

THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR DUMMIES
SESSION 3
JANUARY 25, 2006

The HISTORICAL BOOKS

IS SCRIPTURE TRUE?

“We reject with scorn all those learned and labored myths that Moses was but a legendary figure upon whom the priesthood and the people hung their essential social, moral, and religious ordinances. We believe that the most scientific view, the most up-to-date and rational conception, will find its fullest satisfaction in taking the Bible story literally. We may be sure that all these things happened just as they are set out according to Holy Writ. We may believe that they happened to people not so very different from ourselves and that the impressions those people received were faithfully recorded, and have been transmitted across the centuries with far more accuracy than many of the telegraphed accounts we read of goings on today. In the words of a forgotten work of Mr. Gladstone, we rest with assurance upon ‘The impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.’ Let men of science and learning expand their knowledge and prove with their researches, every detail of the records which have been preserved to us from those dim ages. All they will do is to fortify the grand simplicity and essential accuracy of these recorded truths which have so far lighted the pilgrimage of man.”
– Sir Winston Churchill

- ❑ Tonight we share an odyssey of adventure, of sacred history, and of heroes and villains virtually unsurpassed in all the story of mankind. The saga is contained in twelve books of the Old Testament known as THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.
- ❑ This epic covers about 1,000 years of history - from 1400 B.C. at the invasion of Canaan by the Children of Israel under General Joshua to the collapse of Jerusalem to the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, the 70 year exile, and the return of the Jews to “the land” and the rise of the Persians (Esther).
- ❑ The historical books include: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.
- ❑ The historical books begin just after the death of Moses on Mount Nebo and continue through Malachi to the outset of that period of time known as THE INTER-TESTAMENT, a time of about 400 years that gave rise to the Greeks and Romans, the rise of the Maccabees, to the birth of John the Baptist.

- The historical books tell the stories of the “greats” and “not-so-greats:” Joshua, Samuel, David, Saul, Elijah, Elisha, Ahab, Solomon, Jeroboam, Jezebel, Jonah, and a host of others.

J O S H U A

1. This book of 24 chapters has these main themes:

- ✓ The Conquest of Canaan
- ✓ Crossing the Jordan
- ✓ The Fall of Jericho
- ✓ Victories Over Canaanites
- ✓ Sun Made to Stand Still
- ✓ The 12 Tribes of Israel Divide and Settle in The Promised Land

2. Joshua was of the Tribe of Ephraim. He and Caleb were the only two Israelites who left Egyptian slavery to actually make it to the Promised Land. (He is considered a “prototype” of the One Who will bring the redeemed into the Eternal Promised Land.) We believe that Joshua was 85 when he succeeded Moses (who died at 120). Joshua himself died at the age of 110. We believe that it required about six years for the Israelites to conquer the land. The entire book of Joshua covers about 25 years.

3. There are several stories of particular fascination to your instructor:

A. Crossing the Jordan

Joshua 3:1-5

Early the next morning Joshua and all the Israelites left Acacia and arrived at the banks of the Jordan River, where they camped before crossing. [2] Three days later, the Israelite leaders went through the camp [3] giving these instructions to the people: "When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, follow them. [4] Since you have never traveled this way before, they will guide you. Stay about a half mile behind them, keeping a clear distance between you and the Ark. Make sure you don't come any closer."

[5] Then Joshua told the people, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do great wonders among you."

1. Without Faith, it is impossible to please God.

Try to imagine several million people who are going to attempt a crossing in a flood time (spring) in which the normally narrow Jordan River is now a raging flood torrent of several miles!

When Moses led the Children of Israel across the Red Sea, the waters parted BEFORE they attempted to cross. But at the Jordan River, the priests actually walked into the flood water. Now that's faith!

2. The Fall of Jericho.

Joshua 6:10-20

"Do not shout; do not even talk," Joshua commanded. "Not a single word from any of you until I tell you to shout. Then shout!" [11] So the Ark of the Lord was carried around the city once that day, and then everyone returned to spend the night in the camp.

[12] Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests again carried the Ark of the Lord. [13] The seven priests with the rams' horns marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing their horns. Armed guards marched both in front of the priests with the horns and behind the Ark of the Lord. All this time the priests were sounding their horns. [14] On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They followed this pattern for six days.

[15] On the seventh day the Israelites got up at dawn and marched around the city as they had done before. But this time they went around the city seven times. [16] The seventh time around, as the priests sounded the long blast on their horns, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! [17] The city and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies. [18] Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on all Israel. [19] Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury."

[20] When the people heard the sound of the horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the city from every side and captured it.

To this day, that entire area is simply desolate!

3. The near-tragedy at Ai. (Achan's sin)

Joshua 7:1-11

But Israel was unfaithful concerning the things set apart for the Lord. A man named Achan had stolen some of these things, so the Lord was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, of the family of Zimri, of the clan of Zerah, and of the tribe of Judah.

[2] Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the city of Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven. [3] When they returned, they told Joshua, "It's a small

town, and it won't take more than two or three thousand of us to destroy it. There's no need for all of us to go there."

[4] So approximately three thousand warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated. The men of Ai [5] chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the quarries, and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.

[6] Joshua and the leaders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed down facing the Ark of the Lord until evening. [7] Then Joshua cried out, "Sovereign Lord, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! [8] Lord, what am I to say, now that Israel has fled from its enemies? [9] For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe us off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?"

[10] But the Lord said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? [11] Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen the things that I commanded to be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them; they have also lied about it and hidden the things among their belongings.

A. Even Joshua was so discouraged after the initial contact that he cried out, "Oh, if only we had stayed on the other side of the Jordan!"

J U D G E S

1. We read in secular history of the Middle Ages - or the Dark Ages, as they are also known. The Book of Judges is "The Dark Ages" of Israel, the time of the "Judges," who ruled various "fiefdoms" in Canaan during its first 400 years of development. It is not a happy book.

2. The theme of Judges is "Every man did that which was right in his (or her) own eyes." The fledgling nation had no strong central government. They were a confederacy of independent tribes with no unifying force except God. AND WHEN THEY FORSOOK GOD FOR VARIOUS REASONS THEY HAD NOTHING LEFT AT ALL. The Israelites were constantly falling into idolatry which resulted in their being harassed and sometimes even conquered by their enemies. For example:

Judges 13:1

Again the Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight, so the Lord handed them over to the Philistines, who kept them in subjection for forty years.

3. In those times of repentance, God would send deliverers, "Judges," who would give the people relief from their oppressors. Some of these are well-known names:

A. Othniel, Ehud (one of my favorites, a left-hander who plunged a dagger deep into the belly of the obese Moabite king Eglon), and Shamgar who killed 600 Philistines with an oxgoad.

B. Deborah who delivered Israel from the Canaanites. Here in chapter 4 we read of the death of the Canaanite General Sisera at the hands of another woman:

Judges 4:17-21

Meanwhile, Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because Heber's family was on friendly terms with King Jabin of Hazor. [18] Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come into my tent, sir. Come in. Don't be afraid." So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

[19] "Please give me some water," he said. "I'm thirsty." So she gave him some milk to drink and covered him again.

[20] "Stand at the door of the tent," he told her. "If anybody comes and asks you if there is anyone here, say no."

[21] But when Sisera fell asleep from exhaustion, Jael quietly crept up to him with a hammer and tent peg. Then she drove the tent peg through his temple and into the ground, and so he died.

C. Gideon

Israel had angered God and their enemies the Midianites had swarmed across the land like locusts. For 7 years, the Israelites sought refuge in caves and made hidden pits for their grain. Through a time of testing, God used Gideon and 300 men to give the Midianites such a terrific beating that they came no more into the land.

D. There are many others as well, such as SAMSON. Others include Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and others.

4. The simple history here is this: God had founded Israel for the purpose of paving the way for the coming of a Redeemer for the human race. And in spite of Israel's idolatry, God maintained it. Except for such leaders as the Judges, Israel would have been exterminated. **GOD ALWAYS SENDS HIS DELIVER AT THE NEEDED TIME.**

R U T H

1. This lovely story tells about the great grandmother of King David and the beginning of the Messianic Family. A thousand years earlier, Abraham had been called of God to found a nation for the purpose of one day bringing a Savior to mankind. In this book of

Ruth, we have the founding of the family within that nation in which the Saviour would come. FROM HERE ON, OLD TESTAMENT INTEREST CENTERS MAINLY AROUND THE FAMILY OF DAVID. (The first chapter of Matthew gives us the genealogy of our Lord.)

2. The story opens in Bethlehem where a man (Elimelech) and his wife (Naomi), and their two sons go to Moab (southwest of the Dead Sea) to get away from famine. The Moabites were idolators. The two boys, Mahlon and Chilion, married two of these women, Ruth and Orpah. After ten years in Moab, the father and two sons had died, leaving three widows - Naomi, Ruth and Orpah. Ruth decided to return to Bethlehem and Ruth determined to go with her.

3. Back in Bethlehem, Ruth worked in a field (gleaning). *In the Law of Moses - Leviticus 19:9, 23:22, and Deut. 24:19) God commanded Israel to permit the poor and needy to gather the grain left in the fields after the harvest.)*

The owner of the field was a bachelor named Boaz. (The field, by the way, is the general area of where the shepherds heard the story of Jesus' birth in nearby Bethlehem.) Ruth and Boaz fall in love and we have here one of the great love stories in the Bible.

4. This romantic story took place DURING THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.

I S A M U E L

The event that effectively ended the time of the judges was THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET SAMUEL (who was the last of the Judges as well as being a prophet). He was the *connecting link* between Judges and the Kingdom. The story here begins about 1100 B.C.

In this book we will learn of the beginning of the Israeli Monarchy, first headed by King Saul. It was not God's "Plan A" to allow this. His desire was a *theocracy* (God rule) but the people demanded a king so they could "be like everyone else."

1. The book begins with the birth of the remarkable Samuel. The place was Shiloh - some 25 miles north of Jerusalem. The father was Elkannah (not an especially outstanding man) but the mother was Hannah (a woman of incredible spirituality.) She wanted a son but it seemed her childbearing possibility was zero.

1 Samuel 1:9-20

Once when they were at Shiloh, Hannah went over to the Tabernacle after supper to pray to the Lord. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance. [10] Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the

Lord. [11] And she made this vow: "O Lord Almighty, if you will look down upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord, his hair will never be cut."

[12] As she was praying to the Lord, Eli watched her. [13] Seeing her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking. [14] "Must you come here drunk?" he demanded. "Throw away your wine!"

[15] "Oh no, sir!" she replied, "I'm not drunk! But I am very sad, and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord. [16] Please don't think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow."

[17] "In that case," Eli said, "cheer up! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him."

[18] "Oh, thank you, sir!" she exclaimed. Then she went back and began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.

[19] The entire family got up early the next morning and went to worship the Lord once more. Then they returned home to Ramah. When Elkanah slept with Hannah, the Lord remembered her request, [20] and in due time she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I asked the Lord for him."

2. When Samuel was born, Hannah DEDICATED him to the Lord. Our custom of dedicating children is derived from her act - as well as that of Joseph and Mary of dedicating Jesus.

3. Another highlight of I Samuel was the call of Saul as the first king of Israel and Saul's abdication of spiritual leadership, which resulted in David's being anointed King.

Saul was an outstanding man but had the fatal weakness of disobeying God's edicts. It was this flaw that cost him his crown.
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If you are a regular attender of First Assembly, you have heard me often express my admiration for Saul as a man and as a father. In both of those categories, I believe he eclipses David. Yet David was "the man after God's own heart." Why? Because Saul stood on his faith in himself; David relied on God. When Saul disobeyed God, he lost his divine prerogative to be king:

1 Samuel 15:10-11

Then the Lord said to Samuel, [11] "I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has again refused to obey me." Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the Lord all night.

3. I Samuel 16 tells the story of David's anointing to be King:

1 Samuel 16:11-13

Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep."

"Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."

[12] So Jesse sent for him. He was ruddy and handsome, with pleasant eyes. And the Lord said, "This is the one; anoint him."

[13] So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the olive oil he had brought and poured it on David's head. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

4. Yet another highlight of the book is the well-known story in I Samuel 17 of David and Goliath.

5. David didn't become the King until Saul's death (which we read of in the final chapter of this book) at the hands of the Philistines. Until his death, Saul tried to kill David. David hid in the canyons of En Gedi, one of my favorite spots on the planet. We always hike that canyon on our trips to Israel.

6. I Samuel ends on such a sad note with the death of Saul and his sons:

1 Samuel 31:1-6

Now the Philistines attacked Israel, forcing the Israelites to flee. Many were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. [2] The Philistines closed in on Saul and his sons, and they killed three of his sons—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. [3] The fighting grew very fierce around Saul, and the Philistine archers caught up with him and wounded him severely. [4] Saul groaned to his armor bearer, "Take your sword and kill me before these pagan Philistines run me through and humiliate me." But his armor bearer was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. [5] When his armor bearer realized that Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died beside the king. [6] So Saul, three of his sons, his armor bearer, and his troops all died together that same day.

II SAMUEL

1. You should note that in the original Hebrew Old Testament, I and II Samuel were only a single book. I Samuel covered almost a century in time while II Samuel deals

only with the reign of David, a period of 40 years.

2. David was king only over the southern part of Israel - Judah - for the first seven years of his 40-year reign and his capital was in Hebron. The last 33 years of his reign, the beginning of "the golden age" of Israel, David reigned from Jerusalem.

3. The watershed of the book and his life was his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) in chapter 11. Before this dark chapter, David was a splendid representative of the ideals of a theocratic king.

4. Highlights of the book:

A) David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his capital in ch. 5.

B) He brought back the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem amidst great rejoicing and celebration (ch. 6).

C) David subdued Israel's enemies, beginning with the Philistines (chs. 8-10).

D) David's strong leadership attracted mighty men and inspired intense loyalty. David understood that God had established him as king over Israel (a fact Saul could never quite grasp) and he openly acknowledged God's rule over himself and the nation.

I AND II KINGS

1. I will deal with these as one book. They follow immediately upon the history of I and II Samuel. These four books selectively cover the entire history of the kings of Israel and Judah.

2. I and II Kings chronologically cover four centuries of Israeli history - from the time of King Solomon (970 B.C.) To the time of the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.). I Kings alone covers about 120 years - Solomon's reign of 40 years (970-930 B.C.) and approximately the first 80 years after the kingdom was divided (930-852).

3. The reason the Holy Spirit guided the writing of these two books was to provide the Hebrews in Babylonian exile with a prophetic interpretation of their history so they would understand why the nation split in two in 930 B.C. The cause of the demise of Israel was idolatry - the worship of someone or something other than God.

4. Perhaps the highlight of I and II Kings was Solomon's construction of the Great Temple in Jerusalem. We will study much more about this in I and II Chronicles. However the subject is broached in I Kings chapters 5 - 8.

5. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

(CAPITAL WAS SAMARIA - PRESENT DAY SEBASTE) WAS ESTABLISHED AFTER THE DEATH OF SOLOMON BY JEROBOAM, A MEMBER OF THE ISRAELI MILITARY. THE ISSUE WAS TAXES. THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH WAS LED BY SOLOMON'S RATHER STUPID SON REHOBOAM AND THE CAPITAL REMAINED IN JERUSALEM.

1 Kings 12:1-19

Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all Israel had gathered to make him king. [2] When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard of Solomon's death, he returned from Egypt, for he had fled to Egypt to escape from King Solomon. [3] The leaders of Israel sent for Jeroboam, and the whole assembly of Israel went to speak with Rehoboam. [4] "Your father was a hard master," they said. "Lighten the harsh labor demands and heavy taxes that your father imposed on us. Then we will be your loyal subjects."

[5] Rehoboam replied, "Give me three days to think this over. Then come back for my answer." So the people went away.

[6] Then King Rehoboam went to discuss the matter with the older men who had counseled his father, Solomon. "What is your advice?" he asked. "How should I answer these people?"

[7] The older counselors replied, "If you are willing to serve the people today and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your loyal subjects."

[8] But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and who were now his advisers. [9] "What is your advice?" he asked them. "How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the burdens imposed by my father?"

[10] The young men replied, "This is what you should tell those complainers: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist—if you think he was hard on you, just wait and see what I'll be like! [11] Yes, my father was harsh on you, but I'll be even harsher! My father used whips on you, but I'll use scorpions!' "

[12] Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people returned to hear Rehoboam's decision, just as the king had requested. [13] But Rehoboam spoke harshly to them, for he rejected the advice of the older counselors [14] and followed the counsel of his younger advisers. He told the people, "My father was harsh on you, but I'll be even harsher! My father used whips on you, but I'll use scorpions!" [15] So the king paid no attention to the people's demands. This turn of events was the will of the Lord, for it fulfilled the Lord's message to Jeroboam son of Nebat through the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh.

[16] When all Israel realized that the king had rejected their request, they shouted, "Down with David and his dynasty! We have no share in Jesse's son! Let's go home, Israel! Look out for your own house, O David!" So the people of Israel returned home. [17] But Rehoboam continued to rule over the Israelites who lived in the towns of Judah.

[18] King Rehoboam sent Adoniram, who was in charge of the labor force, to restore order, but all Israel stoned him to death. When this news reached King Rehoboam, he quickly jumped into his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. [19] The northern tribes of Israel have refused to be ruled by a descendant of David to this day.

6. It is important to note that the northern kingdom of Israel never had a good king. 19 kings and everyone of them bad! The southern kingdom of Judah, on the other hand, had 20 kings, eight of them (40%) good.

The 10th king of Judah, Azariah (also known as Uzziah) gets my vote for Judah's premier king. He reigned for 52 years.

Manasseh (son of good king Hezekiah) reigned longer, 55 years, but was a devil in shoe leather. **NOTE CHART FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON THE KINGS AND PROPHETS AT THE END OF THE SYLLABUS.**

7. It was during this time (following the split of the kingdom) that the ministry of the prophets came into being: Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah - all in Judah - and Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos and Hosea in the northern kingdom of Israel. (Again refer to the chart to see under what kings these prophets ministered.)

7. The northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. The southern Kingdom of Israel lasted longer by 135 years and was finally destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. **THIS IS CALLED THE 70 YEARS OF THE EXILE.** It was at this time that Daniel and Ezekiel were exiled as young Jewish men to the country of Babylon (current day Iraq).

8. II Kings ends with the demolition of Jerusalem and Judah.

I AND II CHRONICLES

1. These two books cover basically the same ground as I and II Samuel and I and II Kings - with the exception of adding some details and emphases not found in the previous four books.

2. However, we are given a much more thorough telling of Solomon's Temple, its construction and function.

2 Chron. 3:1

So Solomon began to build the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to Solomon's father, King David. The

Temple was built on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the site that David had selected.

- ❑ **The building of this Temple was a monumental task. Construction began in the fourth year of Solomon's reign and required seven years.**

2 Chron. 2:2

He enlisted a force of 70,000 common laborers, 80,000 stonecutters in the hill country, and 3,600 foremen.

- ❑ **The magnificence of the Temple is described in I Kings:**

1 Kings 6:21-38

Then he overlaid the rest of the Temple's interior with pure gold, and he made gold chains to protect the entrance to the Most Holy Place. [22] So he finished overlaying the entire Temple with gold, including the altar that belonged to the Most Holy Place.

[23] Within the inner sanctuary Solomon placed two cherubim made of olive wood, each 15 feet tall. [24] The wingspan of each of the cherubim was 15 feet, each wing being 7 1/2 feet long. [25] The two cherubim were identical in shape and size; [26] each was 15 feet tall. [27] Solomon placed them side by side in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. Their outspread wings reached from wall to wall, while their inner wings touched at the center of the room. [28] He overlaid the two cherubim with gold.

[29] All the walls of the inner sanctuary and the main room were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. [30] The floor in both rooms was overlaid with gold.

[31] For the entrance to the inner sanctuary, Solomon made double doors of olive wood with five-sided doorposts. [32] These doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and the doors were overlaid with gold.

[33] Then he made four-sided doorposts of olive wood for the entrance to the Temple. [34] There were two folding doors of cypress wood, and each door was hinged to fold back upon itself. [35] These doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and the doors were overlaid with gold.

[36] The walls of the inner courtyard were built so that there was one layer of cedar beams after every three layers of hewn stone.

[37] The foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid in midspring of the fourth year of Solomon's reign. [38] The entire building was completed in every detail by midautumn of the eleventh year of his reign. So it took seven years to build the Temple.

conquered by the Assyrians in 732 B.C. and Judah conquered by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Now as we go into EZRA, we will study the end of the exile and the return of the Jews to their homeland.

E Z R A A N D N E H E M I A H

1. While in exile, there was no Temple. This is when the day of the synagogue began. It could well have been Ezra who organized it. He was the founder of the order of the Scribes.
2. Babylon's world reign was short lived as Daniel tells us of its demise under King/Regent Belshazzar 5. Babylon was defeated by the Persians about 539 B.C. The Persian King Cyrus gave permission to the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Yet only about 50,000 of the Jews availed themselves of the privilege.
3. "Ezra" is one of the three "post-exilic books" - the other two being Nehemiah and Esther.
4. Ezra, along with Nehemiah (the next book) were instrumental in the rebuilding of the walls and city of Jerusalem (annihilated earlier by the Babylonians) and the Temple.
5. While Ezra was a priest, Nehemiah was a layman. He was a passionate man about the things of God:

Neh. 1:4

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh. 6:3

so I replied by sending this message to them: "I am doing a great work! I cannot stop to come and meet with you."

In the first reference, when Nehemiah heard of the plight of the Jews back in Israel, it tore him up inside. He was not indifferent to need!

In the second instance, while working on the walls of Jerusalem, his critics and detractors tried to get him to come down off the wall and debate about it. He simply said, "I'm too busy." Good for Nehemiah! A lesson for all of us to remain busy with God's priorities.

ESTHER

1. The book of Esther is remarkable in that the name of God is never mentioned. Yet the king is referred to 192 times. It tells the story of King Ahasuerus - known as Xerxes in secular history - following his horrible naval defeat at the hands of the upcoming Greeks. Xerxes reigned over a vast kingdom that ran from India to Ethiopia. He returned from the battle to his summer palace in Shushan and threw a drunken feast for several thousands of people
2. In the depravity of that feast, he called for his Queen, Vashti. She refused to come and the King had her exiled from the Kingdom.
3. Now he threw a sort of "Miss America" contest to find a new Queen who turned out to be Esther (Hadassah).
4. This wonderful story tells how Esther saved her people the Jews from extinction of the wicked Haman.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS STORY, HISTORY GOES INTO THAT 400 YEAR PERIOD "BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS."

OUR STUDY OF THE MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS WHICH WILL FOLLOW TELLS OF EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES THAT LIVED AND WORKED DURING KINGS AND CHRONICLES.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

J U D A H						I S R A E L					
King	Reign	Char-acter	Prophet	King	Reign	Char-acter	Prophet	King	Reign	Char-acter	Prophet
1. Rehoboam	931-913 B.C.	17 yrs.	Bad	Shemaiah	1. Jeroboam I	931-910 B.C.	22 yrs.	Bad	Ahijah		
2. Abijah	913-911	3 yrs.	Bad								
3. Asa	911-870	41 yrs.	Good		2. Nadab	910-909	2 yrs.	Bad			
4. Jehoshaphat	870-848*	25 yrs.	Good		3. Baasha	909-886	24 yrs.	Bad			
5. Jehoram	848-841*	8 yrs.	Bad		4. Elah	886-885	2 yrs.	Bad			
6. Ahaziah	841	1 yr.	Bad		5. Zimri	885	7 days	Bad			
					6. Omri	885-874*	12 yrs.	Bad			
7. Athaliah	841-835	6 yrs.	Bad								Elijah
8. Joash	835-796	40 yrs.	Good	Joel	7. Ahab	874-853	22 yrs.	Bad			Micaiah
9. Amaziah	796-767	29 yrs.	Good								
10. Azariah (or Uzziah)	767-740*	52 yrs.	Good	Isaiah	9. Joram	852-841	12 yrs.	Bad			
					10. Jehu	841-814	28 yrs.	Bad			
					11. Jehoahaz	814-798	17 yrs.	Bad			
					12. Jehoash	798-782	16 yrs.	Bad			
											Jonah
11. Jotham	740-732*	16 yrs.	Good	Micah	13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	41 yrs.	Bad			Amos
12. Ahaz	732-716	16 yrs.	Bad								Hosea
13. Hezekiah	716-687	29 yrs.	Good		14. Zechariah	753-752	6 mo.	Bad			
14. Manasseh	687-642*	55 yrs.	Bad	Nahum	15. Shallum	752	1 mo.	Bad			
15. Amon	642-640	2 yrs.	Bad		16. Menahem	752-742	10 yrs.	Bad			
					17. Pekahiah	742-740	2 yrs.	Bad			
					18. Pekah	740-732*	20 yrs.	Bad			
16. Josiah	640-608	31 yrs.	Good	Habakkuk Zephaniah Jeremiah	19. Hoshea	732-721	9 yrs.	Bad			
17. Jehoahaz	608	3 mo.	Bad								
18. Jehoiakim	608-597	11 yrs.	Bad								
19. Jehoiachin	597	3 mo.	Bad								
20. Zedekiah	597-586	11 yrs.	Bad								
<i>(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)</i>						<i>(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)</i>					
*Co-regency						*Co-regency					

Asher (Josh 19:24f)

- 1 Tara
- 2 Azeu
- 3 Cabul
- 4 Achahaph
- 5 Helkath

Naphtali (Josh 19:32f)

- 6 Iron
- 7 Dan
- 8 Kothath
- 9 Yirim
- 10 Merom
- 11 Hazer

- 12 Beth-anath
- 13 Capernaum
- 14 Beusel

Zebulun (Josh 19:10f)

- 15 Hazerthar
- 16 Rimmon
- 17 Betanathem
- 18 Sarid
- 19 Chesulloch
- 20 Daberath

Issachar (Josh 19:17f)

- 21 Enhadad
- 22 Jezreel
- 23 Engannath

Manasseh (Josh 17:1f)

- 24 Dan
- 25 Jokimam
- 26 Megiddo
- 27 Taanach
- 28 Ibzan
- 29 Danthan
- 30 Bethshean
- 31 Succoth
- 32 Samaria
- 33 Tirzah
- 34 Bethan
- 35 Shechem
- 36 Gilgal

Ephraim (Josh 16:5f)

- 37 Aphek
- 38 Tappuah
- 39 Janoah
- 40 Shiloh
- 41 Lesh
- 42 Gathaim
- 43 Ozer
- 44 Upper Bethoron
- 45 Naumath

Benjamin (Josh 18:11f)

- 46 Garath-jarim
- 47 Gibeon
- 48 Mizpah
- 49 Bethel
- 50 Jerusalem
- 51 Adummim
- 52 Jericho
- 53 Beth-elgath

Dan (Josh 19:40f)

- 54 Ippah
- 55 Esdath
- 56 Timnah
- 57 Shualtim
- 58 Ailalon

Judah (Josh 15:1f)

- 59 Jahseel
- 60 Ashdod
- 61 Ekron
- 62 Gath
- 63 Beth-shamech
- 64 Chesalon
- 65 Bethshean
- 66 Bethzur
- 67 Hebron
- 68 Eshbemon
- 69 Arad
- 70 Kirgadi
- 71 Geser
- 72 Tamar
- 73 Mareshah
- 74 Lachish
- 75 Eglon
- 76 Gaza
- 77 Asokalon

Simeon (Josh 19:1f)

- 78 Sharuhen
- 79 Ziklag
- 80 Asnan
- 81 Be'er-lul
- 82 Kibzeel
- 83 Beersheba
- 84 Hazarshur
- 85 Hormah
- 86 Bazaleh
- 87 Etalad
- 88 Ezem

East Manasseh (Josh 13:29f)

- 89 Golan
- 90 Ashtaroth
- 91 Edrei
- 92 Gerasa

Gad (Josh 13:24f)

- 93 Laishah
- 94 Jabeshgilead
- 95 Seroth
- 96 Kugel
- 97 Malmanah
- 98 Ramothgilead
- 99 Bethonath
- 100 Jaser
- 101 Sathiah

Reuben (Josh 13:15f)

- 102 Feshba
- 103 Medeba
- 104 Diton
- 105 Arcer
- 106 Bezer
- 107 Ibbas
- 108 Kedemoth

- city
- city (uncertain location)
- ★ capital city
- ▲ mountain peak

