colonists felt that God was punishing them for not worshipping Him (verse 26), and asked the king of Assyria for help.

"One of the priests . . ." (II Kings 17:27): He was not a Levite, but a priest of the calf-worshippers. He was a poor leader to bring in to teach them to "fear the Lord." Like priest, like people. Both were depraved idol worshippers (verse 29).

"Feared the Lord . . . served their own gods" (II Kings 17:33): They had a cringing fear of the Lord, but they would not turn from pagan gods to serve Him (verses 34, 41). Are they alone in trying to serve two masters (Matt. 6:24)? How many make a profession of turning to God and still cling to the old gods of the unregenerate heart (Gal. 5:19-21). God will have all of us, or He will have none of us.

"Served their graven images . . . children . . . children's children" (II Kings 17:41): The intermarriage of the heathen colonists who had been transplanted into the land with the remainder of the Israelites who were left in the land produced a mixed Samaritan people-"a mixed race with a heathen core" (Ezra 4:2). Following the Babylonian captivity the Samaritans gave up actual idolatry, and by the adoption of the Mosaic book of the law were converted to monotheism. A handful of them have been preserved to the present day in the ancient Shechem, the present Nablus.

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QUESTIONS

1. Who was the last king of Israel before the Assyrian captivity (II Kings 17:1)?
2. Who was Shalmaneser (II Kings 17:3; 16:10)?
3. What was the purpose of sending messenger to So (II Kings 17:4; Hosea 7:11; 12:1)?
4. Why was the siege so long (II Kings 17:5; see Amos 6:1)?
5. What king took Samaria (II Kings 17:6)?
6. Why were the captives scattered?
7. Where were the river Gozan and the "cities of the Medes"?
8. What is the sum of the reasons why God sent Israel into captivity (II Kings 17:16-17; Deut. 28:58-64)?
9. Was God pleased or angry with Israel because of her insubordination, idolatry, and immorality (verses 7-15)?
10. Were the Israelites at first openly or "secretly" practicing idolatry (verse 9)?
11. Which tribe alone was left in the land (verse 18)?
12. What was Sargon's policy in conquering a land (II Kings 17:24)?
13. Why think the lions were sent by "the God of the land" (verses 25, 26)?
14. What kind of priest was brought to teach the people (verse 27)?
15. How could they "fear the Lord, and serve their own gods" (II Kings 17:33, 34, 41)?
16. Is it possible to serve "two masters" (Matt. 6:24)?
17. What people descended from the colonists introduced into Samaria?
18. Can you name some of the idols that were worshipped (II Kings 17:29-31)?
19. Do you think America is akin to "these nations who feared the Lord and served their graven images" (II Kings 17:41)?
20. If drunkenness was one cause of the captivity of Israel (Isaiah 28:1-4), does not America who spent billions for the liquor traffic last year need to awaken before it is too late?

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Lesson 35

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II Kings 18-20

Memory Verse: II Kings 18:3

Memory Verse:

"And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did" (II Kings 18:3).

Public Reading: II Kings 18:1-7.

HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN

Israel (the ten Northern tribes) were taken captive by Sargon II to Assyria in '721 B. C. Hosea (or Hoshea, 730-721 B. C.) was the last of the Northern kings. God's way and mercy had been spurned; Israel was "sold to do evil in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 17:17). God's remedy was rejected; now God's judgment fell.

When Hezekiah (king from 726-697 B. C.) succeeded his father Ahaz as king of Judah, the times were threatened; dark trouble clouds were increasing. Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he came to full power on the throne (II Kings 18:2). The Holy City (Jerusalem) swarmed with false religious practices. The politicians advised an alliance with Egypt; another urged surrender to Assyria to escape siege and slaughter; Isaiah, Micah and other faithful prophets urged trust in Jehovah for deliverance. How the worldly-wise hated the words of God's prophets (Isa. 10:33, 34; 28:7-17). But God's way did prevail, as it always shall (Rom. 8:31).

The complete story of Hezekiah cannot be grasped without a careful reading of II Chronicles 29-32.

I. Hezekiah's Revival (II Kings 18:1-12; II Chron. 29:1-31:21)

1. Religious character of his reign (II Kings 18:1-6).

"And he did that which was right . . ." (II Kings 18:3): Hezekiah had co-reigned with his father, Ahaz. He assumed full powers when he was twenty-five years old (verse 2). God always has His man ready when a crisis faces His people. Hezekiah was doubtless the best king of Judah, reigning from 726-697 B. C.

"He removed the high places . . ." (II Kings 18:4): Hezekiah's reforms removed all public traces of idolatry in the land. The people were given to idolatry. Apostasy from the living God and moral corruption had struck such deep and firm roots in the nation, that the outward idolatry suppressed by Hezekiah broke out again openly after his death when his son Manasseh began to reign (II Kings 21:1ff).

"Brazen serpent . . . Nehushtan": The people developed a superstitious worship of the brazen serpent that Moses had made (Numbers 21:8, 9). "Nehushtan" means "brass thing." It is better to destroy a valued relic than to allow it to become a means of superstitious worship and veneration.

"He . . . opened the doors of the house of the Lord" (II Chron. 29:3): Hezekiah's father had "shut up the doors of the house of the Lord" (II Chron. 28:24). He cleansed the priests and Levites, and held a solemn Passover feast which was attended by all who cared to come (II Chron. 29:3-31:21). Hezekiah led the people literally in up-rooting all forms of idolatry in the land of Judah. They had an "old-fashioned revival" of religion! They turned to God in complete self-surrender, worshipping God in God's way. If any church should be closed and stay closed for sixteen years, and then a loyal minister should come in and call the people back to God, completely renovate the building, restore simple New Testament worship and start a revival, YOU CAN

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IMAGINE THE JOY in the hearts of all faithful men, women and young people as they turn to God in genuine repentance (II Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30, 31).

"He trusted in the Lord . . . none like him" (II Kings 18:5): Hezekiah was the best of all the kings after the kingdom was divided. "He calve to the Lord" (verse 6), "And the Lord was with him . . . he prospered whithersoever he went forth," (verse 7).

2. His military movements and the captivity of Israel (II Kings 18:7-12).

"He rebelled against the king of Assyria. . ." (II Kings 18:7): He no longer paid tribute to the Assyrian king. "He smote the Philistines" (verse 8) for their invasion of Judah in the time of Ahaz (II Chron. 28:18), probably after the defeat of Sennacherib (II Chron. 32:22, 23).

"Shalmaneser king of Assyria. . . Samaria. . . besieged it" (II Kings 18:9): Shalmaneser IV (727-722 B.C.) began the siege of Samaria. He died during the siege. Sargon II (722-705 B. C.) completed the destruction of Samaria and took the ten tribes captive (verses 9-11). "Because they (Israel) obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God. . . transgressed his covenant" (verse 12). But God preserved faithful Hezekiah and the people of Judah.

Roger Babson, world-famed statistician says: "For the sake of business, for our own sakes, for our children's sake, for the nation's sake let us get behind the churches and their preachers. The safety of all we have is due to the churches. By all that we hold dear, let us from this very day give more time, more money, and more thought to the churches of our city, for upon these the value of all we own ultimately depends."

Repentance cleans us up on the outside-and the inside! We become "new creatures" when we obey Christ (II Cor. 5:17; Heb. 5:9; Acts 5:32). We stop sinning; we start serving Christ (Luke 13:3, 5). America needs revival today, just as Judah needed it in the days of King Hezekiah.

II. Hezekiah Reproached (II Kings 18:13-37)

1. He is forced to renew the tribute (II Kings 18:13-16).

"Sennacherib . . . against all. . . Judah" (II Kings 18:13): He was the son and successor of Sargon II, and Assyrian ruler from 705-681 B. C. The most famous of the Assyrian kings, he invaded Judah when Hezekiah with imprudent haste withdrew tribute (verse 7) which his father Ahaz, had paid to Assyria.

"I have offended . . ." (II Kings 18:14): Hezekiah had to resume the tribute to Sennacherib, taking "all the silver" (verse 15) and "cutting off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord" (verse).

2. The surrender of Jerusalem is demanded by Sennacherib (II Kings 18:17-27; II Chron. 32:9-19).

"The king of Assyria sent Tartan . . ." (II Kings 18:17): Title of commander-in-chief of the Assyrian army (Isaiah 20:1); it is not a proper name. "Rabaris": "Chief of princes." "Rab-shakeh": Cup-bearer to Sennacherib. These were titles of high Assyrian officials-Assyrian words taken over into the Hebrew (See Millar Burrows, WHAT MEAN THESE STONES? New Haven, 1941, page 43ff).

"On whom dost thou trust . . .?" (II Kings 18:20): With all sorts of vile, blasphemous attacks, these Assyrians reproached the people, and King Hezekiah (verses 17-27).

3. Rab-hakeh's speech to the people on the wall (II Kings 18:28-37).

"The people held their peace . . ." (II Kings 18:36): To the insults of the Assyrian, the people "answered him not a word."

III. Hezekiah's Repentance and Refuge (II Kings 19:1-37)

1. The king consults the prophet (II Kings 19:1-7).

"Hezekiah . . . sackcloth. . . house of the Lord" (II Kings 19:1): Hezekiah rent his clothes at the daring mockery of the living God (verses 3, 4). He sought the prayers of Isaiah (verse 5). Hezekiah found comfort (Psa. 119:165; I Cor. 10:13). God promised Hezekiah victory (6).

2. Sennacherib sends a letter to Hezekiah (II Kings 10:8-13).

"Let not thy God . . . deceive thee" (II Kings 20:10): Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia was coming to fight him, he demanded that Jerusalem surrender at once. He insulted God, and his people, reminding them of all the lands whose gods had fallen before him.

3. The letter is laid before the Lord (II Kings 19:14-19).

"Letter . . . spread it before the Lord" (II Kings 19:14): The contents of the letter are given in verses 10-13 in the form of the message which the ambassadors had delivered to Hezekiah from their king. This is a great child-like faith in God! Hezekiah would punish the defiance of the living God that that letter communicated and would be justified in so doing! What an example to us!

4. An answer through the prophet (II Kings 19:20-34).

"I have heard . . ." (II Kings 19:20): God denounces the Assyrians (verses 20-28), assures Hezekiah the people will plant in peace the third year (29-31), and says "I will defend this city" (verse 34).

5. The prediction fulfilled (II Kings 19:35-37).

"The angel . . . smote . . . the Assyrians" (II Kings 19:35): 185,000 Assyrians died. This divine judgment caused Sennacherib and those who remained of his army to return to Nineveh. His own sons smote him seventeen years later (verse 37). See Isa. 25:2-5; 26:1-4.

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their sneers was like stars on the sea;
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

"The Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still."

--Byron.

IV. Hezekiah's Recovery (II Kings 20:1-21)

1. Hezekiah's sickness (II Kings 20:1-11).

"Hezekiah sick unto death . . ." (II Kings 20:1): He had a terrible "boil" (verse 7). Isaiah told him to "Set thine house in order . . . thou shalt die." Hezekiah wept and prayed to God (verses 2-3) who spares the king for fifteen years (4-7), giving him a sign, bringing "the shadow ten degrees backward," or forty minutes--a miraculous movement backward of the shadow upon the sun dial.

2. An ambassador from Babylon (II Kings 20:12-19).

3. The rest of Hezekiah's acts (II Kings 20:20, 21).

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QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the king who led in Judah's first great revival (II Kings 18:1)?
2. When and where did Hezekiah begin his reform work (II Chron. 29:3)?
3. What form of idolatry is mentioned for the first time in II Kings 18:4)?
4. What was the spiritual condition of the nation over which Hezekiah was ruling (II Kings 16;10-18; II Chron. 28:1-4, 21-25; 29:5-8, 19)?
5. Is it possible to have a revival before the leaders get right with God (II Chron. 29:5; I Tim. 3:1-7; 4:12; Titus 2:7, 8)?
6. How long were the priests in cleansing the temple (II Chron. 29:16-18)? For whom and for what was the first sin-offering made (II Chron. 29:20-22)? For whom was the sin-offering of II Chron. 29:23, 24 made?
7. How did this revival affect both the people and the king (II Chron. 29:25-30)?
8. What crowning act was next planned (II Chron. 30:1, and why were they unable to observe this feast at the appointed time (II Chron. 30:2, 3; compare with Lev. 23:5)?
9. What was Hezekiah's touching appeal (II Chron. 30:5-9), and how did the response of the people (II Chron. 30:10,11) illustrate the attitude of men toward God's messengers (Acts 17:32-34)?
10. What practical results of this revival of Jehovah's worship produce (II Chron. 31:1; Acts 19:19)?
11. Why did Hezekiah prosper in every work he attempted for the Lord (II Kings 18:5-8; II Chron. 31:21; Psa. 1:1-3)?
12. What king did God permit to test Hezekiah's faith (II Kings 8:13), and tell of Rab-shakeh's taunts (II Kings 18:19-35)?
13. Before whom did Hezekiah spread Sennacherib's blasphemous letter (II Kgs 19:1-19; II Chron. 32:17-20)?
14. How many Assyrians did the angel of God smite (II Kings 19:34; II Chron. 32:21, 22) and what happened to Sennacherib (II Kings 19:36, 37)?
15. What was the cause of Hezekiah's sickness (II Kings 20:1, 7), what did he do when told "thou shalt die" (II Kings 20:2, 3), and when did this occur (II Kings 20:6; 18:2, 13)?
16. Did God hear Hezekiah's prayer, how was he healed and what sign was given (II Kings 20:4-11)?
17. What was the purpose of the letters and the present from the king of Babylon (II Kings 20:21; II Chron. 32:31)?
18. What was Hezekiah's purpose in showing his treasures (II Kings 20:13; II Chron. 32:27-31)?
19. What prediction did Isaiah make (II Kings 20:14-19)?
20. Who succeeded Hezekiah as king of Judah (II Kings 20:20, 21)?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 36
II Kings 21-23

Page 1
Memory Verse: Psalms 119:162

Memory Verse:

"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil" (Psalm 119:162).

Public Reading: II Kings 22:11-20.

MANASSEH AND JOSIAH

Manasseh means "Causing to forget" and Josiah means Jehovah supports him." They were alike in many respects. Both started to reign at an early age, Manasseh at twelve years (II Kings 21:1), Josiah at eight years (II Kings 22:1). Both reigned many years, the former fifty-five, and the latter thirty-one years. A great difference is seen in the two men. Manasseh served idols for many years, was sent into captivity at Ninevah, repented, was restored to his throne at Jerusalem and served God faithfully the rest of his life. Josiah from his youth until his death as a faithful servant of God.

II Chronicles 33-35 must be read for the complete story of the lives of these two kings of Judah.

I. The Reign of Manasseh (II Kings 21:1-26; II Chronicles 33)

I. Manasseh's extreme wickedness (II Kings 21:1-9).

"Manasseh was twelve years old . . . reign" (II Kings 21:1): He reigned for fifty-five years, the longest reign in Judah's history. Uzziah reigned fifty-two years; Asa, forty-one years; Joash, forty years. Manasseh was born three years after Hezekiah's recovery from "the boil" (II Kings 20:7). His youth was spent under the influence of guardians hostile to the religious principles and practices of his Godly father.

"He did . . . evil" (II Kings 21:2): The reforms of Hezekiah his father were ousted; the inner condition of the people was evil. Manasseh led them into all sorts of excesses. This is a story of reaction. Manasseh's sin is not merely of personal wrongdoing, but also of the DELIBERATE UNDOING OF WHAT HIS FATHER HAD BEEN AT SUCH PAINS TO ACCOMPLISH. All the things specifically forbidden were set up in the places sacred to the name of Jehovah.

"Reared up altars for Baal . . . made a grove. . . worshipped. . . host of heaven" (II Kings 21:3): To the Baal and Asherah worship, Manasseh added a third kind of worship, the "host of heaven." This had not occurred before the Assyrian era, and was probably of Assyrian or Chaldean origin. This was pure star-worship, based upon the idea of the unchangableness of the stars, and the temporary nature of everything earthly. Manasseh "built altars in the house of the Lord" (verse 4), and erected "altars for all the host of heaven" (verse 5), to all the stars, sun, moon, planets which were worshipped in conjunction with the zodiac, and with this were connected astrology, augury, and the casting of nativities. This was done in "the two courts of the house of the Lord"-- the court of the priests, and the court set apart for the worship of God (verse 6). He also sacrificed his son to Moloch, like Ahaz (II Kings 16:3). An image of Asherah was set up in the Holy Place (verse 7). Manasseh led his people into greater excesses than those committed by the original Canaanites (verses 8, 9).

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2. The penalty announced through the prophets (II Kings 21:10-15).

"The Lord spake . . . I will wipe Jerusalem" (II Kings 21:13): Because of Manasseh's sins, God's prophets (Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Habakkuk) said He would destroy Jerusalem. It would be truly "wiped off the map" when the avenger came. "The line of Samaria" denotes those captives doomed for destruction who were grouped together and "marked off" by means of a measuring line (II Samuel 8:2; Isa. 34:11). "Plummet" is literally a level. It meant that Jerusalem would be made level with the ground-completely thrown down. It was!

3. Manasseh's cruelty (II Kings 21:16).

"Manasseh shed innocent blood. . ." (II Kings 21:16): Tradition says Manasseh killed the prophet Isaiah by sawing him asunder with a wooden saw (see Hebrews 11:37).

4. His captivity and repentance (II Chron. 33:11-17).

"King of Assyria. . . took Manasseh . . . bound him with fetters" (II Chron. 33:11): God sent Esarhadden, king of Assyria 681-668 B. C., to Jerusalem where he seized Manasseh and put him in chains and led him away a captive to Babylon.

"Manasseh . . . humbled himself" (II Chron. 33:12): God heard his once depraved man when he repented. See II Peter 3:9. It seems that some will not turn to God unless death, misfortune, or some terrible trial befalls them. God restored him to his throne in Jerusalem.

"Nevertheless the people . . ." (II Chron. 33:17): Manasseh turned to God in genuine repentance. However, his long life of sin had influenced the people away from God. They worshipped God with the lips; they were rotten morally (Isa. 1:3-6; Rom. 14:7). One may repent and turn truly to God, but one cannot recall the unkind word, the sinful action. This king, like Lot, repented. His children, following his evil example of early days, walked in those evil ways to their death. This is "A Good Man's Hell on Earth."

5. His chronicles and his death (II Kings 21:17, 18; II Chron. 33:18-20).

6. The reign of Amon (II Kings 21:19-26; II Chron. 33:21-25).

II. The Reign of Josiah (II Kings 22:1-23:37; II Chron. 34-35)

1. General character of his reign (II Kings 22:1, 2): The right start!

"Josiah was eight years old . . . reign" (II Kings 22:1): When his wicked father was assassinated (II Kings 21:23-26), Josiah was eight years old and was placed on the throne. A godly mother and good guardians trained him aright. "Give me a child until he is six years of age, and he will always _____." You can fill it in! Training tells. Josiah "did that which was right" (verse 2). The mothers of the kings of Judah are mentioned. The genealogy is important on both sides of the house!

2. Repair of the temple (II Kings 22:3-7).

"Repair the breach of the house . . ." (II Kings 22:5): The repairing of the house of the Lord implies that Josiah destroyed all the public memorials of idolatry of the temple (II Chron. 34:3-7). Idolatrous kings had destroyed stones, timber, and floor of the temple. Hilkiah was high priest (II Chron. 34:9, 14, 15).

3. Revelation: Book of the law found (II Kings 22:8-9).

YEAR 2 - LESSON 36 - PAGE 3

"I have found the book of the law . . . (II Kings 22:8): The finding of the book of the law by Hilkiah the high priest was a momentous discovery. This was the law of Moses. It was the eighteenth year of Josiah that the temple copy of the law (Deut. 31:26) was found in one of the treasure-chambers of the temple. "The Hidden Bible" will never bring conviction to any heart, although it is God's revelation!

4. Reception of God's Word (II Kings 22:10-20).

"King had heard the words . . . rent his clothes" (II Kings 22:11) "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). King Josiah received the long-lost book of God with profound concern. The king and Shaphan the scribe read the book eagerly and immediately (See Acts 17:11). Josiah heard and heeded the law (James 1:22-25). Great sorrow gripped his heart as he realized the sins of the nation were many, and the penalties of a despised Word of God hung like a black cloud over the nation.

"I will bring evil upon this place . . ." (II Kings 22:16): Huldah was known for her prophetic gifts. She specifically referred the king to God's promise to punish insubordination to his will, idolatry and immorality with removal from the land (Deut. 28:1-68-verses 63-68 especially). Idolatry had doomed Jerusalem to destruction. Nevertheless, Josiah would not live to see the desolation (verses 18-20).

5. Righteousness: Rekindled in the nation (II Kings 23:1-3).

"The king sent . . . gathered unto him" (II Kings 23:1): Josiah called the leaders and the people together for a solemn convocation to hear the Law of God. "All the people, both small and great" (verse 2) heard the "words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord." The king solemnly bound himself "to walk after the Lord . . . keep his commandments" (verse 3). "All the people stood to the covenant"; they, too, agreed to stand firm in their commitment to God.

6. Resolution. The land thoroughly purged of idolatry (II Kings 23:4-20; II Chron. 34:29-33).

"The king commanded . . ." (II Kings 23:4): The king had vowed to keep the "commandments" of the Lord with all his heart. The temple was cleansed of "all the vessels that were made for Baal . . . grove . . . host of heaven" and "burned them without Jerusalem"! "Idolatrous priests" were deposed (verse 51, the houses of the Sodomites were destroyed (verse 7), he "defiled Topheth" to stamp out human sacrifice there (verse 10), chariots "of the sun" were burned and the horses taken away (verse 11), and further purges of idolatry carried out (verses 12-20). Such resolutions to remove current and popular "abomination" required decision, courage, firmness and faithfulness to God--and one's people.

7. Revival: The Passover kept (II Kings 23:21-27; II Chron. 35:1-19).

"Keep the Passover . . ." (II Kings 23:21): The Passover was celebrated. This great feast had been neglected and was now revived. The newfound book gave explicit direction for its observance (II Chron. 35:1-19). There was a general response from every section of Judah and Israel to the king's command. It was one of the greatest Passovers ever held. There was a moral awakening throughout the land.

8. Ruinous decisions. Death of Josiah (II Kings 23:28-30; II Chron. 35:20-27).

9. Reign and dethronement of Jehoahaz (II Kings 23:31-33; II Chron. 35:1, 2; Jer. 22:10-12).

10. Reign of Jehoiakim (II Kings 23:34-37; II Chron. 36:4, 5).

YEAR 2 - LESSON 36 - PAGE 4

QUESTIONS

1. Did Manasseh follow in the footsteps of his righteous father, Hezekiah (II Kings 21:1, 2; II Chron. 33:1-10)?
2. What sinful practices did he revive in Judah (II Kings 21:3-9; Deut. 16:21)?
3. What is the meaning of "all the host of heaven" (II Kings 21:3, 5)?
4. What effect would these sins have upon the nations before whom Judah was to be God's witness (II Kings 21:9; see Luke 12:48; Col. 4:5; Matt. 5:16)?
5. What punishment did God bring upon Manasseh which resulted in his turning to God (II Chron. 33:11-13)?
6. What practical effect did Manasseh's conversion have upon his reign (II Chron. 33:14-19)?
7. What prophet did Manasseh "saw asunder" (II Kings 21:16; Heb. 11:37)?
8. What part of Manasseh's life seemed to influence his son Amon most, that given to wickedness, or that given to righteousness (II Kings 21:19-22; II Chron. 33:21-23)?
9. After what great man of God did Josiah pattern his life (II Kings 22:2; II Chron. 34:2)?
10. How old was Josiah when he began to destroy Judah's objects of idolatry (II Chron. 34:1-7), and repair the temple (II Kings 22:1, 2; II Chron. 34:8)?
11. What great treasure did Hilkiah discover, and how did it reach the king (II Kings 22:3-9; II Chron. 34:14-18)?
12. What was Josiah's attitude and response to the Word of God (II Kings 22:11-13; II Chron. 34:19-21; Psa. 110:11, 105; Isa. 66:2)?
13. What was Huldah's message (II Kings 22:14-20; II Chron. 34:22-28)?
14. Could a great revival prevent the judgment of God from falling upon Judah (II Kings 22:19-20)? Is this true today?
15. Did Josiah believe his responsibility was fulfilled when he heard and lived according to the Word of God in the Law (II Kings. 23:1, 2; see II Tim. 2:2; 4:2)?
16. Why did he burn bones on the altars at Bethel, and elsewhere (II Kings 23:16, 20; I Kings 13:1-3)?
17. Could Josiah have learned all the details of the Passover from Deuteronomy (II Kings 23:21-23; II Chron. 35:10-19; Deut. 16:1-8; Ex. 23:14, 15; Lev. 23:4-14; Num. 9:1-12; 28:16-24)?
18. What accounted for the superiority of Josiah's life (II Kings 23:25)?
19. How did Josiah's failure to inquire of the Lord result in his death (II Kings 23:28-30; II Chron. 35:20-24)?
20. When did Jeremiah make his appearance (II Chron. 35:25; Jer. 1:1-3)?

YEAR 2 - LESSON 37 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 37

Page 1

II Kings 24-25

Memory Verse: Proverbs 29:1

Memory Verse:

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1).

Public Reading: II Kings 25:1-11.

JUDAH'S DOWNFALL AND CAPTIVITY

The history of the last four Kings of Judah may be summarized rightly by the ascription given each of them by the sacred historian: "They did evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that their fathers had done" (II Kings 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19).

That you may have the picture of the downfall and captivity of both Israel and Judah, the following chronology is given:

ISRAEL

Hoshea Bad 730-721

19th and last king of 10 Tribes Northern Kingdom.

Israel's identity lost probably by inter-marriage in captivity in Assyria).

JUDAH

Hezekiah ----- 726-797
 Manasseh -----697-642
 Amon ----- 641-640
 Josiah ----- 639-608
 Jehoahaz -----608
 Jehoiakim ----- 608-597
 Jehoiachin ----- 597
 Zedekiah ----- 597-386
 Babylonian Captivity ----- 606-536
 Return from Captivity ----- 536
 Temple Rebuilt -----520-516

The dates given above are sufficient to show the chronological relation of events and persons. II Chronicles 36 should be read in connection with the lesson.

Jehoahaz is also called Shallum, (I Chronicles 3:15) reigned three months and was put in bonds by Pharaoh-Necho. His end is unknown (Ezek. 19:3, 4).

Jehoiakim, an elder brother of Jehoahaz, was made king by Pharaoh-Nechoh (II Kings 23:34-37; II Chronicles 36:4, 5).

I. The Fulfillment of Jeremiah's Roll (Jer. 36:11; II Kings 24:1-20)

1. The reign of Jehoiakim (II Kings 23:34-24:1-7).

YEAR 2 - LESSON 37 - PAGE 2

"Word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord . . ." (Jer. 36:1): Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiyah the priest. He was dedicated to God from his birth, and received the prophetic call about 627 B. C. His preaching fell upon unheeding ears. Directed of God, Jeremiah warned Jehoiakim of the wrath to come upon the city of Jerusalem (Jer. 36:1-32). The king without fear had the book burned after he had cut it to pieces with his penknife (Jer. 36:23, 24). King Jehoiakim through continued disobedience is gone; the book of Jeremiah remains!

"The king of Babylon shall certainly come . . . destroy" (Jer 36:29): He did, too!

"Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up . . ." (II Kings 24:1): Nebuchadnezzar was one of the mightiest monarchs of all time.

He was co-regent with his father (Nabopolassar who ruled Babylon 625-604 B. C.) over Babylon for two years. He became sole ruler in 604 B. C. (606-561 B. C.) He defeated the armies of Egypt at Carchemish 605 B. C., and broke the power of Egypt, having wrested Palestine from Egypt in 606 B. C.

"Jehoiakim. . . his servant. . . rebelled" (II Kings 24:1): Jehoiakim reigned eleven years in the spirit of his ungodly forefathers (compare II Kings 23:37, 32). Jeremiah represents him as a bad prince who became rich by unjustly oppressing his people (Jer. 22:13ff; 26:22, 23). Jehoiakim became the servant of Nebuchadnezzar "three years," and then revolted from him again. Nebuchadnezzar had come against Jehoiakim in 606 B. C., besieged Jerusalem, and Jehoiakim became his vassal. Some of the seed royal, including Daniel, were taken to Babylon (II Chron. 36:6, 7; Daniel 1:1-3). Jehoiakim could do nothing but submit to Nebuchadnezzar.

"The Lord send against him . . ." (II Kings 24:2): To punish Jehoiakim's rebellion, the Lord sent hosts of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and the children of Ammon "against Judah to destroy it." Nebuchadnezzar was too much occupied in the early years of his reign at Babylon to punish Jehoiakim for his revolt, so he merely sent subject troops from the nations mentioned against Judah. They were not able to take Jerusalem.

"Came. . . for the sins of Manasseh" (II Kings 24:3): The Lord determined to put away Judah from his face because of Manasseh's sins (II Kings 21:12-16; 23:27). The Lord "would not forgive" even if the greatest intercessors, Moses and Samuel, had come before him (Jer. 15:1ff). The cup of iniquity had run over; God was obliged to punish according to His holy righteousness (verses 4, 5).

"Jehoiakim slept with his fathers . . ." (II Kings 24:6): Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead for "three months" (verse 8)--if that could be called "reigning." "Jehoiakim shall be buried like an ass, carried away and cast out far away from the gates of Jerusalem" (Jer. 22:19; 36:30). So Jehoiakim met a violent death, and his body was dishonored in death. See Ezekiel 17:11-16.

"The king of Egypt came not . . ." (II Kings 24:7): Nebuchadnezzar had broken the power of Egypt at Carchemish, 605 B. C., and taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates.

3. The reign and deportation of Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:8-16; II Chron. 36:8-10).

"Jehoiachin. . . reigned. . . three months" (II Kings 24:8, 9): This eighteen year old did "evil in the sight of the Lord." The servants of Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem (verse 10).

"Nebuchadnezzar . . . came against the city" (II Kings 24:11): Jehoiachin knew he could not withstand the siege of the Babylonians. He surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar to win his favor. He was deported with his family, treasures of the temple, and "ten thousand captives" (verses 12-16) to Babylon as Jeremiah predicted (Jer. 22:24-30).

YEAR 2 - LESSON 37 - PAGE 3

4. Zedekiah is made king (II Kings 24:17-20; II Chron. 36:10-18).

"Zedekiah. . . reigned eleven years in Jerusalem" (II Kings 24:18): Zedekiah means "Jehovah is just or righteous." He was a brother to Jehoahaz (II Kings 23:31; 24:17), and uncle of Jehoiachin. He broke his vow of loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar who marched against the city (verses 19, 20; II Chron. 36:13; Jer. 37:3-10; Ezek. 17:15; Jer. 52:1-11; 39:1-11).

II. The Fury of Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 25:1-4; II Chron. 36:17-20; Jer. 39:8-10)

"Nebuchadnezzar came . . . against Jerusalem" (II Kings 25:1): Angered by the revolt of Zedekiah who sought an alliance with Egypt, the king of Babylon determined to destroy Judah, Jerusalem, and her king. So he marched against the city in the ninth year, tenth month (January), and the tenth day of King Zedekiah.

"Famine prevailed . . . city was broken up" (II Kings 24:3, 4): The besieged city went through unspeakable terrors. (Lam. 2:20, 22; 4:9, 10; Ezek. 5:10). A break in the wall forced Zedekiah to know that the end was near. He foolishly fled by night toward the Jordan valley. For years Jeremiah had walked the streets of Jerusalem warning the king and the people to repent of their sins, that God would save them from Babylon IF THEY REPENTED.

The captivity of Judah was accomplished in four installments:

1. 606 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jehoiakim, and took temple treasures, some of the royal seed, including Daniel, to Babylon (II Chron. 36:6, 7; Dan. 1:1-3).
2. 597 B. C. The Babylonians came again, and took the rest of the treasures, and king Jehoiachin, and 10,000 of the princes, officers and chief men and carried them to Babylon (II Kings 24:14-16).
3. 586 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar came, burned Jerusalem, broke down its walls, took Zedekiah and 832 persons captive (Jer. 52:28-30; II Kings 25:8-12).
5. 581 B. C. 745 persons taken captive (Jer. 52:30). This was five years after the city was burned.

Nebuchadnezzar was twenty years in destroying Jerusalem. He first conquered it, and patiently bore with the Jews twenty years before he burned Jerusalem. Daniel probably restrained him until Judah's alliance with Egypt forced Nebuchadnezzar to wipe Jerusalem off the map!

III. The Fate of Zedekiah (II Kings 25:5-7; Ezek.12:13)

"They took the king . . . put out the eyes" (II Kings 25:6, 7): The penalty of disobedience to God is illustrated in Zedekiah, the last and twentieth king of Judah. This ends David's earthly kingdom. It lasted 400 years. The kingdom will be revived in a spiritual sense with the arrival of Christ, and will be consummated in glory at His return!

Zedekiah's sons and nobles were slain before his eyes, his eyes were then put out at Riblah. of Hamath, the camping ground of the kings of Babylon. It was a merited punishment for the breach of his oath (II Chron. 36:13; Jer. 38:17ff; 32:5; 34:3ff; Jer. 52:11). Bound with fetters, Zedekiah was taken to Babylon and kept a prisoner there until his death. The end of sin and disobedience doesn't make a pretty picture, does it (Num. 32:23; Rom. 6:23)?

YEAR 2 - LESSON 37 - PAGE 4

IV. The Fall of Jerusalem and Troubles of the Remnant (II Kings 25:8-30; II Chron. 36:17-23; Jer. 39:8-41:18; 52:12-30)

1. Jerusalem is destroyed (II Kings 25:8-11): The nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar corresponds to the eleventh of Zedekiah (II Kings 24:12; 25:1, 2). The king sent his captain of the guard, Nebuzar-adan, from Riblah of Hamath to destroy the city. He burnt the temple, the king's house, and the great houses of the city (verse 9), and "broke down the walls (verse 10), and carried away the "remnant" (verse 11). Ichabod!

2. A governor appointed for the remnant (II Kings 25:12-22).
3. Scattered bands submit to Gedaliah, but he is assassinated (II Kings 25:23-26).
4. Jehoiachin released and honored by Evil-Merodach (II Kings 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34).

QUESTIONS

1. Name the four kings who reigned over Judah after Josiah's death (II Kings 24:31, 34; 24:6, 8, 17-20)?
2. Which of the prophets had told Zedekiah of the coming Babylonian captivity (II Kings 20:16-19)?
3. Who was the king of Babylon who conquered Jehoiakim (II Kings 24:1)?
4. Did Jehoiakim tremble before God's Word (compare Jer. 36:1-32 with II Kings 22:11)?
5. What four nations (tributary to Babylon) did God send against Judah (II Kings 24:2)?
6. What do you learn about the death and burial of Jehoiakim in II Kings 24:6 and Jeremiah 22:18, 19?
7. Who succeeded Jehoiakim as king of Judah (II Kings 24:6)?
8. By what other names was Jehoiachin known (Jer. 22:24; I Chron. 3:16)?
9. What prevented the king of Egypt from troubling Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:7)?
10. When Nebuchadnezzar first came against Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim, what did he carry back to Babylon (Dan. 1:1-6; II Chron. 36:6, 7)?
11. What did he carry back later when he came against Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:11-16); Jer. 29:1, 2; 52:28; Ezek. 1:1-3)?
12. Whom did Nebuchadnezzar appoint king over Palestine in place of Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:17-19)?
13. What was the result of Zedekiah's rebellion (II Kings 24:20; 25:1, 2; Jer. 39:8-10)?
14. What awful suffering followed this rebellion (II Kings 25:3-7; Jer. 52:1-11)?
15. How was the city systematically destroyed (II Chron. 36:18, 19; II Kings 25:9-17)?
16. What effort had God made to save Judah from this judgment (II Chron. 36:15)?
17. What had been Judah's response (II Chron. 36:16)?
18. How long did Jeremiah say Judah must remain in Babylon (II Chron. 36:21; Jer. 25:12)?
19. What happened to Zedekiah as had been predicted (II Kings 25:7; Ezek. 12:13; 17:16)?
20. What does this lesson teach us regarding sin (Rom. 6:23; James 1:13-15)?

YEAR 2 - LESSON 37 - PAGE 5

BABYLON

Assyria took ISRAEL away in Captivity, 734-721 B. C.
Babylon took JUDAH away in Captivity, 606-586 B. C.
Assyria was the North part of the Euphrates-Tigris valley.
Babylon was the South part of the Euphrates-Tigris valley.
Nineveh was the Capital of the Assyrian Empire.
Babylon was the Capital of the Babylonian Empire.
Nineveh and Babylon, 300 miles apart.

The Old Babylonian Empire

Babylonia was the cradle of human race.
About 2000 B. C. Babylon was the dominating power of the world.
Then, 1000 yrs. intermittent struggle.
Then, 300 yrs. of Assyrian Supremacy, 885-607 B. C.

The New Babylonian Empire

606-536 B. C. Sometimes called the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This was the Empire that broke the power of Assyria, and, in its westward sweep destroyed JUDAH and conquered Egypt. Its kings were: Nabopolassar, 625-604 B. C.; viceroy of Babylon. He threw off the yoke of Assyria, 625 B. C., and established the independence of Babylon. With the aid of Cyaxares the Mede, he conquered and destroyed Nineveh, 607 B. C. (or 612). His son Nebuchadnezzar, 609 B. C., became commander of his father's armies; and, 606 B. C., became co-regent with his father.

Nebuchadnezzar, 606-561 B. C., greatest of all Babylonian kings, one of the mightiest monarchs of all time. He reigned 45 years. The Babylonian Empire was largely his work. He extended the power of Babylon over most of the then known world, and beautified the city of Babylon almost beyond imagination. He was the one that carried the Jews into captivity, including Daniel and Ezekiel. He took a great liking to Daniel, and made him one of his chief advisers. And Daniel's influence, no doubt, must have eased the lot of Jewish captives. See further about Nebuchadnezzar, and Babylon.

Evil-Merodach, 561-560. Neriglissar, 559-556. Labash-Marduk, 556.

Nabonidus, 555-536 B. C. His son, Belshazzar, co-regent the last few years of his reign. Babylon fell. Supremacy passed to Persia. Story of the Handwriting on the Wall, and the Fall of Babylon.

The Babylonian Empire lasted 70 years. The 70 years of Judah's Captivity was exactly the same 70 years that Babylon ruled the world. The year that Cyrus, king of Persia, conquered Babylon, 536 B. C. that same year he authorized the Return of the Jews to their own land.

Babylon, oppressor of God's Old Testament people, gave its name to the Apostate Church, Rev. 17.

-Courtesy, H. H. Halley.

YEAR 2 - LESSON 37 - PAGE 6

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

As the policy of Assyrian and Babylonian kings had been to deport conquered peoples. That is, they were taken out of their own lands, and scatter them in other lands, so, the policy of Persian kings, exactly the opposite, was to repatriate those peoples, that is send them back to their own lands. Persian kings were more humane than Assyrian and Babylonian kings.

One of the first acts of the first Persian king, Cyrus, who was a "singularly noble and just monarch," in his first year, was to authorize the Return of the Jews to their own land.

Persia was the mountainous plateau east of the lower end of the Euphrates-Tigris Valley. The Persian Empire was vaster in extent than its predecessors had been, extending eastward to India, and reaching westward to Greece. Its capitals were Persepolis and Susa; its kings sometimes residing at Babylon. As a world-empire, it lasted 200 years, 536-331 B. C. Its kings were:

Cyrus, 538-529 B. C. Conquered Babylon, 536 B. C. Made Persia a World Empire. He permitted the Jews to return to their homeland, in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

Cambyses, 529-522 B. C. He is thought to have been "Artaxerxes" mentioned in Ez. 4:7, 11, 23 who stopped work on Temple.

Darius I (Hystaspes), 521-485 B. C. Authorized completion of Temple, Ez. 6. Made the "Behistun" inscription.

Xerxes (Ahasuerus), 485-465 B. C. Famous for wars with Greece. Esther was his wife. Mordecai his prime minister.

Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), 465-425 B. C. Very favorable to the Jews. Authorized Nehemiah, his cupbearer, to re-build Jerusalem.

Xerxes II, 424. Darius II (Nothius), 423-405. Artaxerxes II (Mnemon), 405-358. Artaxerxes III (Ochus), 358-338. Arses, 338-335.

Darius III (Codomanus), 335-331. He was defeated by Alexander the Great, 331 B. C., at the famous battle of Arbela, near the site of Nineveh. This was the Fall of Persia, and the Rise of Greece. Empire passed from Asia to Europe.

-Courtesy of H. H. Halley

YEAR 2 - LESSON 38 - PAGE 1
WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 38
Ezra 1-5

Page 1
Memory Verse: Ezra 3:11

Memory Verse:

"And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord. . . when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy" (Ezra 3:11, 12).

THE TWO DECREES OF CYRUS AND DARIUS

In Year II, Quarter 3, lesson 37 we learned that the captivity of Judah was accomplished in four installments:

1. 606 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jehoiakim, and took temple treasures, some of the royal seed , including Daniel, to Babylon (II Chron. 36:6, 7; Dan. 1:1-3).
2. 597 B. C. The Babylonians came again, and took the rest of the treasures, and king Jehoiachin, and 10,000 of the princes, officers and chief men and carried them to Babylon (II Kings 24:14-16).
3. 586 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar came, burned Jerusalem, broke down its walls, took Zedekiah and 832 persons captive (Jer-. 52:28-30; II Kings 25:8-12).
4. 581 B. C. 745 persons taken captive (Jer. 52:30). This was five years after the city was burned.

Nebuchadnezzar was twenty years in destroying Jerusalem. During the bondage, the people were first subject to the king of Babylon (Nabonidus, 555-536 B. C. and his son Belshazzar who was co-regent the last few years of his father's reign). After Babylon's overthrow by Cyrus (538-529 B. C.) they became subject of this first Persian king whose policy was to repatriate peoples who had been deported by the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. Persia was the plateau east of the Euphrates valley. Its two main capitals were Susa and Persepolis. Persia was a world-empire for about 200 years (536-331 B. C.).

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther tell the story of the Jews' return from captivity, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Two Distinct Periods

536-516 B. C.: twenty years under Zerubbabel the Governor and Joshua the priest in which the Temple is rebuilt. Haggai and Zechariah belong to this period.

457-432 B. C.: 25 years under Nehemiah the Governor and Ezra, the priest (grandson of Hilkiah who had directed King Josiah's reformation 160 years earlier, (II Kings 22:8) who rebuilt the wall and made Jerusalem a fortified city. Malachi belonged to this period.

Ezra gives an account of both periods; Nehemiah gives an account of the second period. Esther comes in between the two periods.

Three Returns

536 B. C.: 49,897 return from Babylon to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel.

YEAR 2 - LESSON 38 - PAGE 2

457 B. C.: Ezra and 1754 males go from Babylon to Jerusalem.

444 B. C.: Nehemiah as governor with an army escort at government expense went to Jerusalem and fortified the city.

I. A Caravan of the Captives Return (Ezra 1:1-2:70)

1. The decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4).

"In the first year of Cyrus . ." (Ezra 1:1): Cyrus, king of Persia, conquered Babylon in 536 B. C. He reigned over Persia 538-529 B. C. He made Persia a world empire. Note that II Chronicles 36:22, 23 is identical with Ezra 1:1, 2, probably Chronicles and Ezra were one book.

"The Lord . . . charged me" (Ezra 1:2): God had done this through Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10 and Isaiah 44:28-45:7). Cyrus expressly calls the God of heaven by His Israelite name, and speaks of a commission from this God to build Him a temple at Jerusalem. Cyrus consciously entered into the purposes of Jehovah, and sought, as far as he was concerned to fulfill them. Daniel probably showed Cyrus these prophecies after he had read the handwriting on the wall. They predicted the fall of Babylon. Cyrus was named of God as the one under whom the Jews would return, and rebuild Jerusalem!

"Who . . . let him go up. . . build" (Ezra 1:3): No one was commanded to return to Jerusalem. All were free to go who desired to go. Cyrus requires all his subjects to assist the returning Jews, and to give freewill offerings for the temple (Ezra 1:4).

2. A caravan formed and presents given them (Ezra 1:4-11).

"Then rose up the chief of the fathers . . ." (Ezra 1:5): Those of the houses of Judah and Benjamin and the Levites "whose spirit God had raised" rose to go up and to build the house of God. All the Jews were called upon to return; only those obeyed the call who were willing to do God's will in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.

"All. . . about them strengthened their hands" (Ezra 1:6): The people of the places where the Jews were making preparations for returning. This includes their heathen neighbors (verse 4), and also those Jews remained in Babylon.

"Cyrus brought forth the vessels . . ." (Ezra 1:7): King Cyrus caused the sacred vessels of the temple which had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to be brought forth, and delivered them into the hands of Sheshbazzar (verse 8, undoubtedly the Chaldee name of Zerubbabel. This "prince of Judah" was not only at the head of the returning Jews, but also presided as secular ruler over the settlement of the community in Judah and Jerusalem.

The sacred vessels from the temple at Jerusalem had been dedicated to pagan gods. Now they are given to the remnant of the Jews who return to rebuild the temple. See II Kings 25:14ff; Jer. 52:18ff. There were a total of all small and large vessels of gold and silver 5,400, 2499 being enumerated as the great vessels.

3. Register of those who returned (Ezra 2:1-67).

"Now these . . . went up" (Ezra 2:1): Their chapter contains the register of those who, taking advantage of Cyrus' decree, turned their faces toward Jerusalem. Note the definite order: Those immediately associated with Zerubbabel (verses 1 and 2). Then the names of the families, with the numbers in each case (verses 3-35); names of the members of the priesthood (verses 36-39); the list and numbers of the Levites (verses 40-42); the Nethinim (verses 43-45); the children of Solomon's servants (verses 55-58); a list of those who lost their genealogy. These were excluded from the exercise of priestly functions.

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"The whole congregation . . . (Ezra 2:64): A total of 42,360 Jews returned with 7,337 servants, 200 singers-a total of 49,897. Exiles from other tribes doubtless returned with Judah. "All Israel" (verse 70) is used of those who returned (Ezra 2:70; 6:17; 8:35). This helps us to understand how in New Testament times the Jews were still spoken of as the "Twelve Tribes" (Luke 22:20; Acts 26:7; James 1:1).

4. They make offerings for the temple, and return to their former cities (Ezra 2:68-70).

II. Worship Renewed and the Temple Begun (Ezra 3:1-13)

1. The offerings and festivals renewed (Ezra 3:1-7).

"The seventh month . . ." (Ezra 3:1): In the seventh month of the first year of their- return, the people built the altar, and kept the feast of the tabernacles in joyous thanksgiving to God. It took two months to prepare their homes. It is now October (verse 4).

"Then stood up Jeshua . . ." (Ezra 3:2): Jeshua, meaning Jehovah is Salvation, was the grandson of Seraiah, high priest put to death by Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 25:18-21).

"As it is written in the Law of Moses" the people set up the true altar. They never returned to idolatry. The seventy years of captivity because of idolatry cured the Jews of idolatry.

2. The foundation of the temple laid (Ezra 3:8-13).

"Set forward the work . . ." (Ezra 3:8): In May of the second year, the work of rebuilding the temple was begun. They could not begin in the rainy season. Those from twenty years old and up helped.

"Wept . . . shouted aloud for joy" (Ezra 3:12): The younger ones shouted aloud in their praise of God. The older ones, remembering the glory of Solomon's temple, wept. Is it not always better to live today for God, and not weep about a dead past however glorious?

III. The Work Suspended (Ezra 4:1-24)

1. A proposal from the Samaritans rejected (Ezra 4:1-6).

"Let us build with you . . ." (Ezra 4:2): God's servants will always have "adversaries" (Ezra 4:1). Jesus did; Paul did. We will have them, too (I Peter 4:12-19). The Assyrians had intermarried with the Jews left in the land. The Samaritans were the descendants, a mongrel race, serving idols (II Kings 17:26-34, 41). The Jews rejected the offer (verse 4).

"The people. . . weakened the hands" (Ezra 4:4): The Samaritans hindered the work in every possible way (verse 5).

2. The adversaries appeal to Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:7-17).

"In the days of Artaxerxes. . ." (Ezra 4:7): This Artaxerxes is identical with Ahasuerus of verse 6 --the Cambyses of secular history (529-522 B. C.). He was an enemy of the Jews.

3. An order for suspension (Ezra 4:18-24).

"Cause the men to cease. . . then ceased the work" (Ezra 4:21, 24): The letter from the reigning monarch stopped the work of building the house of God until the time of Darius I, or Hystaspes (521-485 B. C.) who authorized the completion of the temple.

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IV. The Work Resumed (Ezra 5:1-17)

1. The prophets exhort and the work is resumed (Ezra 5:1-5).

"Haggai. . . Zechariah. . . prophesied" (Ezra 5:1): See Haggai 1:1-11; 2:10-9, 10, 19; Zechariah 1:1-6-8. These men of God made it plain that the cessation of the work of building was unworthy of the men who had commenced. They "began to build the house of God" (verse 2). Opposition arose (verses 3, 4).

"But the eye of their God . . ." (Ezra 5:5): God's eye had always been upon them. Through the rousing preaching of the prophets, the consciousness of their relationship to God was renewed.

2. A letter of inquiry sent to Darius (Ezra 5:6-17).

"Letter. . . Tatnai, governor. . ." (Ezra 5:6): He was a governor, or satrap of Syria, one of the twenty satrapies of the Persian empire. This was a friendly letter to Darius who had succeeded Cambyses (529-521 B.C.) Darius (521-485 B. C.) was friendly to the Jews, reaffirming the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 5:13-17; 6:1-15).

QUESTIONS

1. By what two nations, respectively, had the ten tribes (Israel), and the two tribes (Judah) been captured (II Kings 17:4-5; 24:11-16)?
2. How long had God told Judah she would remain in captivity (Jer. 25:11)? Who were the two prophets in Babylon during the period (Ezek.1:1-3; Dan. 7:1)? Which understood the captivity would soon end (Dan. 9:2)?
3. What nations had conquered Babylon during the seventy years (Ezra 1:1,2; Dan. 5:28-31), and who was Cyrus?
4. How had Jehovah charged Cyrus to issue his proclamation (Ezra 1:1-3; Dan. 9:2, 3; Isa. 44:28-45:7)?
5. What two groups are mentioned (Ezra 1:5, 6), and how did each help in rebuilding the house of God?
6. What material contribution did Cyrus make toward the work (Ezra 1:7-10; II Chron. 36:17,18; Dan. 5:1-4)?
7. Can you name the political leaders and the religious leader of those who returned (Ezra 1:2; 2:2; 4:1-3; Hag. 1:14; 2:2; Matt. 1:12; Lk.3:27)?
8. How many returned to Jerusalem, and what did the return of only a small portion of the nation indicate as to its spiritual condition (Ezra 1:3; 2:64,65; Jer. 5:23; Matt. 6:21)?
9. Why wait until the seventh month (Ezra 3:1; 2:70)?
10. Who was the chief priest (Ezra 3:2), and what "altar" (verse 3)?
11. Why wait until the second year and the second month to lay the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:8)?
12. Why the music and rejoicing, and what psalm was sung (Ezra 3:11; II Chron. 5:13; 9:3; Psalm 136:1-16)?
13. Why the weeping, and who of them had seen the first house (Ezra 3:12)?
14. Who were the "adversaries of Judah;" what was their attitude toward God (Ezra 4:1; II Kings 17:24-41)?
15. What was the subtle plan of hindering the work (Ezra 4:2), and what should the courageous answer of the Jews teach us (Ezra 4:3)? Should the church today seek help from unbelievers to carry on Christ's work (II Cor. 6:14-18; II Tim. 3:5; II John 10, 11; Phil. 4:19; III John 7; Psa. 50:10-12)?
16. What accusation against the Jews was made to Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:7-16)?
17. Why was the work stopped (Ezra 4:17-24)?
18. What two prophets encouraged the Jews to resume the building (Ezra 5:1) and what did they say?
19. Who was Tatnai (Ezra 5:6) and the difference in this and the letter to Artaxerxes (Ezra 5:6-17; 4:7-16)?
20. Is "the eye of God" still upon us (Ezra 5:5; I Pet.3:12)? How can you refuse to do God's work today, then?

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WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Year II

Third Quarter

Lesson 39
Ezra 6-10

Page 1
Memory Verse: I John 1:9

Memory Verse:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Public Reading: Ezra 6:7-17.

CONFIRMATION OF DECREES

The introductory paragraphs of Lesson 38, Yr. II, Quarter 3, should be kept clearly in mind as we conclude the book of Ezra.

Chronology of the Restoration

536 B. C.: 48,897 return from Babylon to Jerusalem.
536 B. C.: Seventh month, build altar, offer sacrifices.
535 B. C.: Work on the Temple begun, then stopped.
520 B. C.: Work renewed by Haggai, Zechariah.
516 B. C.: Temple completed.
478 B. C.: Esther becomes Queen of Persia.
457 B. C.: Ezra goes from Babylon to Jerusalem.
444 B. C.: Nehemiah rebuilds the wall.
432 B. C.: Nehemiah returns from Babylon.

Persian Kings

Cyrus, 538-529 B. C. conquered Babylon, made Persia a world empire, and permitted Jews to return to their land.

Cambyses, 529-522 B. C. Probably "Artaxerxes of Ezra" (4:7, 11, 23). Hated Jews. Stopped work on Temple.

Darius I (Hystaspes), 521-485 B. C. Under him the Temple at Jerusalem was re-built.

Xerxes (Ahasuerus), 485-465 B. C. Famous for his wars with Greece. Esther was his wife. Mordecai was his prime minister.

Artaxerxes I (Longimanus). 463-425 B. C. Very favorable to Jews. Step-son of Esther. Under him Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem.

I. Darius Confirms the Decree of Cyrus (Ezra 6:1-22)

1. The king's reply (Ezra 6:1-12).

"Search . . . in the house of the rolls. . ." (Ezra 6:1): The archives where public records were kept. The decree of Cyrus (Ezra 5:17; 1:1-4) was found at Achmetha, "a station, fortress," the summer palace of Darius in

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the cool foothills. The classical name is Ecbatana (verse 2).

"Roll . . . record thus written" (Ezra 6:2): Verses 3-5 contain the decree of Cyrus. It is interesting to think how easily the decree might not have been found. If such a document were not found in the proper libraries, men would abandon their search. Can you read this story without realizing that the EYE OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS ON THE ELDERS OF THE JEWS, and that all the peoples were in His hand? The search was continued until successful.

"Now, therefore, Tatnai . . ." (Ezra 6:6): Darius re-affirmed the decree of Cyrus. Tatnai received the answer of Darius, characterized by clearness and determination. The man who would have hindered and stopped the building was compelled not only NOT TO HINDER, but also to HELP WITH GREAT GIFTS (verses 7-11).

"Expenses be given" (verse 8): The temple was to be rebuilt at the expense of the Persian government. Anyone who interfered with the work was to be hanged (verse 11). Darius commanded: "Let it be done with speed" (verse 12).

2. The house completed and dedicated (Ezra 6:13-18).

"House was finished . . . sixth year. . . Darius" (Ezra 6:15): The work was begun in 520 B. C. and was completed 516 B. C. When a people obey God they at once ensure His cooperation for the accomplishment of their purposes. See Romans 8:28. It had been nineteen years since the foundation was laid (see Ezra 3:8).

3. The passover kept (Ezra 6:19-22).

"Kept the Passover . . ." (Ezra 6:19): The house was dedicated "with joy" (verse 16) and the restoration of the passover was observed "seven days with joy" (verse 22). See Ezra 3:10-13.

II. Ezra Is Commissioned to Re-Establish the Law in Judah (Ezra 7:1-28)

1. An account of Ezra and his journey (Ezra 7:1-10).

"Artaxerxes king of Persia . . ." (Ezra 7:1): He was the step-son of Esther (II Kings 25:21-28) and reigned from 465-425 B. C.

"Ezra the son of Seraiah . ." (Ezra 9:1): He was a rabbi, or doctor, learned in all the civil and ecclesiastical polity and customs of the Jews. He possessed great authority. This was fifty-nine years after the temple had been completed in 516 B. C: it is now 457 B. C. The genealogy of Ezra is not full; more data is given in I Chron. 6:4-15, 50-52).

"The king granted him all his request . . ." (Ezra 7:6): Queen Esther was doubtless used of God to influence the king to grant the request to re-establish God's law in Judah.

"He came to Jerusalem" (Ezra 7:8): The journey from Babylon to Jerusalem took four months (verse 9).

"Prepared his heart to seek . . . to do . . . to teach" (Ezra 7:10): While still in Babylon, Ezra was moved to go help his people in Jerusalem. He obeyed God's law, and so prepared himself for his work of teaching. All who feel called to teach should note the order of this verse!

2. Ezra's letter of authority (Ezra 7:11-26).

"I make a decree. . ." (Ezra 7:13): Artaxerxes made the decrees (verses 11, 12). They empowered Ezra to organize the colony and institute a regular government in Judea (verses 25, 26), giving him the power of life and death over those who refused to obey him. He was authorized to carry a large sum of money from the royal

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treasury and from voluntary contributions (verses 16, 17). Persian officers in Syria were commanded to assist in every possible way (verse 21).

"Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven . . ." (Ezra 7:23): This verse explains the personal reason for the decree and beneficence of Artaxerxes. Why should there be "wrath against the real God of the king and his sons?" The king had some very clear consciousness of the power of God. Thus God is seen overruling, and by the creation of different emotions, bringing them into co-operation with each other, and thus with His purpose!

3. Ezra's thanksgiving (Ezra 7:27, 28).

"Blessed be the Lord God . . ." (Ezra 7:27): Ezra's thanksgiving with the chief of the leaders of the people acknowledges God's hand in everything.

III. His Caravan and His Journey (Ezra 8:1-36)

1. The families of his caravan (Ezra 8:1-14).

"Chief of their fathers . . . went up" (Ezra 8:1): There were 1,496 males.

2. Some Levites enlisted (Ezra 8:15-20).

"Gathered them . . . Ahava" (Ezra 8:15): The Ahava is about eighty miles from Babylon, one of the many streams emptying into the Euphrates. Here gathered thirty-eight (38) priests and 220 Nethinim, a grand total of 1754 adult males (verses 16-20).

3. A fast and prayer for a prosperous journey (Ezra 8:21-23).

"Fast . . . seek of him a right way for us" (Ezra 8:21): Caravans are always in danger of robbers. Ezra and the rich treasure the company carried were no exceptions. He had taught the king so much about GOD'S CARE OF HIS OWN, that he was ashamed to ask for a military escort. The HONOR OF THE NAME OF HIS GOD WAS of vital importance to Ezra. They fasted and commended themselves to God.

"He was entreated of us" (verse 23). "God will take care of you" (I Peter 5:6, 7).

4. Twelve treasurers appointed (Ezra 8:24-30).

"I weighed into their hand . . ." (Ezra 8:26): To avoid suspicion of the people, and for safety's sake the treasure was weighed and given to twelve priests with definite instruction (verses 28-30).

5. The journey completed, and the accounts rendered (Ezra 8:31-36).

"We departed . . . we came to Jerusalem" (Ezra 8:31, 32): The journey took four months (Ezra 7:8, 9). God gave them a safe journey (Rom. 8:31). The treasure was all accounted for (verses 33-35) and the neighboring rulers received Ezra and helped them beautify God's temple because of the letter from Darius (verse 36).

IV. Ezra Suppresses Unlawful Marriages (Ezra 9:1-10:44)

1. Unlawful marriages are reported to Ezra (Ezra 9:1-4).

"The priests . . . Levites, have not separated themselves" (Ezra 9:1): Ezra soon found upon his arrival a situation that dumbfounded and astonished him. The people, priests, Levites, princes, and rulers of the land had

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freely intermarried with the heathen neighbors. God had again and again forbidden the Jews to do this (Deut. 7:2, 3). It always led to idolatry; that led to immorality and banishment. The first returned remnant should have known better (Sec James 4:17; Luke 12:47, 48).

2. Ezra's confession of the people's guilt (Ezra 9:5-15).

"I fell upon my knees . . ." (Ezra 9:5): So stirred that he had rent his garments and plucked off his beard (verses 3, 4), Ezra at the time of the evening oblation "fell upon my knees" before God, and poured out his soul to God. There is no petition in the prayer. It was a prayer of confession of his own personal shame, Ezra at once gathers into his outcry the whole of the people as he spoke of "our iniquities . . . our trespasses." In imagination he went back over the history and saw that it had been one long story of failure and consequent disaster. Then the new failure brought surging sorrow. A full confession is made, without any petition for deliverance. He casts the people before God with a recognition of God's righteousness, and of their inability to stand in His presence (verses 14, 15).

3. Shechaniah proposes a reformation (Ezra 10:1-5).

"Now when Ezra had prayed . . . confessed . . ." (Ezra 10:1): While Ezra was making his confession before God, a large audience gathered around him, and wept. From this point on, Ezra relates the further course of events as to cast his own person in the background, and speaks of himself in the third person.

"And Shechaniah . . . We have trespassed" (Ezra 10:2): One of their number acknowledges the sin, and suggests the remedy. They all knew that they were guilty, and that God would destroy even the remnant if they did not repent and walk in His way (verses 3, 4). Ezra was the leader, and to carry out the matter according to the law (5), the people pledged they would obey.

4. The reformation effected (Ezra 10:6-17).

"All the men . . . gathered themselves" (Ezra 10:9): After calling the people into sacred covenant, that they would put away the evil thing from among them (verses 10-17), Ezra proceeded to carry out their covenant with strict and impartial justice and severity. It was December on the day they first met and "the great rain" (verse 9) was falling. Guilty elders and judges opposed the plan, but all the marriages contracted were annulled, and thus by drastic measures the people were brought back to the place of separation.

5. The names of those who put away their wives (Ezra 10:18-44).

"Among the sons of the priests . . ." (Ezra 10:18): How widespread the evil was is gathered from the list of the names with which the record discloses. Priests, Levites, and people had been guilty. None was exempt from the reformation, which was carried out with great thoroughness.

The man who sets himself to seek, to do, to teach the law of God will always be brought to where sorrow will be his portion and Godly courage his only strength. If such devotion issue in such experiences, it is also the secret of strength, enabling a man to stand for God, and realize His purpose. He thus will be the true friend and deliverer of the people of God--in Ezra's day, or in our day!

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QUESTIONS

1. Where was the decree of Cyrus found (Ezra 6:1), and why was the roll there (verse 2)?
2. Who was Darius, and why was he so favorable to the Jews (Ezra 5:1; 6:1)?
3. Was the reply of Darius out of respect to Cyrus, or by reverence for Jehovah (Ezra 6:6-12)?
4. After the people resumed their building under Haggai and Zechariah how many years were required to complete the temple (Ezra 4:24; 6:15)?
5. Can you compare the joyous dedication (Ezra 6:16, 17) with the dedication of Solomon's temple (II Chron. 7:5)?
6. Was the Passover properly observed (Ezra 6:19-22; Exodus 12:1-27)?
7. Does this book contain any evidence that chapters 6 and 7 are separated by many years?
8. Who was the leader of the second group who returned (Ezra 7:1-10)? To which tribe did he belong (Ezra 7:1-5; Ex. 2:1,2, 10; I Chron. 6:50-52,4-15)?
9. What three-fold explanation for Ezra's interest in Jerusalem is given in Ezra 7:10?
10. Should Ezra's order of dealing with the Word of God, "Seek," "Do," "Teach," be observed by us today (Ezra 7:10; Acts 1:1)? What would be the result if we attempted to teach first (II Tim.2:2)?
11. What does the letter of Artaxerxes show (Ezra 7:11-26)?
12. Did Ezra give Artaxerxes credit for the decree (Ezra 7:27,28; 1:1), and what was the explanation of Ezra's success (Ezra 7:9,28; 8:18,22)?
13. Why did Ezra insist that Levites accompany him (Ezra 8:15-17; Num. 1:47-43; 3:6-10; I Chron. 15:2; 23:26-32)?
14. How did Ezra show dependence upon God (Ezra 8:21-23)?
15. Why were the offerings weighed out to priests (Ezra 8:26-34)?
16. What was the moral condition in which Ezra found the first group who had returned under Zerubbabel (Ezra 9:1, 2)?
17. How did this affect Ezra (Ezra 9:3-5; Mt.9:36; Lk.13:35,36)?
18. Was his prayer confession or petition (Ezra 9:6-15)?
19. Did a rebuke or intercession for the people cause repentance (Ezra 10:1-4)? Is all rebuke unscriptural (Neh. 13:23-25; I Tim. 5:20; II Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:13; 2:15)?
20. Who opposed the reform, and how did Ezra carry it out (Ezra 10:14-19,44)?

WHOLE BIBLE STUDY COURSE

GENESIS THROUGH REVELATION

Summary of Year 2, Quarters 1, 2, 3, 4

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Lesson 1-13 ----- Joshua, Judges,
Ruth, I Samuel 1-21

1st- Joshua and the Jordan -----Joshua 1-5
2nd-The Conquest of -----Joshua 6.7
3rd-Joshua's Last Counsels -----Joshua 23-24
4th-The Beginning of the Judges -----Judges 1-3
5th-Deborah and Barak -----Judges 4,5
6th-The Career of Samson -----Judges 13-16
7th-Ruth -----Ruth 1-4
8th-Samuel's Call and Commission ----I Sam. 1-3
9th-The Capture of the Ark -----I Sam. 4-7
10th-Saul: Israel's First King -----I Sam. 8-12
11th-Saul's Downfall -----Sam.13-15
12th-David and Goliath -----I Sam. 16-17
13th-David and Jonathan -----I Sam. 18-21

Year 2 Third Quarter
Lessons 27-39 -----II Kings 1-Ezra

27th- Elisha's Call----- II Kings 1, 2
28th The Ministry of Elisha ----- II Kings 3, 4
29th The Healing of Naaman -----II Kings 5
30th Further Ministry of Elisha ----- Kings 6-8
31st Reign of Jehu -----II Kings 9-10
32nd A King, A Queen, & a Priest---II Kings 11-12
33rdth The Death of Elisha ----- II Kings 13-16
34th Israel's Downfall and Captivity ----II Kings 17
35th Hezekiah's Good ----- II Kings 18-20
36th Manasseh and Josiah -----II Kings 21-23
37th Judah's Downfall, Captivity--- II Kings 24, 25
38th The Decrees of Cyrus and Darius --- Ezra 1-5
39th Confirmation of the Decrees ----- Ezra 6-10

Year 2 First Quarter
Lessons 14-26 ----- Samuel 22-I Kings 22

14th-David in Exile-----I Sam. 22-24
15th-Sin and Sentence of Saul -----I Sam. 25-31
16th-David Becomes King of Judah ---II Sam. 1-6
17th-The Davidic Covenant -----II Sam. 7-10
18th-David's Sin and Repentance----II Sam. 11, 12
19th-Absalom's Rebellion -----Sam. 13-19
20th-David's Sin in Numbering Israel -- II Sam. 24
21st-Solomon Made King -----I Kings 1-4
22nd-Building the Temple -----I Kings 5-8
23rd-Solomon's Apostasy -----I Kings 9-11
24th-The Kingdom Divided -----I Kings 12-16
25th-Elijah at Mt. Carmel -----Kings 17, 18
26th-Elijah at Horeb----- I Kings 19-22

Year 2 Fourth Quarter
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40th God's Call to Nehemiah -----Neh. 1-3
41st Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem ----Neh. 4-7
42nd God's Word & the Law Restored -- Neh. 8-13
43rd Esther Made Queen of Persia -----Esther 1-5
44th A Self-Made Trap-----Esther 6-10
45th The Trials of Job -----Job 1-3
46th Job's Deliverance ----- Job 32-42
47th The Perfect Man -----Psa. 1
48th The Dignity of Man -----Psa. 8
49th The Shepherd Psalm -----Psa. 23
50th The Million Dollar Psalm -----Psalm 37
51st The Blessedness of Confession -----Psa. 51
52rd The Grace of Giving ----- II Cor. 8, 9
53rd Rebellion and Retribution -----Psa. 78