

PART THREE

From the Time Both Kingdoms have Simultaneous New Kings until the
Fall of the Northern Kingdom.

Even after getting rid of the wicked Omri dynasty, calf-worship continues to characterize the Northern Kingdom. Some rough times are in store for the Southern Kingdom also.

62. Jezebel's Ignominious Death

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 9:30-37.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jezebel tries to change Jehu's mind.
 - b. It doesn't work—he orders her thrown down.
 - c. He rides over her mangled body.
 - d. When he later gives orders to bury her, the dogs have eaten everything but a few pieces.

COMMENTS

It may be debatable whether this event is to be placed here or between the deaths of Jehoram and Ahaziah. Your writer's studies cause him to place the death of Ahaziah after the death of Jehoram and the death of Jezebel after the death of Ahaziah. In other words the likely order of their deaths is: (1) Jehoram; (2) Ahaziah; (3) Jezebel. It seems reasonable that when Jehu shot Jehoram while Ahaziah was making his get-away that he would pursue Ahaziah until he put an end to him. And Scripture itself is even more convincing. In II Kings 9:16 It says, "So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel," and then it goes on to tell of his shooting Jehoram. This is followed in the same chapter by the death of Ahaziah. Jehu was by Ibleam when he ordered Ahaziah smitten in his chariot (II Kings 9:27). Then follows the death of Jezebel which event opens with these words: "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel" (II Kings 9:30).

Since Jehu has killed her son Jehoram and has been out of town until Ahaziah was rounded up and taken care of, Jezebel has had time to think what she will do if and when Jehu returns to Jezreel. By putting on cosmetics and fixing her hair she hopes to do to Jehu what Cleopatra of Egypt will do centuries later to both Julius Caesar and Mark Anthony; namely, she tries to entice him and buy him off with her beauty. But Jehu is not to be enamored by her immoral intentions. When she sees he is not

responding to her licentious offer, she now reminds him that Zimri in the past, who slew King Elah, had no peace but got to reign only seven days, suggesting this could be his fate if he continues to pursue his present course of action.

But looking up from the narrow street in Jezreel to the window out of which Jezebel is looking Jehu inquires, "Who is on my side? who?" And surprisingly two or three of the eunuchs designated to take care of the queen respond by looking out the window. They probably are motivated by fear of Jehu, so when he says to throw her down, they do so. Can't you imagine the fright in her heart and the hollering she does as they take hold of her and throw her down? As she hits the wall and caroms off on to the horses only to fall down under the chariot, Jehu rides back and forth over her in utter contempt. Jezebel's bloody body lies in the street when Jehu goes in to eat a meal. Since we would have no appetite for food were we to kill somebody as he kills Jezebel, it shows how hard Jehu is.

While eating, Jehu recalls she is the daughter of a king and should at least be buried rather than left to wild animals and the weather, so he gives order to bury her. But the men are surprised to find the dogs of the street have already eaten on her while Jehu was eating his meal—so much so there is very little of her to gather up and bury (only her feet, skull, and palms of her hands—things of a human body that would not be eaten as rapidly as the rest of the body). As Jehu's men report the matter to him, he tells them, "This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel." In other words, so little of her is left that if they don't know whose the pieces are, they wouldn't know they are the remains of the famous Jezebel.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 4 memory-facts for this event.

2. What does Jezebel do in hopes of enticing Jehu?
3. What does she say to warn him of conspiracy?
4. What does Jehu ask anybody who is in her room?
5. Who responds?
6. What does he tell them to do?
7. What does Jehu do after she is thrown down?
8. What does Jehu do before burying her?
9. Why does he decide to give her a burial?
10. What has happened to her body while he was eating?

63. All of Ahab's Sons are Killed

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 10:1-11.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jehu challenges the rulers to elect a son of Ahab to resist him in battle.
 - b. They choose rather to submit to him without a battle.
 - c. Jehu then calls for the heads of Ahab's seventy sons to be brought to him at Jezreel the next day.
 - d. When their heads are brought, he has them put in two heaps at the city gate.
 - e. Jehu realizes he is fulfilling God's word through Elijah against the house of Ahab.

COMMENTS

Edersheim" is no doubt correct when he says Jehu must act quickly, sharply, and completely if he is to avoid a counter-revolution from the numerous offspring of a dynasty that has ruled Israel for four generations. So to those who have been entrusted with the bringing up of the younger royal offspring, Jehu immediately forces them to declare themselves for the house of Ahab or submit to his rule. While they naturally favor the house of Ahab, their fear of the rampaging Jehu causes them to submit to him. His order for them to bring the heads of the royal offspring to Jezreel tomorrow will not only squelch any resistance to his rule but will also have the rulers killing them instead of Jehu and his men killing them. Their consultation with each other ("Two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?") that leads to their surrender to Jehu reminds us of Jesus' teaching in Luke

14:31,32 that if an inferior army realizes it cannot successfully meet him on that day, it asks for conditions of peace as Peter's convicted hearers did on Pentecost (Acts 2:36,37). God's conditions of peace for convicted sinners are found in Acts 2:38 (repentance and baptism).

What a gory sight the two piles of heads make as people come in and go out of Jezreel's city gate! And while Jehu's talk in v. 9 appears to be an attempt to shift their death from him to those whom Ahab had appointed to bring up the royal offspring, people are made to fear before the powerful, aggressive new king. These heads give mute evidence he will allow no resistance to his kingship. Jehu tells the people that nothing God spoke against the house of Ahab by His prophet Elijah will fail.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 5 memory-facts for this event.
2. What chance does Jehu offer to have one of Ahab's sons be king instead of him?
3. Why do they not go that route?
4. What bold demand does Jehu make concerning Ahab's sons?
5. Where are their heads put?
6. What does Jehu tell the people about Elijah's prophecies?

64. Ahab's Descendants in Judah are also Killed

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 10:12-14 and II Chron. 22:8.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jehu meets Ahab's descendants of Judah.
 - b. He orders all forty-two of them killed.

COMMENTS

Jehu will not have to go into Judah in order to wipe out Ahab's descendants there, for he comes across them on their way to visit their Northern Kingdom relatives. If they have not heard of the deaths of Jehoram and Jezebel (the ones they were going to visit) nor of the death of their own Ahaziah, it shows the rapidity with which Jehu has thus far

done his work against the house of Ahab. Your writer favors this conclusion, for when Jehu inquires as to who they are, they do not hesitate to identify themselves with Ahaziah. They too are put to death at Jehu's order. So far Jehu has killed both kings, Jezebel, Ahab's seventy descendants in the North, and now his forty-two descendants in the South. According to God's plans for Hazael of Syria, the prophet Elisha, and Jehu, they have wiped out Ahab's family (I Kings 19:17). As far as the Biblical record goes, it appears to be more Jehu than the other two.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Where are the forty-two relatives of Ahaziah going?
3. How does Jehu learn of their identity?
4. What order does he give concerning them?

65. Jehu also Wipes out Baal-Worshippers

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 10:15-28.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jehu and Jonadab are in agreement as to what Jehu has been doing.
 - b. Jehu invites him to go with him to witness his final act against the Ahab program.
 - c. Jehu calls a great Baal convention in Samaria.
 - d. Eighty armed men put every Baal-worshiper to death.
 - e. They brake the great image of Baal, burn the lesser images, and ruin the temple of Baal and make it into a public toilet.

COMMENTS

We are here introduced to Jonadab or Jehonadab, a Kenite. The Kenites are mentioned as early as Gen. 15:19. They have been friendly to Israel all through the years. This is understandable since Moses' father-in-law was of the Kenites (Judg. 1:16). This Kenite chieftain has forbidden his offspring to drink wine or to have a

vineyard or to sow seed (they were to live off the wild products of the land), and they were to live in tents and not build houses. Jer. 35:5-10 shows in Jeremiah's day they were still faithful to his charge.

This Kenite has been unhappy with the Omri-Ahab dynasty and so rejoices at its Jehu-overthrow. When he and Jehu meet, it takes them no time to find out they are both in full agreement with what Jehu has been doing. Consequently Jehu invites him to come with him to see further manifestations of his zeal for Jehovah. It is noteworthy that Jehu's zeal FOR Jehovah will be manifested in his zeal AGAINST Baalism. Biblical zeal expresses itself in both what we are FOR ("zealous of good works," Tit. 2:14) and what we are AGAINST (this event).

V. 17 is very brief and void of details. But whoever of Ahab is left in Samaria is killed by Jehu with Jehonadab along.

Though Jehu has been vicious in his treatment of the royal seed, the Baal-worshippers see in his action only that of a conspirator, so when he says, "Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much," they believe him, and all come to the special inaugural convention he is calling.

As to Jehu's wilful misrepresentation to get them all assembled, don't forget we are living in Old Testament times in this event when such is more acceptable than it is in New Testament times. Other such examples: Rahab's lying to her city authorities about the two Israelite spies she was then hiding (Josh. 2:3-6) and Michal lying to her father's messengers (I Sam. 19:11-17).

The worshipers of Baal are happy as they come to Samaria from all parts of the kingdom for the great convention, for it is to be an unprecedented convention attended by every Baal-worshiper, and with only seven thousand in Israel who have not been Baal-worshippers as recent as Elijah's time, you can see it is going to be quite a convention. Not only that, but it will be "death" for any Baal-worshiper not attending.

There is no other way Jehu can wipe out all Baal-worshippers. If he sends out

police to hunt them down, it would be only partially successful. But since they are invited by the new king, and it is "death" if any does not come, they will all come, and it will take only one day to finish them all off whereas the hunt-them-out method would take months.

So far Jehu's moves have been bold and lightning-fast. The same will be true in this event.

Special vestments are issued to each worshiper (more "buttering up"). Some Jehovah-worshippers might be present just out of curiosity. Jehu's order to the Baal-leaders to be sure there is no Jehovah-worshiper present will assure that no Jehovah-worshippers will be killed.

To make sure his eighty door-guards allow none to escape, Jehu imposes the death-sentence on any guard allowing any Baal-worshiper to get away.

It appears Jehu himself officiates at the altar. As soon as he completes the sacrifice, the captains begin the chaotic slaughter. The helpless, unsuspecting, unarmed mob cannot defend itself against Jehu's slaughter-crew. We might wonder why some don't head for the doors. They probably do only to find them locked and secured.

The multitude of dead bodies, each bloody from a sword wound or more, is removed unceremoniously, the great stone image of Baal is broken down, the burnable images of Baal are burned, and the house of Baal is so defaced that it no longer looks like a temple, and its final disgracing is when it is made into a public toilet.

Elijah had killed four hundred and fifty priests of Baal after his Mt. Carmel contest, but that figure shrinks into insignificance with the slaughter under Jehu.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 5 memory-facts for this event.
2. Who is Jehonadab?
3. Does he agree with what Jehu is doing?
4. What invitation does Jehu extend to Jehonadab?
5. What does Jehu do that causes Baal-worshippers to think he is also one of them?
6. What charge does Jehu make to his eighty door-guards outside the convention temple?
7. When does the slaughter begin?

8. What else does Jehu destroy besides the worshipers?
9. What finally becomes of the house of Baal at Samaria?

66. Surprise: Jehu Continues Jeroboam's Calf-Worship

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 10:29-31.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jehu does not depart from Northern Kingdom calf-worship.
 - b. For executing God's wrath on the house of Ahab God promises the throne of Israel to Jehu's house for five generations.

COMMENTS

For a number of events (from the anointing of Jehu till this present event) it has looked as if the Northern Kingdom will finally have a king who can be listed as "good"—one who is not following the calf-worship set up by King Jeroboam when the Northern Kingdom began. But we are surely left puzzled after so many dramatic events in which Jehu has performed God's will now to read, "Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan."

Nothing recorded in II Kings or II Chron. implicates Jehu in any wrongdoing. His own recorded statements have been that God has been bringing judgment on the house of Ahab through him (see II Kings 9:25,26; II Kings 9:36; II Kings 10:10), but sometime later when God said in Hos. 1:4, "Yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel (where Jehu killed King Jehoram and Jezebel) upon the house of Jehu," it indicates Jehu's motives for what he did were not Simon-pure.

In spite of Jehu's allegiance to the golden calves, God still appreciates his getting rid of the wicked Ahab-line for which He assures Jehu his family will occupy the throne of Israel for five

generations (himself and four generations of descendants). And God will keep His word to Jehu, for the following descendants will succeed him on the throne of Israel: Jehoahaz (seventeen years), Jehoash (sixteen years), Jeroboam II (forty-one years), and Zechariah (only six months). With Jehu's reign lasting twenty-eight years, you can see his family will rule Israel a long time.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. What does God promise Jehu for his blotting out the wicked house of Ahab?
3. What is Jehu's attitude toward Jeroboam's calf-worship?

67. Athaliah Usurps the Throne of Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 11:1-3 and II Chron. 22:10-12.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Because King Ahaziah is dead, his mother Athaliah kills all the royal seed and takes the throne of Judah for six years.
 - b. She does not realize that Joash, Ahaziah's youngest son, is alive and is being secretly brought up by the high priest Jehoiada and his wife Jehosheba.

COMMENTS

Who is this woman Athaliah who dares to do this? She is the offspring of that wicked couple of Israel, Ahab and Jezebel. She was married to Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram who ruled Judah eight years before dying a violent death. After her husband died and her son Ahaziah succeeded to the throne, she became the queen-mother in Judah. But now that Ahaziah has been killed by Jehu, the queen-mother position will pass to Ahaziah's widow. This strong-willed, domineering Jezebel-of-the-South loses no time sizing up what has to be done immediately if she is to be

anybody in the future. So with no thought of conscience she immediately puts to death all the royal seed that is left which has already been greatly reduced by her husband's killing his brothers (II Chron. 21:4), the Arabs having taken some of them captive sometime ago (II Chron. 21:17), and Jehu's so recently killing forty-two of them (II Kings 10:14). Even though neither kingdom has ever had a woman ruler, Judah now has this unworthy one who has even murdered some of her own grandchildren to get the throne. But Judah submits to her out of fear rather than out of respect.

However, she is unaware of a lone development that in six years will be her undoing and death. A daughter of her deceased husband Jehoram (Jehosheba) has providentially been able to save her infant nephew (Ahaziah's son) Joash from the ambitious Athaliah. Josephus says Jehosheba was the daughter of Jehoram by one of his other wives and not by Athaliah. She is married to the godly priest Jehoiada who is also willing to risk his own safety in an attempt to save an offspring of David for the Jerusalem throne. The little prince grows up in the absolute privacy of one of the secret areas of the temple. God sees that the light of David is not put out, and his seed will soon be back on his throne in Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Identify Athaliah.
3. How does she get the throne of Judah?
4. How long will she usurp it?
5. What infant escapes her bloody deeds?
6. Who rears him?
7. Where does he live while growing up?

68. A Boy-King for Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 11:4-12:1 and II Chron. 23:1-24:1.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jehoiada and those in whom he confides plan the overthrow of Athaliah and the coronation of young Joash.
 - b. Joash is crowned king.

- c. Athaliah learning of it shouts, "Treason!"
- d. She is taken out and slain.
- e. Jehoiada leads in renewing the covenant for the people to worship Jehovah.
- f. The people rise up and destroy Baalism.
- g. Jehoiada organizes the leadership for future progress.

COMMENTS

Now that the rightful heir to the throne of Judah is seven years old, the priest Jehoiada thinks there is no need to wait longer to overthrow the usurper Athaliah and to enthrone the seed of David once more in Jerusalem. Though Joash is young, Jehoiada himself will direct him as the "power behind the throne".

But the priest must act with great precaution. Being in touch with many of the prominent men of Judah, he already knows who are anti-Athaliah in their sentiments. Since he will need the involvement of a number of people to make the power-change, he secretly gathers together those who are of the same mind as he. Among them are five captains of hundreds (Azariah, Ishmael, another Azariah, Maaseiah, and Elishaphat). They are surely both surprised and pleased to learn what Jehoiada and his wife have done. They are glad the seed of David is still represented among them, and they too are determined he shall be proclaimed king.

The next step is for these to go throughout Judah with the same precaution Jehoiada has exercised to get an amount of people ready when the day comes. Less suspicion will arise if it occurs on the sabbath when the people come together and when special guards will be on duty.

In preparation for the coronation Jehoiada issues arms and weapons from David's day, guards are assigned to strategic places, a special guard is to be set around young Joash in the temple, and instructions are given to kill anybody who interferes.

The day comes, and the future monarch is brought forth, a crown is put on his head and a copy of the law of Moses into his hands, he is anointed, and the rejoicing people shout, "God save the king!"

Hearing the tumult in the temple Athaliah rushes in to see what is taking place. She can't believe her eyes as she sees the young king near one of the pillars of the temple and carefully guarded. Seeking to summon the help she needs to put down this uprising against her rule, she shouts, "Treason! Treason!" Isn't this something for her to be shouting when she herself has been ruling after pulling an act of "treason" herself?

But whoever might be in favor of her do not come forth to provide any help, for they can see the opposing forces are mobilized against her cause. They remain silent as Jehoiada orders her out of the temple where she is to be slain. Our guess is if any set of guards ever took into custody a hollering, kicking, wild woman, it was Jehoiada's men who took her out to her death. She comes to as abrupt an end as her wicked mother Jezebel did at Jezreel at the hands of Jehu.

It has been sometime since Judah has had a Jehovah-worshipping ruler, so Jehoiada renews the covenant between Judah and Jehovah on that day. One of the first things the people do in consequence of the covenant is to go break down the house of Baal, destroy the altars and images to Baal, and kill the Baal priest Mattan.

Now Jehoiada reinstates the temple worship as David had it set up and according to the law of the Lord. And the pleasure of the people over the change is well stated when it says, "All the people of the land rejoiced: and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword."

Thanks to the godly priest Jehoiada and his good wife Jehosheba, who did what needed to be done though nobody knew they were doing it, and who exercised both patience and wisdom until the time came to act. Because of them a new era has dawned on the life of the

Southern Kingdom. We, like Jehoiada and his wife, need to see what should be done and do it, and we shall see that God may use us to bring in either better things or a better day!

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 7 memory-facts for this event.
2. How old is Joash now?
3. Who plans the overthrow of Athaliah and the enthronement of Joash?
4. Who helps him plan that event?
5. What day of the week will it take place?
6. Tell of the actual coronation of Joash.
7. What does Athaliah declare it to be?
8. What order does Jehoiada give concerning her?
9. What covenant does Jehoiada lead in renewing?
10. Tell of the destruction of Baalism that day.
11. What else does Jehoiada do as the new regime gets underway?
12. What is the attitude of the people over the power-change?

69. The Continuing Power of Jehoiada

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 12:2,3 and II Chron. 24:2,3.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. As long as Jehoiada lives, King Joash does that which is right.
 - b. Jehoiada takes two wives for Joash by whom are born sons and daughters.

COMMENTS

The great high priest Jehoiada will live about one-half of Joash's long forty-year reign. Until Joash is old enough to assume the responsibilities of his kingly office, Jehoiada continues to direct the ship of state. In the meantime he, like a father in these patriarchal times, takes two wives for Joash, who bear him an unrecorded number of sons and daughters. From a later account we know one of his sons was named Amaziah and one of his wives Jehoaddan—Amaziah's mother (II Kings 14:1,2).

As long as Jehoiada lives, Joash is greatly influenced by the godly man who has brought him up and set him on the throne of David. As we shall see later, under the influence of others he will depart from the right way (II Chron. 25:17,18). Let us observe it is a great

thing to be able to influence others just as Jehoiada does here. Yet one's influence is usually more powerful while he is living than after he is dead. In this connection the great leader Joshua called on the nation to follow his example of worshiping Jehovah (Josh. 24:15), and his influence remained over the nation as long as he lived and as long as the leaders who served under him lived (Josh. 24:31).

Mention is again made about the "high places". We would judge they are not being used for idolatrous purposes but in time to come will be. It would be good if they were removed under Joash as they later will be under King Hezekiah, for in Hezekiah's time they will be used idolatrously (II Kings 18:4).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. How many wives does Jehoiada take for Joash?
3. What is said of the character of Joash's reign throughout the days of Jehoiada?
4. Were the high places removed under Joash?

70. Joash Repairs the Temple

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 12:4-16 and II Chron. 24:4-14.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Joash plans to repair the temple and makes arrangements for income by which to do it.
 - b. When his plan for collecting the money fails, he puts a money chest in the temple for the people's freewill offerings.
 - c. Now with money in abundance the work gets underway.
 - d. With the money left over they replenish the vessels of the temple.

COMMENTS

Time takes its toll on any structure, and Solomon's temple has stood for a century and a half, and as far as the divine record goes there has been no major repairing of it. But besides the natural deterioration of time, the temple has suffered great damage from the family of Athaliah: "The sons of

Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim" (II Chron. 24:7). In other words they plundered the temple of whatever could be used in their temple of Baal. Again we witness the far-reaching effects of the Ahab-reign, and much of it is traceable to his marriage to Jezebel. Sometimes a single decision will affect many lives over many years of time. How important, then, for us to consult the Lord in all matters of decision, be they considered by us little or great decisions!

In the years that Joash has been growing up, why has not the high priest Jehoiada repaired the temple? "Clarke" explains it by judging Jehoiada to be a man of piety instead of zeal: "Though Jehoiada was a good man, he does not appear to have had much of the spirit of an active zeal; and simple piety without zeal and activity is of little use when a reformation in religion and manners is necessary to be brought about." And then for those with a knowledge of church history he illustrates, "Philip Melancthon was orthodox, pious, and learned, but he was a man of comparative inactivity. In many respects Martin Luther was by far his inferior, but in zeal and activity he was a flaming and consuming fire; and by him...was the mighty Reformation from the corruptions of popery affected. Ten thousand Jehoiadas and Melancthons might have wished it in vain; Luther worked, and God worked by him."

But "Smith" is more gracious in his approach, admitting it is strange Jehoiada has not made the needed repairs, but supposing he must have had a good reason for not doing it.

Either writer's view might be the correct one, but at this distance it remains a mystery. At any rate now that Joash is old enough to take hold of the reigns, we are glad to see him undertake the great project.

It will take much money for the project. Men will have to be hired to quarry the stones, and others will have to be employed to do the actual repair work.

The three sources of revenue to be channeled for this purpose mentioned in II Kings 12:4 are explained by "Barnes" as follows: "Three kinds of sacred money are here distinguished—first, the half shekel required in the Law (Exo. 30:13) to be paid by every one above twenty years of age when he passed the numbering; secondly, the money to be paid by such as had devoted themselves, or those belonging to them, by vow to Jehovah, which was a variable sum dependent on age, sex, and property (Lev. 27:2-8); and thirdly, the money offered in the way of free-will offerings." According to II Chron. 24:5 Joash orders the priests and Levites to go out into the cities of Judah and collect this money.

Since we do not know which year of Joash's reign he instituted this repair-program, we do not know how long it has been since he authorized the priests and Levites to go forth collecting the money when II Kings 12:6 records, "But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house." And why have they not done it? Our judgment is one of two reasons: either they are accustomed to the temple being as it is and are content to let matters remain as they are instead of having to do so much extra work, or Joash does not possess strong leadership qualities in which case he can give orders that others do not fear not carrying out.

But the king is stirred up over the neglect, and he reprimands Jehoiada and the priests about the matter. The last of II Kings 12:7 sounds as if the priests have actually utilized the money for themselves instead of Joash's project.

At this time Joash and Jehoiada put a money chest (a box with a hole in its top) for the convenience of the people, and much money is received every day. This money is used to hire wood workers and stone masons and to buy materials for the project. How the people rejoice to help and see the work being done, and people are no different today. Those who are handling the money are men of such reputation that with the money left over, vessels are made for the temple, and no

accounting is required of them. With the repairing of the temple the last vestige of the wicked Athaliah is overcome.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 4 memory-facts for this event.
2. What is the condition of the temple at this time?
3. Why is it in this condition?
4. From what sources is the money to come?
5. What is upsetting to Joash?
6. Where does he finally get the money?

71. Jehu's Last Years are Troublous

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 10:32-36.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Hazael of Syria takes away Jehu's territory east of the Jordan.
 - b. After reigning twenty-eight years Jehu dies and is buried in Samaria.

COMMENTS

Jehu has had a long reign—one of the longest for a Northern Kingdom king. This may be due to his having abolished Baal-worship. But now in his latter years God begins to cut him short. He loses much (maybe all) of his territory east of the Jordan where the tribes Reuben, Gad, and one-half of Manasseh live. Gilead is the southern part (from the Jabbok on the north to the Arnon on the south). Bashan is the northern part (from the Jabbok on the south to Syria on the north). Various writers marvel at Jehu's "might" being mentioned when his only military record found in the Bible concerns his territory losses to Hazael of Syria. But later we will study about another Northern Kingdom king (another Jeroboam) who reigned 41 years, yet his reign is covered in II Kings in only 7 verses (14:23-29). Both of these kings have to be powerful to rule so long, so your writer's judgment is that both have triumphs not recorded in the Biblical account. If we had the archives of the Northern Kingdom (referred to in v. 34 as the "book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel"), we would no doubt find such

information. Jehu's entombment is likewise on Samaria's hill.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. How long does Jehu reign?
3. Who is his military adversary in his latter years?
4. What territory does he lose to him?
5. Does the Bible credit Jehu with being a powerful king?
6. Where is he buried?

72. Syria Gives Jehoahaz Trouble

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 13:7.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Because Jehoahaz perpetuates calf-worship, God sends Syria against him in both Hazael's and Ben-hadad's reigns.
 - b. The oppressed Jehoahaz prays to Jehovah who grants peace once more to Israel.

COMMENTS

Jehu's line is to have the throne of Israel for five generations for his destruction of Baal-worship. With his death his son Jehoahaz comes to the throne as the second generation. We note it is the 23rd year of Joash of the South. This is the year Joash gets concerned the temple repairing has not been done (II Kings 12:6ff). "Edersheim" thinks the inroads Hazael is making in Israel as divine judgments is hastening Joash to finish the temple project lest God's displeasure likewise befalls his kingdom. Hazael, as you may recall, took away the territory east of the Jordan from Jehoahaz's father Jehu. Now he and his son Ben-hadad continue to weaken Israel until it is virtually powerless, leaving it only enough horsemen (fifty), chariots (ten), and foot soldiers (ten thousand) to mock Israel. The prophet Elisha foresaw years ago Hazael would become a cruel king (II Kings 8:7-12), and this event records some of his cruel acts: he makes Israel "like the dust by threshing". Amos 1:3 says these Syrians (Damascus) "threshed Gilead with threshing

instruments of iron". "Barnes" notes this is the "literal use of threshing-instruments in the execution of prisoners of war".

Such warfare and reduction of Israel's power humble Jehoahaz, causing him to do what few Northern Kings ever did ("Jehoahaz besought the Lord"), and the divine record says, "The Lord hearkened unto him." Possibly in Jehoahaz's day, in answer to his prayer, God gives relief from further aggression by Syria. The "saviour" God gave to Israel so they "went out from under the hand of the Syrians" and dwelt peacefully as in olden times (v.5) was realized under Jehoahaz's son Jehoash: "Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel" (II Kings 13:25).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 4 memory-facts for this event.
2. How long does Jehoahaz rule Israel?
3. Who was ruling in Judah when he began?
4. Who oppresses Israel in Jehoahaz's day?
5. How little military does Jehoahaz have left?
6. In what way does he humble himself before God?

73. Apostasy Sets in after Jehoiada's Death

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 24:15-19.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jehoiada dies at one hundred thirty.
 - b. Princes of Judah persuade Joash to restore idolatry.
 - c. Displeased, God sends prophets whose rebukes are disregarded.

COMMENTS

God has blessed the godly priest Jehoiada with long life, which is one of God's promises to those who, like Jehoiada, exalt wisdom (Prov. 3:13,16). Even after passing the prescribed age for serving as priest, he has been a bolstering influence for good on King Joash whom he and his wife

reared. Because of asserting the power of a king to Judah during Joash's growing-up years, he is entombed royally at Jerusalem.

Writers struggle for a plausible explanation as to why Joash would change at the instigation of the princes of Judah following Jehoiada's death. But if he has been under the fostering influence of Jehoiada all his life, he is a "sitting duck", so to speak, to be influenced by somebody else after Jehoiada is gone. An important lesson in parenthood is found in Joash's case. To begin with, a parent makes all the decisions for the child. When the child grows up, marries, and has his own home, he—not the father—will be making all his decisions. Now between the time when a father makes all the decisions and later when he will relinquish all the leadership to the mature son, the father must gradually and carefully allow his maturing child to make whatever decisions he is old enough and mature enough to make, being watchful, of course, that the child is making the right decisions. Thus his child develops individual responsibility and leadership, and he is not so easily influenced by more dominant personalities as Joash is in this event.

The immediateness with which this switch in policy takes place reminds us of Paul's words to the Galatians: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal 1:6). All this is a serious reminder that people who are right at this time may be wrong later, and that those who are godly today may become wicked in days to come.

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov 15:3), and His face is against those who do evil (I Pet. 3:12). If Judah will not follow God's law, He will send prophets to correct them and show them their sins (cf. Isa. 58:1). The prophets God sends to rebuke Joash and the princes are brazenly disregarded. Could any of these prophets be among those who wrote Old Testament books? We are not told.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. How old is Jehoiada when he dies?
3. Tell of his burial.
4. What change in Judah comes in after his death?
5. How does God correct Judah?

74. Another Joash Becomes King in the North

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 13:8-11.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. After Jehoahaz of Israel dies, his son Joash succeeds him as king.
 - b. He will reign for the next sixteen years.
 - c. Like all Northern Kingdom rulers he continues Jeroboam's calf-worship.

COMMENTS

The death of King Jehoahaz after ruling Israel for seventeen years brings his son Joash to power for the next sixteen years. Since he is beginning in the thirty-seventh year of King Joash of the South, both kingdoms now have a Joash ruling them, but not for long as Joash of Judah is in his latter years. Both are also called "Jehoash", which can further add to a casual reader's confusion. Joash of the north will also follow the calf-worship at Dan and Bethel.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. Who is ruling in the South at this time?
3. What does Joash of the North do about calf-worship?

75. Reverses Come on Judah's Joash to His End

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 24:20-27 and II Kings 12:17-21.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. The priest Zechariah who publicly opposes Judah's idolatry is ordered killed by Joash.

- b. Zechariah's dying words are, "The Lord look upon it, and require it."
- c. Hazael of Syria comes against Jerusalem, kills the princes, and spares the city when Joash pays him off with temple and palace treasures.
- d. They leave him a very sick man.
- e. Joash's servants conspire against him and kill him in his bed.
- f. He is buried in Jerusalem but not among the kings.

COMMENTS

Zechariah as a godly successor to the deceased Jehoiada is moved by God's Spirit to stand on an elevated place in the temple as he publicly reprimands the people for their idolatry. King Joash is involved in the conspiracy that kills the preaching priest. In thus murdering the son (or maybe grandson) of the very priest who rescued him as an infant from the murderous Athaliah, Joash shows extreme ingratitude toward Jehoiada as well as defiance toward God. And in having him killed in the temple, he does not show the respect for the temple Jehoiada did in commanding Athaliah to be taken out of the temple before being killed (II Kings 11:13-16). Jesus refers to this terrible event in Matt. 23:35.

We note the dying words of Zechariah: "The Lord look upon it, and require it." Since Judah will not regard God's law nor listen to His prophets but kills His priest, God sends the Syrians against Judah this very year who destroy the princes who persuaded Joash to turn idolatrous and take their spoil, accomplishing this by a smaller army than Judah's because God is chastising Judah by them. As Judah sees the tide of battle turn against them, you wonder if they don't recall the dying priest's words: "Lord, look upon it, and require it."

Where to place the speech and death of the priest Zechariah is a difficult problem in harmonizing Kings and Chronicles. In Event 12 we studied about Joash's apostasy after Jehoiada died. Did the princes come immediately and put pressure on him to restore idolatrous worship? It is usually thought they did.

Did God immediately send prophets to rebuke them? Again it would seem He did. It would even seem when Judah did not listen to the prophets, the priest Zechariah would immediately speak up. But somewhere in these there is a time-break, and your writer is arbitrarily placing it between the prophets' rebuking Judah and Zechariah rebuking them (this event). The break may have come at another time, but it appears that a series of fast-moving events proceeds from Zechariah's death through God's bringing Syria (that is in neighboring Philistia) against Judah that very year that killed Joash's evil counselors (the princes), plundered the treasures of the temple and the palace, and left him in great diseases (New International Version says, "Seriously wounded"), and in his helpless condition upon his bed he is killed by a conspiracy by Zabad (Jozachar), the son of a Ammonite woman Shimeath, and Jehozabad, the son of a Moabite woman Shimrith. When God has decreed the doom of a wicked person like Joash, escape is impossible—much as Amos 5:19 says, "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." "Clarke" gives a graphic summary of Joash: "This man, so promising in the beginning of his reign, apostatized, became an idolater, encouraged idolatry among his subjects, and put the high priest Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada his benefactor, to death: and now God visited that blood upon him by the hands of the tyrannous king of Syria, and by his own servants." Joash's shameful, dishonorable end is followed by not being buried among the sepulchers of the kings—all this because he has walked in the "counsel of the ungodly" (cf. Psa. 1:1).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 6 memory-facts for this event.
2. Tell of Zechariah's speech.
3. Who orders Zechariah killed?
4. Where is he killed?
5. What are his dying words?
6. What trouble befalls Joash before year's-end?
7. In what condition do the Syrians leave him?
8. How does Joash die?

9. What honor is denied Joash in his burial?

76. Judah's New King Executes His Father's Assassins

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 14:1-6 and II Chron. 25:1-4.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. The twenty-five-year-old Amaziah succeeds his assassinated father.
 - b. He will reign in Judah for the next twenty-nine years.
 - c. He executes his father's assassins but not their children.

COMMENTS

As Amaziah takes the throne of Judah, he has witnessed Syria's defeats of his father and its helping itself to the temple and palace treasures, followed by the sickness and assassination of his father. The expression, "As soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand," suggests there were some problems for a time in his establishing his kingship. He does not execute his father's assassins until he is well established as the new king. "Clarke" suggests, "No doubt those wicked men...who murdered his father had considerable power and influence, and therefore he found it dangerous to bring them to justice till he was assured of the loyalty of his other officers." It is especially mentioned that he, in executing his father's assassins, did not put their children to death. This is mentioned because it was contrary to the prevailing practice of those times and also to indicate his obedience to God's instructions in the matter: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16). When it says, "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did," the first two statements show he was an admixture

of good and evil, this mixture being a carry-over of his father--as is so often the case. So many times "children learn what they live" with. "Smith" makes an interesting comparison between him and his father: (1) both began better than they ended, being Jehovah-worshippers to begin with but idolatrous later; (2) both resisted a prophet who rebuked them; (3) both knew defeat in war and paid off their conquerors with temple and palace treasures; and (4) both were assassinated.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. When did Amaziah execute his father's assassins?
3. What law of Moses did he especially regard in the matter?
4. How does the Bible speak of his goodness?
5. What were some of the comparisons between him and his father and their reigns?

77. Israel's King Joash Visits the Ailing Elisha

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 13:14-19.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Joash honorably visits Elisha in his final illness.
 - b. Elisha promises the king three victories over Syria instead of complete destruction.

COMMENTS

A king paying a visit to a dying prophet? A king of the Northern Kingdom? When he respectfully calls Elisha "my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," he is calling him the same that Elisha called Elijah immediately after his translation (II Kings 2:12). When he says, "O my father, my father," he speaks with feeling--probably because of the nearing-death of the prophet. When he calls him "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," he is referring to the previous military victories enjoyed by Israel because of Elisha's divine help. Instances: II Kings 3:9-25; 6:8-12; 6:13-23; 6:24--7:16. All these were before King

Joash's time, but the prophet had remained an honored man in Israel ever since. When he calls him "my father", you can see his desire to be associated with the good man.

The aged prophet is moved by the Lord, probably in response to the king's honoring Elisha, to promise Joash some victories like those he has heard about. It will be victories over Israel's constant foe--Syria. Remember that Syria had greatly reduced Israel in the days of his father (II Kings 13:3-7). What a welcome prophecy that God will give him deliverance from Syria! The manner of delivering the prophecy is interesting--the prophet placing his hands on the king's hands on the bow and the arrow as he shoots an arrow eastward toward Aphek where Joash will defeat the Syrians. God has in mind Joash's smiting "the Syrians in Aphek until thou have consumed them", but in the second phase of the prophecy (where Joash is told to smite the ground probably shoot arrows into the ground), he smites only three times which would evidently not be enough to destroy Syria. Because of the brevity of the account and not knowing exactly the mind of King Joash, it is difficult to know that Joash should have smitten the ground more than three times. Evidently he would be satisfied merely to subdue Syria and drive them out of his land instead of destroying it as a nation. If so, he is but perpetuating the trait of Israel that was satisfied to settle in Canaan and subject the pagan nations instead of destroying them as God had willed (Judg. 1:27-33). It is an all too frequent failure of God's people to settle for less than He has willed whether it be in their own spiritual attainment or in their evangelistic accomplishments. Let each of us pause at our next time of personal prayer and ascertain in what categories we are too much like King Joash and Israel!

Verse 25 of this chapter (II Kings 13) shows the prophecy was fulfilled exactly as prophesied. The deliverance under Joash was also prophesied in the days of his father Jehoahaz, Joash being the "saviour" mentioned in II Kings 13:5.

Thus comes to a close the unusual visit of a king of Israel to one of God's greatest prophets.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. Why does the king of Israel pay Elisha a visit?
3. How does he address the great prophet?
4. Elisha promised him victory over what country?
5. How many times will he defeat that country?
6. What displeased God about the king on this visit?

78. A Most Unusual Miracle

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 13:20,21.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Sometime after Elisha's death the Moabites invade the land.
 - b. A funeral entourage spots a nearby Moabite band and decides to lay the corpse in Elisha's sepulchre.
 - c. The dead man is immediately resurrected.

COMMENTS

It is evidently not long after the king's visit that Elisha dies and is entombed (Josephus says with great pomp). Sometime afterwards marauding bands of Moabites come across the Jordan to plunder--in the Spring when the field grains are ripening. One day as a funeral party is carrying a man to his burial, one of these enemy bands is nearby. The funeral procession cannot proceed, and noticing Elisha's sepulchre they temporarily lay the dead body in it only to have it resurrected by contact with the prophet's remains. There is no other miracle in the Bible like this, and it climaxes a great miracle-performing career of Elisha.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. Bands from what neighboring country are a scourge to Israel at this time?
3. What is the occasion of putting a strange body into Elisha's sepulchre?
4. What happens?

79. Israel Recovers Its Cities beyond the Jordan

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 13:22-25.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. After Hazael of Syria dies, his son Ben-hadad replaces him.
 - b. Joash defeats Ben-hadad three times and recovers Israel's cities east of the Jordan.

COMMENTS

Why are these verses split off from Joash's visit to Elisha in which Elisha predicted the victories recorded here? Probably because there is a break in time between the prediction and the fulfillment. In the interval Elisha dies, the miracle of a resurrection takes place, and the Syrian king Hazael who has troubled Israel for so many years dies. It is under his son Ben-hadad that the deliverance under Joash comes. God had not allowed Hazael to destroy the Northern Kingdom because of His regard for His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When it says, "Neither cast he them from his presence as yet," there is an intimation that in time God will forget about the covenant which they had long-ago broken and allow the Northern Kingdom to be destroyed. He will spare it for seventy-eighty years through the reigns of several more kings.

It may be helpful for you to know that Syria had three kings in this order: Ben-hadad, Hazael, another Ben-hadad. The first Ben-hadad was suffocated by his servant Hazael (II Kings 8:7-15). Hazael for some reason named his son Ben-hadad.

Those cities east of the Jordan are in a war-zone between Israel and Syria. In recent times Hazael has taken them from Jehoahaz as a punishment from God. Now they are taken back by Jehoahaz's son Joash from Hazael's son Ben-hadad in fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy to Joash in II Kings 13:19. The Bible does not include a record of these battles by which Israel recovers the cities.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. Why is this account of victories over Syria placed immediately after Elisha's prophecy concerning them?
3. What king of Syria had most recently taken these Israelite cities from Israel?
4. From what king of Israel had he taken them?
5. What king of Israel recovers them?
6. From what king of Syria?

80. Amaziah has a Great Victory over Edom

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 25:1-16 and II Kings 14:7.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Amaziah musters a large army, including some hired soldiers from the Northern Kingdom, to go against Edom.
 - b. A prophet instructs him to send the Israelite soldiers home, who plunder on their way home.
 - c. Amaziah defeats the Edomites.

COMMENTS

Judah will also seek to recover its lost domination over Edom that lay to its south. In the wicked days of King Jehoram (around forty years ago) Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah (II Kings 8:20). Now King Amaziah contemplates bringing Edom back under Judah's control. God can give him victory without the help of the one hundred thousand soldiers hired from Israel. When Amaziah obediently refuses to let them go with him even though he has already paid them a fair sum, we can be sure God will bless His campaign against Edom. In the conversation between Amaziah and God's prophet notice two significant statements: (1) "God hath power to help, and to cast down." His help will be greater than the dismissed one hundred thousand soldiers. If the king doesn't obey the order, God is able to overthrow him. (2) When the king complains he has already paid the Israelites, he is told, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." We need to believe when we do right, God will bless us. Obviously the soldiers who are told they cannot go do not like it and

show their feelings by taking their vengeance on several cities of Judah (both in killing and plundering). The battle against Edom begins in the unidentified Valley of Salt in Edom's rock-fortress Petra, which Amaziah takes. In the battle ten thousand Edomites are killed and another ten thousand are taken and are ruthlessly thrown from the top of the rock bluff to their deaths below. Those who have been to Petra can visualize this from the setting.

From the spoils of the battle are saved the gods (images) of the Edomites, and King Amaziah bows down before them and burns incense to them. Tit. 3:3 connects "disobedience" and "foolishness", and we can surely see this is Amaziah's foolishly and disobediently worshiping the lifeless objects that could not deliver their former worshipers out of his own hands. God whom he should worship and who gave him the victory over Edom is angry with Amaziah for this and sends an unnamed prophet to rebuke him. But he does not listen to the prophet, so the prophet tells him of his coming doom.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. How many soldiers of Judah are in Amaziah's army?
3. How many more does he hire out of Israel?
4. What does the prophet tell him to do about the latter?
5. What do they do when they go home?
6. Give some of the details of Amaziah's victory over Edom.
7. How does Amaziah act very foolishly after this victory?
8. What is his response to a prophet's rebuke?
9. What is the prophet's final word to him?

81. Amaziah Picks a Fight with Israel

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 14:8-14 and II Chron. 25:17-24.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize the event until you can tell it.
 - a. Amaziah's counselors advise him to challenge Israel to battle.
 - b. The king of Israel tries to persuade Amaziah not to engage in a battle.
 - c. Amaziah will not be persuaded.

- d. They clash at Bethshemesh in Judah, and Amaziah is defeated.
 - e. Before going home the king of Israel destroys six hundred feet of Jerusalem's wall and plunders Judah's treasures.
2. What motives may Amaziah have had in challenging Israel to battle?
 3. Does Jehoash really want to fight?
 4. Narrate his fable.
 5. Where does the battle take place?
 6. Why does Amaziah lose this battle when he won the battle with Edom?
 7. What damage does Jehoash do to Jerusalem?
 8. What plunder does Jehoash take?

COMMENTS

There are several lines of thought that will soon converge in a battle between Judah and Israel. As Amaziah returns from his victory over Edom, he feels triumphant--ready to challenge anybody to battle. He either remembers or has just heard about the pillaging done by the Israelite soldiers who were not permitted to go with him to fight Edom. He is ready to retaliate. He issues a challenge to Jehoash, king of the North. At the same time God's displeasure with Amaziah for bringing back Edom's idols is needing a way to chasten him. He will have it in the proposed battle. It is obvious that Jehoash does not want to fight as much as Amaziah, reflected in his suggesting that Amaziah stay home and savor his recent victory over Edom rather than fight with him and lose. Jehoash's fable about the thistle, the cedar, and the wild boar is no compliment to Amaziah. When it is obvious to Jehoash that Amaziah is not to be dissuaded from fighting, he chooses to attack rather than be attacked by going into Judah with his army. The two armies clash at ancient Bethshemesh southwest of Jerusalem. And God delivers Amaziah into Jehoash's hand. Amaziah is powerless to stop his conqueror from breaking down four hundred cubits (six hundred feet) of Jerusalem's north wall, thus destroying the military defense of the city. Nor can he keep Jehoash from helping himself to the temple treasures, Amaziah's own treasures, and some of the people of Judah whom he took with him. Again we see the truthfulness of the proverb, "The way of the transgressor is hard" (Prov. 13:15).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 5 memory facts for this event.

82. A Second Jeroboam Becomes King in the North

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 14:15,16,23,24.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. After Jehoash dies, his son Jeroboam becomes king of Israel.
 - b. This powerful king has a forty-one year reign.

COMMENTS

We know nothing of Jehoash's reign following his significant victory over Amaziah. His death and entombment at Samaria enthrone his son Jeroboam as Israel's new king. Don't confuse this Jeroboam with Israel's first king who set up the golden calves at Dan and Bethel. This Jeroboam is usually called Jeroboam II for distinguishing purposes. His forty-one years on the throne will make him the longest ruling king of Israel.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. How long is Jeroboam's reign in comparison with the reigns of other kings of Israel?

83. Jeroboam again Regains Cities beyond Jordan

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 14:25-27.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jeroboam regains territory to Israel.
 - b. God grants this victory according to a prophecy by Jonah.

COMMENTS

Jeroboam II's reign is not only long but powerful. He completes regaining all the territory east of the Jordan that was begun under Jehoahaz (II Kings 13:25), restoring all the land east of the Jordan from Hamath in the far north to the Dead Sea in the south ("the sea of the plain"). Hardly any writer or teacher in considering the predictions of doom of the Northern Kingdom found in the book of Amos, written in Jeroboam II's day when Israel was so strong and prosperous, fails to note that Amos's prediction seemed so impossible. Amos called them, "Ye that put far away the evil day" (Amos 6:3), referring to the calamity to come on them.

When did Jonah make the prediction of Jeroboam II's military success--before he was sent to Nineveh or afterwards? Though the end of the book of Jonah leaves the reader wondering how he responded to God's rebuking question (see Jon. 4:9-11), it is your writer's understanding that Jonah responded favorably. And so it is possible that his prediction referred to in our present account could have been made even after his trip to Nineveh.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Where is Hamath?
3. What is "the sea of the plain"?
4. When might Jonah have made this prediction in relation to his going to Nineveh?

84. Amaziah Becomes Judah's Second Assassinated King

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Study II Kings 14:17-20 and II Chron. 25:25-28.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Amaziah outlives Jehoash by fifteen years.
 - b. He is assassinated by his servants.

COMMENTS

Jehoash may have defeated Amaziah and exercised authority over him, but both II Kings and II Chron. take note that

Amaziah outlived Jehoash by fifteen years somewhat in the spirit of Eccl. 9:4 ("A living dog is better than a dead lion"). And Amaziah might live longer except that some of his servants assassinate him. II Chron. notes that things have gone bad for him ever since he turned away from following Jehovah in the matter of the Edomite idols. Many since Amaziah have found the same thing--that life can be beset with reverses by forsaking God. Discovering the plot against him, he flees to his great fortification at Lachish on his southwestern border, but it does him no good, for he is killed there and returned to Jerusalem for burial.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. How many years does Amaziah outlive his rival Jehoash?
3. When do things begin going bad for Amaziah?
4. Tell of his sad end.

85. A Powerful King Takes over in the South

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 26:1,3-5; II Kings 15:1-4.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. In the midst of Jeroboam II's long reign Uzziah comes to Jerusalem's throne at the young age of sixteen.
 - b. He will reign for fifty-two years.
 - c. Through a prophet Zechariah he seeks Jehovah and prospers.

COMMENTS

Remember that an assassination in Judah is different from an assassination in Israel. In Israel it brings a new dynasty to the throne. Not so in Judah. The assassinated king's son will succeed him. So an assassination in Judah is not motivated by some aspirant-to-the-throne but by people dissatisfied with the condition of things under the existing ruler. So Amaziah's son Azariah (or Uzziah as he is better known) is crowned the new king. In the North Jeroboam II is in the twenty-seventh year of his forty-one reign. With Uzziah's long

reign of fifty-two years both kingdoms enjoy a long stretch of political stability. "Smith" in his excellent commentary on I and II Kings calls it "the heyday period", and attributes it principally to the Assyrians being in a period of military dormancy. Helping Uzziah also is the blessing of God realized because he is influenced to do good by the prophetic visions of one Zechariah. Do not confuse this prophet with the post-exile prophet by the same name who authored the book of Zachariah. Their dates are far apart. We have no details about the Zechariah of Uzziah's day.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Comment on the different motives for assassinations in Israel and Judah.
3. What is Judah's new king's two names?
4. How long will he reign?
5. How far along is Jeroboam II in his long forty-one year reign?
6. How does "Smith" account for this long period of political stability in both Kingdoms?
7. What prophet strengthens Judah's new king?

86. Uzziah's Reign is Prosperous for Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 14:22 and II Chron. 26:6-15.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. He regains the seaport Elath on the Red Sea.
 - b. He subdues neighbor nations that fear him and pay tribute to him.
 - c. He fortifies Jerusalem.
 - d. He is rich in livestock and agriculture.

COMMENTS

Uzziah's long reign and success are results of his own doing and God's blessing. Recovering Elath on the Red Sea, the port that dates back to Solomon's reign, gives Judah a valuable connection with many parts of the world. His victories over the Philistines and other neighbor nations are reminiscent of David's wars and victories. Besides having a large army and able officers over it, he repairs Jerusalem's

wall, builds towers on the wall, and invents engines for shooting arrows and catapult stones. We do not know how large the stones are that they shot, but catapult stones to be seen today in the ruins of Masada and the Herodium are around the size of a bushel basket. Because he had livestock in various places, he digs many wells and builds many towers for guarding against marauders. Exalted with such power and prosperity, his name is understandably spread abroad throughout his world. His success is attributed to two sources: (1) "he strengthened himself exceedingly" (II Chron. 26:8); and (2) "he was marvelously helped, till he was strong" (v. 16). Will this success go to his head, or will he be able to handle it spiritually? We shall see.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 4 memory-facts for this event.
2. What does the recovering of Elath mean to Judah?
3. Tell of his military set-up and record.
4. Tell of his livestock and agricultural pursuits.
5. What two things account for his greatness?

87. Israel's Last Powerful King Dies

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 14:28,29.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jeroboam II's exploits are recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Israel.
 - b. His death terminates his long reign.

COMMENTS

We might wonder why Inspiration has recorded so little about Jeroboam II's long reign. Because little of it is related to the spiritual life of Israel. And yet in our text's brief summary of his reign, mention is made of his military exploits. Though his reign is one of strength, Israel will begin its final decline after his death.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.

- Why is so little recorded about Jeroboam II's reign even though it was a long reign?
- What of Israel's political condition after his death?

88. Time Runs out on the Jehu Dynasty

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read II Kings 15:8-12.
- Study the event until you can tell it.
- Memorize these facts about the event:
 - Zechariah succeeds his father Jeroboam II.
 - He is assassinated after ruling only six months.
 - He is the last of the Jehu dynasty to rule, fulfilling God's promise to Jehu.

COMMENTS

You will recall that God raised up Jehu to wipe out Baal-worship in Israel and to wipe out the wicked house of Ahab. For this God promised that he and his offspring would occupy the throne of Israel for four more generations (II Kings 10:30). The following tabulation will show that God has kept His promise and that the Jehu dynasty rules Israel for many years:

Jehu - 28 years
 Jehoahaz - 17 years
 Jehoash - 16 years
 Jeroboam II - 41 years
 Zechariah - ½ year

The assassination of Zechariah will bring a new dynasty to power. The combined fact that he is the final generation promised to Jehu and that he gets to reign only one-half year indicates God is ready to remove that family from power. But it has gotten to rule Israel for around one-half of Israel's entire history, from its beginning in 933 B.C. to its fall in 721 B.C.

QUESTIONS

- Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
- What promise had God made to Zechariah's ancestor Jehu?
- Why had God made such a promise to Jehu?
- How is Zechariah's reign terminated?
- Approximately how much of Israel's history does the Jehu dynasty rule?

89. Another Assassination within a Month Rocks Israel

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read II Kings 15:13-18.
- Study the event until you can tell it.
- Memorize these facts about the event:
 - Zechariah's assassin (Shallum) gets to rule only one month before he is assassinated by Menahem.
 - Menahem is a wicked, brutal ruler.

COMMENTS

These are turbulent times for Israel following the death of their powerful Jeroboam II. Shallum has assassinated Zechariah after the latter has reigned only six months, and now Shallum is assassinated by Menahem after Shallum has reigned only one month. There is no question but what Shallum is reaping what he has sown. Things quiet down for a time as Menahem rules for the next ten years. When the inhabitants of the Israelite city Tiphshah refuse to recognize his rule, Shallum smites it most violently as is indicated by his ripping open its pregnant women and letting the fetuses fall out on the ground. Through all this Uzziah continues his quiet reign in Judah.

QUESTIONS

- Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
- What is an instance of Menahem's brutality?

90. Uzziah's Success Goes to His Head

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read II Chron. 26:16-21.
- Study the event until you can tell it.
- Memorize these facts about the event:
 - King Uzziah's heart is filled with pride, and he goes into the temple to burn incense.
 - The high priest Zechariah and eighty priests are unsuccessful in their attempt to forbid the king's action.
 - Uzziah is angry because of their rebuke.
 - While yet angry, God strikes Uzziah with leprosy.

- The priests banish the leprous king from the temple.
- He is a leper until his death, living in a separate house while his son Jotham reigns co-regent with him.

COMMENTS

God has made Uzziah a very strong, prosperous ruler. But there is danger in strength and prosperity (Deut. 8:7-14). It is sad that if God blesses us too much, we are not able to take it in stride and be thankful. So with Uzziah: "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction," reminding us of the proverb, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Uzziah, though, is not the first to try to usurp the priesthood. In the Korah, Dathan, and Abiram insurrection against Moses and Aaron, there were two hundred and fifty men who wanted to burn incense, and when they died, fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, at which time Moses was instructed to have their censers beaten into a single plate and fastened to the altar of incense as a warning against anyone not of the priestly tribe attempting to burn incense (Num. 16:36-40). Eccl. 4:13 speaks of an "Old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished", and King Uzziah fits the description, for he disregards all the words and warnings of the high priest and the other eighty priests, using his kingly authority to do what he has determined to do. To the day of his death several years later he will regret that he did not listen to these warnings, for God immediately smites him with leprosy—and he is finished! He hastens to get out of the temple, thoroughly humbled (reminiscent of what Nebuchadnezzar said in Dan. 4:37). Having exalted himself, he is now humbled of God, a divine principle older than Jesus' teaching on it later in Luke 18:14; Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11. And the priests rise up and thrust him out. Whatever satisfaction he has had in pushing past the objecting priests is momentary—not so with the punishment

for it. He will remain a leper every moment of the rest of his thirteen years. As he idly sits in his separate house while his son Jotham rules, he can only regret what he has done and brought upon himself that God chooses not to reverse.

Here is an interesting sidelight from Uzziah's time. Amos was a prophet in Uzziah's day, and the book of Amos begins "two years before the earthquake". There was a great earthquake sometime during the reign of Uzziah, according to Zech. 14:5 ("Ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah"). "Through the years the Jews have held that this earthquake was sent because of God's wrath against King Uzziah for entering the temple to burn incense" (from your author's work, "Commentary Studies in 5 Minor Prophets").

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 6 memory-facts for this event.
2. Can most people be prosperous without becoming proud in some way?
3. Who earlier than Uzziah tried to burn incense when they were not priests?
4. What is on the altar of incense to warn Uzziah not to attempt to offer incense?
5. How many priests try to keep the king from burning incense?
6. With what does God smite the king?
7. For how long will he be thus afflicted?

91. Assyrian Invasion Begins Israel's Downfall

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:19,20.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Assyria withdraws after being paid one thousand talents of silver.
 - b. Menahem collects the money from wealthy men in Israel.

COMMENTS

God has borne long with the perpetual calf-worship inaugurated by the Northern Kingdom's first king Jeroboam. Now that Menahem has assassinated Shallum and taken the throne, God will begin the weakening process that will eventually

put an end to the Northern Kingdom. It would appear that Assyria under their ruler Pul (also known as Tilgath-pileser III) takes advantage of the political unrest in Israel to come against Menahem in 734 B.C. Menahem's offer to pay Assyria a thousand talents averts Israel's destruction and causes Assyria to confirm him as ruler in the North. This sizeable sum is raised by Menahem's levying a special tax (fifty silver shekels) of the kingdom's wealthy men. What was the force that caused Pul to accept the pay-off and spare Israel? If we can parallel this invasion with Amos's first vision in Amos 7:1-3 (and we can in view of Amos's series of three visions in chapters 7 and 8 predicting the three Assyrian invasions that will spell doom to the Northern Kingdom), then it is the prophet Amos's prayer, "O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small" (Amos 7:2). Result? The next verse says, "The LORD repented for this" (changed the decree--D.G.H.): "it shall not be, saith the Lord" (final destruction is temporarily called off--D.G.H.).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. What Assyrian ruler comes against Israel?
3. What does Menahem do that delays the destruction of the Northern Kingdom?
4. Where does Menahem get the money?
5. What is Amos's connection with this invasion?

92. Death Ends Menahem's Ten-Year Rule

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:21,22.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Like the reigns of the other kings of the North, the happenings of Menahem's reign are recorded in the secular chronicles of Israel.
 - b. Menahem's death appears to be of natural causes.

COMMENTS

Since the only record of Menahem we have is this II Kings account, we know nearly nothing about his

rule. Since his son rather than an assassin follows him to the throne, we conclude he died a natural death.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Why do we know so little about Menahem's rule?
3. Why do we conclude that Menahem died a natural death?

93. Pekahiah is Israel's New Ruler

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:23,24.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Pekahiah becomes king.
 - b. Uzziah (Azariah) is still king in Judah.
 - c. Pekahiah continues calf-worship.

COMMENTS

The leprous Uzziah of Judah is in the closing years of his life when Pekahiah becomes king in Israel. He will have a short reign. He too will follow the calf-worship of all previous Northern Kingdom rulers. Nothing significant happens in his brief reign as not one event is chronicled in the Sacred Record.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. What of significance happens during his reign?

94. Another Assassination in the North

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:25-28.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. In the fiftieth year of Uzziah of Judah Pekah kills Pekahiah and takes his throne in Israel.
 - b. He is flanked by fifty men of Gilead in the take-over.

COMMENTS

The disobedient Northern Kingdom is not to know peace and quiet very long between assassinations

and take-overs. Now after Pekahiah has reigned only two years, he is assassinated in the tower of his Samaria palace by one of his captains, Pekah, helped by a fifty-man band from Gilead. This latter fact is sometimes taken to suggest that Pekah is from that part of the kingdom east of the Jordan. Argob and Arieah, who are evidently killed along with the king, might be royal guards of the king who were greatly outnumbered by Pekah's host. The many-year reign of Uzziah in the South is still going on.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Where does the assassination take place?
3. Who could Argob and Arieah be?
4. Where may Pekah be from?

95. Judah's Second Longest Reign Ends

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 26:22,23.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Uzziah's death concludes his fifty-two years as king.
 - b. Isaiah compiles a book on Uzziah's life.

COMMENTS

The great prophet Isaiah is called to be a prophet this year that Uzziah dies (Isa 6:1ff). Though Uzziah's presumptuous act has removed him from kingly activities, there was much that was great about the first thirty-eight years of his reign, and Isaiah writes a story of his reign in recognition of Uzziah's greatness. His death concludes the longest reign in either kingdom up until now (fifty-two Years), but there will be one yet longer in the future (Manasseh's with fifty-five year reign). It appears from the text that though he is buried in the royal burial plot, he is not buried close to the others because of being a leper.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.

2. In what year of Uzziah's life is Isaiah called to be a prophet?
3. How many years of Uzziah's reign were very eventful?
4. Who compiles a record of Uzziah's reign?
7. Tell of his burial.

96. The Godly Jotham Prospers in the South

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:32-35; II Chron. 27:1-6.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Though Jotham does what is right, there are still some vestiges of idolatry.
 - b. God's blessing enables him to build and fortify both in Jerusalem and in the mountainous and forest regions of Judah as well as subjugate Ammon.

COMMENTS

Ever since Jotham's father Uzziah became leprous, Jotham has been the functioning monarch in the South. Now that Uzziah has died after thirteen long years of isolation, the Bible account returns to tell us about Jotham and his reign. It is said that he does what is right in the eyes of the Lord as his father had done before him, but it expressly mentions that he does not go into the temple as his father had done. It is folly indeed not to learn from the obvious mistakes of others. Because he is a good king, even though the people are still persisting in high-place worship, God helps prosper him in the things he builds. Whether in Jerusalem, where he builds the high gate of the temple and on the wall south of the temple area (Ophel), or in the mountains and forests of Judah, where he fortifies, wherever you look you can see God is with Jotham. In war with the Ammonites east of the Jordan he is victorious so that for three successive years they pay him tribute money. Again it is the case of a godly king who becomes mighty through the blessing of God, and that because he himself chooses to be godly. The same choice and blessings are still ours today.

Questions

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. When does Jotham actually begin functioning as Judah's king?
3. How is the character of Jotham described?
4. What does he not do what his father had done?
5. Tell of his building operations.
6. Whom does he defeat in war?

97. Reverses in Jotham's Last Years

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:36-38.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. In Jotham's last days God sends Syria against him.
 - b. Jotham dies.

COMMENTS

Jotham has been a good king, but since it says God sends a coalition of Syria under Rezin and Israel under Pekah against him in his last days, Jotham has done something to displease God, for God does not afflict any of His people without a just reason. However, there is not the slightest hint in our text as to what evil Jotham has done. The war that begins in Jotham's day will escalate into a greater war under his son Ahaz (see later event). Thus, on a down-graph does Jotham's life and reign come to an end.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Why do Syria and Israel come against Judah?
3. What has Jotham done to cause this?

98. A Wicked King Takes over in Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 16:1-4; II Chron. 28:1-4.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Jotham's son succeeds him in the seventeenth year of Pekah's reign in Israel.
 - b. The new king Ahaz is wicked (idolatrous) like the kings of Israel rather than godly like his ancestor David.

COMMENTS

Pekah, the king of Israel who troubled Judah in the final days of Jotham, is on the throne when twenty-year-old Ahaz succeeds his deceased father. Ahaz was only three when Pekah became king in the North. If we would change the last letter of Ahaz's name to "b", we would have the name of "Ahab", and the terrible idolatrous practices of Ahaz's reign make him more like Ahab and the other kings of the North than like his venerated ancestor David. Reference to making his son pass through the fire refers to his worship of the Ammonites' fire-god Moloch. We note too his patronage of Baal, the idolatrous religion reminiscent of Ahab and Jezebel.

reign ("Pfeiffer" says in 733 B.C., one year after the first invasion) that Assyria again invades the North, and again under Tiglath-pileser (he was called by his personal name Pul in the earlier invasion). In his first invasion he settled for a large payment of money, but this time he takes away some of Israel's territory--the northern part comprising the cities Ijon, Abel-Bethmaachah, Janoah, Kedesh, and Hazor, plus Naphtali's allotment, Galilee, and the land of Gilead east of the Jordan River. And just as the prophet Amos envisioned the first invasion, so does his second vision (the vision of fire, Amos 7:4) envision this invasion in which "a part" is eaten up. In Amos's vision he prays for Israel (Amos 7:5), and God keeps Tiglath-pileser from totally destroying Israel at this time (Amos 7:6).

- i. Ahaz is besieged by the Edomites and the Philistines.
- j. Though he sends money to Tiglath-pileser to come help him, he doesn't.

COMMENTS

The blending of the II Kings, II Chron., and Isa. accounts into an exact chronological sequence is not easy nor something about which your writer is absolutely certain and dogmatic. The "memory-facts" listing above, at best, is a studious attempt to create a probable order of events. With Assyria rising to such prominence, Israel and Syria, who have off-and-on been involved in hostilities against each other, now band together in an attempt to defend themselves against any Assyrian attack. Because Ahaz evidently does not join them, probably fearing they will eventually lose to Assyria, the two kings attack him but at first cannot overcome him. Giving up for the time, Rezin of Syria takes his army down to Elath, Judah's port on the Red Sea, and takes it. Afterwards he and Pekah resume their war with Ahaz, and this time they are successful, killing one hundred twenty thousand in one day, including three men very close to the king of Judah. They also take many captives. But God sends a prophet to forbid the Northern Kingdom to keep the captives it has taken, and Israel restores them to Judah. Because Damascus has been victorious over Judah, Ahaz foolishly begins to worship its gods, hoping they will help him in the future as they have supposedly helped Damascus against him. In time Rezin and Pekah return to Jerusalem, this time to the non-cooperative Ahaz with a ruler of their own choosing (Tabael), probably to assure Judah's joining them against Assyria. With their threatening to take away Ahaz, who though wicked is at least the living representative of the line of David on the throne, God wants to use the occasion as an opportunity to show Ahaz He is the true God by sending the prophet Isaiah to him, assuring Ahaz God will soon rid his land of both his oppressors.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Who is reigning in the North when Ahaz begins in the South?
3. How old is Ahaz when he becomes king?
4. Ahaz is actually more like the kings of _____ than like his ancestor _____.
5. Causing his son to pass through the fire in the worship of the Ammonite god _____.
6. What other heathen deity is mentioned as being worshiped by Ahaz?

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. What Assyrian ruler invades Israel again?
3. What year is this?
4. What damage does he do?
5. What keeps him from totally ending the Northern Kingdom with this invasion?

100. A Series of Military Struggles Involving Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 16:5-18; II Chron. 28:5-21; Isa. 7:1--8:8.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus unsuccessfully besiege Ahaz at Jerusalem.
 - b. After Rezin captures Elath, he and Pekah return and successfully defeat Ahaz.
 - c. Ahaz worships Damascus's gods.
 - d. Pekah and Rezin threaten Jerusalem again.
 - e. Isaiah assures Ahaz that Jerusalem will soon be rid of both opposing kings.
 - f. Ahaz hires Assyria to help him.
 - g. Rezin has to withdraw from Jerusalem when Assyria attacks Damascus (Rezin is killed).
 - h. While Ahaz is at Damascus, he sees an altar that becomes the model for one he has built at Jerusalem.

99. Assyria Again Invades Israel

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:29.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Tiglath-pileser of Assyria takes several of Israel's northern cities.
 - b. Some captives are taken to Assyria.

COMMENTS

As you may recall, Assyria has already invaded Israel in the reign of Menahem (II Kings 15:19,20). Bear in mind Assyria is the dominant power of the time, and the only reason it is not included in Daniel's listing of world-powers from his day to the setting up of the kingdom of God is that Assyria flourished prior to Daniel's time. It is sometime during Pekah's twenty-year

When Ahaz refuses God's offer of a sign, God says He will give the house of David (not Ahaz) a sign that David's line will always be in power. Jeremiah made the same promise: "Thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. 33:17). When Jesus, the "son of David", was born of a virgin (see Matt. 1:18-23), the sign came to pass, and we can be assured of Christ's continued rule (Luke 1:31-33). Ahaz, though, has his own program for the deliverance of Jerusalem; hiring Tiglath-pileser of Assyria to come against his opponents. Tiglath-pileser and Ahaz's going to Damascus to meet him is in conformity with the Assyrian ruler's practice of having his vassals come to him and personally bow down in recognition of his authority over them. While in Damascus Ahaz sees an altar that greatly appeals to him, and he has one like it made for Jerusalem. God has kept the line of David on the throne of Jerusalem even though He is not pleased with Ahaz's doings. He, therefore, brings the Edomites from the south and the Philistines from the southwest against him, and Ahaz again turns to Tiglath-pileser for help. Tiglath-pileser comes all right, but instead of helping Ahaz, he further distresses him, only adding to his military woes.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 10 memory-facts for this event.
2. Is it easy or difficult to harmonize the several accounts at this time into a dogmatic chronological sequence?
3. Why are Israel and Syria probably allied together at this time when they have usually been antagonistic to each other?
4. What is the probable reason for their attacking Ahaz at this time?
5. What are Rezin and Pekah planning to do if they defeat Jerusalem?
6. What will be the fulfillment of the virgin-birth prophecy of Isa. 7:14?

101. The North's Last King Takes Over

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 15:30; 17:1,2.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:

- a. Hoshea assassinates Pekah and takes over in the North.
- b. He is evil but not as bad as the kings before him.

COMMENTS

God has seen that Rezin is slain, and now Pekah gets what's coming to him. Hoshea kills him and rules in his place. Though he is said to be evil but not as evil as the kings before him, the ten-tribe kingdom of the North will come to an end nine years later.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. How long will Hoshea reign?

102. Hezekiah Becomes King in Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 16:19,20; 18:1,2; II Chron. 28:26--29:1.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Ahaz dies, but they do not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings.
 - b. Ahaz's twenty-five-year-old son Hezekiah begins his twenty-nine-year reign.

COMMENTS

When a king of Judah's reign was marked by severe military reverses, it was customary not to honor him with the normal burial of its kings. Because of the political weakness the kingdom has suffered under Ahaz, he is not entombed among the kings of Judah. As is customary in Judah, a son of a deceased monarch succeeds him on the throne--this time Hezekiah.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Tell of the burial of Ahaz.

103. Hoshea Pays Tribute to Assyria

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 17:3.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Shalmaneser of Assyria invades Israel.
 - b. Hoshea pays tribute to him.

COMMENTS

Israel has been paying tribute to the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser. Now that he is dead, Hoshea tests the sovereignty of Tiglath-pileser's successor Shalmaneser. Thus Shalmaneser comes against Israel and again forces it into a tributary position to the power of Assyria.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Who succeeds Tiglath-pileser as ruler of Assyria?
3. What causes him to come against Israel?
4. What is the result of his coming?

104. Revival under Judah's New King

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 18:1-6; II Chron. 29:1-36.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Hezekiah reverses the policies of his father, immediately proceeding to purify the temple of all idolatry and to restore the temple services.
 - b. One of the items of idolatry he destroys is the brazen serpent Moses made in the wilderness because they are worshipping it.

COMMENTS

Like father, like son?" Not always--surely not in Ahaz and Hezekiah's case. Ahaz was wholly idolatrous; his son Hezekiah is just the opposite (a Jehovah-worshiper). He departs from the ways of his father (idolatry) not because he is a rebel but because he is wise. He said, "Our fathers have trespassed...Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he delivered them to trouble". Possibly the low esteem held for his father in Judah's not burying him among the kings

has helped Hezekiah in his thinking. From the very outset of his reign (the first month of his first year) he begins his much needed reforms. We are surprised to hear again of the brazen serpent of Moses' day (Num. 21:8) some eight hundred years ago. Now because the people are worshipping it, Hezekiah has it broken in pieces also. Since Ahaz's administration discontinued temple service (II Chron. 28:21), King Hezekiah restores the priests to their temple roles. After the temple and its vessels are cleansed, the king and his rulers come up to the temple to see that the temple sacrifices and music are restored and to rejoice. Some today actually blame David for the introduction of instrumental music into the temple, but II Chron. 29:25 says he and his seer Gad and the prophet Nathan introduced it at the commandment of the Lord.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. Why does Hezekiah depart from the idolatrous ways of his father?
3. About how many years has the brazen serpent been around?
4. Was the introduction of instrumental music into the temple service of human or divine origin?

105. The Great Passover under Hezekiah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 30:1-27.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Hezekiah sends messengers throughout Israel inviting them to come to the Passover.
 - b. While some in Israel ridicule the messengers, others come to the feast.
 - c. It is the greatest Passover since the days of King Solomon.

COMMENTS

Hezekiah does what Jeroboam I feared Rehoboam would do: get the people of the North to attend the feasts at Jerusalem (see I Kings 12:26-28). Hezekiah not only wants them to attend the Passover, but he recognizes

that their fathers have lived in disobedience that has been bringing God's wrath down upon them, and he sees some hope of God's mercy for them yet if they will again become obedient to Jehovah (v. 6-9). The "posts" who are sent out are messengers (our words "postman" and "post office" are related to their word "post"). Hezekiah sets a good example in not only wanting to be right himself but in wanting to help others be right also.

You will notice that this Passover is to be in the second month of the year instead of the usual first month. Purifying the temple in the first month of the year (II Chron. 29:17,18) was such a big work that it left no time for the priests themselves to become suitably purified to hold it at the usual time. Hezekiah remembers the provision God made in Num. 9:10,11 whereby the Passover can be observed in the second month instead of the first; thus, they plan it for the second month.

His messengers are variously treated as they go through the tribes of the North. Can't you hear some of the Northerners ridicule the invitation? But that doesn't make the messengers wrong and the ridiculers right any more than mocking today makes the mockers right and believers wrong (see II Pet. 3:3,4). The faithful messengers continue their mission, and they are rewarded by those who accept the invitation. Why are only five tribes mentioned as attending? "Barnes" explains: "Two (Reuben and Gad) are in captivity. One (Dan) was absorbed into Judah. Simeon and Naphtali, which alone remained seem to have been more than ordinarily idolatrous (II Chron. 34:6)."

So strongly does Hezekiah feel about having those of the North take part in this Passover that he invites them even though they will not have time to purify themselves ahead of time. In consequence he prays about their case: "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." "And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah." So

happy are the people of the North who have for so long been deprived of this privilege and the people of the South who have received them and observed this seven-day feast together that they stay on for another seven days. It is the greatest Passover since the days of King Solomon, for following his death the kingdom was divided.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. What is the gist of the message Hezekiah sends to those in the Northern Kingdom?
3. Do his messengers let the mistreatment by some stop them from fulfilling their mission?
4. Why is this Passover being observed in the second month of the year instead of the first?
5. Why does Hezekiah pray a special prayer for those of the North who take part in the Passover?
6. What indicates the extreme joy of those observing this Passover?
7. What factor makes this the greatest Passover observance since Solomon was king?

106. Further Revival under Hezekiah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Chron. 31:1-21.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. The reaction against idolatry that has been in Jerusalem is now extended throughout the Southern Kingdom and into the Northern.
 - b. Hezekiah organizes the priests and Levites and appoints his own burnt offerings.
 - c. He reinstates God's system for the support of the priests and Levites.

COMMENTS

Here is another entire chapter devoted to King Hezekiah. Some kings did so little to take note of that only a few verses were devoted to them whereas several chapters are devoted to the worthy reign of Judah's present king.

As the prolonged Passover comes to an end the rejuvenated worshipers go forth from Jerusalem to destroy idolatrous places throughout the Southern Kingdom and also in the Northern Kingdom. "Then

all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities."

David divided the tribe of Levi into its three sections: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. He further broke down the priestly work into sections (see I Chron. 23 and 24). These were known as "courses". John the Baptist's father was a priest. As a part of the "course" of Abijah, it was his "lot" to burn incense (Luke 1:5,9). Hezekiah reinstates this system of service for the priests and Levites.

He is going to call on the people to bring of their substance for the temple and those serving in it, so he sets a good example by setting aside his portion also. The people seeing their king so generous, they do likewise, and it is a surprising abundance that they bring. When the king sees the heaps of things brought, he can hardly believe it either. As a result he arranges for proper storage of these items in designated temple chambers and appoints officers to be in charge.

The chapter closes with a beautiful report of Hezekiah's good work. In some ways he reminds your writer of the good work that will be undertaken and done by Nehemiah some years later.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. Why is so much information recorded about Hezekiah's reign?
3. How generous are the people in their giving?
4. What arrangements does Hezekiah make for taking care of their offerings?

107. God Blesses Hezekiah and Judah

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 18:7,8.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Hezekiah is able to rebel against paying tribute to Assyria.
 - b. He also is victorious over Philistia.

COMMENTS

The good reign of Hezekiah shows that good leadership can arise when situations are very bad. In fact, most of history's great leaders have come on the scene when it was very dark. Man is not always faithful to God who is good to him, but God never fails to be faithful to anyone who is good to Him—thus, "The Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth."

Hezekiah's father Ahaz was tributary to Assyria. As it is now so evident that God is prospering Hezekiah, he refuses to continue paying this tribute money. This bold act is based on his great trust in his God Jehovah. It is possible that he does so when the new Assyrian king Shalmaneser becomes ruler. God also enables Hezekiah to smite the neighboring Philistines decisively. Judah truly has a great king in Hezekiah.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. How does Hezekiah's case encourage courageous leadership in times that are dark?
3. When did Judah begin paying tribute to Assyria?
4. When does Hezekiah probably rebel against Assyria?

108. The Northern Kingdom is Topped by Assyria

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 17:3-23; II Kings 18:9-12.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Hoshea who earlier submitted to Assyria's tribute demands now rebels and calls on Egypt for help.
 - b. Assyria takes Samaria and Israel after a three-year siege.
 - c. With its deporting of the Israelites the Northern Kingdom falls.

COMMENTS

Several Bible verses speak of the "forbearance" and the "longsuffering" of God--like Rom. 3:25; Rom. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9; I Pet. 3:20. While it was God's will that ten tribes be broken off from Solomon's family, it was

not His will that the newly formed kingdom be worshipers of Dan and Bethel's golden calves and of various other forms of idolatry from time to time. But God has borne with nineteen different kings (from Jeroboam to Hoshea) over a two hundred and twelve year period (from 933 B.C. to 721 B.C.), but He will bear with Israel no more. Amos's third vision (Amos 7:7-9) has God setting a plumbline in the midst of Israel, and Israel (like a wall about ready to topple) is beyond repair. God says, "I will not again pass by them any more," meaning His mercy has run out. And so when King Hoshea thinks he can get sufficient help from Egypt to throw off the tribute-yoke of Assyria, God uses Shalmaneser and the Assyrians to come against the Northern Kingdom in its final days. For three years the Assyrians surround the capital Samaria, awaiting its ultimate collapse when all food supplies within the city are depleted. There is a division of thought whether Shalmaneser died before the fall of the North or whether right after. Some say he died before so that the actual fall came under his successor Sargon. Most of the verses setting forth this event are explanations why God has brought this destruction to Israel. In harmony with the Assyrian policy, the ruler deports the citizenry out of the land so there is no possibility of a rebuilding and a later uprising on the part of the conquered. The captives are taken to the land of the Medes (several hundred miles to the north and east of Palestine). Mark 721 B.C. as the date for the fall of the Northern Kingdom.

There is a false theory known as the British-Israel or Anglo-Israel theory that has the British people the lineal offspring of the deported tribes. We commonly refer to them as the "ten lost tribes of Israel" because they are. They were deported as captives, sold as slaves into different nations, and as individuals they were absorbed into the nations to which they were sold. Besides, the prophet Amos two different times said the Northern Kingdom people were going to fall and would never rise again: "The

virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise" (Amos 5:2); "They shall fall, and never rise up again" (Amos 8:14).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 3 memory-facts for this event.
2. Through how many kings and over how many years has God borne with the Northern Kingdom and its idolatry?
3. In what year does the Northern Kingdom fall?
4. What prophet prophesied that it would never rise again?
5. To what land are the captives taken?

109. A New Nation Replaces Israel in Its Land

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 17:24.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. The Assyrian king brings captives of his from other nations to repopulate the area vacated by captive Israel.
 - b. This is the beginning of the Samaritan people.

COMMENTS

This is the other half of the Assyrian victory policy--not only to take the defeated out of their native land to some other land but to bring in captives from other campaigns and settle them in the land just conquered and vacated. We commonly hear that the Samaritans were a half-breed nation composed of the offspring of these foreigners as they intermarried with the Israelites who remained in the land. The Biblical evidence that there were any amount of Israelites left in the land by the Assyrians is slight, making the Samaritans basically a mongrel people resulting from the intermarriage of the various peoples Assyria brings in.

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 2 memory-facts for this event.
2. How is the vacant land of Israel repopulated?

110. The Conglomerate Religion of the New Nation

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read II Kings 17:25-41.
2. Study the event until you can tell it.
3. Memorize these facts about the event:
 - a. Since this new people do not worship Jehovah, He sends lions among them that slew some of them.
 - b. They appeal to the king of Assyria to send an Israelite priest who can teach them what the "God of the land" would have them know.
 - c. A priest is sent back to teach them.
 - d. The result is adding some aspects of Jehovah-worship while each national group maintains its own previous god.

COMMENTS

What will God do next? He has had Israel deported from the land that has been sacred because of God's promise to Abraham and His giving it to Abraham's seed after him. Naturally this heterogeneous group is not God's people and does not know nor obey God's laws. God wishes to go on record at the very beginning of their occupation of the land that things are not right. He sends hungry lions into the various cities. Various Old Testament passages indicate that lions are native to Palestine (Samson killed one that roared against him, David killed a lion in caring for his father's sheep, etc.). They were evidently no real problem while Israel was in the land, but now that God has a mission for the lions, He causes them to invade Samaritan towns so suddenly that in their superstitious belief in local or provincial gods, they conclude that the God of their area is highly displeased with them. It is on this background they request an Israelite priest to be sent back to teach them about the "God of the land". So one of the priests is selected and sent back to teach them the law of God. Can he be one hundred per cent correct

because of the degenerate religious conditions he has grown up in and operated in before Israel's fall? He succeeds at least in giving them the writings of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy), for the Samaritans to this day have those writings (altered here and there to fit their own set-up). But they do not take seriously the commandment that says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me ('in my presence'--D.G.H.)", for each nation continues with the worship of its own native god. We are surprised to read, "They feared Jehovah and served their own gods," until we stop to reflect that much the same can be said about our own American nation that affirms faith in God while serving its own gods of mammon and pleasure.

Having the writings of Moses we can see why the Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "We know that Messias cometh" (John 4:25) and why He appreciated the response given Him by her and her townspeople enough to spend a couple days with them (John 4:39-43). Later Philip (Acts 8:5) and Peter and John (Acts 8:25) preached in various places in Samaria, and Acts 8:12 and Acts 15:3 show that there came to be churches among the Samaritans.

Being mongrel by blood and apostate in religion we can see why Zerubbabel and the returning Jews will refuse to let them have a part in rebuilding the temple after the Captivity (Ezra 4:2,3), and the trouble between the two peoples will set in (Ezra 4:4) that will persist even to Jesus' day (John 4:9 and Luke 9:51-53).

QUESTIONS

1. Recite the 4 memory-facts for this event.
2. What evidence do we have that there were lions in the land before we read of them here?
3. How much of the Old Testament do the Samaritans have?
4. How does this fact show up in the Samaritan woman at the well?
5. When does the hostility between the Samaritans and Jews begin?